

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE
SCOPE, ROLE, AND FUNCTION OF
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Birgit Schreiber

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The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a stylized classical building with columns and a pediment, with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' below it.
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Supervisor: Professor Sandy Lazarus (PhD)

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KEY WORDS

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4. Higher Education Policy
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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation into the scope, role, and function of student development and support (SDS) within higher education in South Africa. The underpinnings and frameworks of SDS were explored during the research, as well as its integration into the institution and into organisational structures, the relationship between SDS and the policies of the Department of Higher Education and Training, and the influences from the national and international context of SDS.

Policies emerging from the Department of Higher Education and Training heralded dramatic changes after the first democratically elected government in South Africa. The changes were amplified by the shifts in the international context of global explosion of knowledge production and neo-liberal influences on higher education in general and SDS in particular. The higher education system in South Africa has changed from an elite system to broad “massification”, which addresses issues of equity, access, participation and relevant skills development at medium and high level (DoE, 1997, p. 4). Changes have not only been in terms of governance and institutional mergers but also in terms of notions and discourses in education, teaching and learning, student development, and student support. The higher education system has become open, responsive, and relevant, and knowledge is understood to be relative and context-bound, co-created within the relationship to a heterogeneous group of students who have a range of capabilities and challenge traditional notions of inclusivity and diversity.

The findings are extensive and liberal use of quotations from the participants substantiates the emerging themes. The key themes that emerged are clustered under the headings of: scope, role and function; theoretical framework; professionalisation; paradigms and alignments; SDS integration into the organisational structure; SDS in relation to the Department of Higher Education and Training; and SDS within the national and international context of globalisation.

The discussion synthesises the findings and reveals that SDS is facing many challenges which require attention. Some challenges concern the lack of clarity around scope, role, and function, as well as issues around the lack of theoretical grounding and the paucity in local theory development. Challenges also surfaced regarding the integration of SDS into the academic life of the institution. Similar concerns appeared around the exclusion of SDS from governance issues. Tensions emerged from discussions on the need for a guiding framework for SDS, while preserving autonomy and acknowledging the heterogeneous character of

institutions. The findings also suggest that non-elective operational standards and some kind of monitoring and evaluation systems for SDS are required. Despite these challenges, it appears that SDS is perceived as a key contributor to the shared goal of student success and that an expressed commitment to and alignment with national and institutional goals exists.

This utilisation-oriented study, it is hoped, will make significant contributions to the understanding of the scope, role and function of student development and support within higher education. It may help illuminate the challenges and provide suggestions to enable more articulated contributions to the shared goals of higher education in South Africa. Recommendations include the development of an epistemic community which can generate contextual and constructivist paradigms for SDS in South Africa. This research study reveals the pressing need for a normative framework for SDS and identifies areas which need to be given serious consideration when developing such a framework.



DECLARATION

I declare that *An investigation into the scope, role, and function of student development and support within the context of higher education in South Africa* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

Birgit Schreiber

Dated/signed



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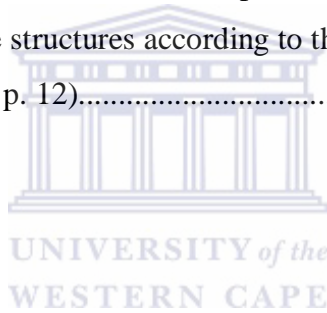
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACUHO-I-SA	Association of College and University Housing Officers–International–South African chapter
AD	Academic development
CAS	Council for the Advancement of Standards
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
FTE	Full-Time equivalent student
HAU	Historically advantaged university
HDU	Historically disadvantaged university
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resource Department
IASAAS	The International Association of Student Affairs and Services
KPA	Key performance area
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersexual minority groups
NASDEV	National Association for Student Development Practitioners
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
PASS	Professional administrative support staff
SAACDHE	South African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education
SAASSAP	South African Association for Senior Student Affairs Practitioners
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASSE	South African Survey on Student Engagement
SDS	Student development and support
SHAWCO	Student Health and Welfare Centre Organisation
SRC	Student Representative Council

SUN	Stellenbosch University
T&L	Teaching and learning
UCT	University of Cape Town
UKCISA	United Kingdom Council on International Student Affairs
UWC	University of the Western Cape



CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The research for this study was focussed on student development and support (SDS) within higher education in South Africa. The scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education in South Africa were investigated by gathering insights from three higher education institutions in the Western Cape. Theoretical underpinnings and frameworks of SDS (and relative lack thereof), SDS integration into the institution and into the organisational structures of the institution, the relationship between SDS and the policies of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and the influences from the national and international context of SDS are explored. Discussion is presented on how SDS practitioners have addressed and responded to the changed context emerging from the policies of the DHET and to the changed profile of students accessing higher education since the imperatives of the National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001a) were imposed. On a personal note, the study also reflects a personal desire to understand the purpose and meaning of SDS work because I have worked within SDS all of my professional life.

The study generated significant insights about SDS which are translated into recommendations, and this is where the significant contribution, impact, and strength of this study lies. However, this study is part of an evolving process and interpretations are not absolute, but part of a dialectic interpretive paradigm based on the notion that knowledge is socially constructed and contextually embedded. Recommendations generated from the insights and interpretations must be viewed in these terms.

1.2 Rationale for this Study

A review of relevant literature suggests that SDS in higher education in South Africa has followed the traditional trajectory of increasing its output and implementing a proliferating range of interventions since the increase in demand on its service provision as a

result of the changed context in higher education (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Hernandez, 1989; Mandew, 2003). The beginnings of a debate appear to have risen around the scope, role, and function of SDS and how this domain can best respond to the changed context and landscape of higher education (Hernandez, 1989; Lange, 2010; Lunceford, 2006; Mandew, 2003; Ngcobo, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Lange, in the introduction to the *Higher Education Monitor 9* (Lange, 2010), stated that there is a need to illuminate the explanations which are trapped within the cultural and physical contexts within which students are required to manage their academic demands and that a need to explore “the relationship between students’ success and their experience of universities as academic and social spaces” (Lange, 2010, p, xi) exists, and SDS is uniquely positioned to respond to this call and to contribute towards this understanding.

A systematic investigation into the status quo of SDS within higher education is therefore required in order to explore the scope, role, and function of SDS in relation to the national governing documents, such as the *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996), *White Paper 3: Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (DoE, 1997), the Higher Education Act, (101 of 1997), and the *National Plan for Higher Education* (DoE, 2001a).

There is a need to maximise what SDS can offer in order to contribute towards the broader aims of higher education, which include, amongst others, throughput and retention, academic excellence, graduate attributes, and citizenship (DoE, 1997).

Criticism that SDS is not responding adequately to contextual challenges has surfaced and SDS representatives and practitioners have not yet articulated a clear position on higher education (Barnes, 2004; Cloete, Pillay, & Swart, 1986; Harper, 1996; Lunceford, 2006, 2011; Mandew, 2003).

The debate around a comprehensive SDS framework for South Africa was raised by the Education Minister Kader Asmal and again by Education Minister Naledi Pandor during the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) conferences in 2004 and 2006 (SAASSAP, 2004, 2006), and yet, the domain of SDS is no closer to finding a shared vision or platform which might enable the development of a framework. Expectations that the DHET will enable such a framework might be misplaced and may challenge issues of institutional autonomy (Moodie, 1996). In *The Council on Higher Education Monitor 9* on exploring access and throughput, Lange stated that “What is missing ... is a clear conceptual framework that can integrate macro and micro levels of

analysis and show how these mediate students' experiences and in turn their academic achievement" (Lange, 2010, p. 45).

The SDS domains in higher education are comprised of large cohorts of staff, and the domain has unique access to students and can make exceptional contributions to higher education (Harper, 1996; Mandew, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, SDS seems a relatively ungoverned and unguided resource, in need of definition and comprehension, and this study is aimed at contributing towards addressing these challenges and towards shaping SDS so that it can contribute fully to the shared goals of higher education (Lunceford, 2011).

1.3 Context of this Study: Higher Education in South Africa

This section provides an overview of the South African higher education system, how it has changed over the past 15 years since the first democratic elections in 1994¹, and how it currently functions. This provides the context within which SDS operates in South Africa.

1.3.1 Overview

The structural and qualitative landscape of higher education in South Africa has altered dramatically since the political changes *after* the first democratic elections in 1994. The changes are explicitly articulated by the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in the *Overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996), the subsequent *White Paper 3: The programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997) and the National Plan for Higher Education in 2001 (DoE, 2001a). The new structures have also been described as creating an "existential crisis" (Bawa, 2000, pp. 1, 6), not only because of the identity of higher education being trapped in the history of apartheid but also because of the global explosion of knowledge production and information sharing (Bawa, 2000).

The changes in South African higher education since 1994 have been fundamental. The previous regime maintained a higher education system which was steeped in Christian nationalistic and racist thinking (Struthers, 2005). Students were constructed as passive receptacles, homogenous and obedient. The new higher education system reflects the values

¹ The African National Congress worked on various policies documents before the official publications of the first one in 1996, so this reference to fifteen years is only approximate.

of a participative democracy which honours human rights and strives towards equity and a better life for all South Africans (DoE, 1996, 1997). Students are considered as partners in knowledge creation, which is, in turn, viewed as a collaborative process generating solutions for current problems (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007).

The initial phase after liberation in 1994 was characterised by the development of macro frameworks and reforms with the intent of fundamentally changing the higher education system into a responsive, transparent, co-ordinated, and accountable system, which was expected to play a key role in the reconstruction of the South African psyche, its social fabric, and its economy. In 1995, the NCHE (DoE, 1996) consulted widely with the sector and proposed radical changes from an elite system to “massification” in order to address issues of equity and development, that is, increased participation rate and relevant skills development at medium and high level (DoE, 1997, p. 4). The NCHE report (DoE, 1996) recommended the development of a unitary higher education system, which focusses on participation, responsiveness, and interaction within the sector.

The shift in the South African higher education system was not only away from a closed educational system, which was self-referential and insular, to an accessible one with permeable boundaries and a relationship with society but also to an educational system which is responsive to national social and economic needs (DoE, 1996). No longer is knowledge a value in itself, but it has to demonstrate some utility value and needs to be relevant to current national challenges (DoE, 1997). Knowledge is no longer considered to be just delivered but acknowledged as being co-created. Its creation is shared and is developed in problem-focussed pedagogies. The student population has changed from a homogenous group, enrolled in rigid degrees, to a heterogeneous population which has diverse needs and requires flexible programmes of study (Scott et al., 2007). Quality of service delivery has become crucial and is measured in competencies and outcomes.

The South African higher education system and its institutions are engaging with these policy changes within the context of international shifts in the higher educational sector, which are due to a drastic increase in knowledge production and information flow, increased pressure for reduced trade barriers for higher education provision by the World Trade Organisation² that impact on neo-liberal economic practices, and increased globalisation (Collins, 2007; DoE, 1997, 2001a).

² The WTO’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) includes a proposal which calls for the “aggressive trade liberalisation of services like higher education” (Collins, 2007, p. 283).

SDS needs to be located in this higher education context and in relation to the imperatives of the higher education sector (Mandew, 2003; Lunceford, 2011). Its role and function must be constructed within the directives of the policies and in relation to its stakeholders, while its practitioners need to remain cognizant of the macroeconomic context which is impacting on the entire sector (Lunceford, 2011).

1.3.2 Policy Context

Since 1994, the national government has embraced the regulation of higher education. During 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) had already published a visionary implementation plan for the fundamental transformation³ of education, which was to be the forerunner of a participatory and transparent education system (ANC, 1994). The first democratically elected government, led by the ANC, created a policy context which governs higher education as key participant in national and economic reconstruction (DoE, 1996, 1997, 2001). This is in line with what Cloete and Muller (1998, p. 2) pointed out: “[T]he African university has been cast in the role of saviour of Africa by African statesmen such as Kwame Nkrumah and international scholars such as Castells”. New instructive policies, position papers, and publications from the Council on Higher Education (CHE), as an advisory body to the Department of Higher Education and Training⁴ (DHET), emerged. Essentially, higher education in South Africa has become centrally governed and goal-oriented. Its funding is now contingent on performance related to national imperatives (DoE, 1996, 1997, 2001a).

The policies that emerged from the Department of Education (DoE), and later the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), were initially focussed on the macro framework of higher education within which the values and principles of South Africa’s newly constituted democracy were protected (DoE, 1996). The basic values of access, equity, and accountability became enshrined in these governing policies. The policies which emerged subsequently focussed increasingly on managing and guiding the intricacies of the new system, such as policies about funding, admissions, and access (Bunting & Cloete, 2006).

³ According to Cloete and Muller (1998, p. 6) this radical transformation was overdue not only because of the “gross inequalities” but also because the South African Higher Education system was functioning like a “fragmented, outdated version of a UK model of yesteryear”.

⁴ In 2009 the Department of Education (DoE) was re-structured and two departments were created: Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Department for Basic Education.

Finally, documents which emerged more recently address inefficiencies in the systems (CHE, 2010).

The first formal document which presented the basis for the framework for radical transformation of the higher education sector in South Africa post-1994 was the *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996). It places higher education in a “pivotal role in political, economic and cultural reconstruction and development of South Africa” (DoE, 1997, p. 1). The three central features of this new policy framework address equity, responsiveness, and participatory governance and are as follow:

1. increased participation of students and increased diversity and flexibility with enrolment and programme offerings; this “massification” is expected to address equity, redress and development (DoE, 1997, p. 4);
2. greater responsiveness with its social context, i.e. an “open knowledge system” (DoE, 1997, p. 4); and
3. increased co-operation and partnerships across institutions in terms of addressing the tension between state and institutional autonomy, and with civil society (DoE, 1996, p. 12).

The National Commission on Higher Education (DoE, 1996) paved the way for the reconfiguration of the higher education institutions, which began in 2002. The state-funded universities and technikons were reorganised from 36 institutions (21 universities and 15 technikons) to a total of 23 universities, comprising 11 universities and 12 comprehensive universities and universities of technology⁵. The mergers since 2002 have preoccupied the public institutions for the past years while they address the challenges of integrating human resources and organisational cultures, often over culturally divergent and geographically scattered campuses (Bundy, 2006).

After the *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (1996), the next key document which helped shape the new higher educational landscape was *White Paper 3: The programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997). It outlines the implementation of a planned,

⁵ This does not include the private Higher Education Institutions which have proliferated into 88 registered and 27 provisionally registered institutions as of January 2012 (CHE, retrieved on 12/8/2012 at <http://www.che.ac.za/heinsa/>).

governed, goal-oriented, and performance-related funding system which addresses equity, access, and delivery in line with national goals. The new focus on effectiveness and efficiency and on institutional autonomy and public accountability precipitated a preoccupation with “the question of what 'transformation' should mean for higher education” (Lange, 2010, p. 2).

Following White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) was the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997. This act regulates all aspects of higher education and provides for the functions of the Council on Higher Education, higher education institutions, quality assurance, and various other matters connected therewith. The Council on Higher Education has an advisory function to the Minister of Higher Education and Training.

Various documents followed these seminal documents, mainly emerging from the Council on Higher Education. These include the *Size and shape report: Towards a new higher education landscape: Meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century* (CHE, 2000). This document was aimed to “institutionalise the principles and values of the white paper in order to realise its social and educational goals” (CHE, 2000, p. 8).

The documents which governed higher education during the late 1990s considered the on-going fluctuations in the enrolment, throughput, retention, and overall participation rate. The student enrolment had reached a plateau in the late 1990s, and figures suggested a slightly lower enrolment in 1999 compared to 1996. Enrolment accelerated dramatically as of 2001, but South African enrolment has since not reached the goals of the National Commission’s expectation of 30% participation⁶ nor has it reached the national target set by the Department of Higher Education and Training of 20% but has remained on 17% (CHE, 2010). During the 1980s, approximately 160 000 students enrolled in higher education (including universities and technikons), during 1990, approximately 300 000 students enrolled, and in 2000, approximately 490 000 students enrolled. By 2008, almost 800 000 students enrolled in the higher education sector (CHE, 2010).

Overall participation, equitable access, and graduation rates remain a huge challenge. Governing and guiding documents addressing these inefficiencies began to emerge from 2000 onwards. Policies shifted towards regulating “inefficiencies and ways of improving the outputs of public higher education institutions” (CHET, 2006, p. 5). This shift is heralded in the *National Plan for Higher Education* (DoE, 2001a).

⁶ Participation rate is the participation of 18-24 year olds in higher education, including universities and universities of technology.

The more recent focus area in higher education is that of efficiency, with special focus on teaching and learning and related areas such as work-integrated learning, community engagement, information and communication systems, and e-learning as augmentations to the teaching and learning process (CHE, 2010; Scott, et al., 2007). What emerges is the beginning of a consideration of the context as a significant factor, either as an enabler or as a barrier to student success. The context, not only the student or the institution but also the complex web connecting these, emerges as crucial in revealing key insights to understanding student success. Furthermore, as Lange (2010) stressed, a pressing need exists to explore “the relationship between students’ success and their experience of universities as academic and social spaces” (p. xi).

The national survey of student engagement (SASSE) has shifted the focus towards exploring the contextual factors which enable student learning and student persistence, coupled with a focus on teaching and learning and issues of social cohesion. The ‘SASSE’ has enabled a more textured exploration of factors which prevent the higher education system from becoming a more potent engine in the transformation of South Africa (CHE, 2010, 2011; Howell, 2005; Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007; Soudien, 2008).

1.3.3 Student Profile

The transformation of higher education from simply generating and transmitting knowledge and fostering elitism to “massification” of higher education brought about a shift in the profile of students, especially at the undergraduate level. The National Commission of Higher Education (DoE, 1996) set the mark by suggesting that South Africa would have achieved its goal of “massification” when participation rate is 30%⁷.

The national student demographics profile began to change slowly with the Universities Amendment Act in 1983 and continued to change more significantly during the 1990s, as a result, amongst other reasons, of equity-driven admission policies, alternative admission tests, financial aid systems, and selective academic support initiatives (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Mandew, 2003). The most dramatic increase in enrolment of black⁸ students occurred between 1990 and 1994. The Centre for Higher Education Transformation

⁷ For comparison: in South Africa in 1995 participation rate was 15%, and by 2009 it remains at 17% (CHE, 2011). Compared to other countries, South African participation rate is exceptionally low: Brazil has participation rate of 35%, Russia 77%, India 23% with huge variations between federal states, China has 23%, the United States of America 55%, Germany 65%, and Norway 95% (UNESCO, 1998; CHE, 2011).

⁸ *Black* is defined as *African* for this context and research and no acceptance of racial categories is implied.

publication on student access indicates that the average annual participation rate increase between 1995 and 2000 was 0.6%, whereas the average annual participation rate increased to 6.1% between 2000 and 2004 (Bunting & Cloete, 2006). This is an increase of 27% or 156000 more enrolments in higher education (Bunting & Cloete, 2006).

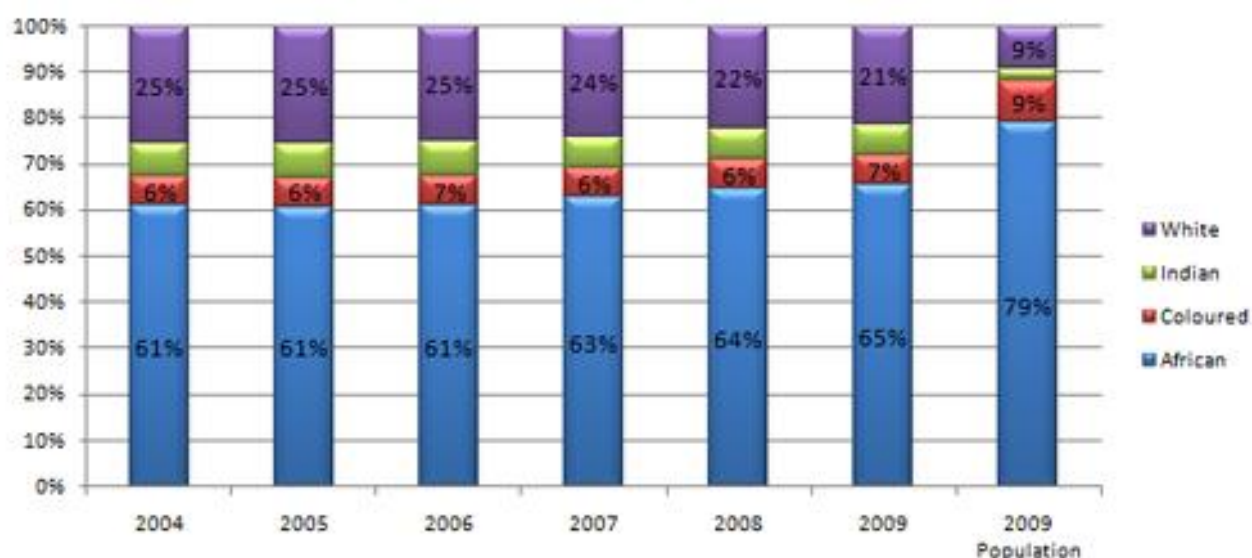
Table 1

Headcount Enrolments in Public Higher Education by Race, 2004 to 2009

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
African	453640	446946	451106	476768	515058	515058
Coloured	46090	46302	48538	49069	51647	51647
Indian	54315	54611	54859	52596	52401	52401
White	188687	185847	184667	180463	178140	178140
Total	744489	735073	741380	761090	799490	799490

Source: CHE, 2010, <http://www.che.ac.za/heinsa/tl/participants/>

The Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2010, p. 2) stated that “the change in the racial composition of the student body is one of the most dramatic in the world”. The percentage drop of participation of white students is drastic, while participation of black student has steadily increased (CHE, 2010). However, racially skewed graduation rates persist (Bohrat, Mayet, & Visser, 2010). The figure below shows the headcount of student enrolment, by race, from 2004 to 2009, demonstrating the changes in participation according to race groups⁹ (CHE, 2010).

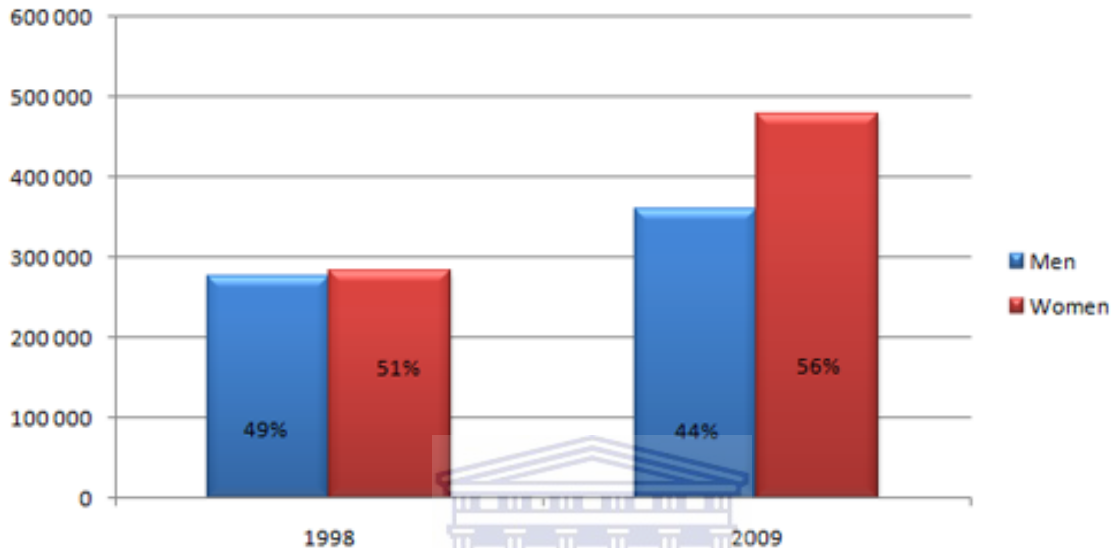


Source: CHE, 2010

⁹ Participation rate of Whites is at 58% whereas participation rate of Blacks is at 13% (Cloete, 2011).

Figure 1: Percentage of headcount student enrolments in public higher education by race, 2004 to 2009

In terms of gender, participation rate of women has remained higher than men. There is a trend towards increased female participation, as demonstrated in the figure below (CHE, 2010).



Source: CHE, 2010

Figure 2: Headcount of student enrolments in public higher education by gender, 1998 and 2009



1.3.4 Student Success

Student success is defined in different ways and calculated with different formulae, but essentially, it reflects the efficiency of student graduation. The discrepancy between the historically black universities¹⁰ and the historically white universities¹¹ in terms of resources, demographics, staffing, and other variables is stark and continues to burden the SDS domain and affect its overall scope, role, and function within the institutions. As Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007, p. 2) stated, “[S]tudent performance continues to be racially differentiated”.

¹⁰ Historically black universities (HBU) also called historically disadvantaged universities (HDU), are those universities which were categorised ‘non-white’ during the apartheid regime and were much less resourced and funded and also were restricted in terms of faculties and course offerings.

¹¹ Historically white universities (HWU) also called historically advantaged universities (HAU), are those universities which only permitted access to ‘white’ students during the apartheid regime. This had resource implications and the government allocated far more funds to these universities.

Historically white universities score particularly low on the graduate equity measure; however, there is little conclusive research which illuminates the issues and provides obvious and immediate solutions. Student success is the result of many interrelated factors, implicating multiple layers, paradoxically interacting and continuously changing.

Key policy documents, such as *White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997) and the *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996), drew attention to the notion of “underpreparedness”¹², which is considered to be a result of socio-political history in South Africa. This includes the injurious effects of the pre-1994 Department of Education and Training administration, part of the destructive Bantu Education which the apartheid system enforced (DoE, 1996, 1997, 2001a; Huysamen, 2000; Scott et al., 2007; Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson, & Strauss, 2003). Hay and Marais (2004, p. 61) asserted that South Africa has an educational challenge of “millions of school leavers who are not adequately prepared for higher education”.

Graduation rates, while not a perfect measure of success rate¹³, reflect huge problems in the system, and the reasons for poor graduation performances are myriad and generally disputed. Broadening access has meant that a wide range of students with diverse preparedness levels, especially scholastic preparedness but also social, epistemological, and financial challenges, have entered higher education. While this is particularly pronounced in South Africa, given its political history, which has created huge inequities, it is also an international phenomenon (Scott et al., 2007; CHE, 2010).

Graduation rates are compromised by huge dropout rates, as a result of failure to retain students within the higher education institution, for a range of reasons. Letsaka and Maile (2008) stated that 30% of students drop out within their first year of enrolment, a further 20% drop out during the second year, and another 25% drop out before graduation.

¹² This is an unfortunate term but was first used in the DoE document of 1996 and again in 1997 describing students who entered higher education from disadvantaged backgrounds and from schools which were managed by the Department of Education and Training which was responsible for the infamous Bantu Education pre-1994.

¹³ Using graduation rates as indicators of success fails to recognise that student progression through the system is not linear, nor that students transfer to other institutions and that a premature drop out is potentially not a ‘failure’ in terms of human capital development (Wits, 2006, in CHE, 2010).

The overall national graduation rates are approximately 17% to 24%, depending on the formula used for the calculation¹⁴ (Letsaka & Maile, 2008; Scott et al., 2007).

This poor graduation rate has been ascribed to many factors, some of which are the challenges faced by first-generation students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds (Letsaka & Maile, 2008; Ngcobo, 2004; Sennet et al., 2003). Challenges are not only in scholastic areas, including poor proficiency levels in numeracy and literacy, but also in "affective factors" which contribute to and underpin academic performance (Botha, Brand, Cilliers, Davidow, de Jager, & Smith, 2005; Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008; Malefo, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Petersen, Louw, & Dumont, 2009; Scott et al., 2007; Sennet et al., 2003).

Compromised psycho-social and affective competencies impair students' adjustment to higher education and its academic demands (Botha et al., 2005; Dahmus, Bernardin, & Bernardin, 1992; Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008; Prillerman, Myers, & Smedley, 1989; Sennet et al., 2003; Strahan, 2003).

1.3.5 Summary

Given the change in the overall student profile, the students' needs for support and development have changed in terms of type, extent, range, and depth. Hence, an appraisal of SDS scope, role, and function is essential in order to ensure effective articulation between SDS and student profile and student needs. SDS needs to find its place in this higher education context and in relationship to the imperatives of the higher education sector (Mandew, 2003; Lunceford, 2011). SDS representatives need to construct its scope, role, and function within the directives of the DoE policies and in relation to its stakeholders (institution and society), while remaining cognizant of the macroeconomic context which is impacting on the entire sector (Lunceford, 2011).

1.4 Research Aims and Significance of this Study

The aim of this study was to conduct an exploration into the scope, role, and function of student development and support within higher education in South Africa. This involved examining theoretical underpinnings, frameworks and models of SDS, SDS integration into the institution and into organisational structures, the relationship between SDS and relevant

¹⁴ The graduation rate changes depending on whether one uses headcount of actual enrolled students or one uses the number of weighted average full-time students.

policies of the DHET, and influences from the national and international context impacting on the SDS domains in higher education.

The primary question guiding this study is the exploration of the scope, role and function of Student Development and Support within Higher Education in South Africa with special focus on three public higher education institutions.

It is hoped this study will contribute to the debate on, and the challenges in understanding, the scope, role, and function of SDS and in illuminating challenges in formulating a national framework for SDS.

Advocates of grounded theory research methodology suggest that the research questions should be intentionally open and general (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), so research questions relevant to this study were purposefully broad in order to allow for themes to emerge and were formulated as follows:

1. What are the scope, role, and function of SDS at the three universities in the Western Cape?
2. What theoretical framework and underpinnings inform SDS functioning? What is SDS's position and structure within the institutions and beyond?
3. What is the DHET policy context within which SDS functions?
4. How is SDS responding to changes in the international context, with particular reference to globalisation?

This study is aimed at making significant contributions to the understanding of SDS's scope, role, and function within higher education. It reveals challenges and paradoxes and offers suggestions to enable more suitable contributions to the shared goals of higher education. In this study, gaps and weaknesses within the domain of SDS are identified and suggestions made on how to address these.

A pressing need for a guiding framework for SDS is identified as well as areas which need to be given serious consideration when developing a national framework. While this research is not quite a "utilisation study", it is hoped that the findings will have a "knowledge percolation" effect on policy. This facilitates a reformulation of the discourse around issues and how to shape policy to address these issues (Bailey, 2010, p. 7). Neilson described this as the "conceptual use" of research, which can influence policy discourses and "describes the graduate shifts in terms of policy makers' awareness and re-orientation of the basic perspectives" (cited in Bailey, 2010, p. 7). This study and the recommendations emanating from it will contribute to alleviating the paucity of research on and knowledge of issues

around SDS in South Africa and, it is hoped, will offer insights for the "iterative process of decision making", which has an effect on SDS (Bailey, 2010, p. 11).

The recommendations are developed within the historical-political and social-economic context of 15 years of re-shaping the higher education landscape in South Africa. The landscape is disparate and complex and the recommendations need to be viewed within this context.

1.5 Overview of Methodology

This study was intended to investigate complex and connected phenomena and sought rich and textured explanations, hence, qualitative methods of inquiry were chosen for the research.

Qualitative research methods allow for contextualised, inductive, and naturalistic interpretations (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Brown, Stevens, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to Brown et al. (2002, p. 3), "Grounded Theory provides techniques and procedures to create an inductively-deductively integrative theory". Grounded theory research is a dynamic research process which engages with processes rather than moment-in-time illuminations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Brown et al. (2002) concluded that grounded theory is ideally suited to capture the convergence of theories and practices and is an "effective tool in conceptualizing complex phenomena, providing language to describe it, detailing how it occurs" (Brown et al., 2002, p. 10).

Grounded theory assumes the researcher to be connected to her or his area of enquiry, and it requires the researcher's insight into the literature and the practice of a particular field (Brown et al., 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It creates a space for personal reflections in a study (Brown et al., 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory is thus particularly suited to me, as the researcher of this study, given my personal history and my connectedness to the work in SDS,

Document analysis was employed to develop a detailed understanding of the policies from the DHET which guide SDS scope, role, and function. I used thematic content analysis for both the document analysis and the interview data, employing open, axial, and selective coding methods (Brown et al., 2002; Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jullings, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The details of my research design and methodology are described in Chapter 4.

A semi-structured interview format was used to enable broad discussions, while keeping a focus on the research aims (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Keats, 2000; Seidman, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The participants were selected from a “small sample of people, nestled in their context and studied in-depth”, as is recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 24). Senior SDS staff from the three institutions, the University of the Western Cape, the University of Cape Town, and Stellenbosch University, were identified and interviewed. Of the 24 identified participants, 23 consented and took part in contributing data for my study.

The data were collected in the second half of 2010 and participants were keen to be involved and shared generously during the interviews, contributing to significant findings, which are described in detail in Chapter 6.

1.6 Outline of the Chapters

This study follows the traditional sequence, as is customary for research done in the field of education.

1.6.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provides the motivation and rationale for this study. It gives a brief overview of the literature in the area of SDS within higher education and highlights the gaps in this area of research, which this study aims to begin to fill. The chapter also gives a brief summary of the theoretical approach and research methodology employed and a synopsis of the significant contribution this research makes to the domain of SDS and to higher education in South Africa. This chapter concludes by providing an overview of the whole thesis.

1.6.2 Chapter 2: Literature on SDS

Chapter 2 contains the literature and research from and about the domain of SDS in South Africa and internationally. The literature review includes SDS scope, role, and function, organisational structures and models, and SDS in the developed and the developing world. It also reviews contextual factors, nationally and in the macro context. Significant changes in SDS and the current challenges for SDS within the higher education context in South Africa are highlighted. A review on the policy context of SDS within higher education in South Africa and relevant student demographics are also included. The chapter concludes

with an outline of the emerging implications for SDS in South Africa, nationally and within the globalising and neo-liberal macro context.

1.6.3 Chapter 3: Literature on SDS theory

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical underpinnings and models informing SDS theory and practice, clustered into, firstly, the developmental theories, mainly emerging from the discipline of psychology, and, secondly, into the environmental impact theories, mainly emerging from the SDS domain in the United States of America.

The developmental theories are discussed under the headings of cognitive, moral, psycho-social, and identity development and describe psychological constructs of normal development, with particular focus on the developmental stage of a ‘typical’ student, that is, late adolescence and early adulthood.

The environmental impact theories are discussed under the headings of the seminal authors who generated the theories, illuminating issues in the context and within the relationship of the student with her/his context. These pioneering authors include Astin, Tinto, Pascarella, Weidman, and Kuh. The chapter concludes with a discussion of wellness models and the literature on integrated models of SDS.

1.6.4 Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological research framework used for this study. In it, the design, data collection method and sites, selection of participants, process of interviews, and a description of how the data were analysed to generate the findings are discussed. It includes a discussion on the trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations, and how I intend to disseminate the results of this study. The application and relevance of the findings for the SDS domain and higher education are particularly important to this study and hence emphasis is on the application and dissemination of the findings.

1.6.5 Chapter 5: Findings: Document Analysis

This chapter is focussed on the governing documents from the DHET which concern SDS within higher education since 1996. The documents were identified, and document analysis using key words was done. The key words to search for references to SDS scope, role, and function included student affairs, student services, student support and student development, academic support, counselling, orientation programme, guidance, life skills, and

learning support. The chapter ends with a summary of the government documents and how they implicitly or explicitly construct the scope, role, and function of SDS.

1.6.6 Chapter 6: Findings: Interviews

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the data collection via semi-structured interviews. The research questions were formulated around the research aims, and the responses, when clustered into themes, generated the following 10 diverse themes:

1. Scope, role, and function of SDS
2. Theoretical framework of SDS
3. Professionalisation issues in SDS
4. Paradigms and alignments of SDS within the institution
5. SDS within the institution: intra- and inter-relationships
6. SDS relationship with academic development and academic support
7. SDS relationships beyond the institution
8. SDS perceptions of DHET
9. Globalisation and internationalisation impact on SDS
10. Miscellaneous themes.

These themes, discussed and contextualised, are illustrated with extensive use of quotations from participants. The emphasis is on the abstraction of the themes and not on which participant from which institution generated the theme. Throughout, I am using the pronoun 'she', and have inverted coding systems and distorted references to real people or aspects of the institutions in order to protect the participants, given the small pool of my sample. The findings include references to the frequency of how many participants made reference to the particular theme.

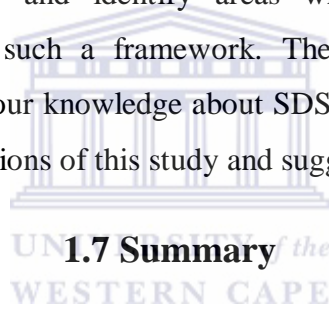
1.6.7 Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

This chapter draws together the central findings and presents an in-depth discussion on them, with reference to the literature consulted on the topic and in relation to the research questions. The comprehensive synthesis presents the core themes which are generated by this study and which are the significant contribution of my study to the area of SDS scope, role, and function in higher education. The analysis shows that discussions on scope, role, and function are mere beginnings to the complex and dynamic issues and challenges facing SDS and higher education in South Africa.

The discussion in this chapter sketches a picture of SDS as a key domain which seems in need of guidance and direction. The discussion includes issues around the development of a national framework and includes considerations of institutional autonomy, theoretical framework, and national imperatives. Throughout this thesis, my concern is to illuminate, as much as possible, the concerns around SDS and to identify key issues, enablers, or barriers which have an impact on SDS.

1.6.8 Chapter 8: Conclusion

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the study, its key findings, and recommendations. The findings are presented as answers to the research questions. Recommendations include the development of an epistemic community which can generate contextual and constructivist paradigms for SDS in South Africa. The results of the study reveal the pressing need for a normative framework for SDS and identify areas which need to be given serious consideration when developing such a framework. The chapter outlines the significant contribution this study makes to our knowledge about SDS in South Africa and also includes some considerations of the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.



In the introduction to the widely cited book *A guide on South African student services*, Mandew (2003, p. 2) stated that

it is critical that student services leadership grapple with the changing environment within and outside higher education in a creative, informed and positive manner, especially because answers to many of higher education's vexing questions and complex issues are not easy to come by.

Mandew's words were portentous then, as they are now.

SDS divisions need to engage with their environment and practitioners have to explicitly articulate its position, its scope, its role, and its function within the micro and macro context of South Africa. While institutional uniqueness should be accommodated and preserved in order to make SDS relevant and effective, a normative framework, located in an appropriate paradigm for SDS is required. Such a framework needs to be yielding enough to

be responsive to the ever-changing context and to be firm enough to withstand the seductions of short-term gains and the whims of authorities.

The aim of this study is to contribute to addressing these concerns and to contributing to solving the “vexing questions” (Mandew, 2003, p. 2) which burden, but also sustain, the domain of SDS.



CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW OF SDS WITHIN ITS CONTEXT

2.1 Overview

The study involved an exploration of the scope, role, and function of student development and support (SDS) in higher education in South Africa and of the institutional, national, and macro context within which SDS is embedded.

This chapter presents the review of the literature and research on SDS in South Africa and internationally, and its relationship to, and scope, role, and function within, higher education. The most significant changes in the emergence of SDS as a recognised domain and the contextual factors which have an impact on SDS are reviewed. This chapter forms the context to the subsequent research in this study.

The literature review includes an overview of the South African higher education landscape, the policy context, and how this relates to the SDS domain, an overview of structural and organisational models of SDS, and the debates surrounding the scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education. The South African higher education institutions have common challenges, which will be discussed. Nevertheless, institutions also have unique challenges related to their distinct historical-political and socio-economic context, their culture, and their climate, which affect student functioning and success and hence also SDS.

The emerging issues for SDS in South Africa and internationally within a globalising world are discussed. The focus on the macro context is in terms of influences emanating from globalisation. A discussion on SDS in developed and developing countries and an overview of SDS structures and organisations follows.

The chapter concludes with a focus on the challenges and implications for SDS in South Africa and is followed by another chapter reviewing literature and research, which focusses on theories and models of SDS.

2.2 Process of Sourcing Literature and Research

Cooper (1989) described various processes for sourcing literature for a review: a) collegial exchange of manuscripts, papers, presentation, and research, b) citation indexes and abstract services and platforms, and c) on-line computer searches using broad-based search engines. Since the 1980s, most literature has migrated to the electronic medium and exists on electronic platforms, and hence, the search for literature is now pursued mainly via on-line computer search engines. The most commonly used engine is scholar.google.com but it does not harvest all data bases: for instance, it does not access that of Sabinet¹⁵. The CALICO¹⁶ platform allows for access to all search engines, and hence, search for my literature review was done using CALICO and scholar.google.com. Books were sourced in hard copy, purchased, or borrowed, and colleagues were contacted to scan their resources for useful material. Key-word searches began with the key words listed for this study but were expanded as soon as sourcing literature from other reference lists appeared useful.

In summary, the literature was sourced from electronic data banks and from hard-copy material, including books, journals, newspapers, and conference papers. The Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of the Western Cape, in particular, yielded much material, as did the publications of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, the Centre for Higher Education Transformation, and conversations with colleagues which directed me to well-hidden sources.

2.3 SDS Scope, Role, and Function

The discussion on scope, role, and function of SDS in South Africa is complex because it is influenced by conceptual, philosophical, economic, and theoretical assumptions which influence and guide SDS. These issues are part of the focus of this study.

SDS scope refers to the inclusion or exclusion of areas within or beyond the SDS domain. It is the range and extent of what is considered to be part of SDS responsibility. For instance, issues concerning international students may be considered to be part of SDS;

¹⁵ Sabinet is a search engine and provides online electronic access to information.

¹⁶ CALICO is the Cape Library Consortium and is a collaborative library project of the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC). It represents the collaboration of the four libraries at the four tertiary education institutions in the Western Cape: University of the Western Cape, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, and the Cape Peninsular University of Technology.

alternatively, such issues may fall within the domain of marketing and branding or the question of whether student financial aid departments fall within SDS or into the financial management of the university. These questions raise issues of how student financial aid is understood and conceptualised. Clearly, what falls within SDS or beyond is a conceptual issue and reflects implicit and explicit ideologies, assumptions, and frameworks.

2.3.1 Scope

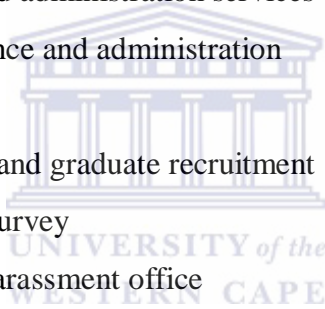
The divisions which are collectively referred to as Student Development and Support (SDS) are also called Student Affairs or Student Personnel Services at universities and universities of technology in South Africa and internationally. While there might be conceptual differences of emphasis, for the purpose of this study, the terms are used interchangeably. SDS usually comprises student services which are described as co-curricular or non-academic in nature (Helfgot, 2005; Lumadi & Mampuru, 2010; Morrison, Brand, & Cilliers, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). These include, but are not limited to, academic and career counselling services, psychological and personal counselling, residential and catering services, health services, student governance and leadership, orientation programmes, and services for students with disabilities¹⁷. Mandew (2003) indicated that the “nomenclature, definition, scope, configuration and modus operandi of these services and functions differ from institution to institution depending on a variety of factors, not least the availability of resources (human and financial), facilities and infrastructure” (p. 90).

The more-or-less discrete clusters or departments employ a range of theories which to one degree or another inform practice. Typically, SDS departments are managed by an administrative and/or academic director who reports to the vice rector/deputy vice chancellor. Their staffing level ranges from administrative workers to professionals, such as nurses, doctors, psychologists, and social workers, who might be registered with national and professional bodies (Botha et al., 2005; Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Harper, 1996; Hernandez, 1989; Mandew, 2003; Morrison, Brand, & Cilliers, 2006; Ngcobo, 2004; SAACDHE, 2007).

Mandew (2003, p. 91) listed the student services which he considered to be core functions of SDS:

¹⁷ This list is not as inclusive as the range of student development, support and services offered by Student Affairs in the USA, which is much more diversified and broader. For a full list of Student Affairs services in the USA, refer to Dean (2006) *CAS professional standards for higher education*.

- Campus health services
- Counselling and careers services
- HIV/AIDS unit
- Student development
- Disabled students support services
- Financial-aid services
- International students services
- Multi-faith centres
- Orientation programmes
- Sports and recreation
- Student housing and residence-life services
- Catering services
- Student enrolment and administration services
- Student life: governance and administration
- Educare centres
- Student employment and graduate recruitment
- Student-satisfaction survey
- Discrimination and harassment office
- Adult student services
- Bookstore services
- Services for gay and lesbian students
- Student discipline and judicial services
- Diversity management and development.



This list represents the conceptual scope of SDS. However, no South African higher education institution has the kind of organogram where these functions are collected under the umbrella of SDS.

Most of the services listed by Mandew (2003) are scattered throughout the institution. Reasons for the spread of these services throughout the institutions are myriad and may be due to political and organisational changes since Mandew's publication. For instance, campus health services are usually privatised in line with the health professions regulations in South Africa, which govern the medical industry. Similarly, for HIV and Aids, gender, and discrimination services, these tend to have been moved to executive level and centralised

since the Soudien report on *Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education* (Soudien, 2008).

The Soudien report focussed attention on the poor state of transformation¹⁸ and this precipitated a re-location of some student services to a higher reporting level within institutions. Other SDS services such as career services and international offices have become marketing tools and revenue-producing departments, and these tend to be moved to strategic positions within the institution, where they are more visible or potentially make the institution “look better” (Burke, 1997, p. 8). Catering services may be privatised and outsourced as seems to be the trend in human resources and financial management, nationally and internationally.

A key focus area of SDS is psycho-social functioning and includes the personal-social development of students (Botha et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; SAACDHE, 2007). Although SDS is traditionally narrowly constructed, it is simplistic to locate numeracy and literacy proficiencies within the academic development domain alone and personal-social issues within the SDS scope. This disjuncture is particularly problematic as literature and research support the notion that cognitive and emotional-social development are not separate, or segmented, but intertwined, that is, academic learning is closely related to and contingent on personal-social development. The contestation of the boundaries separating academic and personal-social development contributes to the debates on SDS scope (Nuss, 2003; Weidman, 1989).

SDS scope is on a continuum, from academic support to personal-social development, from pure service provision to academic development, from crisis support to development of life skills, from financial support to housing, from focussing on the individual to the contextual, from intra-psycho to systemic, from content focus to process focus, and so on. Some might argue that anything which does not belong purely in the lecture theatre or in the administration of the institution might fall into the scope of SDS (Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994; Kuh, 1995; Kuh, Schuh & Whitt, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

It is clear that South African SDS does not have a clearly defined scope, and scope appears to be shifting continuously (Lunceford, 2011). It seems SDS scope has emerged

¹⁸ The lamentable state of racial integration was highlighted by numerous commentators, especially Jonathan Jansen, in his *Race, Education and Democracy after ten years* (2004), in which he discusses the notion of the university being experienced as “home” across the races as an indicator of transformation.

organically in each institution, depending on the institutional operating plan, institutional vision, context, student profile, and institutional history. While a prescribed or narrowly defined scope is perhaps not suitable to South Africa's diverse institutions, there are some core functions which need to be located within the scope of SDS (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These issues need to be collectively addressed, and it is important to find a national space or platform to debate these issues.

2.3.2 Role and Function

Role and function of SDS are intractably interlinked (and linked to scope) and reflect the intentions and outcomes of SDS. In essence, the question of role and function of SDS addresses the issues of purpose and is discussed in this section.

Harper (1996) identified two clusters of roles of SDS in South African higher education. Firstly, there is the role of SDS within the institution, which she divides into a) supporting core business of the university, that is, its academic agenda alignment with institutional outcomes; and b) linking student development with the institutional system, that is, the learning context. According to Harper (1996, p. 5), the second role of SDS within higher education in South Africa is its "contribution to the National Reconstruction and Development Program", which is part of the South African transformation agenda and reaches beyond the confines of higher education and extends to serve the common good.

Harper's (1996) discussion on the SDS role highlights SDS's role in contributing not only to student success and institutional goals but also to the common good. This contract with society is also described by Kezar (2004), who emphasised that SDS has a tradition of serving the public good and needs to remain focussed on this contract with society¹⁹. Subsequent to Harper (1996), this is echoed in *White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997), which states that those involved in higher education need to

address the development needs of society and provide the labour market, in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy ...

¹⁹ Du Toit (2007) discussed the issues arising from considering, what he called, higher education's "social contract". He argued that the social contract safeguards academic freedom. Hall and Symes (2005) suggested that South African higher education should move towards a "conditional autonomy" where the state performs a procedural role in ensuring effectiveness, while higher education asserts its right to academic freedom.

and produce graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and ideas. (DoE, 1997, p. 3)

White Paper 3 reflects this dual role and function of SDS in aligning its purpose, on the one hand, with the institution in terms of contributing to student success and, on the other hand, with society and the common good.

Mandew (2003) linked the role and function of SDS to the goals as stated in *White Paper 3* (DoE, 1997):

A conceptualisation of student development should also be linked to and contribute towards the core deliverable of higher education, namely student success. It is absolutely critical that student services leaders and managers participate in institutional efforts and discussions relating to improving student success, that is, throughput and output rates. (Mandew, 2003, p. 61)

According to Mandew (2003), SDS participation in key debates of what constitutes meaningful learning and what facilitates student success needs to form part of SDS's role and function.

The role and function of SDS include the contribution to student success and include the focus on “affective”, “underlying” or “co-curricular” factors which may inhibit or facilitate student success (Mandew, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Scott et al., 2007). Scott et al. (2007) observed that “The issue of where responsibility for the improvement of higher education output lies is complex and contested” (p. 19), but clearly some of this responsibility rests unarguably with SDS.

In the National Plan for Higher Education, it was observed that higher education output is contingent on “underlying factors” (DoE, 2001a, p. 3). These are not easily distilled and are differently defined depending on the analysis and the analyser. Broadly, these “underlying factors” range from access, equity, pre-disposing, financial, and socio-economic factors to issues around numeracy and literacy levels and personal-social affective factors (Scott et al., 2007). It is widely accepted that affective factors (such as anxiety, self-confidence, mood-related disturbances, alienation and adjustment, sense of coping, and mastery of and symptoms associated with and resulting from these) underpin academic

functioning. These affective factors and adjustment competencies have an effect on academic performance, persistence, motivation, concentration, and focus (Baker & Siryk, 1989; Botha et al., 2005; Case, 2007; Honikman, 1982; Klagsbrun, 1992; Malefo, 2000; Sennett et al., 2003; Woosley, 2003). Addressing these affective factors and personal-social adjustment competencies is part of the role and function of SDS (ASAC, 2010; Botha et al., 2005; SAACDHE, 2007; Sennet et al., 2003).

Across the domain of higher education in South Africa, SDS varies in scope, role, and function from providing remedial resources at the fringes of campus life to centrally positioned and significant contributor to student success and institutional life.

Central in the role and function of SDS at any higher education institution is the engagement with the meta-theoretical framework which informs its *raison d'être*. SDS needs to be involved in defining its scope, role, and function and needs to have access to core debates around these issues. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

2.3.2 Summary

In the above section on the context of SDS in South African higher education, some challenges for SDS were highlighted. Discussions on SDS scope, role, and function are intricately linked to SDS and institutional theoretical and meta-theoretical frameworks. No clear definitions of scope, role, and function are given, but there is general agreement that SDS contributes to institutional deliverables, to national deliverables, and to the common good (Harper, 1996, Kezar, 2004; Mandew, 2003). While narrow in scope, the SAACDHE position paper (2007, p. 7) refers to the role and function of counselling and development within SDS and aligns these with “improving efficiency and effectiveness” of higher education. This reflects much of the discourse around the scope, role, and function of SDS, which positions SDS in terms of serving national goals articulated by the state. This implicit alignment with the state has implications for institutional autonomy and will be discussed further on; suffice here to mention the complexities around this.

These areas of student success and institutional alignment, national imperatives, and alignments with national higher education and the contract with society inform the scope, role, and function of SDS. As long as tensions around institutional autonomy are not addressed, challenges around defining role, scope and function will continue to prevail.

2.4 Challenges for SDS in South Africa

SDS practitioners need to grapple with the higher education context and need to explicitly articulate the position, scope, role, and function of SDS. Although each institution is distinct, and needs to be accommodated and preserved in its uniqueness, a theoretical or ideological principle or framework for SDS is required (Mandew, 2003).

Given that the regulatory context is a key influence on SDS, the following challenges for SDS will be discussed in this section:

- 1) SDS within the regulatory framework: SDS alignment with national and/or nationalistic agendas is examined.
- 2) Historical challenges: The shifts SDS needs to make in order to emerge from its history are examined.
- 3) Current challenges: Current issues in SDS in South Africa are pointed out.

2.4.1 SDS within the Regulatory Framework

In analysing governance structures, Luescher-Mamashela (2008) described typologies of organisational structures, one of which is particularly relevant for this discussion. According to Luescher-Mamashela (2008), the “prestigious national university” (p. 58) typology of university organisation is compliant with national directives and acts as instrument of the (political or otherwise) elite and maintains the elitist *status quo* (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008). This typology is analogous to Castells’ disparaging descriptions of higher education conceptualisation of the university as an instrument to maintain elites (Castells, 2001). According to Cloete et al. (1986), during the apartheid regime, SDS was obediently embedded into this typology of higher education model and was an agent of the state, obedient to policy, and deferent to political and educational authority.

In line with Castells’ (2001) notion that part of higher education’s historical function is to maintain the *status quo* of the elite, and locating the pre-1994 SDS in the “prestigious national university” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 60) so also was SDS aligned with the apartheid regime and deeply embedded into national regulatory frameworks (Cloete et al., 1986). Cloete et al. described the role that student services played during the apartheid regime, when student services were “instruments through which the dominant ideology functions” (cited in Mandew, 2003, p. 52).

Cloete et al. described a particularly chilling moment in the history of student services in South Africa which illustrates the imperviousness to

the prompting and impulse for change in the division of student services in the area of student counselling and career services during the turbulent period of the mid-1980s. This impenetrability on the part of the leadership of the profession did not go unchallenged. Three members of the student services profession prepared a paper for the 1986 Annual Conference of the Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa (SSCSA), entitled *The Pro Active Counsellor: Is Neutrality Possible?*, in which they sought to expose, challenge and redefine issues of positionality and power, that is, issues related to the values, interests and commitments of students and academics and the assumptions underpinning the practices of teaching and studying in what was then the context of a polarised society. (cited in Mandew, 2003, p. 10)

The history of SDS in South Africa is mired in serving national agendas and generating and transmitting prevailing nationalistic ideologies (Castells, 2001; Cloete et al., cited in Mandew, 2003). The current challenge for SDS is to distil its position in relation to the regulatory framework, in relation to national and institutional imperatives, and to ensure ideological autonomy while preserving its contract with institutional-national agendas and society around contributing towards national goals, social justice, and equity (Kezar, 2004).

2.4.2 Historical Challenges

Historically, in an attempt to service the ever-increasing range of diverse needs of incoming students, SDS departments added on more services and more offices while attempting to cope within a context of increasing accountability and fiscal discipline (Fraser & Killen, 2003). Increasing fragmentations, poor co-ordination, and nebulous goals resulted. In an extensive review of the South African student services, Harper (1996) identified a number of challenges for SDS in South Africa:

- Fragmentation and duplications, with a lack of central co-ordination within institutions;
- Multiple or unclear reporting lines;
- Marginalisation of student services, despite obvious need for these services;
- Funding problems;
- Inclusion of academic support programmes under the banner of counselling services;

- Disparity between the historically black universities and the historically white universities;
- Lack of professional staff training with SDS. (Harper, 1996, pp. 1, 2)

This list primarily addresses internal challenges. Mandew added contextual issues to the challenges which have historically burdened SDS. SDS “has at very critical and ... opportune moments not always risen to the challenges of change” (Mandew, 2003, p. 1):

- Shift from expert, discipline-bound, and self-referential to an open, trans-disciplinary, and context-bound SDS;
- Promotion of development as a lifelong process;
- The role in diversification in a pluralistic world as opposed to the promotion of a narrow culture;
- The promotion and expansion of SDS functions while fiscal pressures prevail (Mandew, 2003, p. 16).

These challenges highlight the need for integration of SDS within its context. They emphasise the need for the fluid and reciprocal relationship of SDS with its context and shift SDS from narrow and absolute notions to systemic and interrelated notions about student success (Mandew, 2003; Tinto, 1993, 1997).

The historically held implicit ideologies in certain areas of SDS, for instance, commonly employed counselling and psychological models, seem to have been impervious to the societal pressures pre-1994 (Cloete et al., 1986; Mandew, 2003) and have been guilty of the “context minimisation error” when explaining phenomena, “ignoring the impact of ... contexts on human behaviour” (Shinn & Toohey, 2003, p. 427).

2.4.3 Emerging Challenges

Evidence exists that in some universities, SDS has evolved from a welfare service at the fringes of university life to a key contributor to student success “fundamental to the work of the HEI as a whole” (Trainor, 2002, p. 11). The challenges for SDS in South Africa are not only about how to develop well-defined and relevant interventions with explicit outcomes, aligned with institutional and national educational imperatives but also about how to establish itself as a profession and articulate a coherent framework with a shared vision, scope, role, and function. While the structural issues of SDS within higher education need to be addressed to enable SDS to contribute significantly, there needs to be a corresponding process which interprets SDS within the higher education policy context. These simultaneous discussions

will inform each other and create a synergistic outcome which can bring SDS in line with contemporary South African higher education (Harper, 1996; Lunceford, 2011; Mandew, 2003).

Given the changed student profile, the changed policy context, and the changed institutional identities since the mergers (DoE, 2001a), implicitly held assumptions in higher education need to be examined. Some near-sacred constructs, such as the 3-year degree²⁰, the academic calendar, and assumptions about student readiness, need to be examined in order to ensure that institutional practices, especially those of SDS, are in line with current realities and reflect the changing definitions of concepts. Angelil-Carter (cited in Mgqwashu, 2009, p. 727) asserted that “the system as a whole has to adjust to deal with students who are heterogeneous in a growing number of ways” and SDS needs to position itself so that it can contribute effectively to these changes²¹.

Systemic issues of diversity, discrimination, and transformation have repeatedly emerged and are examples of new areas SDS needs to engage with. If the *Diversity Audit* of Harper and Cross (1999), Badsha and Harper’s (2000) *Diversity Overview*, and the Soudien (2008) *Report on transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education* give an indication of the culture and climate problems at higher education institutions, then it is imperative that SDS is implemented adequately to have an impact on issues of diversity, discrimination, and transformation.

The changed profile of students implies that a re-examination of the implicit notions about students is essential. The construction of the ‘disadvantaged’ student relies on notions of deficiency and otherness. The discourse surrounding students has been that of “underpreparedness” and foundation courses and first-year experiences are designed to “up skill” the first-year students who come from “disadvantaged” backgrounds (DoE, 1996, 1997). While poor schooling is a reality, as is the relatively poor social and cultural capital which particularly first generation students bring to their higher educating experience, it is

²⁰ The Chairperson of the CHE, Prof. C Manganyi, indicated in his 2011 annual report that the CHE will be advising the DHET on the possibility of a 4-year undergraduate degree.

²¹ Kretovics (2003) presents an interesting review in *The Role of student affairs in distance education: Cyber-services or virtual communities*, which highlights that the changed context also includes migrating some SDS roles and functions to the virtual and online media, given that talk-and-chalk didactics have been replaced by innovative pedagogies which include the idea that learning takes place in virtual spaces. New communications technologies have a “profound influence on the way students, professors, administrator and staff live, study, work and do their business on and off campus” (Grant, 1999, p. 59).

essential that the SDS domain reviews how it engages with the apartheid legacy without entrapping itself in outdated and unhelpful discourses on students with “disadvantaged” and “underprepared” identities (Mgqwashu, 2009; Tshiwula, 2011).

Students enter universities with a variety of social and cultural backgrounds and a wide range of academic potential and preparedness (Fraser & Killen, 2003; Sennett et al., 2003). Much evidence supports the importance of addressing psycho-social and “affective” factors which underpin academic performance and hence affect graduation rates (Baker & Siryk, 1989; Botha et al., 2005; Case, 2007; Honikman, 1982; Klagsbrun, 1992; Malefo, 2000; Sennett et al., 2003; Woosley, 2003). These areas of psycho-social development, affective-emotional competencies, academic development and support, and adjustment competencies fall within the SDS domain. Some theories and interventions used to address these concerns rest on assumptions of deficiency, and researchers of SDS need to explore if this is the most appropriate theoretical framework and intervention for the South African context, rather than relying on traditional, potentially outdated, and unhelpful practices (Harper, 1996; Mgqwashu, 2009; Tshiwula, 2011).

2.4.4 Summary

The above section provided a review of the historical and current challenges for SDS. Since Harper’s paper on SDS challenges (Harper, 1996), South African SDS divisions seem to be grappling with issues of poor co-ordination and lack of framework, fragmentation and disorganised structural issues, funding challenges, nebulous relationships with university and external stakeholders, theoretical ambiguities, and neglect of engagement with issues emerging from the macro context (Harper, 1996, Lunceford, 2011; Mandew, 2003).

SDS practitioners need to engage with these challenges and find the role and function of SDS, define it in relevant terms, align it with institutional and national imperatives, and respond to national challenges. The changes in student profile, policy landscape, and national imperatives have an effect on the strategy, relevance, and implementation of SDS, as well as its scope, role, and function, across the higher education sector. It is unclear whether the universities, the DHET, or the SDS associations can spearhead the engagement with these challenges, but a collective national engagement with these issues is imperative.

SDS has enormous potential to contribute significantly to the South African higher education challenges (Cilliers, Pretorius, & Van der Westhuisen, 2010), and yet it seems it is a relatively untapped resource within higher education (Botha et al., 2005; SAACDHE, 2007). SDS can contribute significantly to the challenges of the higher education transformation

agenda, both on a personal and inter-personal level and on a structural and climate level. This positioning of SDS as an instrument of achieving *national* goals within higher education must be tempered by autonomous ideological and value-based thinking to prevent pre-1994 compliance with *nationalistic* goals. By preserving this tension, SDS remains aligned with institutional and national goals and with society as a stakeholder in higher education (Botha et al., 2005; Dean, 2006; Harper, 1996; Mandew, 2003; Mgquwashu, 2009; SAACDHE, 2007; Strayhorn, 2006).

2.5 SDS Associations

A review of SDS associations is relevant in so far as it gives an indication of the maturity of the profession and level of professionalism²² of a domain, two indicators which affect scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education. In addition, SDS associations might be key role players in facilitating national engagements with the challenges described above. SDS associations might take on the form of “issue networks”, which share knowledge about particular issues or problems, or “epistemic communities”, which form a network of experts who can exert influence on the basis of knowledge and research, or “advocacy coalitions”, which exert pressure over a period of time through co-ordinated activity (Bailey²³, 2010, p. 14).

A measure of the advancement, development, and maturity of SDS within a country is the degree to which an SDS division organises itself, collectively seeks representation, or has a shared framework. In South Africa, the DHET has repeatedly made a call for SDS departments to create an organised body which might form the conduit between SDS and the DHET in order to facilitate co-ordination and perhaps to address issues of efficiency (Asmal, 2006; DoE, 1996; Pandor, 2007).

In the next section, the national and international associations, societies, and interest groups which represent SDS concerns, are the voice of SDS, provide space for theoretical and research exchanges, and address SDS concerns are reviewed. The review of national

²² A “profession” has to do with the scope of practice and behaviours associated with a profession, while “professionalism” refers to the implicit or explicit code of conduct and norms associated with a profession.

²³ Bailey (2010) discussed the policy-research nexus and explored the utilisation of research and its impact on policy and in particular the role “networks” (such as associations) in terms of the interplay between research and policy.

associations illustrates the developmental state of the SDS domain in South Africa, especially in comparison to mature associations such as those found in the United States of America.

2.5.1 South Africa's SDS Associations

In South Africa, numerous associations have evolved which reflect parts of the SDS domain and SDS profession²⁴. These are the National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV), the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP), the Southern African Association of Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE), the South African Graduate Recruitment Association (SAGRA), and the recently emerged American Association of College and University Housing Officers–South Africa Chapter (SA-ACUHO-I). These associations and societies concern themselves with specialised aspects of the SDS domain, and none of these seem to have managed to organise an inclusive and coherent association, or umbrella association, which addresses all aspects of SDS and attracts all professionals. An umbrella body has been suggested by the SAACDHE (2007) with the explicit assurance of SDS association “sovereignty and independence” (SAACDHE, 2007, p. 6), but it appears that the tensions have not yet been addressed and remain a barrier to collaboration.

For instance, NASDEV seems to attract practitioners from the middle management area of SDS. NASDEV's conferences are not focussed on theoretical or strategic questions but rather report on surveys and interventions. The SAASSAP, as its name implies, attracts senior practitioners, mostly deans of students and executive directors. The SAASSAP conferences explore conceptual concerns and strategy alignment within the higher education institutions and in relation to the DHET.

The SAACDHE emerged from the former Society for Student Counselling in South Africa (SSCSA) and has a large membership from student counselling and student development domains within SDS at higher education institutions in South Africa (SAACDHE, 2007). Its strength is the theoretical and empirical research body it is building around SDS issues with particular emphasis on counselling and development at higher

²⁴ The South African Association of Campus Health Services (SAACHS) is excluded here as most higher education institutions have outsourced primary health care services on campus, which are privatised by legislation from the Health Professional Council of South Africa (www.hpcs.org.za).

education level. In addition, it has developed a quality assurance document for counselling and development offices, which can be adapted to broader use in SDS domains (SAACDHE, 2007).

SAGRA is committed to advancing SDS work in areas of graduate recruitment and has strong relations with industry (www.sagra.org.za). The South African chapter of the ACUHO-I aims to address the “needs of student housing and student affairs professionals on campuses” and offers skills training and systems development for this part of the SDS domain (www.acuho-i.org).

Perhaps because of historical-political reasons, but also because of theoretical divergence, the associations seem to struggle to develop a unified voice, develop a shared agenda, or to become issue-based networks or advocacy-based associations (Bailey, 2010). So while government is looking towards the South African associations for solutions (Asmal, 2006; DHET, 2010; DoE, 1996; Pandor, 2007), the associations, perhaps much like the profession itself, are struggling to develop a professional identity which represents the diverse interests and collects the various visions into a comprehensive and coherent SDS association, setting a shared agenda. Once a collective has been formed which has significant gravitas, perhaps it can then provide comprehensive SDS-driven solutions to students, institutions, and the South African DHET.

2.5.2 International SDS Associations

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services, IASAS, is an advocate for the enhancement of student development and the student affairs profession worldwide²⁵. It aims to support students and practitioners through communication, support, sharing of resources, and creating events for networking. It has a useful, perhaps not exhaustive, list of all the organisations worldwide. The country which has the most diverse and also the most inclusive organisation is the United States of America. This is in line with the level of development of SDS within that country, regarding its theoretical base, its professional development, and its status within higher education institutions (Dalton & Crosby, 2011). The American associations, like the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Affairs Practitioners (NASAP), have professionalised the SDS domain in America, created professional competencies, quality assurance mechanisms,

²⁵ www.iasasonline.org

and policy and position papers and have had a significant impact on international and South African SDS domains²⁶.

2.5.3 Summary

The national and international SDS associations can play a significant role in the professionalisation of the SDS domain and in providing guidance and support to issues of SDS scope, role, and function within higher education, either at institutional or national policy level (Bailey, 2010; Dean, 2006; Strayhorn, 2006). The review of South African SDS associations reveals that there is a medley of associations which have not yet achieved a unified representation which could form an umbrella association collating issue-based or epistemic communities. American associations also have a myriad of representations and societies (Dalton & Crosby, 2010), and they have collected within the national umbrella associations of NASAP and ACPA, which have epistemic resources and advocacy-based influences (Bailey, 2010).

2.6 Influences of Globalisation

Castells (2001) described globalisation as the paramount social phenomenon of recent times. This echoes Chomsky (1999), who stated that “neoliberalism is the defining political economic paradigm of our time” (Chomsky, 1999, p. 7). While neo-liberalism, as an economic model, is intricately related to globalisation, these terms require definition at the onset of this section. *Globalisation* means the global mobility and transnational circulation of information, education, culture, and economics. This refers to the global distribution of goods, services, and knowledge through the increase in exchange and the opening of borders by the reduction of barriers and the increase of open access to information via the internet and other virtual platforms. The economic results of these processes are described as neo-liberal and refer specifically to the decrease in regulation and the increase in competition

The term *neo-liberalism* was coined to describe the stage after socio-economic liberalism, which dominated the first world with its emphasis on civil liberty and economic freedom, while protecting individual rights. The removal of the protective regulations controlling economic monopolies is considered the onset of the neo-liberal economic order.

The influences associated with globalisation are of paramount importance to higher education, and in the next section, an exploration of how economic-political realities within a

²⁶ www.naspa.org; www.myacpa.org

globalising world influence the higher education landscape, internationally and also locally in South Africa (Lange, 2010; Castells, 2001; Kezar, 2004), will be conducted. Globalisation, and its economic neo-liberal influences, has a defining impact on the role and function of higher education and hence also on the scope, role, and function of SDS (Castells, 2001; Kezar, 2004). The “discourse of globalisation positions higher education institutions as key agents in the development of graduates with the expertise and high-level skills for a high growth path of economic development and global competitiveness” (CHE, 2010, p. 49).

The discourse of globalisation further affects higher education and SDS. Conceptual tensions exist between indigenous knowledge, on the one hand, and Western knowledge on the other. This dualism is part of post-colonial thinking of *either* Africanisation of higher education in terms of focus and content or of embracing development in line with Western goals. However, the “logic of postcolonial discourse has been radically undermined by the forces of globalisation, such that every country now partakes, albeit unequally, both in the local and the global” (Cloete & Muller, 1998, p. 19). Globalisation is more than just the synthesis of that which is indigenous with that which is international. The new *weltanschauung* and paradigm overcomes the parochial dualism, and the newly emerging multiplicity is felt in SDS in areas of employability and internationalisation, as discussed further on.

In exploring SDS within this eco-political macro context, peculiarities and contradictions emerge. The following section will be used to explore the critical issues, local and global responsiveness, emerging partnerships with corporate organisations, and the relationship of SDS to the market²⁷. The eco-political changes have a particular impact on funding and resource distribution, directly affecting SDS. This section ends with an exploration of market-related phenomena, such as employability and internationalisation, which affect SDS.

2.6.1 Higher Education in Globalisation

Buroway (2010, p. 1) referred to those South African universities burdened by apartheid inequities (historically black universities [HBU]) and those that need to compete in a global reality (historically white universities [HWU]) as “under-resourced at one end and

²⁷ *The market* is a reference to the market economy as a neo-liberal concept in which goods and services are determined by a free price system with little central or government regulation. This is in opposition to state-directed economic planning with controlling tariffs, regulations, and subsidies. The term *the market* is used in describing the economic climate in a neo-liberal dominated economic-political globalising context.

subject to global competition on the other”. In short, higher education in South Africa “is caught between the disabling legacies of the past and the structural pressures of the present” (Buroway, 2010, p. 1). Perhaps Buroway’s distinction is artificial and the burden of apartheid and the need to compete globally applies to all universities; hence, the exploration of the impact of globalisation in general and of neo-liberal economic influences on SDS is important for this study.

Globalisation has come to denote all commercialisation, including that of knowledge and education. The changes concern the commercialisation of research and innovation, and for SDS, for instance, the attraction of revenue generation determined access to students as clients, research alignment with market, the use of sports for marketing, the brand promotion on campus environments, and so on. Some suggest it is the partnering of two systems with different and, at times, contradictory and incompatible values and principles (Buroway, 2010; Duderstadt, 2004). Higher education’s fundamental principles involve freedom of inquiry, sharing of knowledge, desire for learning, finding solutions to the betterment of society, and being accountable to society at large (Duderstadt, 2004; Hirt, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, the goals of commerce are a “return on investment”, and commercial entities are thus accountable to shareholders (Duderstadt, 2004, p. 72). Higher education increasingly competes within the knowledge market, aligns its research with profitable niche areas, and aims to improve university image and ranking (Duderstadt, 2004; Salerno, 2007). Students are constructed as clients who invest in their future by consuming the product of ‘education’ (Duderstadt, 2004; Salerno, 2007).

Research universities in particular have been criticised for abandoning traditional missions of civic education and commitment to public service and for neglecting research on social issues while serving capitalist goals (Hirt, 2006). Niche area research and centres of excellence, partly funded by corporations, seem to attract revenue, while undergraduate studies and student development seem underfunded (Hirt, 2006). This raises questions about the scope, role, and function of SDS.

The Bayh-Dole Act of the 1980s in the United States of America seems to have been vital in promoting this partnership of higher education and the market through its legislation that research-generated funding should be earned by the institution itself rather than by the state, that is, the title to the intellectual property has been shifted from the state to the university (Good, 2004). Many countries have followed this competitive model and have inadvertently changed the focus on funding sources away from government (public) to

corporate (private) while increasing tuition fees and fees for services (Good, 2004; Schuh, 2003). This, in turn, has an impact on the SDS's scope, role, and function in so far as SDS funding sources also shift from public to private.

Neo-liberal practices have influenced the shift away from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy (Apple, 2005; Duderstadt, 2004). The creation of wealth is no longer about ownership of resources but increasingly dependent on research and education. The higher education sector has evolved into a “global knowledge and learning industry driven by strong market forces” (Duderstadt, 2004, p. 60). The commercialisation of higher education manifests in changes of funding sources, in changes in management structures, in the introduction of standardisation, and in the changed focus of research on revenue-generating areas.

2.6.2 SDS in Globalisation

The commercialisation of higher education, beginning in the 1980s, has led to “expanding industry-university collaborations” (Buroway, 2010, p. 3), with the consequence of reduced state funding. The reduction of state funding, globally, has led to changes in the higher education sector in terms of its very *raison d'être* and in terms of its structure (Buroway, 2010; Hirt, 2006).

In South Africa, while higher education funding from the state has increased, it has not kept pace with the demands for expansion of the system or with international standards of increased funding. Proportionally, state funding is decreasing and compensation from the private sector, while not abundant, has increased (Wolhuter, Higgs, Higgs, & Ntshoe, 2010). South African funding for higher education institutions is about 50% from the state, 25% from tuition fees, and 25% from private and research sources (DoE, 2004).

Reduced state funding has led to inflated tuition fees, which affects students directly and is incompatible with claims of massification and broadening access (Schuh, 2003). The higher education sector, including SDS, is compelled to seek funding from private sources (Schuh, 2003). In climates of financial austerity, accountability increases, and this has also affected SDS. Its practitioners need to demonstrate convincingly that SDS contributes to core business and that this contribution is measurable (Schuh, 2003).

Commercialisation and market-driven curricula and outcomes of programmes pose some challenges to SDS. Kezar (2004, p. 439) noted “that neoliberal philosophy was one of the main forces driving the move away from the traditional charter between higher education and society, a tradition built on a communitarian philosophy of the public good”. She

maintained that this tension might compromise some SDS areas in that SDS survival is contingent on market-driven values (Kezar, 2004). Narrow curricula, in and outside of the classroom (co-curricular), which are aligned with market forces, neglect the contract with society around producing students who take part in public life rather than just acquiring a career as a vehicle for self-promotion (Buroway, 2010; ESU, 2008; ISAP, 2009; Kezar, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, Sidhu, 2006; Urbanski, 2009).

These shifts also affect South African universities. For instance, in South Africa, the University of Cape Town has recently created a position which is dedicated to exploring how the university's research can benefit from, and relate to, commercial relationships²⁸. This is an example of how funding dictates to research, rather than research being determined by society's needs. The example is perhaps isolated but reflects the trend of corporate and higher education partnership.

Along with higher education, SDS has shifted its scope to include servicing the revenue-promising partnerships of higher education (Dalton, 1999). Shifts in SDS are evident in its increased focus on revenue-producing partnerships (for instance with bursary providers, sponsors, or 'wealthy' academic departments), its selective attention to students who can pay for the services (for instance via bursary or via a corporate sponsor), its focus on compliance with target market standards (for instance establishing 24-hour help lines, which are common in some United States universities, but untested for South African contexts), its increase in programmes for international students as a client market (increase in adjustment programmes for semester-abroad students), its quasi-outsourced²⁹ services (for instance, revenue-producing or privatised health services), and so on.

Various SDS services are thus specially designed for and delivered to selected students. While this is commendable, it also clashes with ethical principles of SDS, which imply that all students are entitled to support and services (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Change in the way SDS is represented within higher education is also evidenced in the language used to describe its scope, such as *global market*, *shareholders*, *profit*, *employability*, *revenue generating*, *market related*, and so on (Merrick, 2007). This discourse is pervasive in South Africa, where the 'management speak' includes *outcomes*, *markets*,

²⁸ See: www.uct.ac.za/vacancies/, retrieved on 15/05/2010

²⁹ Here: *quasi-outsourced*, such as the Health Service at the University of the Western Cape, which is indeed outsourced as an independent concern, but reports its activities internally to the university executive management.

employability and *market-related* curricula (Francis & Hampton, 1999; Hirt, 2006; Merrick, 2007).

The competitiveness within corporate and privately funded SDS programmes for students is “antithetical to the collaborate philosophy that many student affairs professionals embrace” (Hirt, 2006, p. 101). To illustrate this, an example is the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, which are selectively funding the SDS programmes of selected students at various South Africa institutions of higher education³⁰. Dalton (1999) cited another example of a partnership between SDS and IBM in developing leadership skills amongst students, where the leadership programme might not be structured along best-practice principles in SDS but rather along marketing principles, generating much value for the corporate social responsibility indicator, which is used as a corporate branding, image, and marketing tool.

While SDS was previously accountable to the institution’s goals, national goals, and society’s goals, it seems that it has become increasingly accountable to the sponsors who fund SDS, who ultimately have goals aligned with their shareholders’ rather than with SDS’s goals. Furthermore, this kind of shift makes students “consumers” and “clients” rather than “participants” in the higher education process (Buroway, 2010; ESU, 2008; Gupta, 2006; ISAP, 2009; Sidhu, 2006; Urbanski, 2009).

Although instances of the privatisation and outsourcing of student services have been reported, it seems that outsourcing of SDS has, despite wide privatisation of, for instance, campus health services, not yet become prominent in South Africa (Nuss, 2003). However, in the USA, outsourcing and privatisation have taken place to reduce costs for institutions (Schuh, 2003), while increasing the costs for the student-users of outsourced services. Schuh (2003), in a chapter in the *New Directions for Student Services: Issue on Contemporary Financial Issues in Student Affairs*, discussed the effects of funding changes and financial constraints on American student affairs domains.

Each chapter in the issue reviews a different student affairs area, and each author raises the question of whether the service is more efficient if outsourced. The answers are not always clear, but it is clear that an outsourced service is not in a position to provide systemic input and contribute effectively to systemic and institutional issues. Outsourcing a service reduces it to its essential service provision and prevents it from being in an equitable and reciprocal relationship with the institution. Outsourcing student services reduces these to their

³⁰ See: www.uwc.ac.za/sds/csss/programs/, retrieved on 15/05/2010

essential tasks and divorces them from the institution, which prevents meaningful feedback to the institution. The precarious contractual position of outsourced services renders them disempowered and voiceless in terms of giving systemic feedback to institutions.

Outsourcing compromises the integrated function of SDS within the higher education institution, and South Africa has thus far kept core SDS functions within the organisational life of the institution. This is important not only to make services affordable for students but also to enable the institution to benefit from the reciprocal relationship with SDS.

Given the challenges in scope, role, and function of SDS, conceptually and in terms of positioning, funding, and alignments, the concepts of employability and internationalisation have emerged as key influences on SDS deliverables which are linked to the market (Kezar, 2004).

2.6.3 Employability

The literature on employability as an SDS deliverable can be divided into two sources: 1) literature exploring issues from the vantage point of employers, business, and industry; and 2) literature concerning the national and students' need for increased employability.

In South Africa, the need of employers for not only professionally and technically skilled employees but also for all-round competent employees is a national imperative (DoE, 1996) and echoes international trends. The imperative of student employability highlights the need for a combination of graduate skills which are beyond the purely academic, professional, or vocational domains and focusses on competencies such as communication, self-management, leadership, information literacy, problem solving, life-long learning, value awareness, and so on³¹. These generic competencies need to be transferable, multifunctional, and adaptable to various contexts which are aligned with the needs of the increasingly globalised higher education sector (Fung, Lee, & Wong, 2009).

In South Africa, as in some other countries, such as Australia, these competencies are reflected in the notion of “graduate attributes”, which is gaining momentum throughout the higher education sector (Barrie, 2007). Graduate attributes are generic capabilities, attitudes, and characteristics which universities aim to develop as part of the graduates' educational experience, beyond the content the graduates learn in their degree studies (Barrie, 2007).

³¹ <http://www.acer.edu.au/sias> and www.dest.gov.au

The development of these competencies and attributes falls within the co-curricular domain and the scope of SDS deliverables. Many aspects of graduate attributes include attitudes, behaviour, and skills which improve the employability of graduates, thus serving national imperatives, employers, and employees, while also serving society and the common good.

The scope of SDS has shifted to focus on the development of these capabilities, and authors of the relevant literature have commented on cost-effective ways of doing this with the added benefit of improving employability of graduates, that is, ways in which graduates are better equipped to seek employment and then to adjust effectively to the new demands made in the employment context and to progress within it³².

To improve employability of graduates, research findings indicate that out-of-classroom activities, also called co-curricular activities, such as involvement in student societies, student leadership roles, and other development programmes, contribute towards these goals (Ackerman, 2005; Douglas, Lund & Ramin-Gyurnek 1994; Kuh et al., 1995; Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991; Wilson, 1999).

In the service of delivering on student employability, SDS has incorporated an increased focus on out-of-classroom experiences. Out-of-classroom activities have always been viewed by SDS as an important vehicle in delivering on its goals of student support and development, and it is within the discourse of employability, market-related or not, that this focus receives renewed energy (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Fung, Lee, & Wong, 2009; Healy & Liddell, 1998; Reichert & Tauch, 2004).

2.6.4 Internationalisation

Internationalisation is described as the integration of an international and multicultural dimension into the teaching, learning, student development, and student services domains (Quiang, 2003). Quiang (2003) described various aspects of internationalisation which affect SDS differently: a) internationalisation as an aim in itself, with special focus on multiculturalism as a value in student development; b) internationalisation as a vehicle to achieve broader goals, such as improved employability; c) reshaping SDS to accommodate international students; and d) internationalisation as a culture and ethos beyond SDS to enable engagement in the global arena and to compete on the global market, which is what Kelly (2009, p, 43) described as “knowledge advantage”. These aspects of internationalisation each

³² <http://www.acer.edu.au/sias> and www.dest.gov.au

affect SDS differently and, hence, traditional boundaries of SDS are expanding and internationalisation is described as the “new frontier for Student Affairs” (Dalton, 1999, p. 3).

South African higher education institutions had already in the 1980s begun to form partnerships with universities in different continents for student exchange programmes (Loeftstedt & Shangwu, 2002). Since the end of the apartheid regime, almost all higher education institutions have formed close relationships with universities across Africa and beyond. The focus is on student learning and academic research collaborations and has been described as representing a “net gain for South Africa” (Cloete, 2009, p. 15) and part of the “international education industry” (Merrick, 2007, p. 1).

Internationalisation is viewed as an enriching experience for students (Cloete, 2009), and countries recognise the economic value of higher education as a revenue-producing industry (Dalton, 1999; Merrick, 2007). Dalton (1999) pointed out that quantifications of internationalisation in higher education are expressed not only in actual international student numbers but also in the revenue these students generate (Dalton, 1999). Perhaps a risk in defining international students in economic terms is the resulting image of the international student as a ‘cash cow’, being offered special services and privileges for payments made, thus compromising SDS ethical principles of student equality. As Kelly (2009) stressed, internationalisation should be based on values and not on efficiencies and income. She reviewed the literature on international education and concluded that ethics, values, and social implications of internationalisation are neglected and consumer-related discourses overwhelm the domain (Kelly, 2009).

Standardisation processes, such as the Bologna Process across Europe, have made internationalisation increasingly possible and lucrative (Merrick, 2007; UKCISA, 1999). In addition, the notion that an international education is the gateway to wealth supports the drive to standardise in the service of increased mobility and, ultimately, employability (Dalton, 1999; Figel, 2009).

The UK Council on International Student Affairs (UKCISA) has identified a list of key deliverables for student affairs in order to enhance the international student experience (Merrick, 2007; UKCISA, 1999). This is an illustrative example of the shift in thinking about SDS: SDS is involved in making the higher education experience more attractive and hence contributes to its economic viability. In order to sustain internationalisation, students need to be satisfied with the higher education experience. SDS is called upon to deliver on factors which increase student satisfaction, as a marketing strategy (Garci’a-Aracil, 2009; Merrick,

2007; UKCISA, 1999). For instance, the I-Graduate Student Barometer is used as a tool to measure student satisfaction, and the results are used to inform student development programmes with the purpose of attracting more students to the university (Merrick, 2007).

2.6.5 Summary

In this section, the impact of globalisation, with specific focus on neo-liberal influences on SDS, was reviewed. Higher education was shown to be pressurised to align more closely with corporate companies and the market in order to secure funding. Consequently, SDS is affected by this alignment in that it shifts focus to cater for market needs while potentially neglecting the SDS contract with students, university, and society.

The increased focus on the importance of the student's experience, not only as a marketing asset but also as a key ingredient in student success, marks a shift in SDS relevance across the higher education domain (Trowler, 2010). Increasingly, SDS is viewed as a key role player in contributing meaningfully to educational goals, institutionally, nationally, and internationally, even if aligned with the market. SDS needs to strategically engage with the shifts towards market-related deliverables and strategically use the opportunities to maximise its contribution to higher education goals.

Globalisation has also shifted conceptual aspects of employability and internationalisation for SDS. By moving beyond dualistic notions of local and international, globalisation has introduced the importance of conceptual flexibility between different concepts of *weltanschauungen*, the importance of synthesis and abstractions which extract the best from 'local' and 'international' in order to develop 'global' graduate attributes.

2.7 SDS in Developed and Developing Countries

Higher education institutions worldwide are under pressure to address issues of access and equity, quality assurance, and standardisations (Dalton, 1999; Gupta, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; UNESCO, 1998). Issues of efficiency, of student success, and of employability beyond graduation are crucial concerns for SDS worldwide (Gupta, 2006; UNESCO, 2004). The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAAS) emphasises that higher education institutions should go beyond direct academic instructions and provide services and development which improve student learning and success. These services differ according to country and culture and include academic development, diversity education, student advocacy and leadership, social activities, recreational activities, and

employment services. The International Association of Student Affairs and Services described the aim of these services as “to assist students in navigating their journey through the tertiary education landscape and add to their repertoire of educational and lifetime learning experiences”³³.

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services, although dominated by Western presence and participation, has acknowledged the tension between the “developed” and the “developing” models of student affairs and cautions that perhaps there has been a rush to “adopt/adapt Western forms of higher education, sometimes without regard for the cultural appropriateness of these models”³⁴. Challenges emerge when engaging with the ‘developed’ countries which have ‘professional’ SDS domains, from a ‘non-professional’ position within a ‘developing’ country such as South Africa.

In the following section, the differences and the commonalities of the scope, role, and function of SDS within different counties and contexts are explored, grouping developed and developing countries.

2.7.1 SDS in Developed Countries

SDS has a long history, emerging primarily from the universities of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Although the higher education institutions in the United States of America, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the European continent have historically fairly different constellations and structures, the emerging SDS models and practices are beginning to look rather similar. (Buroway, 2010; ESU, 2008; ISAP, 2009; Sidhu, 2006; Singh, Kenway, & Apple, 2005; Urbanski, 2009). The different historical trajectories of higher education are important for an understanding of SDS within it and are described by Du Toit (2007), who identified the Anglo-Saxon, the Continental-Roman (strongly influenced by the German tradition), and the Anglo-American models of higher education. In essence, the Continental-Roman model is centrally managed by state bureaucracies³⁵. The Anglo-Saxon model is premised on strong faculty association and “rather than expressing the rational order of the public sector or the administrative state,

³³ <http://www.iasasonline.org/>

³⁴ <http://www.iasasonline.org/>

³⁵ The Continental-Roman model has nonetheless constitutionally protected academic freedom. But, as Du Toit pointed out, this is only of any value in so far as the state observes the constitution, which was not the case in, for instance, Nazi Germany (Du Toit, 2007).

universities were rooted in local communities, served regional needs, and reflected local communal identities” (Du Toit, 2007, p. 54).

United States of America, Australia, and the UK. In the United States, the Student Affairs divisions have advanced from a narrow *in loco parentis* model, which primarily concerned itself with student discipline, conduct, student social and moral development, and the management of their residential lives (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The original American SDS was modelled on the English model, which focussed on the holistic character-building aspect of the higher education experience (Dalton, 1999). The United States Student Affairs domains have evolved into a multi-textured profession. In a review on the trends on student affairs and the higher education relationship in the United States, Fang and Wu (2006, p. 6) commented that

[t]he relationship between student affairs and academic affairs in the U.S. higher education institutions has undergone the spiral evolution from original natural unification to conscious differentiation and independence, and later moving towards collaborative and integrating educational partnership. Such development course reflects not only the inner logical demands for continuous professional and academic growth of student affairs in American universities, but also the profound changes in its basic aim, conception, concrete mission and role orientation.

Student affairs practitioners in the United State today are professionals, typically with master’s-level qualifications in Educational Leadership, part of an education faculty of a university (Keeling, 2004; Nuss, 2003; Schuh et al., 2010). The American student affairs practitioners take part in the core business of higher education by “working effectively with faculty to create a coherent curriculum” (Schuh et al., 2010, p. 73). Student affairs is integrated into the institutional mission and is considered a significant contributor to the achievement of academic outcomes of higher education.

The international literature and research on SDS stem primarily from the United States of America and inform South African SDS practices, emphasising that effective SDS offers “comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development” (Keeling, 2004, p. 2). The American Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education has developed comprehensive standards for the assessment of

learning and development outcomes which articulate the values which underpin SDS in America (Dean, 2006; Strayhorn, 2006). The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) developed these guidelines as “profession-wide criteria of good practice” (Dean, 2006, p. 3), which are based on generic principles and values that span the domain of SDS and student affairs practice in America (Dean, 2006; Strayhorn, 2006). The resulting generic value-based framework allows for programmatic flexibility and contextual adaptability. The suggested assessment tools “promote self-regulation as the most viable approach to program accountability” (Strayhorn, 2006, p. 11).

The American student affairs domain has generated a significant body of research and has developed seminal theories and managed to professionalise itself (Dean, 2006; Keeling, 2004; Nuss, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Schuh et al., 2010; Strayhorn, 2006). In the United States, as the higher education focus shifted from educating the elite to “building a nation,” student affairs divisions gained much currency and status by positioning themselves as key role players and demonstrating their impact (Nuss, 2003, p. 67). Perhaps this is a trajectory South African SDS domains will follow.

Financial challenges, or “doing more with less” is a common phenomenon internationally across student affairs domains (Burke, 1997, p. 7) and Burke points to the United States as setting the benchmark in generating alternatives of using “student volunteers extensively and provide them with training, social activities, certificates or other non-financial rewards” (Burke, 1997, p. 7). This is an original solution to “doing more with less”, which simultaneously enables student development on many levels. These are the kinds of solutions, derived from the United States, which are adopted in South Africa and enhance some of the SDS work.

American Departments of Student Affairs are not without issues which present lessons for South Africa. Some authors raise questions around the extent to which the structure of American student affairs addresses issues of diversity and the needs of non-traditional students (Ellis, 2009; USDE, 2006). For instance, Ellis (2009) raised the question of how much minority students, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and intersexual (LGBTI) student issues are addressed by Departments of Student Affairs and observed that there is a paucity in the literature exploring the relationship of student affairs with the need for

specialised support³⁶. Ellis (2009) suggested the establishment of dedicated student support which would not only address the “aftermath of homophobia” (Ellis, 2009, p. 739) but also intervene proactively with special focus on campus climate issues. These are some of the issues which might provide lessons for South African SDS departments.

The American Student Affairs domain currently provides the international benchmark, not only because of its successes but also due to the increase in inclusion of student affairs professionals in institutional planning (Dalton, 1999; Keeling, 2004; Schuh et al., 2010). However, despite American student affairs advancement Dalton and Crosby suggest that “the field of student affairs work (in America) has struggled throughout its history to clearly define its central mission and role in higher education (2010, p. 1).

Australian and United Kingdom student affairs divisions are similar to the American and Canadian model of viewing student affairs as a profession which can significantly contribute to institutional goals through holistic student development and has “much to contribute to maintaining and improving student retention” (Burke, 1997; Trainor, 2002, p. 4). Trainor (2002) noted the shift in the United Kingdom from perceptions of SDS as a welfare service, a “reactive support department” which is the “last resort for students with problems” to the perception that SDS is the “first port of call involved in supporting all students”, which is “fundamental to the work of the HEI as a whole” (Trainor, 2002, p. 11).

In the United Kingdom, since the Prime Minister’s Initiative in 1999 (UKCISA, 1999), the focus of student affairs has incorporated issues concerning internationalisation of the student body and universities. The focus of SDS includes contributing to the image of the university as well as improving the study experience of the international students in an effort to promote student mobility and student exchanges (Figel, 2009; UKCISA, 1999).

At Australian universities, perhaps most significantly the University of New South Wales, Sydney, there is much discussion about the concept of “graduate attributes”, and linking it to the SDS deliverables³⁷. This has a particular impact on the content of SDS, rather than affecting structural or conceptual issues of SDS.

Europe. Mainland Europe has a rather young SDS history. Mainland Europe only began addressing student life, student development, student services, and student support as

³⁶ A useful reference which does indeed address issues, research, policies and practices concerning LGBTI in Student Affairs in the USA is *Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Research, Policy, and Personal Perspectives: New Directions for Student Services, No. 111* edited by Ronni Sanlo (2005).

³⁷ www.sydney.edu.au

part of university life in earnest during the 1950s (Nuss, 2003). During the 19th century, particularly German universities promoted an exclusively academic focus in the university, with emphasis on a “value-free academic ethos” (Dalton, 1999, p. 5). The “laissez-faire approach that emphasises student independence and autonomy in values-neutral ethos” (Dalton, 1999, p. 5) was reviewed after World War II, and it is now recognised that the higher education institutions need to be explicit about their values and principles and indeed include some student support (UNESCO, 2004).

The European SDS domain includes services such as counselling, disability, child care, career development, accommodation support, sports, and others, but its primary agenda seems to be the internationalisation of higher education, promoting and enabling student mobility and exchanges, not only across Europe and the Bologna area, but also partnering with institutions abroad (Figel, 2009). The Bologna Process, the UK Ministerial Initiative (PMI) and the ERASMUS agreement (European Community Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) assist in dissolving cultural boundaries and political borders and promote large-scale student mobility (Dalton, 1999; Figel, 2009). It is in this area of student international exchange, adjustment and orientations, diversity, and inclusivity where SDS is particularly active and focussed (Dalton, 1999; Figel, 2009).

In Europe, some SDS services are separate from the core business of the university and located in local government or municipal services, where funding and accountability lines are shared between the institution and the local, the national government, and/or social services. Some of these services are managed and provided by the parastatal *Studentenservice*³⁸, and include services for residences, cafeterias, financial aid administration for students, counselling and support for other concerns of living.

South African SDS might benefit from more deliberate exchanges with the developed world, not only theoretical and practical but also from staff exchanges and research collaborations in the domain of SDS so as to rigorously engage with the various models employed in these regions, and also to review these models, some of which are perhaps uncritically and hastily accepted in South Africa.

³⁸ www.studentenwerk.de, www.direct.gov.de

2.7 2 SDS in Developing Countries

The countries with developing democracies and developing economies share many issues, particularly around higher education. SDS divisions within the developing countries and economies are not as developed as SDS domains in the developed world.

Brazil, India, and China. Brazil is a particularly useful example in comparison to South Africa. Similar to South Africa, higher education in Brazil was designed to support the economic and political elite and was tightly controlled by a military regime (Sidhu, 2006). Today, Brazil is facing similar challenges to South Africa: the need to produce “equity, quality and efficiency” (Sidhu, 2006, p. 283). Like South Africa, Brazil must produce research which attracts international interest while finding solutions to local problems (Buroway, 2010; Carnoy, 2002; Cloete & Muller, 1998; Sidhu, 2006). Brazil is focussed on attracting international student exchange and some of the SDS goals in Brazil and India are focussed on promoting international student exchanges as their primary aim.

India’s educational system is much like South Africa’s, mainly because of its colonial roots, and hence the British system of higher education informed the basic structure of the institutions and SDS within it (Chitnis, 2000). India, like most of the rest of the world, is engaged in improving access and equity across higher education to become an “economic powerhouse” (Punwani, cited in Gupta, 2006, p. 2). India is struggling with a deeply entrenched caste³⁹ system, and, much like South Africa, is trying to redress the injurious effects its colonial and political history has inflicted. Of great interest is India’s attempt to improve access of the different castes, also called “scheduled castes”, “scheduled tribes” and “other backward classes”⁴⁰ to higher education (Gupta, 2006). According to Gupta (2006), improved access is crucial in supplying immediate market needs and enabling long-term employability required for a stable economy. Gupta (2006) added that through personal development, students play a critical role in the socio-economic and civic development of society.

While there are pockets of excellence, such as the All India Institute for Medical Science, largely supported by specific federal funding, corporate interest, and “educational entrepreneurs of a new breed”, it seems that, overall, the Indian higher education sector is burdened by inequities, challenges around implementation, poor accountability, under-funding, dated pedagogical practices, student unrest, migration of students to first-world

³⁹ The term ‘caste’ system does not apply to South Africa.

⁴⁰ The use of these terms does not imply an acceptance of these.

universities, and other factors deeply rooted in historical, cultural and social norms (George & Raman, 2009, p. 3).

The literature review yields little on SDS at Indian universities, despite much reference to the interpersonal and social difficulties, such as racism and discrimination, integration and social cohesion, first-generation student epistemological access challenges to higher education, or mainstream student tolerance to students on 'reserved seats', SDS seems to not feature on the Indian higher education landscape (George & Raman, 2009; Thornton, Bricheno, Iyer, Reid, Wankhede, & Green, 2010). In their study over a 3-year period, Thornton et al. (2010) concluded that most of their participants indicated that integration of different castes is needed; however, SDS and its potential in contributing to this process was not mentioned in their paper.

Using CALICO⁴¹ and other search engines, in searching for references for key words "India + student affairs/student development/student support", with relevance to higher education, only four successful hits were returned. The four links are references to student support in terms of academic supplementary tutorials and tuitions. Interestingly, on searching for India + training, with reference to higher education, 11 successful returns refer to career development. It seems that offices which facilitate "training and placement" for career purposes are largely private and outside of the institutional structure.

An extended search, to see if the university websites of the high ranking universities in India contain any SDS-type services, revealed that specific services are indeed offered. For instance, the website for the All India Institute for Medical Science (AIIMS), a prestigious university in Delhi, globally recognised for its undergraduate and postgraduate curricula in all branches of medicine, offers a link to Student Life and Academics. This page contains a brief paragraph about the "laid back character" of the student body, and describes itself as cosmopolitan and 80% male⁴². No further reference to any student support, student development, or organised student life is made.

The Community Health Department of the All India Institute for Medical Science, an academic department, offers a Pre-marriage Orientation and Counselling for Happy Married Life course, which addresses issues of conflict, communication, and some HIV and Aids education for students. This seems to be the only course which marginally approaches issues

⁴¹ See reference to CALICO in introduction to this chapter: CALICO is the Cape Library Consortium providing a platform to search all libraries in the tertiary institutions in the Western Cape online.

⁴² www.aiims.edu

of student development, albeit only to married students. What is of interest is that this course is offered by an *academic* department.

Another internationally well-known institution is the Ambedkar Institute of Technology⁴³, also in Delhi. Its website offers a link to Student Activities and Student Menu. Neither of these pages offers any services resembling SDS.

Some universities, for instance the University of Hyderabad, have a link to International Students, which offers some information about international exchanges and partner universities⁴⁴. Also Foreign Student Association links are found on other websites, for instance the Jawaharlal Nehru University⁴⁵. Student governance seems to have a presence at some university websites (e.g., the University of Hyderabad and the Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh), as do cultural festivities and sports activities, such as cricket and basketball⁴⁶.

The Student Development Association of India⁴⁷ offers links to private organisations or companies which seem to specialise in narrowing the gap between graduation and career, offering courses on public speaking, motivation, presentation skills, and communication and leadership skills. This suggests that SDS-type services are outsourced and privatised and not within the ambit of higher education.

In general, only sparse information is given at Indian universities about student development, academic or personal support, adjustment or career development, or how the universities address issues of student development and support.

During the 1970s, China adopted a new stance towards education, with a move away from the Maoist centralist model to de-centralisation, which gave local authority autonomy and flexibility to create more opportunities for access and to respond to societal needs, while improving relations with Western higher education institutions (Liu, Rhoads, & Wang, 2007). By the 1980s, formal agreements for educational exchange and collaboration with the West were quite common for higher education institutions in China (Liu et al., 2007; Loefftstedt & Shangwu, 2002).

⁴³ www.delhi.gov.ait

⁴⁴ www.uohyd.ernet.in

⁴⁵ www.jnu.ac.in.

⁴⁶ www.rgu.ac.in; www.uohyd.ernet.in; www.du.ac.in

⁴⁷ www.SDAIndia.org.in

The development of SDS in higher education in China “does not seem to represent the result of systemic or strategic planning at the highest level” (Wang, 2004, p. 9). Initially, a division named Student Residences and Career Services was introduced, and as SDS matured, interesting practices emerged. Academic disciplines seemed to define the sense of belonging for students and academic mentors and academic staff to “play a much greater role than student affairs staff” (Wang, 2004, p. 10), reminiscent of the original model of *in loco parentis*, where academic staff were entrusted with moral and professional caretaking of their protégés. While campus life offers more than academic activities, such as sport and political involvement in the Communist Youth League, the shift to the global market has created opportunities for SDS to support the learning and development process. Currently, it appears that “little attention is being paid to either the theoretical or practical aspects of facilitating student development through student affairs programs and services” (Wang, 2004, p. 11).

While some high-ranking flagship universities, such as Peking University and Beijing Normal University, offer a range of student services, student societies, student volunteering and counselling, and health care⁴⁸, as Wang (2004) indicated, little literature is available on Chinese student affairs models and theories. Little reference is made to meetings of student affairs professionals in China, particularly as part of South Pacific regional meetings (UNESDOC, 2002)⁴⁹.

The African Continent. African universities are as young as Africa’s independence from colonial powers, bar the few established by the expatriot communities and colonizers. As Mamdani stated, Africa “became independent with no more than a handful of university graduates in the population” (Mamdani, cited in Du Toit, 2007, p. 56). For African independence and African nation building, the “university functioned as an integral part of the post-independence African nationalist movement” (Mamdani, cited in Du Toit, 2007, p. 56).

Higher education institutions across Africa grapple with similar issues to South African universities. Throughout Africa, the university is considered a key contributor to national development and student enrolment has increased five-fold in the late 20th century, mainly due to state promotion, socio-political pressure, parental motivation, and economic ambitions (Za’rour, 1998). One of the consequences of high enrolment is high dropout,

⁴⁸ <http://english.pku.edu.cn/> and www.bnu.edu.cn

⁴⁹ However, there are firm beginnings of developing Student Affairs functions at universities, especially in the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau (personal communications, Schuh, 2012).

failure, and repeat and these are the issues with which SDS divisions across Africa grapple (Za'rour, 1998).

In general, African SDS divisions follow the American model of a student affairs domain with a focus on student development, student support, and student services for holistic student development aligned with the institutional goals, such as Strathmore University in Kenya and the University of Zambia⁵⁰. African SDS domains are staffed by a dean of students with a complement of staff focusing on “planning, co-ordinating and implementing a variety of programs and services which are designed to assist and support students in achieving academic and personal success”⁵¹. Some universities embrace current models of integrated student development and speak of developing “a conducive learning and living environment”⁵². Younger universities, such as the University of The Gambia seem to have international offices addressing issues of student development, which might suggest an implicit focus on globalisation of its ethos⁵³. Overall, the influence of the American SDS model as comprehensive and integrated, and aimed at holistic student development, with a pronounced focus on internationalisation is evident across the African continent.

In addition to the focus on promoting internationalisation, SDS practitioners in Africa also address urgent and compelling social concerns. The African Student Affairs Conference (ASAC, 2009, 2010, 2011) hosted university deans and student affairs professionals of African universities, and the papers which were presented indicated that the SDS domains focus on issues around campus conflicts, race and gender violence, and basic problems of living, such as food and housing. However, the conference papers do not shed much light on the scope, role, and function of African SDS divisions, on frameworks and theories, and on other areas of interest to this study (ASAC, 2009, 2010, 2011). Literature and research concerning SDS issues in Africa appears sparse. Not only is there a gap in the academic journal domain but also the two internationally accredited journals on SDS, both located in the USA, contain little reference to African SDS issues.

A scan of academic SDS journals contributes to the understanding of SDS in developed and developing countries: Journals focusing on SDS can be divided into four loosely defined categories. The first group comprises two journals which are focussed directly

⁵⁰ www.strathmore.edu; www.unza.zm

⁵¹ www.strathmore.edu/dos

⁵² www.unza.zm

⁵³ www.unigambia.gm

on the SDS domain, are internationally accredited, and reside in the USA. They are (1) the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, located at the *National Association of Student Affairs Practitioners* (NASPA) in the USA, and; (2) The *Journal of College Student Development* housed at the *American College Personnel Association* (ACPA). Both are accredited for subsidy purposes in South Africa. The second category includes journals which focus directly on SDS and are located in the USA but tend to have a less international focus, are not accredited in South Africa, and are frequently located at a specific institution. Examples include the *Journal of Student Affairs*, at Colorado State University, and the *Journal of Student Affairs* at New York University. The third loosely defined category of journals is located in the EHEA/Bologna zone and does not directly focus on SDS but on teaching and learning and higher education management, but they tend to include articles on SDS. The fourth category is comprised of a small number of Southern African journals which publish manuscripts about SDS. These include *Perspectives in Education*, *Education as Change*, the *South African Journal of Higher Education*, the *Journal of Psychology* and the *African Journal of Psychology*. The only Africa-wide journal in the domain is the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* published irregularly by CODESRIA. Some African universities (e.g. Makerere University, Kenya) publish frequent education, faculty-based in-house journals and, more recently, online Nigerian journals have appeared such as the *International Journal of Educational Research*. An extensive search via *googlescholar* and some platforms which are not automatically harvested, such as *Sabinet*, suggests that there are no internationally accredited journals focussing on African SDS.

2.7.3 Summary

In this section, SDS in higher education in the developed and the developing world was reviewed. In the United States of America, which sets the benchmark for SDS internationally, SDS is well established “emphasising the whole student and working effectively with faculty in creating a coherent curriculum in which specified learning outcomes are achieved through collaboration” (Schuh et al., 2010, p. 73). Learning and student development are viewed as integrated and complementary (Keeling, 2004; Schuh et al., 2010). This model has been adopted by Australia and the United Kingdom. Although the American SDS model emerged from Anglo-Saxon history, which traditionally promoted institutional autonomy, “it would be impossible to attempt reliable generalisations about American academic culture in brief compass” (Du, Toit, 2007, p. 59).

Countries in Europe have a younger SDS history than their American counterparts, and some student services are performed by local city municipalities and social services⁵⁴. The close relationship between university services and the local and regional municipalities can be related to the historical relationship with the central control of the state. While the Bologna Process asserted the autonomy of higher education, it was negotiated by government ministers rather than by the university executive, highlighting the close relationship of university and state in mainland Europe. University-based SDS is focussed primarily on internationalisation, as standardisations across the Eurozone have enabled huge student mobility and required universities to facilitate student integration (Figel, 2009).

SDS across the developing world, including the African continent, seems focussed on student learning and social challenges. Given internationalisation and student semester-abroad programmes, research collaborations, and international development grants, the SDS in these universities is geared towards servicing international students and exchange programmes which aim to improve internationalisation of the institution.

The American model of an academically integrated SDS which addresses issues of holistic development, with integrated student support and services, seems to have permeated the developing world and the African continent.



2.8 SDS Structures and Models

The structure and models of SDS within higher education inform much of SDS's scope, role, and functions. Conversely, the conceptualisation of SDS influences the structural integration of SDS into the institution.

Given that South African higher educational institutions have no uniform structure (Lunceford, 2011), SDS has emerged organically in each institution, depending on institutional vision, institutional operating plan, contextual factors, student demographics, institutional profile, and institutional history. While a uniform structure or model might not be feasible for SDS within South Africa's diverse campuses, there are some structural issues which have an impact on overall SDS scope, role, and function in higher education (Lunceford, 2011).

⁵⁴ See for instance <http://www.bildungserver.de/Auslaendische-Studierende-447.html> for range of student services in Germany: Focus is on services-related to internationalisation.

In the next section, the literature on SDS organisational structures and models, nationally and internationally⁵⁵, will be reviewed.

2.8.1 Organisational Structures of SDS

The organisational structure of SDS in the higher education institution has implications for the reach, effectiveness, scope, role, and function of SDS. SDS's position within the organisational structure has effects on the overall institutional integration of SDS. The relationships of SDS with its context depend on its strategic, static, or dynamic positioning therein (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The status of SDS in institutions is reflected in the structural and organisational placement of SDS, where it is located, and who and at what level its staff reports to and how it is represented at decision-making committees and meetings (Burke, 1997). There is increasing support for the idea that SDS, independent of structural positioning, is effective at multiple levels and that SDS should function as an open system with and within the institution (Komives & Woodard, 2003; Kuh et al., 1991; Kuh et al., 1994).

Structurally, SDS is either centralised or de-centralised (Burke, 1997). *Centralised* implies that there is a direct connection between the core vision, the core business, and executive thinking, conceptualised as and nominally referred to as “the centre”, on the one hand, and the SDS's management, role, and function and its operations and implementations on the other. *De-centralised* implies that SDS reporting lines are within the local and immediate context, perhaps an academic department or a faculty.

Centralised SDS. Centralised organisational structures usually have direct or “stand-alone” reporting lines, perhaps directly to the executive of the institution (Burke, 1997, p. 9). Centralised SDS is managed centrally, independent of faculty, and is academically neutral and more generic. The diagrammatic representation of a centralised structure has vertical reporting and communication lines towards the executive of the institution.

⁵⁵ The theoretical distinction between American and European models of SDS is discussed in the next chapter, but a brief explanation here may be useful: American models emphasise the integration of SDS into the academic experience at faculty level (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 2010; Kuh, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), while European models of SDS locate SDS within Bernstein's “official recontextualising field” of higher education, where it contributes to administrative service delivery, i.e., ‘outside’ of, or ‘next to’ the academic domain (Bernstein, 2000). This is echoed by the state-university relationship which locates student services in local and regional municipalities.

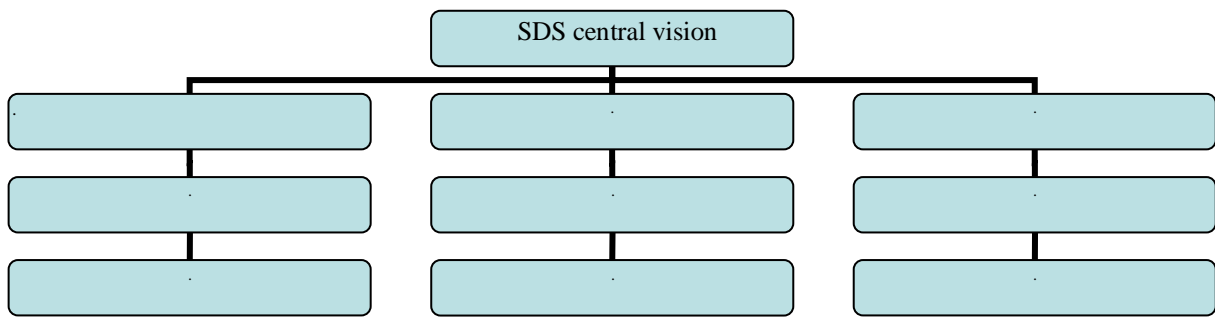


Figure 3: Centralised organisational structure

The *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996) prescribes a centralised structure for SDS which is reflected in the figure below (DoE, 1996, p. 12).

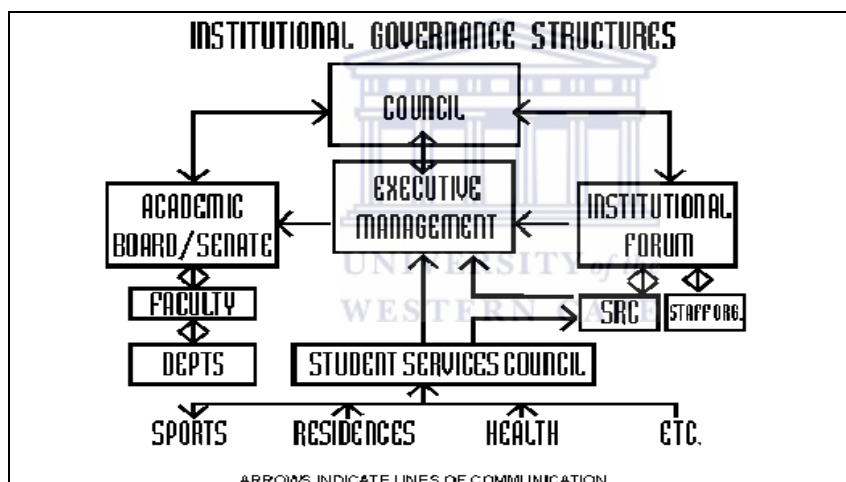


Figure 4: Institutional governance structures according to the National Commission on Higher Education (DoE, 1996, p. 12)

This diagrammatic representation of the governance structures in institutions in South Africa shows the isolation of SDS from the academic senate, which is an important and powerful structure within institutions. This centralised structure of SDS does not suggest formal lateral relationships and perhaps this is the genesis of some of the isolation of SDS within the institutions.

Some of the limitations of the centralised structure have been described as the static “silo effect” (personal communication with Mr N. Magopeni, 12 June, 2010), which suggests a “disconnect” between SDS and the academic governance and academic experience of

students. General concerns around centralised structures involve the burgeoning of bureaucracies which are sluggish in their response and a general top-down rather than a bottom-up flow of information and operations.

In South Africa, the continuously changing profile of students and the shifting parameters guiding higher education may make a purely centralised SDS structure inflexible and non-adaptable to constantly changing realities. This might also be the case for institutions, where faculties differ from each other in terms of culture, demographics, and academic programmes and demands, and where faculties require flexible provisions and original responses to their unique contexts, which might be hampered by a purely centralised structure.

De-centralised SDS. De-centralised SDS divisions have devolved decision-making management lines, are located within faculties and in academic departments, and have reporting and communication lines to the academic dean of the faculty. The diagrammatic representation of the de-centralised structure has numerous horizontal lines, lateral towards academic and other domains, has fluid and multiple communication lines, and has many ‘open’ points for reciprocal feedback and engagement. The parts in a de-centralised system are inescapably mutually influencing each other and receptive to organic shaping. This is represented in the figure below.

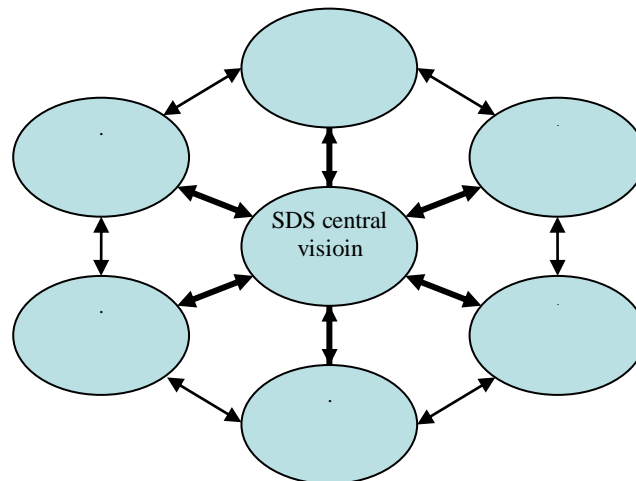


Figure 5: De-centralised organisational structure

Because of the decision-making process being closer to the academic life of faculty and students, de-centralised structures are described as being more closely aligned with curriculum and the character of a faculty. However, de-centralised SDS services may be

compromised in terms of independence and trustworthiness by students, possibly being viewed as part of the staff that assess and evaluate rather than support the students⁵⁶ (Burke, 1997).

De-centralised SDS structures can exhibit more dynamic responsiveness and can flexibly engage with the immediate context and experience of the students (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002). The complexity of the SDS domain and the academic context may require flexible and nimble responsiveness, at least at departmental level (Komives & Woodard, 2003). However, de-centralisation might present issues of duplication and potentially poor co-ordination (Harper, 1996); hence, a centralised co-ordinating function seems valuable.

De-centralised SDS may risk becoming exclusively aligned with faculty outcome and allow a de-railing of SDS goals, also described as "scope creep" or "mission drift", and may lose focus on national or institutional imperatives, or neglect the SDS contract with society.

De-centralisation of SDS could remove it from its contract with society and its obligation to deliver on the imperatives of White Paper 3: *Programme for the transformation of higher education* of developing graduate attributes (DoE, 1997). De-centralisation of SDS seems to attract commercial partnerships and enhance fiscal efficiency. For instance, providing student development and support to only a narrow group of students who are a 'priority area', done by private consultants employed by faculties, seems to increase academic efficiency but might be neglecting the central tenets of SDS and institutional mission and vision. This may occur when an academic department enlists the support of private consultants to facilitate student support and neglects the development of graduate attributes and fails to instil a sense of social responsiveness and social responsibility in graduates, as is the vision and mission of the university.

Some institutions tend to prefer or have organically evolved into either more centralised or more de-centralised models, and solutions probably lie in hybrid models, where central steering is balanced with on-site autonomy (Hall & Symes, 2005).

2.8.2 Prestigious National and Market-Oriented Institutions

Luescher-Mamashela (2008), in discussing organisational and governance models of South African universities, presented a typology of models of university governance and

⁵⁶ The binary view of staff as *either* assessing students *or* supporting students emerges from the schools' environments which perpetuate learners' perceptions of education as a non-supportive context.

organisation, and two of these are particularly relevant to this discussion on SDS. The first is the “prestigious national university” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 58), which is compliantly aligned with national directives, uncritically trusts national steering mechanisms, and acts as the instrument of the (political or otherwise) elite and is positioned to maintain an elitist status quo, analogous to Castells’ notion of higher education (Castells, 2001). According to Cloete et al. (cited in Mandew, 2003), during the apartheid regime, SDS was obediently embedded into and aligned with this typology of the higher education model. This “prestigious national university” organisational institution constructs students “as the future elite of the nation” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 61).

The second university typology model Luescher-Mamashela described is the “market-oriented university”, which is structured as a “commercial educational service provider that competes in the local (and global) higher education market” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 63). Accordingly, the university provides revenue-generating research services which contribute to university brand and image, used for further marketing and market positioning, measured in “outputs” and “rankings” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 63; Salerno, 2007). Management focuses on financial viability and efficiencies, and deliverables are conceptualised in terms of self-contained projects and programmes financed by independent cost-centres, with little systemic impact or collective engagement. Students are targeted as “clients”, passive, demanding and expecting future returns, and consumers of a service (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008). The consumed commodity leads to gainful employment and SDS-type student development is perceived as “distractions” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 63) unless incentivised or improving chances of employment (perhaps via certificates, which are perceived to improve CVs and employability).

Both types of university have an influence on SDS in so far as conceptualisations of students, SDS deliverables, and structural integration of SDS are affected by the typology. SDS scope, role, and function are directly and powerfully affected by these two models, both of which seem to reflect tendencies or actual shifts in higher education in South Africa (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008). In the prestigious-national institution, SDS becomes an instrument of the state, whereas in the market-oriented institution, SDS services the student-consumer-client and contributes to institutional image and competitive advantage.

2.8.3 SDS Models

Besides the structural and organisational arrangement of SDS within the institutions, models of SDS which inform the overall scope, role and function of SDS are key

determinants of how SDS is conceptualised in higher education. Burke (1997) described three different models of how higher education institutions assemble, position, and facilitate different kinds of SDS. He named them the “I know what’s needed” model, the “students say they want this” model and the “this would appeal to prospective students” model (Burke, 1997, p. 8). Each model affects SDS conceptualisations, scope, role, and function differently.

Theory-Based Models of SDS–“I Know What’s Needed”. The first model, “I know what’s needed”, is a theory-driven⁵⁷ model, informed by the conviction that theory provides analytical tools for understanding and explaining phenomena.

SDS is a multi-disciplinary domain, which rests on convergent and divergent theoretical models from varying theoretical domains, such as psychology, sociology, theology, social work, and so on. Theories are socially constructed and reflect the current reality, perhaps more so of the researcher and her/his theoretical orientation than that of the subjects (Helms, 1994; McEwen, 2003). SDS theories need to be challenged and need to withstand rigorous interrogation by diverse theoretical positions. Various philosophical positions, such as critical theory, feminist re-conceptualisation, cross-cultural investigation, and social construction provide useful meta-analysis frameworks which assist in considering SDS theory (McEwen, 2003).

Theory, as the foundation of a profession, is fundamental in making meaningful predictions, forming coherent and effective conceptualisation and developing pragmatic interventions. Once SDS in South Africa is recognised as a profession, theory-based research and theory-driven interventions will assist in articulating its role and function (McEwen, 2003).

The “surrogate parent model” (Burke, 1997, p. 8), also termed *in loco parentis*, informed by “I know what’s needed”, is perhaps a good illustration of how theory and thinking within SDS has changed. The theoretical conceptualisation of some SDS within higher education as occupying an *in loco parentis* role and function has been increasingly met with much ambivalence by SDS practitioners and has largely become outdated (Mandew, 2003; Martinez Aleman & Lynk Wartman, 2009; Thomas, 1991; Trouw, 2007) and, in America, has been overlaid by “hybrid” and “disparate” models (Du Toit, 2007, p. 59).

⁵⁷ An in-depth discussion of theoretical models, frameworks, and conceptual understandings within SDS is presented in the next chapter. This discussion here focusses on the model, not the theory per se.

McEwen (2003) highlights the need for and importance of theoretical introspection and explicit “identity development” (p. 171) of SDS in order to provide significant and compelling presence within higher education.

Needs-Driven Models of SDS–“Students Want This”. The second model of SDS is informed by student needs and evolves from consultations with students. Student-centred approaches have gained much currency, especially since the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century in 1998 (UNESCO, 1998). The idea of placing the student in the centre of the higher education experience and meeting the students’ needs is assumed to be pivotal to the successful outcomes of higher education.

An interesting example of when “theory meets students” is the evolution of Chickering’s seven-vector model (McEwen, 2003, p. 172). The revision of the seven-vector model came from “making social construction visible” (McEwen, 2003, p. 171), when Reisser incorporated students’ narratives and needs over a 3-year period into the theoretical constructs of the seven-vector model (McEwen, 2003). This is an example that illustrates the importance of theory emerging from direct engagements with and research on students (McEwen, 2003). Student-centred approaches place the individual (rather than a ‘type’ of student) at the centre, allow for much scope (for instance, addressing needs of non-traditional students) and put special emphasis on issues of diversity (Dungy, 1996).

However, various theorists have suggested limitations to the assumption that needs-driven approaches are sufficient to address conditions for adequate functioning. Nussbaum (2000) and Sen (1995, 2001) postulated that people measure their expectations according to their experiences, and hence, their perceived need may not be the most appropriate indicator of what might be required. Thus, the “students want this” approach has significant limitations, especially in impoverished contexts, which include aspects of the South African higher education system.

Market-Oriented Models of SDS–“This Looks Good”. Some SDS models incorporate services into their scope that “look good” to the prospective student-as-client and sponsors, positioning the student as client and consumer. This model is market-oriented (Burke, 1997, p. 8; Luescher-Mamashela, 2008). Burke cited the example of a 24-hour help line, which might provide a sense of security to prospective students and their parents and hence would increase the attractiveness of the institution but may contradict student development theories which put the development of autonomy and dependence at the core of student development outcomes (Burke, 1997, p. 8).

Utilising SDS in the marketing and branding efforts of higher education institutions is part of the effect of new market realities and increased competitiveness. SDS services and SDS narratives may be used to improve the branding of an institution and present it as a “caring” institution. Also, SDS might be used to improve the image of an institution by suggesting that its graduates have improved chances of employability through their engagement in various co-curricular activities, such as volunteering, which may appear advantageous on a CV. SDS could also be used to buttress the promise of an institution for graduate success by displaying the range of SDS support interventions (Burke, 1997; Luescher-Mamashela, 2008). Especially SDS models which appear to offer a broad range of services and development opportunity but are short-staffed and scarcely resourced, and are positioned to improve the image of an institution, belong to this kind of market-driven SDS model.

The South African higher education institutions are heterogeneous and do not subscribe to one model or organisational structure. To preserve the range of institutional cultures and organisational structures and to ensure autonomy, it is advisable to encourage diversity in the SDS models and structures, as proposed by Woodard and Sims (2000, p. 2), who stated that “there is not one correct organizational model for student affairs”.

2.8.4 SDS and the Relationship with Academic Stakeholders in the Institution

Apart from literature in the USA⁵⁸, very little has been published on the relationship of SDS with academic development⁵⁹, faculty, and research centres. SDS, as a part of the learning process and as part of academic development and support, has been under-researched, and as Howell (2005) observed, that in South Africa “the nature of the teaching and learning process in institutions and its associated parts are given insufficient attention” (p. 60). The relationship of SDS with its academic partners is unclear and each relationship

⁵⁸ In the USA, the relationship between SDS and the academic sector is a focus of broad attention, for instance, Schuh and Whitt edited number 87 of the *New Directions for Student Services* (1999) which was devoted to this area.

⁵⁹ Academic development is a reference to the domain which include Teaching and Learning, pedagogies, curriculum design and curriculum development, perhaps more focussed on the processes in the classroom and the relationship between the lectures, the academic material and the student. This is different from but may include Academic Support. Academic Support, as a supplement to the academic process is traditionally part of SDS. The distinction between academic development and academic support is nebulous and context dependent, and boundaries are blurred. See Boughey (2010) for a discussion on the academic development and academic support models.

seems to have developed organically, either deliberately or as a result of coincidental or historic events.

Boughey (2010) suggested that at least two models of the relationship of student development and academic development exist, both potentially in competition with each other for space in the academic timetable and in the students' lives. The one, alongside the core academic business, is facilitated in learning laboratories and workshops or added and tagged onto the unyielding and rigid academic programme. The other relationship is one of integration, where academic support and student development create shared outcomes and create structural opportunities for complex development on multiple levels. This kind of support is infused into the curriculum and is generalised across the students' experience in higher education.

Some tensions emerge from the structural separation of academic development and academic support. Academic development tends to be de-centralised and managed and facilitated by academics, enabling a fluid relationship between the curriculum, curriculum development, teaching and learning, thinking about pedagogies, and academic development. SDS tends to be centrally managed and staff contracts are "administrative" rather than "academic". Perhaps an added source of tension is the notion of SDS as consisting of administrative staff in offices, who provide a service, rather than of professionals who address systemic issues with similar goals to those of academic development. This notion is based on the artificial distinction between academic and psycho-social development, neglects their intertwined relationship, and divorces them from contextual factors.

Howell (2005) reviewed South African student academic support specifically focussed on disabled students, and identified more "overarching issues that emerged from the study: the failure to integrate support for disabled students into core areas of the institution's functioning" (Howell, 2005, p. 61). This might be extended to other aspects of student support which, similarly, are not integrated into the university's core function.

2.8.5 SDS Integration with and Infusion into Institutions

A widely accepted assertion is that SDS's contribution to higher education is predicated on its integration into the core business of higher education (Baxter-Magolda, 1992; Kegan, 1994; King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996; Kuh, 1995; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perry, 1970; SAACDHE, 2007; Schuh et al., 2010; Feldman, Smart, & Ethington, 2004).

Four arguments⁶⁰ inform the assertion that SDS needs to relate more closely to faculty and to the academic life of students and that “cognitive and affective dimensions of development are related parts of one process” (Baxter-Magolda, 1992; Feldman et al., 2000; Kegan, 1994; King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996, p. 163; Kuh, 1995; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 2010; Nuss, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The first is the constructivist argument that epistemological access is grounded in the active construction of knowledge (Bernstein, 2000), that is, the active interpretation of experience, or as King and Baxter-Magolda (1996) expressed it, “the known is inextricably connected to the knower” (p. 165). Epistemological access is a function of personal development (Jansen, 2001). Knowledge is socially and personally constructed (Boughey, 2005). This was originally formulated by Piaget, who suggested that schemata are actively constructed (and re-constructed) through the active meaning-making in the world.

Vygotsky maintained that knowledge is always contextually constructed. Personal meaning-making is linked to the academic meaning-making (Weiten, 1998). The personal, affective, and social development of the student is inextricably linked to academic development and, hence, to the academic success of students. This has implications for the co-curriculum in that the active engagement with out-of-classroom experiences is correlated to the active engagement within the classroom.

Second, the construction and use of knowledge is related to the student’s sense of self and self-authorship in the higher education institution. The self is pivotal in knowledge construction. Through the self, as the medium of engagement, the student is involved and engaged with the academic experience, which increases persistence in knowledge construction (Astin, 1977; Tinto, 1997).

Third, the process of making meaning is a function of psycho-social development. In other words, it is the psycho-socially mature student who can evaluate different arguments, compare different positions, explore different solutions, and critically engage with the learning process. This is not a reference to the predictable change a person experiences as a result of exposure to higher education but rather to development in the sense of a restructured inner world, incorporating new rules and schemata which engage the world in a different way.

⁶⁰ The discussions of these arguments are further developed in the next chapter which discusses the theories of student development.

Finally, the infusion of SDS into the wider educational experience through the re-definition of learning⁶¹ as a broad process across cognitive, affective, and social domains assists in achieving the educational outcomes of higher education. Learning is synergistic, not segmented. An integrated approach to learning which incorporates student development principles and applications enhances higher education outcomes (Nuss, 2003; Weidman, 1989).

The above arguments present guiding principles for the conceptualisation, positioning, and delivery of SDS in higher education. Organisational structures need to be matched to the outcomes and deliverables of SDS, and, while not “one model fits all,” the SDS domains need to critically examine their organisational structures to evaluate the fit between outcome and structure. Moreover, these need to be predicated on the theoretical assumptions underpinning education, learning, and development.

2.8.6 Summary

In this section, the position of SDS within organisational structures, and how this impacts on SDS scope, role, and function, was reviewed. Overarching models, either theory-based or needs-based or market-based, and perhaps not as neatly distinguishable as suggested here, were discussed.

SDS relationship with the academic development sector was briefly reviewed and this research area was found to be characterised by paucity. The section on positioning SDS within the institution suggests that structural and curriculum integration of SDS contributes to overall student success and that the distinction between academic and personal-social development is artificial, reductionist, and contrary to notions that development is synergistic and not segmented.

2.9 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the application of SDS in higher education in South Africa was reviewed. The first section covered the macro context within which SDS is embedded,

⁶¹ This re-definition of learning is nicely expressed in the title of the ACPA and NASPA publication entitled *Learning reconsidered*, which is premised on the American student affairs “philosophical foundation”, which understands learning as a “comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development” (Keeling, 2004, p. 2).

examining the policy context, student profile, and indicators of student success. This was followed by an outline of SDS scope, role, and function and issues relevant to this debate.

The global context, with specific emphasis on globalisation and neo-liberal influences on SDS, was discussed, and market-related SDS deliverables, such as employability and internationalisation, were explored, followed by a discussion on different kinds of organisational models of SDS.

Part of the development of a comprehensive national SDS framework is the development of SDS associations which address collective issues, perhaps forming “issue based networks” or “advocacy coalitions”, which might be able to advance the debate on SDS issues (Bailey, 2010, p. 14). Hence, a section on national and international associations was included. The international position of SDS was explored in relation to developed and developing countries. In essence, the developed world has much to offer in terms of theories and lessons, and South African SDS practitioners need to critically engage with the influx of theories and also engage in local theory development in order to ensure the “cultural appropriateness” of adopted theories and models⁶².

The issues of framework and guiding principles emerged repeatedly. Originally Harper (1996) and Mandew (2003) raised issues of SDS functioning within the higher education sector in South Africa. The debate around a comprehensive SDS framework in South Africa was later raised by Minister Kader Asmal and again by Minister Naledi Pandor during the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professional (SAASSAP) conferences in 2006 and 2007 (Asmal, 2006; Pandor, 2007). At the African Student Affairs Conference in Bloemfontein in 2011, Lunceford emphasised the need for a comprehensive SDS framework which assists the SDS domain to professionalise itself, to position itself within the universities, and to review issues of efficiency linked to theory and practice.

Calls have been made for a common and shared framework of higher education in South Africa to bring together the “fractious” (Bawa, 2000, p. 6) dimensions of higher education, and of SDS, whose managers need to develop a comprehensive and common understanding of what its role and function is (Bawa, 2000; Lange, 2010; Lunceford, 2011). Bawa (2000) made a call for a contract between higher education and society so as to not only address issues of student success but also to include a focus on the common good, which would enable students to emerge from their higher education experiences actively engaging in

⁶² <http://www.iasasonline.org/>

public life (Buroway, 2010; ESU, 2008; ISAP, 2009; Kezar, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, Sidhu, 2006; Urbanski, 2009).

Since the surge of research and literature from within and about the SDS domain (Botha et al., 2005; Hamrick et al., 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), SDS domains have increasingly become “self-conscious, confident and widely influential” (Nuss, 2003, p. 87) and SDS in South Africa is beginning to carve an identity for itself, informed by theory and local research, as a significant contributor to the core business of higher education.

After this discussion on macro issues affecting SDS, the next chapter will be focussed on the theories which underpin and inform SDS practices.



CHAPTER 3:

THEORIES OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Theory, as the foundation of a discipline, is fundamental in enabling explanatory conceptual constructs of empirical phenomena, in relating knowledge, in creating coherent and consistent methods of enquiries, and in developing effective pragmatic interventions.

Constructivist epistemology emphasises that knowledge is socially constructed and always part of the complex web of multiple realities (Bernstein, 2000). He described the “official recontextualising field” and the “pedagogic recontextualising field” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 42) in exploring the socially constructed context which exists in the learning environment in higher education⁶³. The “official recontextualising field” is described as the official or non-academic domain which is pivotal in shaping climate and culture at a university. The “pedagogic recontextualising field” refers to the domain of knowledge construction and reconstruction, discipline-specific discourses, curriculum, and teaching and learning. These two areas, together with a third, the social domain, constitute “key institutional domains of practice where the interplay of mediating factors in student experience takes place” (Lange, 2010, p. 46).

SDS finds itself straddling these domains: the official recontextualising field (official and non-academic domain), the pedagogic recontextualising field (knowledge construction domain), and the social domain (student experience). American models emphasise the integration of SDS into the academic experience at faculty level (Astin, 1977, 1996; Kuh, 1995; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1997), while

⁶³ Bernstein’s (2000) distinction of domains is used here to introduce the conceptual theoretical domains of SDS. In the previous chapter, it was mentioned that Bernstein’s distinction reflected the physical, structural and organisational issues around SDS, i.e. SDS’s location within ‘administration’ or ‘academic’ domains. SDS spans more and finds itself in the pluralist intersections between the co-curricular and the curricular, between the affective and cognitive, between the faculty and student, between the administration and the student (Case, 2007; Lange, 2010; King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996; Kuh, et al, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Scott et al., 2007; Sennet et al, 2003).

European models of SDS are located within Bernstein's "official recontextualising field" of higher education, where SDS contributes to administrative service delivery. Moreover, SDS is poised to affect the social domain, that is, the "student experience" (Lange, 2010, p. 46), comprised of intra- and inter-personal relationships among students and their relationship with academic staff.

SDS is curiously infused into and affects each of these areas in which students make sense and create meaning out of their experience. Different theoretical constructs and SDS theories explain different aspects of this complex picture, and SDS occupies the intersection of these areas.

SDS is theoretically diverse and at times subscribes, deliberately or implicitly, to complementary and also conflicting theories. However, there are overarching conceptual paradigms which inform the collective approach to SDS. An analysis of the literature reveals that two broad clusters of theories or paradigms are evident:

1. Developmental theories, addressing issues of human growth; and
2. Environmental impact theories, which address the interplay between the environmental factors and the student (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

In general, SDS theory is informed by a) student developmental and b) environmental impact theory, and is designed to "minimise dependence and to empower the individual" (Burke, 1997, p. 8). In broad terms, both theoretical paradigms suggest that the key goals are to assist students in achieving autonomy and identity development while providing opportunities to develop the necessary skills to do so (Burke, 1997; Hambrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; McEwen, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Young, 2003). In order to achieve this, developmental theories focus on the intra- and inter-personal factors which affect and are affected by learning, cognitive, and personal-social development, whereas environmental impact theories attempt to explain the contextual interplay in understanding the achievement of the aims.

In the following section, the prominent developmental theories which describe cognitive, moral, emotional and social, and identity development with specific focus on late adolescence and early adulthood are discussed. A discussion of the environmental impact theories follows, especially those by Astin (1993, 1996), Tinto (1993), Pascarella (1985), Weidman (1984, 1989), and Kuh (Kuh, 1995; Kuh, et al., 2010). The choice for inclusion in this review was based on Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) list of the most prominent theorists in the SDS domain, which overlapped considerably with the review done by

Burkard, Cole, Ott, and Stoflet (2004), who surveyed senior student affairs practitioners' perception⁶⁴ of the most important theories in the SDS domain in America. Van Lingen (2005) proposed the inclusion of the wellness model as a framework for SDS and her synthesised proposals are discussed later in this chapter.

This chapter ends with a summary of the theoretical constructs underpinning SDS as these inform scope, role, and function of SDS in higher education. Theoretical constructs are the lens through which reality is interpreted. Hence, depending on the theory on which SDS is premised, scope, role, and function are shaped by these theoretical constructions (Bernstein, 2000).

3.1 Developmental Theories

Developmental theories view student development as a progressive process towards complex forms of thinking, planning, judging, decision making, and engaging with the self, society, and the world around us. The self becomes less egocentric and a more autonomous social self emerges (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

Viewed through this lens, SDS promotes development, in the Piagetian sense (Piaget, 1976a), where *development* is a general, inherent and spontaneous process promoted by a facilitative environment (as opposed to *learning*, which is the attainment of new knowledge). Developmental theories consider development as a predetermined and discontinuous sequential process of qualitative changes (Naude, 2007; Piaget, 1976a, 1976b). Perry (1970) emphasised that while development is usually sequential, it is also irregular and uneven, occurs in spurts, and can be described as “a helix with expanding radius, indicating how the same issues are faced and revisited repeatedly, but from a broader and increasingly complex perspective” (Perry, 1981, p. 97).

It is traditionally accepted that development in one aspect within the person is closely linked and related to and influenced by development in another aspect (Perry, 1970; Piaget, 1976a). Some suggest that cognitive and emotional development is really part of the same process and “inextricably intertwined” (King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996, p. 163). According to this position, “learning” and “development” are deeply related and any separation is reductionist and artificial (King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996). This integrated perspective of

⁶⁴ Burkard et al.'s (2004) study examined the perceptions of senior student affairs practitioners in the USA regarding the theories important for professional practice for student affairs practitioners.

knowledge construction, of meaning-making and the awareness of the self, promotes the infusion of SDS programmes into the core business of higher education, including Bernstein's "official recontextualising field" and the "pedagogic recontextualising field" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 42).

Developmental theories explain the development throughout the life span. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the undergraduate students' developmental stage within each theoretical domain will be highlighted, typically aged 17-23 years, and also called late adolescence or early adulthood⁶⁵ (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Weiten, 1998). I will discuss the major proponents in each domain.

Developmental theories focus on different aspects of development, and, while not separate or exclusive, the focus areas discussed here include cognitive development, moral development, psycho-social development, and identity development. These are the conceptual domains which make up the collective of developmental theories of SDS.

3.1.1 Cognitive Development

The major proponents of cognitive developmental psychology were Piaget, Vygotsky, Perry, and King, Kitchener, and Baxter-Magolda. Each one contributed key insights to the area of cognitive development.

Piaget. The most seminal work in the area of intellectual development comes from Piaget, a Swiss psychologist who developed the original theories on which various neo-Piagetian theorists base their thinking.

Piaget defined intellectual development as an adaptive process which emerges through engagement with the world. According to Piaget (Piaget, 1976a, 1976b; Weiten, 1998), it is based on discovery or on inventions which build on previously developed cognitive structures (also called schemata). A key concept is that cognitive learning is predicated on development. Development precedes learning, that is, from the individual

⁶⁵ Although there is an increasing influx of so-called 'mature', also called 'non-traditional' students, entering university via prior-learning routes or as 'returning students', these are not the focus of SDS theories. Currently in South Africa, the definition of 'mature' student is 23 years and older; however, other definitions include 'returning' students, which shifts the focus to more complex notions of the 'non-traditional' student. Notions of 'non-traditional' challenge 'traditional' pedagogic and SDS practices which raise issues of what 'widening access' means. According to Scott, et al. (2007), in South Africa expanding provision to accommodate the 'non-traditional' student is at the core of transformation, otherwise higher education will merely become a "crowded traditional system" (Murphy, cited in Scott et al., 2007, p. 130).

development towards social engagement. Piaget put enormous value on real experience and the activity of deriving meaning (Piaget, 1976b; Weiten, 1998). Accordingly, development is not a passive process but requires active engagement and involvement with the world.

According to Piaget, humans seek a state of equilibrium between their internal and external worlds and hence build cognitive schemata which reflect and explain the world. If their pre-existing schemata or their pre-developed schemata about the world are in dissonance with a new experience, then two processes become active: assimilation or accommodation. “Assimilation involves interpreting new experiences in terms of existing mental structures without changing them” (Weiten, 1998, p. 437), whereas, “Accommodation involves changing existing mental structures to explain new experiences” (Weiten, 1998, p. 437), that is, people adapt their schemata to reflect and accommodate the new experiences.

Adjustment to new environments and new experiences obviously involves both processes, but it is especially the process of accommodation which creates new ways of thinking and new ways of processing new information (Piaget, 1976b; Weiten, 1998).

Piaget thought of development in terms of schemata, much like Kantian thought (Jardine, 1992). Piaget, like Kant, articulated the basic categories which allow the organisation of incoming experiences, that is, implying epistemological *a priori* innate receptors for experience (Jardine, 1992). The experiences are organised in terms of spatiality, temporality, causality, and object and are necessary developmental precursors for any experience to be processed.

Piaget devised a stage model of development. The fourth stage, relevant for students in higher education, is the “formal operational stage” which, according to Piaget, begins at age 11 and continues through adolescence into adulthood (Weiten, 1998). This stage is most relevant for SDS as it describes the cognitive stage in which students in higher education find themselves. During this stage, people are described as being able to make abstractions and move beyond the concrete, being able to reason about abstract principles, constructs, and consequences. The person in this stage is able to appreciate complex and paradoxical positions, think deductively and inductively, systematically, logically, and hypothetically. Piaget suggested that further changes in cognition have to do with degree rather than nature of thought (Piaget, 1976b; Weiten, 1998).

Piaget is celebrated as the founder of cognitive theories of development. His theory is, however, criticised for underestimating children’s and adolescents’ cognition, for making

little allowance for “mixing” of phases of development, and for underestimating the influence of culture on cognitive development (Weiten, 1998).

Vygotsky. Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist who developed his ideas in the first quarter of the 20th century and is best known for his cultural-historical psychological theory, or social development theory (Weiten, 1998). Vygotsky’s dialectical theory focusses on how the social milieu and cultural context influence thinking and cognitive development, much in line with Marx and Hegel and related to Bourdieu’s “notion of the habitus”, emphasising the intricate relationship of the sense-maker with her/his milieu and her/his reliance on the milieu for any sense-making (cited in Mutch, 2009).

Vygotsky’s theory is particularly useful to SDS thinking about learning in that it creates space for thinking about the roles the context and the facilitator have in the learning process, that is, SDS staff and faculty staff and the campus environment. Vygotsky’s social development theory’s emphasis on the contextual role may allow for it to be included with the environmental impact theories. However, Vygotsky focussed on the process of learning and development rather than on the study of impact on development, and hence, his theory remains within the developmental cluster (Weiten, 1998).

Most relevant for the context of this study is Vygotsky’s notion of cultural mediation and internalisation. According to Vygotsky, cultural and contextual knowledge is acquired through interpersonal communication, which means it is personally constructed. Discourse, explicit language, and implicit symbols are developed and acquired via integration into a particular group or culture. The construction of knowledge is culture-biased, created within a culture or subculture, and internalised. Internalisation is the mastery of skills through active engagement with the cultural group (Weiten, 1998).

The three major tenets of Vygotsky’s social development theory focus on the following:

1. The role of social interaction in the development of cognition: social and cultural experience precedes development. Vygotsky asserted that development is first inter-psychological and then intra-psychological. This locates learning and development within a social and cultural sphere where social relationships precede development and cognitive sense-making. This is fundamentally different to Piaget, who maintained that intrapersonal development precedes social engagement as a necessity.

2. The notion of the “more knowledgeable other”: the importance of the influence of a higher ability—more developed ability—in facilitating development. The social milieu is thus crucial to the facilitation of development.
3. The concept of the “zone of proximal development”: also described as *potential*, the area between performance during facilitation and independent performance. (cited in Weiten, 1998, p. 73).

Vygotsky’s thinking is particularly relevant for the higher education context in that he emphasised the participation of the learner in developing knowledge and mastering competencies, rather than the ‘transmission’ of knowledge from learned to the learner. Vygotsky stressed the role of the learning context, which allows for active participation and collaboration in learning, that the context stimulates the learning in that it presents something “within reach” of the cognition, and it is in this zone of proximal development during which cognitive development takes place.

The notion that meaning is derived from the relationship of the self with the social world is central to Vygotskian thought, as he locates the individual not in the self but in the construction of relationships and meaning-making as a reciprocal process between self and others.

Perry. Perry (1970) expanded on Piagetian thinking and focussed especially on the student stage of intellectual development. In addition to cognitive (intellectual) development, he incorporated affective components and “personal meaning making”. In contrast to Piaget, Perry maintained, based on research with exclusive male subjects, which is also the basic critique his work faces, that intellectual development is ego-strengthening and is inseparable from affective development (Perry, 1981). He described development in terms of “positions”, comparable to a “view point” or “outlook”, rather than stages (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perry, 1970, 1981). His

Like Piaget, Perry subscribed to the constructs of assimilation and accommodation, also describing them as “differentiations and reorganizations” (cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 36) and concurred with Piaget (1976b) that accommodation often requires conscious insight or reflection.

Perry compensated somewhat for the lack of elaboration in Piaget’s final stage. Perry separated the formal operational stage into two different positions. Higher education students, according to Perry (1970, 1981), begin to deal with complex and paradoxical information,

dissecting and integrating it. Relativism is accepted and ambiguity tolerated (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Perry, 1970, 1981).

The most relevant contribution of Perry's work for SDS is the shift in students' thinking from dualism to multiplicity to contextual relativism (positions 5-6) and, finally, to commitment to relativity (positions 7-9). According to Perry, students develop through positions 7 to 9 and test new truths and their relativity, eventually making a firm commitment to the establishment of an identity, a commitment to ideas and values (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perry, 1981).

Perry (1981) also described the defensive positions some students might assume when confronted with the reality of relativism. Anxiety, disillusionment, and anger might be evoked, and Perry coined the term *temporising*, which is the attempt to avoid reality through the postponement of development. Perry also described other defences such as retreating or regressing (returning to dualistic and dichotomous thinking), which is coupled with moralistic self-righteousness and fear and dislike of the "other". The "other" is viewed as representing a challenge to dualistic thinking and hence denigrated, and de-valued, to avoid being challenged into reviewing one's own dualistic ways of thinking. The final stage, according to Perry (1970, 1981), is one of maturity, which embraces paradoxes and tolerates tensions created by conflicting realities (Perry, 1970, 1981).

King, Kitchener, and Baxter-Magolda. King, Kitchener and Baxter-Magolda all extract nuanced constructs from their research into the late adolescent and early adulthood developmental stages, which are the stages of students in higher education (Baxter-Magolda, 1992, 1999; King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996; King & Kitchener, 1994, 2002).

King and Kitchener described the concept of "reflective judgment" during the cognitive development of the student's developmental stage. Reflective judgment is slightly different from critical thought, in that it needs to be applied in complex, real, unstructured situations which have no "right" answer (King & Kitchener, 1994, 2002; King, Wood & Mines, 1990). King and Kitchener (1994, 2002) asserted that humans proceed through stages of development, culminating in the final stage of "reflective thinking", in which students use reflective judgment to navigate complex and paradoxical situations.

Baxter-Magolda (1992, 1999) identified gender differentiations emerging from her studies with university students. Like King and Kitchener (1994), she emphasised the complex interplay between the epistemological, the intra-personal, and the inter-personal

domains in the cognitive development of students (Baxter-Magolda, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

3.1.2 Moral Development

The following theories involve the development of ethical decision making and moral judgment. It is commonly accepted that moral development is related to intellectual development (Weiten, 1998). On the basis of Piaget and neo-Piagetian thinking, most argue that the higher forms of moral reasoning require abstraction and hypothetical thinking. Some theorists suggest, however, that in addition, learnt pro-social behaviours contribute towards ethical behaviour and moral reasoning (Weiten, 1998).

Moral and ethical reasoning in university students is a traditionally tacit outcome of the university education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and is part of the civil education articulated by the early universities of Europe and the liberal arts colleges of the United States during the late 18th century. The moral character of the graduate has been a traditional focus of the universities in the United Kingdom, and this tradition has influenced American student affairs and, by extension, also South African thinking in SDS (Dalton, 1999). The major proponents in the area of moral development are Kohlberg and Gilligan.

Kohlberg. According to Kohlberg (1971, 1981), morality develops through a process of progressive stages and is a product of the person's cognitive processes and an engagement with the environment's ethical dilemmas and challenges. Increasingly complex differentiations are recognised and appreciated, which inform moral reasoning. Kohlberg organised the stages into three clusters: (1) pre-conventional, (2) conventional, and (3) post-conventional moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1971; Weiten, 1998).

Students at higher education institutions are typically in the post-conventional stage, in which the student develops a personal code of ethics. In this stage, moral thinking is flexible and rigid adherence to rules is less absolute. Complex moral tensions are tolerated and personally negotiated. In essence, according to Kohlberg, moral development progresses from a focus on the self and the individual to the social and, ultimately, to the universality of morality (Kibler, 1993; Kohlberg, 1971, 1981; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Weiten, 1998). Kohlberg's stage theory is criticised for neglecting the development through mixed phases and for its cultural limitations and potential bias (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Gilligan. Gilligan (1981, 1982), a student of Kohlberg, criticised Kohlberg's theory for equating morality with justice, which reflects males' socialisation into values of justice and autonomy as separate from human relations (Gilligan, 1981, 1982; Pascarella &

Terenzini, 2005). She referred to Kohlberg's theory as andro-centric or male-centric, describing the male bias in Kohlberg's theory as being due to the judging of female behaviour using male standards. Gilligan (1981, 1982) argued that the concept of "ethics of care" and notions of inter-connectedness are better developed in females but poorly reflected in Kohlberg's theory, who bases it on the "ethics of justice" perspective.

Gilligan suggested that moral development emerges in the relationship of the self to the world and culminates in the manifestation of care, interdependence, and responsibility, which are especially developed in females (Gilligan, 1981, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Gilligan had a social-emotional focus and described the concept of ethics of care, social connectedness, and responsibility, while Kohlberg's thinking was more aligned with concepts of social justice, autonomy, rights, and social separation (Gilligan, 1981; Hamrick, Evans, Schuh, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Weiten, 1998).

3.1.3 Psycho-Social Development

Psycho-social development is the term that describes the psychological development in interaction with the social world. This is particularly relevant for students in higher education as their internal, psychological development is related to their social relationships and vice versa. It occurs in the stage of late adolescence and early adulthood, when the sense of self is developed within the social context (Weiten, 1998). The major theorists in this area are Erikson and Chickering.

Erikson. According to Erikson (1963, 1968), whose theory is formative in human development paradigms, development occurs within a social context and in social relationships. Stages are sequential and discrete and pose different developmental challenges, also called "crises". Erikson's epigenetic principle describes this process and has formed the foundation for other psychosocial theories (Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1963, 1968).

Erikson described eight stages of lifelong development and named these according to the development, or failure thereof, of key competencies: (1) trust versus mistrust, (2) autonomy versus shame and doubt, (3) initiative versus guilt, (4) industry versus inferiority, (5) identity versus identity diffusion and role confusion, (6) intimacy and solidarity versus isolation, (7) generativity versus self-absorption, and (8) integrity versus despair (Erikson, 1963; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; Weiten, 1998). In ever-expanding social relations, the *crises* shift in focus and once resolved, mature and migrate to the next level with its new developmental challenges.

For the student age group, the fifth and the sixth stages are particularly relevant. Students are challenged to develop a sense of identity, autonomy, and integrated self. They need to explore different roles in order to develop a firm sense of identity. Intimacy and solidarity, which involve the exploration of romantic and platonic relationships, facilitate the negotiation of this stage. Emotional separation from the family of origin and from parents is vital in learning to make decisions based on one's own thinking and reasoning. Finding peer acceptance is part of the challenge of this stage (Erikson, 1968).

According to Erikson, the student is afforded a psycho-social moratorium, in which s/he can explore different roles, play with different decisions and solutions, almost with impunity, within a developmentally safe environment, which affords a liberty unknown to the older adult (Erikson, 1968).

Chickering. Chickering was most significant in formulating an extensive framework for college student development (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Hamrick et al., 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and is therefore discussed in more detail here.

Chickering (1969) developed the seven-vector development model, which was later refined with his colleague Reisser (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The vectors are described as having "direction and magnitude" not directional but in "spirals" and "steps" (Chickering, 1969, p. 8) and move towards individuation and a commitment to a unique set of values and ideals.

Chickering's seven vectors are progressive, although not in stages; development across vectors might be simultaneous and in spurts. Revisiting earlier points on the vector is possible and serves to achieve increased differentiation and integration of ever-increasing complexity. Much research across different age groups, gender, race, and varying settings and contexts supports the model's constructs (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Hamrick et al., 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The seven vectors of development (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) are as follow:

1. Achieving competence: The higher education experience develops increased competence in the student; knowledge acquisition is crucial in the development of this vector;
2. Managing emotions: Students begin to manage their emotional lives, develop impulse control, and develop appropriate responses to emotional arousal in such a way that it promotes the educational process;

3. Moving through autonomy towards inter-dependence: Students move towards emotional independence from reliance on others' affirmation and approval. Students develop abilities to manage their lives and affairs independently of others. At the same time, interpersonal relationships begin to reflect equality and reciprocity;
4. Developing mature interpersonal relationships: Through social and intimate relationships as learning experiences, students develop an emerging sense of self and are increasingly capable of healthy intimacy and commitment based on interdependence;
5. Establishing identity: This is a central vector, relating to previous and to subsequent development. The student needs to develop a complex identity, within a complex context, with complex pressures. Aspects of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious contexts, and cultural and familial pressures need to be negotiated;
6. Developing purpose: Students need to develop a sense of intentionality and direction, evident in planning and future focussed orientation;
7. Developing integrity: This reflects the development of coherent values and beliefs, consistent across contexts, manifesting in socially responsible behaviours. This included an appreciation of the relativity of values and the tolerance of contradictions.

The most valuable aspect of Chickering and Reisser's work is their emphasis on the relevance of theory for practice, especially for the SDS domain. The vectors cover the student's development.

However, Chickering and Reisser have extended their discussions to include areas within the context which can facilitate development along these vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This is essential in linking the psycho-social model of vectors to the environmental impact theories. The institutional environment can either facilitate student development or can present barriers.

Seven areas of influence on student experience and student success within higher education institution are described by Chickering and Reisser, (1993):

1. Clarity of institutional objectives and internal consistency of policies, practices, and activities
2. Institutional size, which enables opportunity for participation

3. Frequent student-faculty contact
4. Curricula which integrate content and process
5. Flexible teaching which mobilises student involvement
6. Multiple social student communities
7. Student development programmes and services characterised by educational content and immersed into student faculty life.

These are clearly articulated guidelines for higher education institutions to enable a positive student experience. In addition, while perhaps rather broad and over inclusive, the model gives some indication of SDS's scope, role, and function within a learning environment.

3.1.4 Identity Development

Developmental models all, to some degree or another, acknowledge the central stage of identity development to be during late adolescence and in the early adulthood years. The identity differentiation and integration is discussed either in general terms or concerning aspects of identity, such as gender, race, or disability and other dimensions.

Marcia (1980) elaborated on Erikson's "adolescence crisis" and distinguished two tasks. First, the exploration of and search amongst alternatives and, subsequently, the commitment to an identity which reflects stability and continuity. Marcia discussed four tensions in the process of identity formation:

1. Identity diffusion represents the lack of any crisis or challenges;
2. Foreclosed identities are those described as assumed without questioning;
3. The moratorium state (much like Erikson's psycho-social moratorium concept) affords the student the space to actively explore and consciously experiment with aspects of identity; and
4. Identity achievement is the commitment to an identity, in terms of gender, racial, sexual, and religious or other aspects of the self (Hamrick et al., 2002; Marcia, 1980).

Gender identity formation theories raise similar critiques to traditional identity theories, as presented by Gilligan (1981, 1982). Josselson (1996) suggested that for women, social and intimate relationships and their investment in and attachment to others are vital in their fluid identity formation. In addition, her research results suggested that for women, their relational value context is more crises-evoking than their occupational and political value context (Hamrick et al., 2002; Josselson, 1996).

Racial identity formation is particularly interesting for SDS in South Africa. SDS programmatic implications from theory are not available in the South African research or literature but can be found in some North American literature. Added complications are the varying definitions of race and social contexts, especially in South Africa, where race and its related constructs have undergone fundamental changes over the past decade. However, as Nair (2008) emphasised, there is no doubt that the “negative consequences of sustained exposure to an oppressive system of such magnitude on the identity development of the oppressed group are arguably immeasurable” (Nair, 2008, p. 38).

In her 1994 discussion of the challenges in racial identity formation, Helms suggested that to interrogate and triumph over internalised racism is one of the key themes for racial identity development, and she added that this needs to take place within “varying conditions of racial oppression” (cited in McEwen, 2003, p. 207). Phinney (1989) discussed identity formation in minority group adolescents and concluded that the sense of belonging to a group is universal, but especially challenging in minorities.

Identity development theories concerning people with a disability as sharing the “oppressed status” have emerged since the legislation about disability rights has gained societal acceptance (McEwen, 2003). Especially because of the HIV and Aids pandemic in South Africa, students with disability from HIV and Aids join the students with congenital and invisible disabilities to form a considerable group of students to whom SDS practitioners need to respond.

Fine and Asch (2000, p. 133) identified four social constructions about persons with disabilities:

- that the “person and the disability are synonymous”,
- that the person is a “victim”,
- that the problems presented are caused by the disability, and
- that the disability is “central to the person’s self-definition”.

It is these socially constructed perceptions of students with disabilities which SDS needs to be aware of when conceptualising programmes and interventions. In addition, the social construction of disability highlights the barriers in the social and learning environment, and again, SDS practitioners need to create awareness of these environmental and contextual constraints within higher education.

Identities are multiple; they intersect and are sometimes ambiguous and sometimes explicit, at times fluid and complex and at times rigid. It is especially the age group of 17-25

year olds who explore and experiment with roles and identities, and the fluid and evolving development during this stage informs SDS programs and interventions (Komives & Woodard, 2003).

3.1.5 Summary of Developmental Theories

Developmental theories focus on the psychological changes that occur in humans and, while primarily focussed on childhood development, also include development across the life span, including cognitive, moral, psycho-social and identity development of late adolescence and early adulthood, the stage most of students are in. Developmental theories focus on the “intra-individual growth dimensions” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 46) while de-focussing from the social and contextual impacts on development and learning. Internal factors, rather than environmental factors, are considered the agents of learning.

SDS interventions which focus on attachment, adjustment, and “front loading”⁶⁶ are premised on developmental theories and on the assumptions that development occurs in stages and might be accelerated by intensified support and development during the first year of experience (Case, 2007; Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008; Sennet et al, 2003; Wood & Lithauer, 2005; Woosley, 2003).

The developmental theories articulated ‘ideal’ outcomes for personal development in students. Students are expected to be reflective, critical, decisive, tolerant, responsive and responsible (Kegan, 1994). Perhaps it needs to be emphasised that most students are only at the beginning of developing the internal structures that manifest these attributes. Kegan (1994) is ubiquitously quoted when he reminds researchers that students might well be overwhelmed by the demands made on them, that the expectations of “making meaning is more complex than the meaning-making structures” and that the demands are “over their heads” (p. 22), given their developmental stage.

⁶⁶ The term ‘*front loading*’ was used liberally by Prof Martin Hall, Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Cape Town during the 1990s and year 2000. The term has come to denote development which is focussed on the first year of the students’ academic career which might be in the form of bridging, access or foundation programmes. The idea that students can be ‘up skilled’ evokes much criticism especially from authors who highlighted the ‘epistemological gap’ particularly first generation students need to overcome.

3.2 Environmental Impact Theories

The conceptual paradigm of developmental theories complements the environmental impact theories which underpin the “college impact models of student change” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 52). These theories explore the interaction of the environment with the individual at the micro level, for instance amongst small peer groups and at the organisational or institutional and societal level (macro level), for instance, in the interplay of social class and race and the educational process and experience. A prominent position is ascribed to the role of the context within which the student needs to succeed. Scott et al. (CHE, 2007, p. 38) described the institutional context as a “key issue” in addressing South African national challenges of student success, and hence, the environmental impact theories are of particular importance.

Much like the developmental theories, the environmental impact theories locate the site of growth and development in the student. However, the environmental impact theories broaden their view, and hence the site of intervention, that is, the scope of SDS, away from the intra-psychic and inter-social to include the contextual. Student development and academic outcomes become a shared responsibility, shared between the individual and her/his context. Agency for success is viewed as not only within the students but also within their academic and social contexts in the higher educational Institution.

Attachment to the higher education institution seems to be a construct which emerges as one of the predictors of student success (Case, 2007; Jansen, 2004). Attachment is a function of the students and their environment and describes the relationship of the students with their institution, how they define themselves in relation to it, how they share institutional goals, see themselves mirrored, recognised, and valued in the context (Case, 2007). This person-environment fit, or engagement and alienation as the converse, is particularly fragile in the beginning of the academic career. Factors present in the student (such as adjustment competencies) as much as factors in the environment (perhaps with an alienating campus climate and culture) contribute to it (Lange, 2010).

The environmental impact theories have a recent history and emerged since the 1950s, and are increasingly generating interest. For instance, Lange, in the *Council on Higher Education, Monitor 10* (2010), in exploring diverse factors beyond the academic domain which affect student experiences and student success, stated unequivocally that “What is missing ... is a clear conceptual framework that can integrate macro and micro levels of

analysis and show how these mediate students' experiences and in turn their academic achievement" (Lange, 2010, p. 45). This is an exciting call to begin to integrate SDS into a comprehensive conceptual framework of higher education which includes multiple and complex realities: academic, co-curricular, and social.

3.2.1 Environmental Impact Theorists

The headings that follow describe the proponents of particular theories, rather than the conceptual domain and the theories themselves. Alexander Astin, Vincent Tinto, Ernest Pascarella, John Weidman, and George Kuh are some of the major thinkers in the domain of environmental impact theories (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) who have researched and published their thinking prolifically and will be discussed below.

Astin. Astin proposed the prevailing I-E-O model: the input-environment-outcome model (Astin, 1977, 1993, 1996). This model proposes that outcomes, defined with different emphasis, but mainly around student academic success, are a function of input (the student) and her/his interaction with the university environment. Lewin, the founder of social psychology and organisational psychology, had already in the 1930s represented the impact of the environment on behaviour in the famous equation $B = f(P \times E)$, which translates into *behaviour is the result of the interaction of the person with her/his environment* (Hamrick et al., 2002). As in Lewin's thinking, central in Astin's theory is the interaction of the student with her/his environment, not the environment in itself.

Input is the demographic and familial background, academic abilities, and aptitudes that students bring to their higher education experiences. The university environment includes all staff, students, practices and policies, institutional cultures, and degree programmes which students meet at university. The *outcome* is the students after college: their attributes, their competencies, their values, and their aspirations.

The central tenet in Astin's (1985) model is the concept of involvement, defined as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the students devote to the academic experience (p. 133). "Students learn by becoming involved" (p. 133), and Astin emphasises that involvement can be in purely academic but may also be in social and personal domains. Five principles of involvement are described (Astin, 1985, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005):

1. Investment of psychological energy into the task or people
2. Involvement is continuous
3. Involvement is measured in qualitative and quantitative terms

4. Extent of learning is directly proportional to the degree of involvement, and
5. Educational effectiveness is directly related to the capacity to attract student involvement.

Astin (1985) ascribed a key role to the institution in presenting opportunities for involvement. However, the student needs to actively capitalise on opportunities presented to her/him. Hence, development is a function of the environmental influence and the active engagement of the student with the opportunities presented (Astin, 1985, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to Astin, challenges and support need to be balanced in order to create an environment which presents optimal opportunities for engagement and development (cited in Hamrick, 2002).

Astin's work on "student integration", published in 1977, in his seminal book *Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes and knowledge* has provided the foundation for the currently much-used concept of "student engagement".

The discussions on student engagement have attracted the attention of South African researchers since the Student Engagement Survey, commissioned by the Council on Higher Education, in 2009 (CHE, 2010), and more nuanced research areas have emerged such as styles of engagements, outcomes of engagements, and the short- and long-term effects of student engagement, focussing on surface and deep learning. The discussion on student alienation is related to student engagement (Case, 2007). Some scholars indicate that the measures for engagement on the one end of the continuum reflect as measures of alienation at the other end of the continuum (Trowler, 2010).

Tinto. Together with Astin, Tinto is considered to have contributed seminal work to the conceptual paradigm of university student development, and his theory is described as "the most influential model" (McCubbin, 2003, p. 1).

Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997) developed a model of student retention which highlighted interaction with the university context. Tinto suggested that the degree of student connectedness is predictive of student retention (Tinto, 1975). Tinto's seminal "communities of learning" concept has shifted debates in SDS and teaching and learning communities to re-focus on the contextual impact as being highly influential on academic development and learning (Tinto, 1997, 1998). Tinto maintained that a complementary relationship exists between social integration and academic integration, which positively influences persistence and retention (cited in Mannan, 2007).

Tinto explained the intra-institutional impact on the student and produced the “longitudinal model of institutional departure” (Tinto, 1993, p. 114). It links pre-entry attributes of the students, via their goals and commitments to the institutional experience, where “academic integration” and “social integration” are key factors in influencing the students’ successful completion of studies. Tinto described his work as an “interactive model” of primarily “sociological” character (Tinto, 1993, p. 112). Tinto’s model is dynamic in that the student’s goals and intentions are continuously reshaped through interactions with the organisation and the academic and social structures.

Tinto (1993) defined integration as the alignment of students’ attitudes and values with the social (peers), the academic (faculty), and the institutional goals. As integration increases, so do the personal goals which link the student to the institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Negative experiences distance the student from the academic and social community of the institution and reduce commitment to the shared goal (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Persistence is thus a function of integration into the higher educational system, academic and social.

Tinto’s “integration” is similar to Astin’s concept of “involvement” (Astin, 1985, 1996) but with more textured components which allow for more operationalisations. In addition, Tinto’s learning communities span different contexts, such as academic disciplines and beyond the faculty into residences (Tinto, 1997, 1998). Tinto’s student integration model has been criticised for its limited generalisability (McCubbin, 2003). Some studies seem to indicate that some traditional and some non-traditional students, such as mature and returning students (as much as minority students) do not show a convincing correlation between integration and retention and persistence and attrition, as asserted by Tinto (McCubbin, 2003).

Pascarella. Pascarella (1985) proposed a causal model of environmental effect on student development. According to Pascarella, student development is a function of the interplay between five variables. The student’s background, together with the institutional characteristics, shapes the third factor, which is the university environment. These three influence the degree and quality of the interaction with faculty, staff, and students, which are also called “agents of socialization” (Pascarella, 1985, p. 10). The quality of the student effort is influenced by the student’s background, the institutional characteristics, and the agents of socialisation. The learning and cognitive development is the collective outcome of all factors and their relative interplay.

Key in Pascarella's model is the role he ascribes to the institutional characteristics and the organisational structure in influencing the student's learning experience. Like Tinto, Pascarella emphasised the dynamic interplay between students and their engagements with their academic and social environment on campus.

Weidman. Weidman was deeply influenced by Tinto and Astin and built on their environmental impact theories. He extended their thinking to include the psychological and social factors into his model of "undergraduate socialization" (Weidman, 1989, p. 299). Students' predisposing factors and the formal and informal influences of the family, social, institutional, and societal impacts converge to influence the outcomes, such as degree and career choices, life-style aspirations, values and ideals (Weidman, 1984, 1989).

Weidman's model is particularly interesting as it incorporates broader phenomena, which are located in society, as contributing to student success. The synergy of the micro and macro level, from within and external to the higher educational environment, including non-university reference groups, highlights the societal role in student success.

Kuh. Kuh directs the Centre for the National Survey of Student Engagement in Indiana, USA, which works with student-experience research and engagement nationally across the United States of America. The recognition of student engagement as a vital construct for student development has spread from the United States of America to South Africa and has become known to many in higher education through the South African Survey on Student Engagement (SASSE) which was done at a few higher education institutions in South Africa during 2009.

Kuh's student engagement model suggests that students' academic and personal-social engagement is predictive of academic outcome. Along with colleagues, Kuh (Kuh et al., 1991) showed that students need to have a sense of belonging to the institution before they engage with and be engaged by the university. Schlossberg (cited in Hamrick, 2002) proposed four components of "mattering" that contribute to a sense of belonging, and these underpin Kuh's concept of a student's sense of belonging (Hamrick, 2002, p. 86):

1. Importance: a feeling of being cared about;
2. Ego extension: believing that another empathises with one's successes and failures;
3. Dependence: feeling needed;
4. Appreciation: a sense that one's efforts are valued by others.

Kuh spoke of the critical issue of “creating a sense of belonging, a feeling on the part of the students that the institution acknowledges the human needs of social and psychological comfort and that they are full and valued members of the campus community” (cited in Hamrick, 2002, p. 87). This kind of validation may occur in varied contexts on campus: in the classroom, on the sports field, in student societies, in the residences, or anywhere else where the student and her/his environment may find a point of engagement.

Kuh’s research on student experience underscores Kuh’s model on engagement, and his results showed that student-faculty interaction is correlated to academic success (Kuh & Hu, 2001). Kuh (1995) agreed with Astin (1993) that peer-to-peer interaction in out-of-classroom activities has a significant impact on academic success and has the potential to increase academic development.

3.2.2 Summary of Environmental Impact Theories

It is recognised that intrinsic factors, such as scholastic ability and motivation, are key predictors of student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Beyond these, the environmental impact theories are crucial in understanding the contextual factors which contribute towards student success. Decades of theory development based on empirical large-scale research, mainly in the USA, indicates that interaction and engagement with the campus and faculty have a positive effect on academic outcomes. Not only academic interaction but also out-of-classroom, co-curricular, and peer-to-peer interactions are formative and influence academic outcomes and broader cognitive, personal, and social development⁶⁷ (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 1995; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This has been confirmed by authors of South African research studies who have emphasised the role of an *engaging* or *alienating* higher education context as either enabling or as presenting barriers to student success (Case, 2007; Sennett, et al, 2003).

The discussion on the environmental impact theories included the exploration of student involvement (Astin), social and academic integration (Tinto), socialisation of undergraduate students (Weidman), and the integrated model of student engagement (Kuh), focussing on how students engage with their learning and also on how faculty and staff can facilitate opportunities for engagement.

⁶⁷ Kuh (1995) offers a useful framework for the alignment of outcomes (cognitive, personal and social development operationalised in terms of competencies) with the out-of-class and co-curricular experiences (operationalised in terms of activities and programmes).

Environmental impact theories are focussed on the factors which influence development, as opposed to the developmental theories which are focussed on the intra-personal constructs that change during development and the personal characteristics which contribute towards student success. In addition, environmental impact theories centre on the organisational factors that influence student learning and student development, such as organisational structures, institutional policies, and faculty-specific practices which are understood to fundamentally affect student learning and student development. Institutional climate and culture are considered central factors in shaping student experience (Scott et al, 2007; CHE, 2010).

Scott et al. (2007) remarked on the importance of campus climate and environmental factors and how these relate to the academic domain, when addressing issues of student success, and they asserted that contextual factors, such as institutional climate and culture, “have emerged as key issues” in student persistence and student success (Scott et al., 2007, p. 38).

SDS environmental impact theories illuminate issues in the intersections between the personal and academic development affecting student success. Particularly in South Africa, where environmental and contextual factors present inhibitors to the educational process, environmental impact theories present very useful ways of thinking about solutions when considering issues of student success in South Africa.

3.3 Wellness Model as Conceptual Framework for SDS

Wellness models have been used in some local and international SDS domains as the guiding paradigm (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Van Lingen, 2005). The “holistic” development of students, as emphasised by wellness models, is an overarching aim of most paradigms and spans the essence of the developmental and environmental theories (Van Lingen, 2005).

Some SDS divisions across South Africa and some within the USA have adopted the wellness model as a framework for guiding SDS work with students. Van Lingen’s exploration (2005) of the use of the wellness models for SDS is of particular relevance here. She describes the wellness model application at the SDS department at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth, South Africa and concludes that it is a suitable model for the context at NMMU (Van Lingen, 2005).

Wellness is a multi-dimensional construct which synthesises the constructs of physical, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual, and occupational dimensions of human development and human experience. Subjective experiences of wellbeing, balance, physical health, and psychological functioning, conceptualised within the paradigm of positive psychology, are essential ingredients in current wellness models (Seligman, 2002). Wellness models assert the notion that development is holistic, multi-factorial, and relative to the subjective experience.

Hettler, the original proponent of the integrated and holistic wellness model, proposed a six-dimension wellness model during the 1970s in the USA and asserted that by balancing and actively seeking to improve these dimensions, overall wellbeing can be achieved (Hettler, 1984, 1986). Hettler's model was developed in a cross-disciplinary way and applied at the Wisconsin-Stevens Point University SDS in the USA during the 1970s. The wellness dimensions are comprised of the following:

- Physical wellness: understood as health;
- Social wellness: contributing to one's human and physical environment for common welfare;
- Emotional wellness: understood to represent awareness and acceptance of a wider range of emotions;
- Spiritual wellness: the willingness and ability to transcend oneself to question the meaning and purpose of life;
- Occupational wellness: to contribute unique skills and talents to meaningful and rewarding work;
- Intellectual wellness: this is evident in self-directed behaviour around the development of cognitive achievements contributing to a more satisfying existence.

Wellness models have, since Hettler's conceptualisation, proliferated, and other models, such as Travis's "iceberg" model have emerged (Myers & Sweeney, 2004). The iceberg model suggests that only a small aspect of health is overt, which is predicated on covert aspects such as lifestyle, behavioural patterns, spiritual aspects, motivations, and so on. The iceberg model shows that wellness is on a continuum and not static, but essentially a process of striving for greater wellbeing and health. Shafer (1996) contributed to the wellness theories with an emphasis on the relational and contextual factors, accommodating some culture-specific articulations of wellness.

In the contexts of the theoretical underpinnings of the environmental impact theories, wellness models focus on the programme delivery and fall short of addressing systemic or organisational issues which may act as enablers for or barriers to student success.

The wellness paradigm has been criticised as Eurocentric and as too pragmatic to illuminate issue of ill-health or wellness within complex contexts. Also, the notion of wellness is subjectively constructed and difficult to employ for research purposes. Sen (1984, 1995, 2001) and Nussbaum (1995, 2000) maintained that context and uniqueness within the relationship to the context (akin to Gilligan's concept of "ethics of care") are important in considering issues of wellness and creating conditions which promote wellness.

Researchers have suggested that self-reports about wellness may not constitute reliable indicators of wellness, as people adjust their expectations, their experiences, and their narratives about their lives and wellbeing depending on the context to which they become accustomed (Nussbaum, 1995, 2000; Sen, 1984, 2001; Sevenhuijsen, Bozalek, Gouws, & Minnaar-McDonald, 2003). The capabilities approach discussed by Sen (2001) and Nussbaum (1995, 2000) challenges the notions of wellness models relying on self-report data in that self-report may not constitute the best data for assessment of contexts and adequate self-states conducive to and required for adequate student functioning.

In the wellness model, happiness and wellness seem conflated and individualised (Americanised) notions of pleasure seem overused (Hermon & Hazler, 1999), neglecting notions of collective identities and concepts of *ubuntu* which emphasise the collective wellbeing and foreground this in preference to individual wellness.

Some critics include the neglect of the financial dimension as a determinant of human wellbeing as a gap in the wellness model (Van Lingen, 2005). The wellness model has been criticised for providing too little analytical explanation, especially around stages or phases of wellness, for neglecting contextual factors, and for committing the "context minimisation error" (Shinn & Toohey, 2003). The "context minimisation error" is a "tendency to ignore the impact of enduring community contexts on human behaviour" (Shinn & Toohey, 2003, p. 427). While the wellness model is useful in thinking about human wellness, it provides little analysis or explanation of contextualised and comprehensive student development and student support at higher education divisions in South Africa.

3.4 Integration Model of SDS

The development and environmental impact theories, together with wellness models, make contributions to the understanding of student success in higher education. The authors of two important documents have proposed integrated models for student development, student counselling, and student support.

Van Lingen (2005) proposed the integration and synthesis of environmental impact theories with the wellness model and saw the university context as containing “critical enablers”.

Van Lingen (2005) described a synthesis of the wellness model (which describes the intra-personal dimensions of wellness) with Tinto’s student development model (which describes contextual and student-institution factors). The proposed integrated model of student development is a longitudinal model describing the student’s life cycle from pre-entry attributes, through adjustment, to institutional culture and social integration. All these processes are seen to be iterative and ultimately lead to persistence or withdrawal from the educational pursuit (Van Lingen, 2005). The model includes considerations of contextual factors, such as institution size, demographic composition of student and staff, campus climate and facilities, whether a student is residential or a commuter, and factors external to the campus, such as parents, finances, and distractions.

This integration model is a multi-dimensional and integrated proposal on how to understand student development. However, the inclusiveness of this model, while progressive and sagacious, makes it rather cumbersome and complicated, remaining perhaps at a descriptive level. It does not distil key factors which promote success. Its strength is in its inclusiveness, which allows for diverse student experiences of a diverse student population, where students respond to different factors in different ways. The integration model needs to be tested and researched, but it potentially presents a model that is a significant synthesis of the two major strands of thinking in SDS theory.

Strange (1999) also proposed an integrated model that involves 14 theoretical propositions which emerge from the four central questions (cited in Mandew, 2003, p. 62):

1. Developmentally, who is the higher education student?
2. How does development occur?
3. How does the campus environment influence student development?
4. What are the goals of student development?

Strange's integrated model, much like Van Lingen's (2005), has not been researched and tested and will need to be empirically explored to find wide acceptance.

The South African Association of Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) developed a model for student support services in South Africa (2007). This model is focussed primarily on content; in other words, the range of services SDS should provide, but while very useful in that sense, provides little guidance on institutional issues concerning SDS, such as organisational position, policy impact, management lines, and funding. The authors of the document highlight very perceptively the existence of tensions among the SDS associations in South Africa and identify this as a barrier to development. A model for co-operation is suggested that would enable the development of an umbrella body, Student Services in Higher Education (SSHE), which would guarantee sovereignty and independence of all the associations. While the tensions are not yet resolved at this level, the challenge is to begin to form a platform for collaborative framework development (SAACDHE, 2007).

3.5 Theoretical Framework for SDS in South Africa

Overall, no coherent or overarching SDS framework or paradigm seems to be used in South Africa. During the late 1990s, Harper (1996) indicated that SDS needs to develop a coherent framework, and subsequently, Mandew (2003) stated, "Right now in South Africa there is no overtly articulated philosophical framework or explicit theory that informs practice in the field of student services" (Mandew, 2003, p. 21). A review of the literature suggests that since these publications, little seems to have changed for SDS in South Africa (Barnes, 2004; Lunceford, 2011).

Attempts have been made at formulating comprehensive South African frameworks, such as Van Lingen's integrated model for SDS (2005) or the SAACDHE (2007) *Position paper for student counselling and development*. Van Lingen (2005) proposed the integration of the wellness model (using Hettler's six wellness dimensions as the basis) with Tinto's environmental impact theory (which focusses on integration of the student into the academic faculty and campus life). The SAACDHE⁶⁸ paper proposes an operational framework for student counselling and student development offices and services within SDS at South African higher education institutions. However, neither model nor framework is

⁶⁸ SAACDHE is the South African Association of Counselling and Development in Higher Education.

comprehensive and both remain untested beyond the immediate contexts within which they were developed (SAACDHE, 2007). Neither model manages to attract the attention of SDS practitioners sufficiently to gather enough momentum to use these as points of departure for an overarching or comprehensive framework.

While the underpinning theories in SDS in South Africa are multi- and trans-disciplinary, emerging from psychology, sociology, social work, human development, organisational theory, and medicine, common to all theories are the attempts to explain factors which impinge on student functioning and attempt to promote practices which enhance this functioning (Botha et al., 2005; Hamrick et al., 2002; Harper, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). As was stated in the *CHE Monitor 9*, “What is missing from the studies reviewed above is a clear conceptual framework that can integrate macro and micro levels of analysis and show how these mediate students' experiences and in turn their academic achievement” (Lange, 2010, p. 45).

The findings in this study, as discussed in Chapter 7, lead to the study's conclusion that, indeed, a national framework for SDS is required. The exploration in this study of scope, role, and function of SDS will, it is hoped, make key contributions to the recommended development of a national and comprehensive framework of SDS.

3.6 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the theories which underpin the practices and thinking of SDS practice, according to the authors found in the literature search, were reviewed. The domain is dominated by two clusters of theories, namely, developmental theories of student development and environmental impact theories of student development. The wellness model as an overarching paradigm was proposed by Van Lingen (2005), who also suggested that an integrated model of student development, incorporating the environmental impact theories, may provide some conceptual framework. While the conceptual map is perhaps cumbersome, the notion of integrating different theories is sensible. However, it needs to be tested and researched.

Developmental theories of student development focus on intra-psychological processes and describe the changes that occur during the adolescent and early adulthood stage. The theories are further divided into subgroups, depending on their focus: cognitive development, moral development, psycho-social development, and identity development. The tenets which underpin the developmental theories are that development is progressive and

accumulative, depending on context, and ultimately aims towards autonomy and a state of equilibrium within the self and with the social context within which the person lives.

The environmental impact theories emphasise the role of the context, the higher education environment, the climate and culture within it, and how the student relates to the institution, to faculty, and to her/his academic work and peers. It is within this intersection of self with environment that ingredients for success, persistence, or failure reside. The major proponents of the environmental impact theories are Astin, Tinto, Pascarella, Weidman, and Kuh (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). There are some differences in emphasis, but they all challenge the status quo and traditional modus operandi of higher education in so far as they locate the site of change within the relationship of the student to the institution and link academic and personal-social developmental domains. They share the conviction that student success is directly related to the prevailing climate, culture, and practices within higher education.

The theories which dominate the SDS in the higher education institution influence the implicitly held assumptions about students, and these notions about students inform practice. The individualistic and epigenetic theories of Piaget, seminal in the developmental theories, de-emphasise the context and promote essentialist and autonomous notions about students.

Vygotsky, and other theorists steeped in Marxist and Hegelian thinking, construct the student as contextually embedded. Vygotsky, Bernstein, and Bourdieu maintained that people are part of their narratives, constructions, and meaning-making and that discourse is a formative influence in conceptualisation (Bernstein, 2000). The discourse of disadvantage, deficit, and underpreparedness not only reveals problematic constructions about the student but also locates the speaker in a particular elitist position. The acknowledgement of the context, as affecting one's understanding, needs to lead to a shift in discourse; as the context shifts, so must the language which is embedded within it and which reflects the lived reality shift with it.

Theoretical constructs shape notions of students, and while discourses of disadvantage, deficit, and underpreparedness prevail, the locus of agency for change will remain in the "advantaged-paternal other" and leave "disadvantaged" students with an external locus of agency. Mgqwashu (2009, p. 736) critically reflected on the current discourse concerning the "educationally disadvantaged" and suggested that first-year students, in general and across the board, are "outsiders" to the higher education discourses and

discipline-specific “foreign methods of communication” (Archer, 2010, p. 495), and not only the assumed-to-be-homogenous group euphemistically called “disadvantaged”. Perhaps it is useful to shift discourse to describe the *systems* and *structures* as *disadvantaging*, rather than the students who emerge from these contexts as “disadvantaged”.

It is important that the discourse in SDS is made explicit (Lumadi & Mampuru, 2010), so that practitioners can review their implicitly held notions, which might create barriers to the changes they seek to enable.

After this chapter of examining the literature on the theoretical constructs underpinning SDS, the next chapter will contain a review of the research methodology which was employed to gather and analyse the data.



CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methodology employed to achieve the aims and objectives of this study is detailed. In the first section, the research design and theoretical framework of the qualitative research, its location within “Mode 2 knowledge production”, its strengths, and its limitations are discussed, citing research and literature relevant to the topic. This is followed by a reflective section on my relationship as a researcher with the study itself, my context, the area under investigation, and the participants.

I present an overview of the research setting and context of the three universities in the Western Cape, the 23 participants who consented to interviews, and the data collection methods. The chapter includes a description of the data analysis method, the techniques used to improve trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. A discussion of my intentions for reporting and dissemination of the research findings follows. The chapter concludes with a summary.

4.1 Aims and Objectives of this Study

This study is an exploration into the scope, role, and function of student development and support within higher education in South Africa. Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings and frameworks of SDS, SDS integration into the institution and into organisational structures, the relationship between SDS and the policies of the DHET, and influences from the national and international context on the SDS domains in higher education are explored.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the debate on and challenges in understanding the scope, role, and function of SDS, and to illuminate challenges in formulating a national framework for SDS.

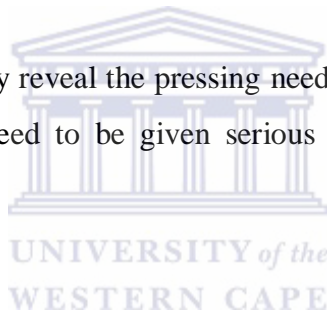
Grounded theory research methodology requires that the research questions should be intentionally open and general (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Whetton,

1989), so research questions relevant to this study were purposefully broad in order to allow for themes to emerge and were formulated as follows:

1. What is the scope, role, and function of SDS at the three universities in the Western Cape?
2. What theoretical framework and underpinnings inform SDS functioning?
3. What is the SDS position and structure within the institutions and beyond?
4. What is the DHET policy context within which SDS functions?
5. How is the SDS domain responding to changes in the international context, with particular reference to globalisation?

This study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the SDS scope, role, and function within higher education. It illuminates challenges and provides suggestions to enable more and better articulated contributions to the shared goals of higher education. Gaps and weaknesses within the domain of SDS are also identified and suggestions made on how to address these.

The findings of this study reveal the pressing need for a guiding framework for SDS and help identify areas which need to be given serious consideration when developing a national framework.



4.2 Research Design

This study is grounded within what is termed “Mode 2 knowledge production”. Mode 2 followed from Mode 1, regarded as traditional, basic, discipline-bound research, governed by academic interests and detached from society (Bailey, 2010). It is hoped that the results of the study will benefit heterogeneous groups of users and have utilisation value (Bailey, 2010). The study was conducted to investigate complex and connected phenomena, was exploratory, investigative, and illuminating, and sought in-depth and textured explanations. Hence, I chose qualitative methods for this research and to gather, analyse, and interpret the data. Qualitative document analysis was used to interrogate and discuss how SDS is constructed in the key policy documents from the DHET.

4.3.1 Grounded Theory

The rationale for employing the grounded theory method for this research was to “explore and understand how complex phenomena occur” (Brown et al., 2002, p. 2). Grounded theory research methods allow for the illumination of phenomena which are

unformulated and are “designed to build new theory that is faithful to the area under study and that illuminates a particular phenomenon” (Brown et al., 2002, p. 2).

Employed to explore the connection of concepts in complex phenomena, grounded theory research is a dynamic research process which engages with processes rather than with moment-in-time illuminations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Brown et al. (2002, p. 3), “Grounded theory provides techniques and procedures to create an inductively-deductively integrative theory” and is ideally suited to capture the convergence of theories and practices as it is an “effective tool in conceptualizing complex phenomena, providing language to describe these, detailing how these occur” (Brown et al., 2002, p. 10). This makes grounded theory a very suitable framework for this study as I aimed to discover processes and illuminate the complex terrain of SDS, rather than uncover detailed facts or events.

Grounded theory assumes the researcher to be connected to the area of enquiry, and it requires the researcher’s insight into the literature and the practice of a particular field (Brown et al., 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Because of my involvement in the work in SDS and my connection with the context of this study, grounded theory is very useful in utilising this personal relationship as an opportunity for insight, and it is imperative that I am explicit about my intentions and my assumptions, as noted by Brown et al. (2002), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Strauss and Corbin (1998). This personal involvement, and my position within this research, is described in the section below, after the discussion on the strengths and limitations of qualitative research.

4.3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods allow for contextualised, inductive, and naturalistic interpretations and allow the researcher’s personal involvement in the study (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Brown et al., 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Furthermore, qualitative methods are appropriate for exploring complex phenomena, especially when the phenomena under study are only partially identified, defined, and circumscribed (Brown et al, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative methods are also described as *gestaltic* in that they emphasise the “totality of experience” (Payton, 1994, p. 87).

The qualitative research approach and methodology is a suitable tool to answer the research questions, especially in the area of SDS. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) criticised the over-representations of quantitative research in SDS and have emphasised the value derived from qualitative research.

4.3.3 Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research enables the generation of full and textured data which offer insight into complex phenomena. Some argue that qualitative research methods offer ways to illuminate ordinary phenomena in their natural context in ways that quantitative methods cannot do (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The emphasis is on the phenomenological experience and personal sense-making of the participants. The data gathering process occurs within a social and historical context which influences the collection and interpretation of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The historical and social context gives the data particular meaning, and interpretations are relative and related to the context. Qualitative methods of data gathering and data interpretation, more than quantitative, offer possibilities of meaning and sense-making which offer insight and understanding rather than mere description. Especially in areas which are uncharted territory and concern under-explored phenomena, qualitative research offers a systematic approach to gathering and interpreting data.

However, the very strength of qualitative methods also presents potential limitations. The interpretations are located in the personal *weltanschauung* and autobiography of the researcher, which, even if explicitly stated, always present limitations to the data gathering and data interpretation process. Research is never value free but is always embedded in a personal and contextual reality (Mutch, 2009).

Bourdieu's definition of the *habitus* is relevant in this context. *Habitus* in Bourdieu's sense is the dispositions and perceptions, implicitly or explicitly held, which impact on the research process (Mutch, 2009). According to Bourdieu, the distinction between the subjective researcher and the objective field of investigation is an artificial distinction. The habitus and the field merge, and the object of analysis becomes part of and reflects the researcher's disposition. The field is constructed, and meaning is created through the perceptual lens of the researcher. The objective and subjective are no longer clearly separated but are mutually influencing each other (Mutch, 2009). This dynamic interplay between researcher, context, and data makes the qualitative research method simultaneously rewarding and subjective.

Various ways are offered to begin to manage this limitation of qualitative research. The most frequently cited countermeasure is the full disclosure, as far as this is ever possible, by the researcher of her dispositions, agency, history, context, and relationship to the area of study, the context, and the participants. While qualitative research is explicit about the role

and impact of subjectivity of the researcher, the subjectivity of the researcher does not disappear in quantitative research.

4.3.4 My Relationship with the Research Area, Context, and Participants

The importance of exploring my own disposition, my own history, and the context in terms of this research emerges from the observation that the subjectivity of the researcher is deeply related to the field of study.

According to Arminio and Hultgren (2002), the researcher's disclosure about her relationship to the research is of vital importance, especially in order to contribute to transparency towards the reader. Furthermore, the disclosure about her relationship with the research is important in order to create awareness of her possible bias in gathering and interpreting data. Especially when doing research in the immediate context, it is important to explore ethical concerns. Perhaps the most significant reason for self-disclosure of her relationship with her research is to establish and confirm the researcher as an authority in her context and to give the research credibility (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002).

My history in SDS began formally when I was working as a programme manager for a student development programme at the Institute for Counselling at the University of the Western Cape during the mid-1990s. I completed my master's degree in Psychology at the University of the Western Cape, where I conducted my research for my thesis on a student development programme⁶⁹. I subsequently returned to work at the Institute for Counselling, managing the student development programme and contributing to social research. I began working as a psychologist at the University of Cape Town and later managed the Student Counselling Department in the Student Affairs Division of the University of Cape Town. I attended Berkley University, California, as a visiting scholar, in 2002 and worked at the

⁶⁹ My master's thesis is entitled *The exploration of the impact of a student mentoring programme on the academic performance of a group of first-year students at the University of the Western Cape* (Schreiber, 1999). The programme was a peer support programme relying on social relationships as the vehicle for support with the aims of positively impacting on academic performance. The focus was then, perhaps more so than today, on reducing the deleterious effects of alienation from the higher education context and creating social and other spaces for mutual mirroring and mutual recognition as a form of affirming shared interests, behaviours, attitudes, and background. Although the thesis was perhaps simplistic in its interpretations, the quantitative statistical analysis of academic results of the group of first-year students in this programme suggested that there was a significant positive correlation between participation in the peer support programme and academic performance. This finding of a positive correlation between social support and academic performance has been documented since in many studies in South Africa (Schreiber, 1999).

Student Development Centre at Berkley, focussing on programme evaluation and programme design. I was involved in a number of quality assurance audits in student development departments in other higher education institutions, have presented papers at conferences, and have published in the area of student development and student support. I began my work as the director of the Centre for Student Support Services, reporting directly to the deputy vice chancellor (DVC) for SDS, at the University of the Western Cape during 2008. The work entails developing the strategy and operational plans to deliver on the institutional vision and managing the operations, finances, and human resources for five departments, with about 30 staff who all focus on providing student support and development.

My work in the centre has intensified my curiosity about the work of SDS within the institution. In order to manage the centre, I searched for a guiding framework from within the institution, theories, and practices, beyond the institution in the DHET, and in the macro context. While I found guidance in some pockets, I came across interesting discrepancies and baffling paradoxes, sharp contradictions, and surprising alignments.

I began to search for documents and publications which describe, discuss, and also explore the terrain of SDS, and though I found some significant work, it was minimal. This prompted me to explore the area of SDS, its scope, role, and function, its relationship to its context, and its relationship to the DHET and beyond, and in this way to contribute to the knowledge in the field and begin to fill the gap in research around SDS.

This study is perhaps an extension of my own questions around my own place within SDS and within the institution. As director of the Centre for Student Support Services, what is my role, my function, how far does my scope extend, where are the boundaries, what are the governing and organising principles, what is the metric, the currency, who are my partners and allies, what does the DHET say we should be doing, how should this be done, and what are the influences from the macro context; in sum: what is the bottom line and to whom are we accountable?⁷⁰.

I hope to generate some insights which will assist me and others in making this area more effective and efficient, more conscious and empowered, more aligned and explicit about its deliverables and outcomes. This study is part of this desire.

⁷⁰ This is what Cloete (1998, p. 5) refers to when describing Mode 2 knowledge production, saying that “the research problem arises in the context of application”, in this case, my research arose from the application within my context.

4.5 Research Setting

The three universities in the Western Cape, South Africa were chosen as data collection sites. Although the data were collected from these three sites, the focus was on the generalisability of the findings, not necessarily linked directly to the site. The three universities have unique histories and contexts, and each one is described briefly. The data that were collected from the participants from these three institutions were not grouped according to institutions, neither are the institutions compared to each other. The purpose of this study was to elicit data which transcend the immediate context and do not implicate the institutions but rather highlight issues which might be abstracted in terms of time and context (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It was of lesser importance which institutions were implicated by the data, and though this might be of great interest, given the different histories and contexts, it is beyond the scope of this research.

In addition, ethical clearance for this research did not permit for the institutions to be directly compared, and participants were assured that the data gathered from them would not be linked to the institution. The following data are mainly gathered from the www.chet.org.za site and from the universities' websites⁷¹.

4.5.1 The University of the Western Cape (UWC)

The University of the Western Cape is a middle-sized residential university located on the outskirts of Bellville, Cape Town, separated from the urban centre of Bellville by industrial land. It has about 19000 students, almost 60% of whom are female, 60% coloured⁷², and 35% black. Its history is steeped in the apartheid past. It was designed as a “coloured” teacher’s college 50 years ago, training “bantú” teachers for “bantú” education. It was the home of the left during the apartheid regime and has, since liberation, established itself as a leading university in various niche and research areas in the country and internationally. It is ranked 7th in the country⁷³, ahead of all historically disadvantaged universities⁷⁴ and

⁷¹ CHET.org.za, uwc.ac.za, uct.ac.za, sun.ac.za

⁷² This category is required for HEMIs reporting, i.e. demographic data reporting to the Department of Higher Education and Training. The use of this category does not imply acceptance of these racial categories.

⁷³ According to the January 2011 edition of the *Webometrics Ranking of World Universities*.

⁷⁴ Historically disadvantaged universities are also called historically black universities and are those universities who were only poorly supported and resourced by the apartheid regime, and permitted to admit ‘coloured’ or ‘black’ students and had only limited faculties and degrees.

following all historically advantaged universities in South Africa. Like all universities in the country, UWC struggles with throughput and poor retention of students, which are more pronounced in the historically disadvantaged universities than in the historically advantaged universities. UWC is financially and physically under-resourced, especially compared to the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University.

SDS at UWC is headed by a deputy vice chancellor, a member of the senior executive, who has the portfolio of Student Development and Support. The four directors who report to her are responsible for the following areas: (1) Centre for Student Support Services, (2) Financial Aid, (3) Sports Administration, and (4) Residence and Catering Services. The Student Representative Council reports to the DVC's special assistant, and Student Campus Health is privatised and liaises with the DVC's office in order to address communication with campus and students. The Centre for Student Support Services manages a further five departments headed by managers with the following portfolios: Academic Support, Student Development, Career Services, Leadership and Social Responsibility, Student Governance Support, Disability, and Student Counselling.

In terms of SDS organisational structure, it is a vertical structure, centrally managed and organised. Some of the specialised services, such as those for Gender Equity and HIV/Aids report directly to the vice chancellor's office and are not connected to SDS. The Writing Centre is part of the teaching and learning domain which reports to the academic deputy vice chancellor.

Minimal de-centralised student services exist across faculties. Only in the Economic and Management Science Faculty is a unit staffed by administrators who are mandated to support students via mentoring and tutoring. The academic development functions across faculties are de-centralised and are integrated into the first-year foundation programmes and provide language, literacy, and numeracy programmes, managed and facilitated by academic development staff.

SDS is filled with staff who are on "administrative and support" contracts. Only one member of SDS besides the DVC, is a standing member of senate. The figure below illustrates the structure.

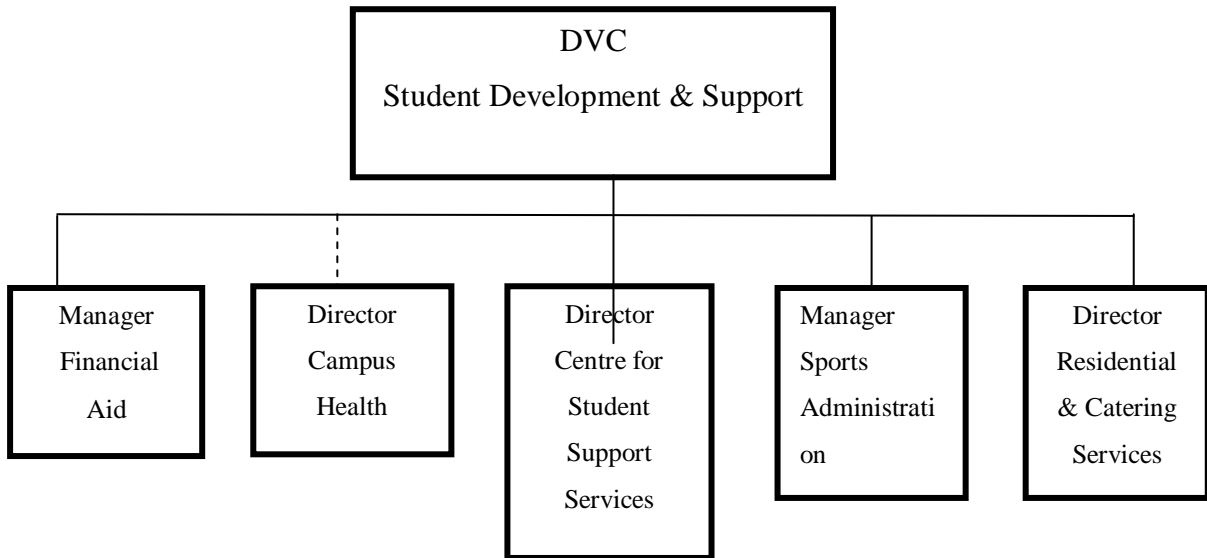


Figure 6: Organogram: UWC Student Development and Support

4.5.2 The University of Cape Town (UCT)

The University of Cape Town is a medium-sized, residential university situated in Rondebosch, a leafy suburb of Cape Town, and provides a symbol and signature picture of Cape Town.

The roots of UCT go back as far as 1874 when it began as the South African College School and later became the University of the Cape of Good Hope and, finally, the University of Cape Town in 1918. During the apartheid regime, it was a site of opposition, and during the 1980s, demonstrations on this “white” campus showed UCT’s contempt for the apartheid regime. Today (in 2012), the university has 25000 students in six faculties. It has 50% female students, 25% coloured, 25% black, and 50% white.

The SDS division is called Student Affairs and is headed by an executive director who reports to a DVC who holds a number of portfolios, such as internationalisation and recruitment, but none of them directly related to the academic domain. The Student Affairs department has four clusters: Student Development (Student Governance and Leadership, Student Orientation and Student Sports and Recreation), Student Financial Aid, Student Housing and Residence Life, and Student Wellness Services (Counselling and Student Health).

The Student Affairs division is vertically arranged and has few horizontal formal relationships or memberships. Over the past few years, the faculties have begun to develop their ‘own’, localised, self-funded, de-centralised student support. Some faculties, such as

Engineering and the Built Environment, Commerce, and Health Science have student development staff, such as psychologists, managing and facilitating student support, either via individual psychotherapy or via support programmes, either in permanent contracts or short-term contracts or on a consultancy basis. The staff of these student-support programmes report to faculties and the programmes are funded by faculties.

Some "special projects" or transformation initiatives, such as the Disability Office, and the HIV/Aids unit have been moved to the vice chancellor's office and report directly at high level.

None of the Student Affairs staff is a member of senate. All Student Affairs staff is categorised as administrative and support staff. The Centre for Higher Education Development, a quasi-faculty, reports to the academic deputy vice chancellor and hosts all academic development and academic support functions, and its staff is integrated into the faculty.

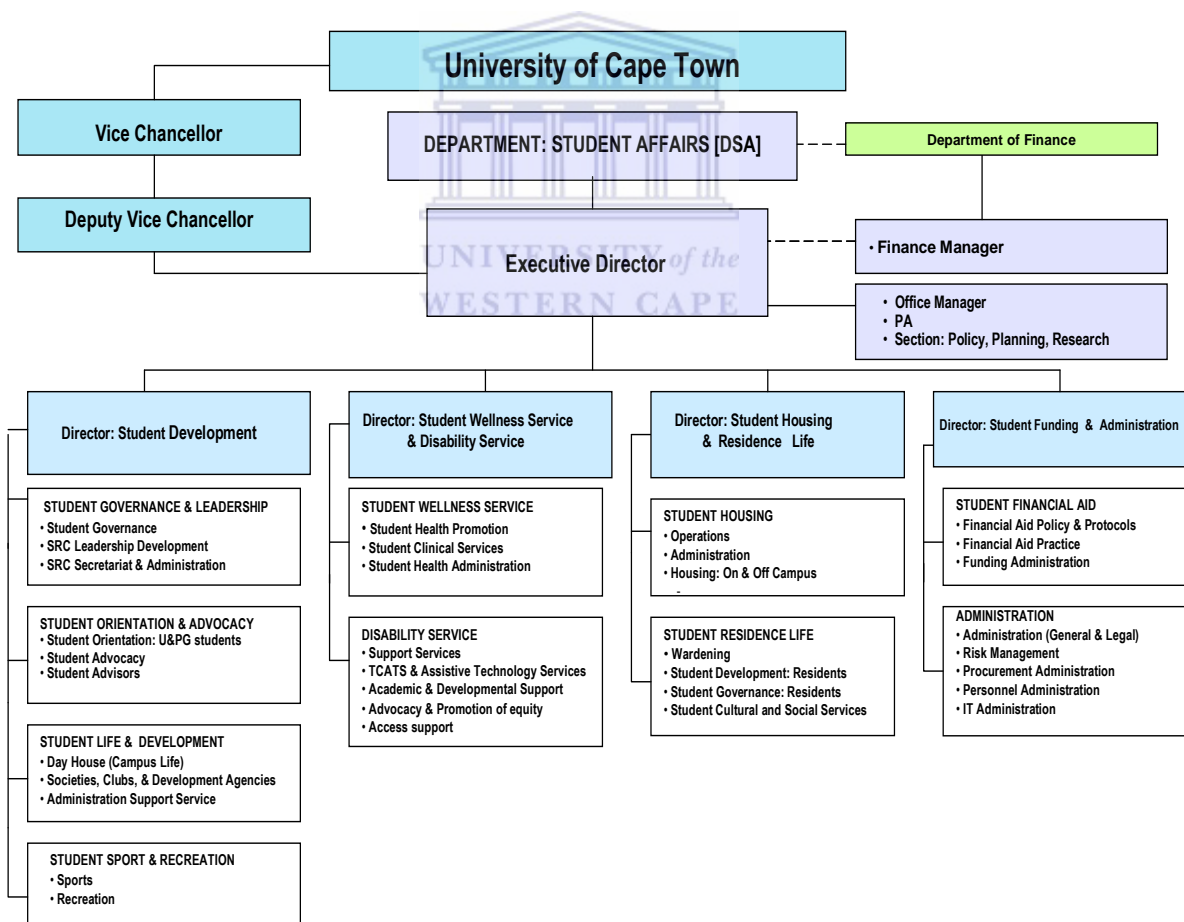


Figure 7: Organogram: UCT Student Development and Support

4.5.3 Stellenbosch University (SUN)

Stellenbosch University (SUN) has a long history. Stellenbosch Gymnasium was established in 1866 and, after various iterations, received university status in 1918. It is a medium-sized residential university spread out in the picturesque village of Stellenbosch. It is an Afrikaans-medium university but is beginning to offer undergraduate and more post graduate courses in English.

The university has 28000 students in 10 faculties, 51% female, 20% coloured, 15% black, and 65% white students. As with UCT, SUN is one of the top-ranking universities in the country, second in rank in South Africa, after UCT⁷⁵. Since liberation in 1994, SUN has re-invented itself and has made huge strides in embracing the new democracy and addressing inequities in its student and staff profile, and in the country.

The SDS domain is managed by an executive director, who reports to the academic deputy vice chancellor, and is called Student Academic Support. It is comprehensive and includes SDS functions, teaching and learning, and academic support. The departments include the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, Centre for Prospective Students, Tracking Unit, Language Centre, Centre for Student Affairs, Centre for Student Communities, and Centre for Teaching and Learning.

It has direct relationships with the academic sector via various formal programmes, such as the first-year academy and its teaching and learning departments. While it reports vertically and is managed centrally, the lateral relationships are semi-formal and are accountable to the SDS and to the faculty. This is a hybrid organisational model. Its staff is part academic and in part administrative/support staff and contributes to institutional research output.

⁷⁵ According to the January 2011 edition of the *Webometric Ranking of World Universities*.

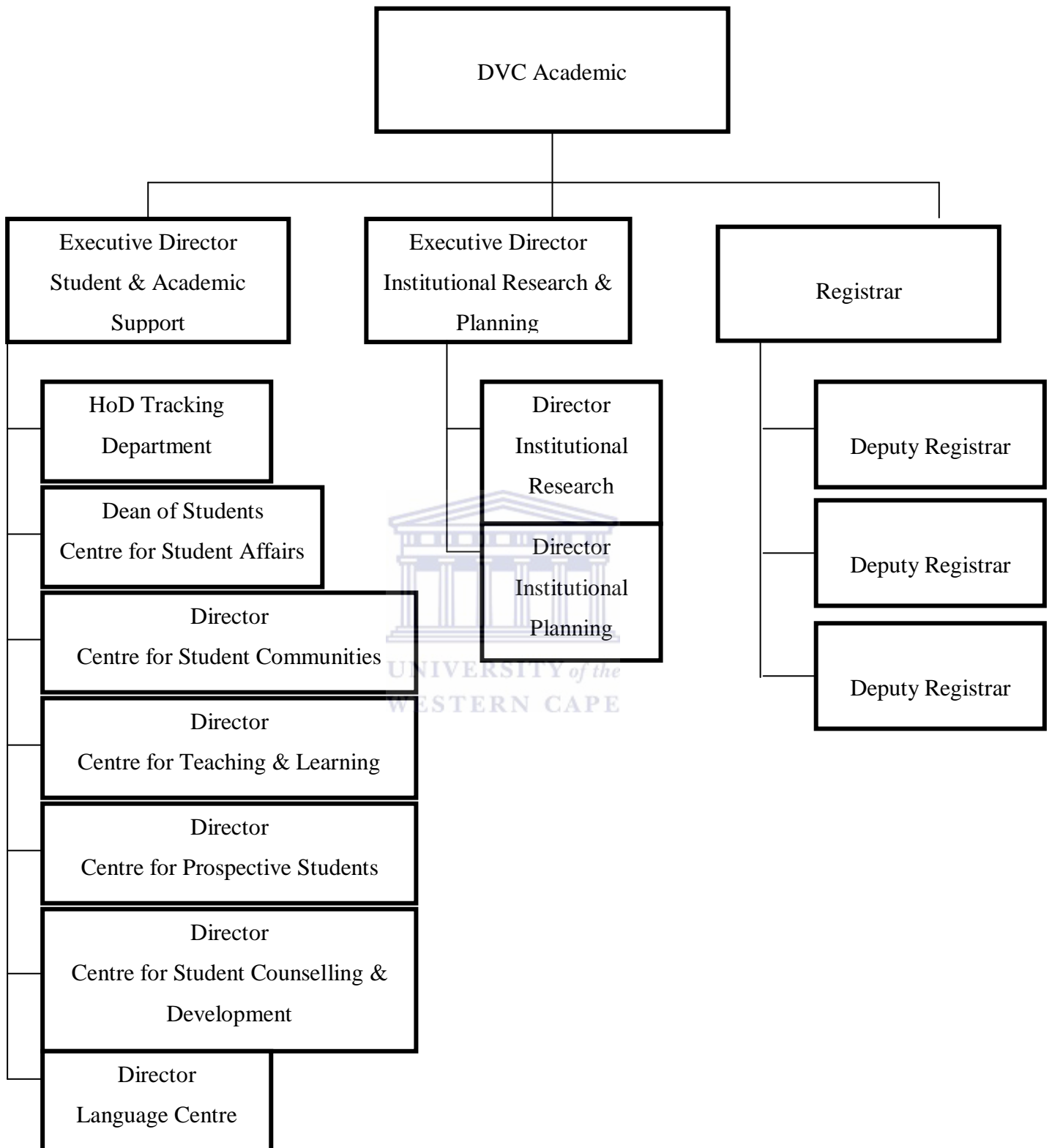


Figure 8: Organogram: Stellenbosch University Student Development and Support

4.5.4 SDS Scope at the Universities

Mandew's list for SDS scope is extensive, ambitious, and comprehensive and allows for useful assessment of scope of SDS (Mandew, 2003). Using Mandew's list of what he considered areas *within* the domain of SDS, the following table indicates which services reside *within* SDS at the three universities⁷⁶ and are thus part of the conceptual and operational thinking of SDS (Mandew, 2003, p. 91):

Table 2

*Areas within the Domain of SDS at the Three Universities*⁷⁷

SDS focus area	UWC	UCT	SUN
Campus health services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Counselling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Careers services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HIV/AIDS unit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disabled students' support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Financial-aid services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
International students services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Multi-faith centres	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Orientation programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sports and recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student housing and residence-life services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Catering services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

⁷⁶ The distinction is that these offices are located *within* or *beyond* SDS. It is emphasised that some or most of these services are indeed offered at universities, but that they are not located within SDS, i.e. that they are not located within the conceptual home of SDS, within the operational plan for SDS, nor within the vision of SDS at the institutions.

⁷⁷ Key: this symbol indicates that this department *is not* part of the SDS domain and this symbol indicates that it *is* part of the SDS domain.

Student enrolment and administration services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student employment and graduate recruitment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student-satisfaction survey and research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Discrimination and harassment office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adult student services, life-long learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bookstore services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Services for LGBTI, minorities and special focus groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student discipline and judicial services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Diversity management and development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Of Mandew's (2003) recommended 23 service areas, only 6 of these resided within SDS in all three universities. These are student counselling, student development, student orientation, sports and recreation, student housing and residence life, and student governance. Student health services are privatised at UWC, within SDS at UCT, and beyond SDS at Stellenbosch University. HIV/Aids services are not within SDS at any of the three universities, neither are international student services, diversity, transformation, or minority services (Mandew, 2003). Career services, disability services, discrimination and harassment services, and related functions are within some SDS domains at one university but not at either of the other two.

In Chapter 7, the issues around the inclusion and exclusion of certain offices within SDS or beyond will be discussed. The location of these offices in the organisational structure of higher education, either within or outside of SDS, manifests the theoretical underpinnings of SDS and is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 and then again raised as an issue in the recommendations in the final chapter.

4.5.5 University Statistics

The following data provide snapshots of the three institutions. All data were collected from the Centre for Higher Education Transformation, which draws data from the

national HEMIS⁷⁸ data (www.chet.org.za) up until 2009, providing a good indication of the basic variables which illustrate the contexts of the institutions.

The universities have increased their student numbers since 2010, increasing to 19 000 (UWC), 24 000 (UCT), and 28 000 (SUN) respectively. The table below provides details on student enrolments.

Table 3

*Full-Time Equivalent Student Enrolments (Thousands)*⁷⁹

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Approved 2010 target
Stellenbosch	15.9	16.1	16.5	16.7	17.2	17.8	17.9	18.4	19.5	20.7	19.5
UCT	13.8	15.2	16.5	17.1	17.5	17.9	16.4	17.2	17.7	18.9	20.3
UWC	8	8.4	10.1	10.9	11.1	11.5	11.5	11.8	11.6	12.1	14.3

The universities have very different race demographics. UWC has a ratio of 60:35:5 for coloured, black, and white⁸⁰, indicating that students are mainly coloured (60%) and black (35%). At UCT, the ratio is 25:25:50, indicating that the student population is 50% white. At Stellenbosch University, the ratio is 20:15:65, with the majority of students being white (65%). These statistics are particularly interesting, as the national ratio, according to the South African Census of 2001 is about 78% Black, 10% White, 9% Coloured, and 3% Asian and Other. The details according to race are contained in the table below.

⁷⁸ HEMIS is the Higher Education Management Information Systems data base, which contains most information about higher education institutions in South Africa. Most information is available to the public.

⁷⁹ An FTE student enrolment total takes into account the course load carried by a student. This can be illustrated in the following examples. One full-time equivalent student is counted as 1 if s/he takes the full required course load.

⁸⁰ The use of these race categories does not imply an acceptance or agreement with these.

Table 4*Enrolments by Race Group (Percentage)*

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 target
Stellenbosch: African	15	15	15	13	12	12	11	12	13	13	13
Stellenbosch: Coloured + Indian	12	12	13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	19
Stellenbosch: White	72	73	72	73	73	72	72	71	69	68	68
UCT: African	27	27	27	27	28	28	30	30	31	32	32
UCT: Coloured + Indian	21	21	21	22	22	22	23	24	25	25	27
UCT: White	53	52	52	52	50	50	47	46	44	42	41
UWC: African	51	49	44	39	36	34	36	38	40	40	40
UWC: Coloured + Indian	47	48	53	58	60	61	59	58	56	55	54
UWC: White	2	2	2	3	4	5	5	5	4	4	6

In terms of gender, the universities are quite similar, although UWC has the highest female percentage with 60% female students. Details are listed in the table below.

Table 5*Enrolments by Gender (Percentage)*

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 planned
Stellenbosch: Female	52	52	53	52	53	52	51	51	51	52	53
Stellenbosch: Male	48	48	47	48	47	48	49	49	49	48	47
UCT: Female	47	48	49	49	50	51	51	50	50	50	52
UCT: Male	53	52	51	51	50	49	49	50	50	50	48
UWC: Female	56	57	57	57	57	59	60	59	60	59	59
UWC: Male	44	43	43	43	43	41	40	41	40	41	41

Graduate enrolment is considered a proxy for throughput and is calculated by relating graduates to enrolments (head counts). The DHET sets the national norm at 20%. Stellenbosch and UCT are consistently higher than the national benchmark and higher than UWC. This is a key indicator for institutional funding and efficiency, two core goals of every institution. Numbers are contained in the table below.

Table 6

Graduates as a Percentage of Enrolments--Graduate Throughput Rate

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Stellenbosch	23	23	24	25	25	25	25	25	25	26
UCT	21	22	23	25	24	28	25	26	25	25
UWC	21	17	15	16	16	21	19	21	20	21

The ratio of administrative to academic staff is particularly interesting in the context of reviewing SDS staff, who are all considered “administrative” staff. Stellenbosch and UCT have a relatively high ratio with over two administrative staff to each academic staff member, whereas UWC is somewhat low with one-and-a-half administrative staff member to one academic staff member. As an HDU, UWC has lower ratio of SDS and ‘administrative’ staff than the other two HAU. Details are contained in the table below.

Table 7

Ratio of Administrative⁸¹ to Academic Staff⁸² (Ratio)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 planned
Stellenbosch	2.03	2.01	2.01	2.08	2.16	2.07	2.02	2.01	1.97	2.06	2.04
UCT	2.27	2.27	2.28	2.22	2.18	2.13	2.2	2.15	2.31	2.38	2.02
UWC	1.71	1.71	1.58	1.56	1.49	1.55	1.52	1.48	1.53	1.53	1.44

⁸¹ Administrative staff are all employees whose work does not fall into the category of academic staff.

⁸² Academic staff are employees who spend at least 50% of their official time on duty on teaching and/or research activities.

The ratio of student to full time academic staff⁸³ ratio is an indicator of how many instructional staff or research staff are available per student. This ratio reflects the ability of an institution to provide adequate numbers of instructional/research staff to meet its teaching commitments. The national standard set by the DHET is 20:1. A larger ratio indicates that the institution is admitting students without being able to provide adequately for their teaching and learning requirements. On this requirement, UWC and Stellenbosch University seem similar, although UWC seems to plan to admit more students than its teaching capacity can accommodate. Details are tabulated below.

Table 8

Ratio of FTE students to FTE staff (Ratio)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 planned
Stellenbosch	11	13	14	13	16	15	16	18	19	19	19
UCT	11	12	12	12	12	12	13	15	15	16	12
UWC	15	16	17	20	19	19	19	19	17	19	22

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4.5.6 University Ranking

In terms of overall university ranking, using all kinds of indicators and formulae, based on the *Webometrics* (January, 2011), UCT is the top ranking university in South Africa, Stellenbosch is in second place, and UWC in seventh place. UWC is the highest ranking historically disadvantaged university in South Africa.

4.5.7 Summary of University Comparisons

Overall, the universities reflect some important differences, notably their histories, their resources, and their race demographic of students, with UCT and Stellenbosch having a large white student percentage, and their having better resources than UWC. However, they are similar in that all the through-put rates are low: UCT and Stellenbosch have a 25% through-put rate, whereas UWC has a 20% rate. These are very low figures, and it is not clear how these relate to the statistics provided and which variables are correlated.

⁸³ Full-time equivalent staff are employees who work full-time at the institution for an entire year.

4.6 Research Participants

The method for the selection of participants should be appropriate for the research questions. Grounded theory allows for a sampling technique called “maximum variations sampling”, which ensures diversity amongst the participants with regards to the specific area the researcher investigates and involves the deliberate identification of participants. “Theoretical sampling” involves targeting certain participants and is focussed on and related to particularly useful area (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The participants were selected from a “small sample of people, nestled in their context and studied in-depth”, as is recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 24). Hence, I was purposeful in selecting the participants according to their position within SDS and their seniority. The participants were selected to reflect the range of services within SDS, and the selection process ensured a maximum of diversity in terms of the participants’ professional orientation within SDS.

The participants were from the executive management, executive directors, directors, and managers from within the SDS domains in the three institutions, UWC, UCT and SUN. I targeted the departments which address academic support, counselling and psychological services, residence life, student governance and leadership, career services and orientation programmes, student disabilities and diversity, and excluded departments which primarily deliver a service to students, such as finance offices, catering, and sports departments.

I identified 24 participants from executive and senior management within SDS at each university, and each one gave permission for participation. In total, 23 participants agreed to participate in the study. See details in the tables below.

Table 9

Participants for this Study According to University (N=23)

University	No of Participants
UWC	8
UCT	8
SUN	7

Table 10*Participants for this Study According to Seniority (N=23)*

Category	No of Participants
Deputy Vice Chancellor	3
Executive Director	4
Director	8
Dean of Students	1
Manager	5
Programme Co-ordinator	2

4.7 Data Collection Methods

The data which formed the substance of my study were collected from the document analysis from policy documents from the DHET and during the interviews with the participants.

4.7.1 Document Analysis

Qualitative content analysis aims to enable the researcher to grasp a document's significance and its intended meaning (Bowen, 2009). Weber (1990) spoke of "content-analyzing" (Weber, 1990, p. 5) the written texts. This method was used on sections within the documents which refer to the scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education. Document analysis is not used as a triangulation method but as a data-gathering method on its own (Bowen, 2009).

The documents which were acquired from the DHET (or pre-2009 called the Department of Education, DoE) formed the basis for the document analysis. The DHET is the governing body for higher education institutions in South Africa. It has issued policies and acts, national plans, and commission documents which provide the governing framework for higher education in South Africa. The key documents were identified, and document analysis was employed to extract reference to the SDS domain and reference to its role and function. The documents were sourced via websites or otherwise drawn from those issued to the public or to the higher education institutions.

Table 11*Policy Documents from the DHET Used for Data Collection*

Publication title	Source
<i>National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation</i>	DoE, 1996
<i>White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education</i>	DoE, 1997
Higher Education Act, (101 of 1997)	DoE, 1997b
National Plan for Higher Education	DoE, 2001a
<i>White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system</i>	DoE, 2001b

The procedure used for analysing the documents involved identifying key words which could be substituted for SDS, such as *student affairs*, *student services*, *student support* or *student development*. Other key words used for the search were *academic support*, *counselling*, *orientation program*, *guidance*, *life skills* and *learning support*. The range of key words was derived from an aggregate of the three institutions, taking into account that any one key word might denote different services in different institutions, while different key words might refer to a similar service. For instance, UWC's Student Development and Services is referred to as Student Affairs at the University of Cape Town, while it largely performs the same functions.

The documents were searched for key words, and frequency tables were generated identifying frequency of references and context of reference. The findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Grounded theory is less prescriptive on specific interviewing styles but rather suggests qualitative interviewing techniques that encourage open-ended questions and a flexible agenda which is participant-driven. Researchers are advised to move from the general to the specific and to engage in the interviewing process "until redundancy is reached" (Brown et al., 2002, p. 4). Also, "flexible and opportunistic data collection methods" might be used to allow the researcher to delve further into themes and explore unique or idiosyncratic responses (Pandit, 1996, p. 3).

A semi-structured interview format was used to create the space for discussion while keeping a focus on the themes (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Keats, 2000; Seidman, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Although different information can be expected to be generated by individuals, as compared to groups, in discussions, individual interviews were chosen as the method for data collection rather than group interviews.

I prefer this method of data collection as I believe it unlikely that the kind of participants identified for this study would have been receptive to group interviews. Group interviews require the participants to feel at ease to share honest opinions in front of each other, and the power differentials between participants and issues around line management might have prevented frank discussions within a group setting. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity is compromised during group and focus interviews.

Interview venues and times were set up at the convenience of each participant. I introduced the purpose of the study and discussed the ethical issues involved, assured the participant of confidentiality and anonymity and discussed the dissemination of the research findings. The participants were given a choice as to the use of their own names and particulars or the use of a pseudonym. Signed permission was requested to record the interview. I discussed the process of grounded theory research and encouraged the participants to review the data and analysis and give feedback, comments, and opinions.

Prior to the interview, each participant was sent the schedule of questions⁸⁴ and a copy of my abstract, which was used to sketch the context of my study. I opened the interview with general questions and explored the themes raised in my research aims. The interviewing time was scheduled for one hour to create space to go into depth and to exhaust themes.

At the end of the interview, the participants were again reassured of confidentiality and anonymity and were encouraged to comment freely on the data and analysis which I shared with each participant via email or in person, depending on the participant's preference.

4.8 Interview Data Analysis

As discussed above, qualitative interviewing techniques were used and information was recorded, transcribed, and coded according to expected and emerging themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Transcriptions were done by a professional transcriber who submitted typed text in electronic format of about 22 typed pages per one-hour interview.

⁸⁴ See Appendices A to C for schedule of questions, letters and consent forms for participants

The simultaneous interrelatedness between analysis and collection of data is fundamental to grounded theory research. There is circularity in the collection of data, the analysis, and the further collection of data, based on the results of the analysis. Data collection, analysis, and the formulation of theory are reciprocally related, and detailed procedures guide this process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Grounded theory research uses three types of non-distinct coding procedures: open, axial, and selective. Open coding is used to generate abstract themes and is the first step in grouping the raw data into meaningful categories, which are subsequently described and given dimension. Axial coding is used to link categories according to levels, properties, and dimensions and foregrounds the conditions which underpin certain phenomena. Selective coding is the final process which identifies the core category and relates all data to create a meaningful matrix, which completes the grounded theory process (Brown et al., 2002; Paterson et al., 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In this study, I first grouped the raw data into categories based on research questions. This was further divided into 10 emerging core themes as almost each sentence and each paragraph was coded. This concluded the open or substantive coding process.

The Axial coding was done by extracting themes and subthemes and sub-subthemes and cutting these into new clusters. These new clusters and subthemes were scaffolded and grouped according to meaningful newly-emerging themes. Subthemes which seemed related to more than one theme or cluster were colour-coded across the thematic scaffold.

The thematic reach across themes emerged from reviewing the data repeatedly, from listening to the transcriptions at different stages of gathering the data, and from sketching flow diagrams which swelled and changed as more interviews were done, more reading took place, more layers were discovered, and more, sometimes idiosyncratic, data emerged. Various discussions with my colleagues, supervisor, and peer reviewer allowed me to regroup and to realign data to create meaningful flows. This *memo-ing* process was an essential precondition for sorting the themes into coherent arguments which answer the core research questions, and these then formed the basis of the discussion. The theoretical sketches resulting from the *memo-ing* are presented in narrative style in the discussion of this study.

I counted the frequency of how many participants presented a particular topic, argument, or theme, stated a particular opinion, or represented facts in particular ways, or used language and discourses in striking ways which revealed something about their perceptions, ideologies, assumptions, or beliefs with regards to the research questions.

While I experimented with the alignment of the themes, quotations, and phrases which contained the concepts, I kept the participants' coding in order to be able to trace each source. Participants' transcriptions were colour-coded, including bold, italic, and different fonts to identify each source. (See Appendices D and E containing examples of how the process of data analysis unfolded).

4.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research needs to establish what quantitative research calls *rigor* and to establish confidence, also referred to as replicability, credibility, and authenticity, in the findings it generates (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Krefting, 1991). It is recommended that at least two techniques are used to augment trustworthiness of qualitative studies (Creswell, 1998). In this study, I used four techniques to strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of my study: 1) exploring negative cases, 2) sharing analysis with participants, 3) having a peer reviewer to validate process and findings, and 4) providing self-disclosure of the researcher regarding her role and position within the research.

Exploring negative cases involves the deliberate exploration of data which seem idiosyncratic, peculiar, or novel (Brown et al., 2002; Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Paterson et al., 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This contributed to the exploration of potential 'blind spots' within the analysis.

Sharing the analysis with participants is part of creating trustworthiness of the study and allows participants to validate the findings. This was done by blind emailing the analysis after the findings were written up, and I invited the participants to share their thoughts, insights, and opinions with me. While many affirming emails were received, only one comment was of a substantive nature.

Brown et al. (2002) suggested that one may engage the assistance of an "inquiry auditor" or "peer reviewer" or "validator" to check the emerging data from the a) content analysis of documents, and b) the content analysis of the interviews. Krefting (1991) referred to a peer examiner who verifies the process and findings. I used this technique and have presented my data analysis process, demonstrating each step, to a peer reviewer. She⁸⁵ is particularly suited and very insightful as she has experience in the higher education context and understands the references, contexts, and themes. The participants' identities were not

⁸⁵ My peer reviewer was Dr Soraya Nair (PhD, SUN)

revealed as she only worked with the data in the transcribed format, where the data were already in colour, bold, italic, and in special fonts. The key to this was only known to me and my supervisor. The peer reviewer validated the process and confirmed that she was satisfied with the process of the analysis.

Trustworthiness is improved when the researchers disclose their relationship with the area under investigation, their history, and their perceptions and biases, as was done in the section above, in which I described my own motivation for my study (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002).

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Grounded theory research relies on qualitative interviews with participants, and hence every effort was made to conduct these interviews and the research as sensitively as possible, focussing on informed and voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and protection of the participants (Brown et al., 2002; Merriam, 2002; Paterson et al., 2001). To promote honest and frank responses from the participants, I assured the participants of the following:

4 10.1 Informed and Voluntary Participation

Participants were fully informed of the scope, aims, and potential outcomes of the research. Participants were invited on a free and voluntary basis, without any inappropriate enticement and were assured that they could withdraw at any stage with impunity. Written and signed consent to participate voluntarily and to give permission for recording were requested of the participants.

Each participant was assured that the data reported in the findings and discussed in the analysis would be impossible to be linked to her. In order to ensure this, I numbered the participants in random ways, not grouped according to institution or along rank or seniority. Each participant is referred to as 'she' and this pronoun further removes any link to the source. References to the institutions or persons, or names, abbreviations, terms or departments were removed entirely in order to ensure that the participants did not feel exposed or identified in any way.

Voluntary participation was a particularly sensitive issue as some of the participants were closely associated with me, either through direct line management or because of

participation in other forums. I enlisted the service of a substitute researcher⁸⁶, to interview one participant in my stead, as this interview seemed particularly sensitive to boundary issues.

4.10.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Written assurance of confidentiality and anonymity were provided to the participants prior to individual interviews. Grounded theory research relies on the generated content in interviews and not on the person who contributes the data (Brown et al., 2002; Glaeser, 1998). In that way, anonymity can confidently be assured without compromising any of the themes derived from the content analysis. The transcriptions were kept for records only and no one but me and my supervisor knows of the key that identifies the sources of the data, that is, the participants. The peer reviewer had no access to the key and hence to the sources so could not link the data to the participants.

The aim of my study was not to compare the institutions, but to extract themes which might transcend the participants and their contexts. Institutions are only mentioned in the discussion if this adds significant value to the interpretation of the data.

4.10.3 Protection

Given this study is embedded into the terrain in which the participants work, related to their own performance and their own immediate line managers and institutions, it seemed very important to assure the participants that they would be protected and not humiliated or judged if they revealed potentially sensitive information about themselves or their colleagues or institution. This non-maleficence is a key ethical principle and one which needs emphasis.

4.11 Limitations of this Study

Limitations of this study primarily concern challenges of disparity of rhetoric and practice. Rhetoric refers to what people *report* they do (gathered as data in the interviews) and what assumptions and constructs guide their work (what they believe in). Practice refers to what people *actually do*, how they act within the context of their assumptions and constructs (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). This tension is particularly evident in areas where there might be a divergence of practice and policy, where declarations and empirical evidence converge little. Areas in this study which illuminate incongruities highlight this disparity of rhetoric and practice. For instance, a participant's claim that SDS is paramount in contributing to the

⁸⁶ My substitute researcher was Dr Soraya Nair (PhD, SUN)

deliverables of higher education (rhetoric) while she describes how SDS staff are not necessary in governance committees (practice) needs to be further explored. These complexities form part of the limitations of this study and can perhaps form the focus of future research.

A second area of concern, highlighted by Fontana and Frey (1998), is the risk of participants giving socially desirable responses to please or deceive the interviewer and thus distort the results of the study. Self-report and qualitative data gathering techniques are burdened by this, and those performing interpretations need to consider the possibility that ‘correct’ rather than ‘truthful’ responses were provided by the participants.

The limited sample pool was a third concern for this study as it was restricted to senior and executive management in three higher education institutions in the Western Cape. On the one hand, even one institution might have presented opportunities for insights, as is gleaned from case studies, while, on the other hand, this might have seriously compromised anonymity and confidentiality. Moreover, as in most qualitative research, a small sample size is a limitation to the generalisability of the findings. However, in this study, the aim was not to develop aggregations but to explore insights and to generate recommendations.

A fourth limitation concerns the constraints inherent in qualitative methodology. Interviewing, interpreting, and sampling involve the subjectivity and autobiographical bias of the researcher. While full disclosure is included in this study, I am always a product of my own iterations and interpretations, as much as I attempt to distil subjectivity from the empirical world I am studying. Although “self-reflexivity unmask[s] complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing, ... desires to speak ‘for’ others are suspect” (Richardson, 2005, p. 523). I hope that my political and ideological agendas are unmasked and that findings speak for themselves. Not all interviews were conducted by me. One interview was done by a substitute researcher as the boundaries of my relationship to the participant seemed to prevent my interviewing her. At the same time, this participant was identified as a key contributor of insights and experience, and hence I did not want to omit her from my identified participants.

Another conceptual limitation, which was part of the research focus precisely in order to address such concerns in general, was the lack of consensual and aggregated understanding of terminology. The reference to SDS meant different things to different

people⁸⁷. The need for definitions of scope, role, and function of parameters and theoretical underpinnings emerged from this study and, in turn, the lack thereof presented a limitation to the data gathering and data interpretations.

Finally, I am aware of the impossibility of capturing an objective reality or of capturing it objectively (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The influence of my presence on the interviewees and my relationship to the participants is impossible to assess. Given that I know some participants and have had work relationships with some, increased trust may have enabled a more frank discussion, whereas, my knowledge of some participants may have made them cautious in terms of disclosures. I may only speculate that despite my reassurance of an impartial process, my mere presence influenced the interview.

4.12 Reporting of Research Findings

The findings are reported by first discussing the themes as they emerged from the data and then reporting on the subthemes as they were grouped under the main themes. Each theme is explained as it relates to the main research questions. Each theme is described, including the number of participants who mentioned the theme. In addition, particularly pertinent and poignant quotations which illustrate the theme further are presented. The conclusions drawn in the discussion are based on the findings and are tentative and offer multiple explanations and alternative interpretations.

4.13 Dissemination and Application of Research Findings

Arminio and Hultgren (2002) stressed how important it is that research should contribute towards meaningful recommendations about the area under investigation. This is the translation of research into practice, which is part of the importance of qualitative application-oriented research, elevated from self-referential research into a tool which serves to engage with reality. This is in line with global shifts for research “to become more user- and utilisation-orientated” which is responsive to current challenges (Bailey, 2010, p. 18).

⁸⁷ In South Africa, the terms SDS and Student Affairs are used interchangeably. However, America (see www.naspa.org and www.myacpa.org), the UK (www.ukcisa.org), Europe and the EHEA area (www.studetn-affairs.eu, www.ehea.info and www.ecsat.org), Asia (www.apssa.info) and Australia (www.asa.org.au) seem to favour Student Affairs, as does the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (www.iassasonline.org).

The strength of this study is the chapter on recommendations which are directly related to the current field of SDS within higher education in South Africa. The recommendations are discussed in Chapter 8 and will be shared with SDS associations and the DHET.

In line with the dissemination model of knowledge utilisation research, I will ensure that potential and relevant users are aware of this study and its findings and recommendations (Bailey, 2010, p. 37). I will share an executive summary and access to the full thesis with the participants of the study, with staff in SDS, and with the executives of the three universities. Furthermore, the executive summary and recommendations for a national review will be submitted to the DHET. As suggested by Bailey (2010), it is essential that I make the study, findings, and recommendations accessible and understandable, relevant and specific to various user groups.

I aim to publish various aspects of the findings of the study in peer-reviewed journals and at relevant conferences⁸⁸.

4.14 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the research framework and methodology were discussed for this utilisation-oriented and user-relevant study, located in Mode 2 knowledge production, which acknowledges complex “contextual factors that are impacting on knowledge production” (Bailey, 2010, p. 18). Reasons for choosing, and strengths and limitations of, qualitative research were discussed and included, as was my self-disclosure on my own role within this research. Limitations of the study are discussed in the last chapter, which concludes the study.

Chapter 4 also included the research setting and context, describing the three universities and the SDS organogram at each institution in detail. I interviewed 23 participants from the institutions and described how I analysed the data and reported on the findings.

The chapter concluded with a commitment to translate the findings for potential utilisation and practice and to engage the institutions and the higher education sector to explore the scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education in South Africa.

The next chapter presents the findings of this study, first the findings of the document analysis and then the findings from the interviews.

⁸⁸ Bailey (2010, p. 38) suggested that researchers need to go beyond scholarly journals as ‘scholarly journals just don’t do the trick’ in disseminating research to a wide user-audience.

CHAPTER 5:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

This chapter is focussed on the governing policy documents which have emerged from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) over the past 15 years, since the first democratically elected government came into place in 1994.

The DHET is the governing ministry for the public and private higher education institutions in South Africa. The DHET has published policies, acts, and national plans which present the governing framework for higher education in South Africa. Five key documents were identified, and document analysis was employed to explore any references to the SDS domain and references to SDS's scope, role, and function. The context within which SDS is referenced and the meanings surrounding the references are analysed in this chapter.

5.1 Procedure used for Analysing Documents

The procedure used for analysing the documents involved identifying key words that could be substituted for SDS, such as *student affairs*, *student services*, *student support*, or *student development*. Other key words used for the search were *academic support*, *counselling*, *orientation programme*, *guidance*, *life skills*, and *learning support*. Each document was searched for these key words and frequencies of key words are presented in a table, one per document. The research aims and questions acted as the broad framework for the document analysis.

5.1.1 Definition of Student Development and Support: SDS

The departments which are collectively referred to as Student Development and Services (SDS) are also called Student Affairs within universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology⁸⁹ in South Africa. While there might be conceptual differences

⁸⁹ After the university mergers during 2002 (DoE, 2001a), technikons were renamed as universities of technology, and in instances where universities and technikons merged and now grant graduate degrees and diplomas, these were renamed as "comprehensive universities".

of emphasis, for the purpose of this chapter, the terms are used interchangeably. The SDS usually comprises student services which are non-academic in nature. These include, but are not limited to, academic and career counselling services, psychological and personal counselling, residential and catering services, health services, student governance and leadership, orientation programmes, and disability support offices.

Typically, SDS departments are managed by an administrative and/or academic director who reports to the vice rector/deputy vice chancellor. SDS staff range from administrative workers to professionals, such as nurses, doctors, psychologists, and social workers, who might be registered with national bodies (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Hernandez, 1989; Mandew, 2003; Ngcobo, 2004).

5.1.2 Scope of SDS for this Document Analysis

For the purpose of this study, this chapter will be focussed on the supportive and developmental departments, programmes, and initiatives of SDS and not on the pure service delivery departments, such as the provision of housing, catering, financial aid, or bursaries. The distinction between student development and support, on the one hand, and student services, on the other, is nominal and artificial. Here, the focus is on the developmental and supportive services and interventions which SDS provides for students and the institution.

This attempt at assessing the scope of SDS is problematic, as any ‘scoping’ is located in conceptual differences and ideological assumptions. Whether a department is located within SDS or not has many reasons, some theoretical, some financial, some political, and some historical, while some departments have coincidentally been clustered within or outside of SDS scope. The key words were chosen to allow a broad search for a range of SDS services within the policy documents, acts, and national plans of the DHET. The challenge around the determining the scope of SDS is addressed in detail in Chapter 7.

5.1.3 Methodology for this Document Analysis

The methodology for the identification of relevant documents and for the extraction of SDS references was a thematic content analysis. To source the relevant documents from the DHET, an electronic document search was performed. An internet search was conducted using a common search engine (www.google.co.za, www.google scholar.co.za), using the key phrase *Higher Education South Africa*. Automatic and predictive search suggestions appeared according to frequency of “hits” and these were all explored. Furthermore, key sites were explored. These included the websites of the Department of Education

(www.doe.gov.za), the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (www.chet.org.za), and the website of the Council on Higher Education (www.che.ac.za). All documents authored by the DoE, and subsequently the DHET, which contain any explicit or implicit reference to the SDS domain were extracted.

The following documents tabulated below were identified and explored for references to SDS.

Table 12

DHET Policy Documents Relevant to SDS

Publication title	Source
<i>National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for Higher Education Transformation</i>	DoE, 1996
<i>White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education</i>	DoE, 1997
<i>Higher Education Act, (101 of 1997)</i>	RSA, 1997
<i>National Plan for Higher Education</i>	DoE, 2001a
<i>White Paper 6: Special needs education: Building an inclusive education and training system</i>	DoE, 2001b

The documents are discussed in sequence of publication. Each document is described, extracted data is tabulated, and a discussion about the data follows.

For each document, I did a key word and thematic analysis based on themes, topics, and key words, as follows. The list of themes and topics as listed here are reference points for SDS scope, role, and function. The range of topics is derived from an aggregate of the three institutions, taking into account that any one key word might denote different services in different institutions, while different key words might refer to a similar service. For instance, the SDS at the University of the Western Cape is referred to as Student Development and Support, whereas the conceptually and structurally analogous domain at the University of Cape Town is referred to as Student Affairs.

The range of key words illustrates the rather nebulous area in which SDS finds itself. The scope of SDS in South Africa is not well defined (Lunceford, 2011; Mandew, 2003).

The following key words (and different spellings thereof) were used for the thematic content analysis of each document:

1. Student Affairs
2. Student Support
3. Student Development
4. Academic Support
5. Counselling
6. Orientation Programme
7. Student Services
8. Guidance
9. Life Skills
10. Learning Support.

5.1.4 Governing Documents from the Department of Higher Education and Training

The Department of Education (DoE), renamed the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) during 2009, is the governing body of all higher education, all tertiary education in South Africa. Various other bodies, such as the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), provide an advising, monitoring, and evaluating function but have no governing function. The documents identified for this study form the policy backbone of South African higher education (Scott et al. 2007).

Each document will be located within its context and references to SDS are identified and discussed.

5.2 National Commission on Higher Education: An Overview of a New Policy Framework for Higher Education Transformation

This document was published by the Department of Education in 1996 and was the first formal document heralding the new Higher Education policy framework.

5.2.1 Contextualising the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE, 1996) Document

This document was the first formal document, developed in a very consultative and participative way, which presented the basis for the framework for radical transformation of the higher education sector in South Africa, post 1994, rooting higher education in its local context while preserving the value of global benchmarks. The document is a concise 16-page

document and is divided into three sections, which describe 1) the need for transformation, 2) the features and principles of the framework, and 3) the framework itself.

This report *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* places higher education in a “pivotal role in political, economic and cultural reconstruction and development of South Africa”⁹⁰ (DoE, 1997, p. 1). It identifies the deficiencies of a fundamentally flawed higher education system inherited from the apartheid regime and outlines the remedies, while maintaining the strengths within the system. The NCHE documents the importance of transformation at that point in the historical and socio-political context of South Africa because of “unprecedented national and global opportunities and challenges” (DoE, 1997, p. 1).

The principles which guide the process of transformation are based on equity and the correction of historical inequity. Governance of the system is designed to be democratic and participatory; systems for quality assurance are established, academic freedom and institutional autonomy are guaranteed, and public funding for higher education is used as a steering mechanism and linked to performance, efficiency, and accountability (DoE, 1997). The system is expected to ensure broad accessibility, to respond to the educational needs of an emerging economy, to support the democratisation of a critical and responsive society with a shared commitment to a human rights culture, and to contribute towards knowledge creation with special reference to local and African contexts (DoE, 1996).

The central features of the new policy framework can be summarised in three central points (DoE, 1997, p. 3). The National Commission intended the new policy framework to a) ensure increased participation of students and increased diversity and flexibility with enrolment and programme offerings; this “massification” (DoE, 1997, p. 4) was understood to address equity, redress, and development; b) create greater responsiveness⁹¹ within its social

⁹⁰ All raw data derived from document analysis and interviews are presented in italics, whereas quotations from literature sources are merely put into quote signs.

⁹¹ The NCHE’s emphasis on higher education ‘responsiveness’ in an ‘open knowledge system’ (NCHE, DoE, 1996) is a reference to Mode 2 knowledge production, emphasising South Africa’s higher education’s utility role within its context, relevant to African and local issues, analogous to ‘Africanisation’ of higher education (Cloete & Muller, 1998). Cloete and Muller (1998) provide an interesting argument for the reduced tension between the local African contextual responsiveness suggested by the NCHE, and the modern Western modes of enquiry with its global ambitions aiming to *develop* in order to bring Africa closer to Western milieu, and present a “incorporation of local non-cosmopolitan knowledge” and suggest an “interactive multilateral conceptions of knowledge” bridging the “crippling dichotomous code of postcolonial discourse” (Cloete & Muller, 1998, p. 4).

context, that is, to form an “open knowledge system” (DoE, 1997, p. 4); and c) to encourage increased co-operation and partnerships across higher education, and, in terms of the tension between state and higher education autonomy, with civil society. This positions the state in a “steering and coordinating role” (DoE, 1996, p. 5), while institutional autonomy manifests in self-regulation within the confines of accountability and central decision-making authorities who steer with incentive-based systems.

Co-operative and participatory governance was a key feature of this new policy framework. The following diagram is presented in the document to illustrate the internal governance structures and organisational alignment at universities (DoE, 1996, p. 12):

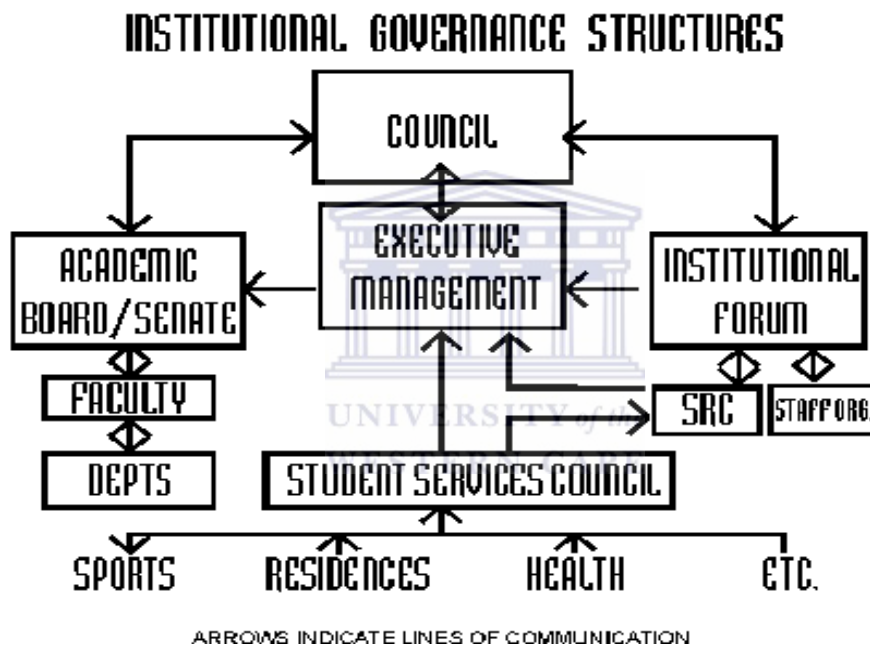


Figure 9: Institutional governance structures according to the National Commission on Higher Education (DoE, 1996, p. 12)

This diagram locates the Student Services Council directly accountable to Executive Management and hence at a fairly senior and central position. The absence of lines between the academic section and the SDS section is noticeable.

5.2.2 Findings and Discussion

In searching through the content of the document, the following data were extracted:

Table 13

National Commission on Higher Education: Frequency of Key Words

Key word	Page number
Student Affairs	-
Student Support	-
Student Development	-
Academic Support	-
Counselling	12
Orientation Programme	-
Student Services	12 (x 2)
Guidance	12
Life Skills	-
Learning Support	-

It is in the context of discussing governance that the document mentions “counselling”, “student services” (twice) and “guidance”.

The NCHE document makes a call to “*professionalise student services*” in order to cope with the “unprecedented need” created by “massification” (DoE, 1996, p. 12). It mentions the need for “skilled career counselling and academic guidance” and proposes a “Student Service Council with policy advisory functions” (DoE, 1996, p. 12). The authors of the documents explicitly state that staff development is essential to develop improved service provision for students in the area of career and academic development, implying recognition of the importance of career and academic development and support. They indicate that student services need to assist in addressing the “unprecedented need” for career and academic guidance and suggest that student governance structures need to be assisted in developing leadership capacities (DoE, 1996, p. 12).

As the first formative policy document emerging from the newly established Department of Education post liberation, the NCHE document sets the course, albeit in only one reference, for the scope, role, and function of student services, suggesting that SDS can provide assistance, guidance, and counselling, positioning SDS in a supportive and remedial role within the institutions, with vertical communication and reporting lines, and “next to” or “parallel” to the academic deans and academic experience of the students. This organisational diagram depicts SDS within a “silo” (Magopeni, 2010), beside the academic decision-making, faculty, and academic programmes.

5.2.3 Summary

The NCHE document of 1996 heralds the new policy framework for higher education, focusses on governance issues, and sets the parameters in terms of values related to national imperatives, institutional imperatives, and civil society. SDS is recognised as playing a role in reconstruction and nation-building. SDS is referred to in terms of remedial functions predicated on notions of academically deficient students. The following governing document *White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education*, (DoE, 1997) was published a year later and outlines the programme for transformation of South African higher education.

5.3 White Paper 3: Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education

White Paper 3 was an augmentation of the previously published *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* and provides the implementation framework.

5.3.1 Contextualising White Paper 3

White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education (DoE, 1997) resulted from wide consultation and various position papers and is a continuation of the process that was initiated by the NCHE during the previous year. It describes the framework for change and outlines the key principles for this change (DoE, 1997).

White Paper 3 enshrines the core values of the goals of transformation and provides the implementation framework, with special emphasis on the new funding framework as a steering mechanism. In essence, it outlines the strategy for the implementation of a planned, governed, goal-oriented, and performance-related funded system which addresses equity, access, and delivery in line with national goals. Because White Paper 3 is a continuation of the process which was begun by the NCHE in 1996, it reiterates the goals of higher education transformation and lists three fundamental goals of transformation: 1) increased and broadened participation, 2) responsiveness to societal interest and needs, and 3) co-operation and partnership in higher education governance (DoE, 1997, p. 6).

The principles are described and include equity and redress, democratisation and development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and public accountability. Much like the principles in the NCHE's overview (DoE,

1996), the principles build the framework for a new higher education system, which is to give meaning to the new democracy (DoE, 1997).

The document is detailed and comprehensive and includes numerous references to the domain of SDS. White Paper 3 contains 55 pages, divided into four chapters: Chapter 1 on principles and vision, Chapter 2 on structure and growth, Chapter 3 on governance, and Chapter 4 on funding. The emphasis is on organisational structure and performance-related funding as a governmental steering mechanism.

5.3.2 Findings and Discussion

In searching through the content of the document, the following data were extracted:

Table 14

White Paper 3: Frequency of Key Words

Key word	Page number
Student Affairs	-
Student Support	22, 23, 27, 27, 39, 42, 45
Student Development	-
Academic Support	-
Counselling	42, 43, 22,
Orientation Programme	-
Student Services	42, 42, 42
Guidance	29, 42, 22
Life Skills	42
Learning support	-

There are 17 references to the key words, as tabulated above. In the section on Equity and Redress (Chapter 2), the document highlights “the development and provision of student support services, including career guidance, counselling and financial aid services, are other essential requirements’ to address the “widespread” “learning deficit” amongst learners (DoE, 1997, p. 22). It seems that student services are positioned and conceptualised to remedy the deficits of the learners. This reflects the dated medical model in which support and

development was located (Howell, 2005; Lazarus, Davidoff, & Daniels, 2000; Struthers, 2005⁹²).

The author of the document goes on to show that “only a multi-faceted approach can provide a sound foundation of knowledge, concepts, academic, social and personal skills and create the culture of respect, support and challenge on which self-confidence, real learning and enquiry can thrive” (DoE, 1997, p. 22). This suggests that SDS needs to be included in thinking about the development needs of the learners, which implies an inclusive lens of conceptualising development needs of students, shifting to the social model of support and development (Howell, 2005; Lazarus et al., 2000).

The section on Equity and Redress contains a statement that “academic development structures and programmes are needed at all higher education institutions to promote the development of teaching skills, curricula, courseware and student support services as a mainstream programme development’ (DoE, 1997, p. 23). This suggests that student support services should be aligned with academic development in providing support within the mainstream of the university.

The section on Distance Education maintains that “expansion cannot take place without additional investment, especially in learning technology, staff development and student support” (DoE, 1997, p. 27). Of significance is the passage claiming that “there is still considerable work to do to re-focus institutional missions, modernise courseware, improve student support, and undertake essential efficiency reforms and cost-effective planning, so that the quality of provision and performance is improved” (DoE, 1997, p. 27).

These statements seem to indicate that support services need to be bolstered, not only in terms of expansion, resources, and staffing but also in terms of alignment with university deliverables, in terms of overall university performance. SDS is related to efficiency and this is the start of SDS needing to justify its contribution to “core business”. The emergence of a discourse of managerialism and market-oriented structure and culture is evident (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008)

In terms of Admission and Selection Procedures, the document contains mention of the provision of “career guidance” (DoE, 1997, p. 29) as part of the National Higher

⁹² Howell (2005), Lazarus et al. (2005) and Struthers (2005) refer to the shift from medical and curative to the preventative and developmental approach with special emphasis on basic education. However, this may be generalised to higher education.

Education Information and Admission Services. This is a function envisaged to be provided prior to student admission, but which never materialised.

Chapter 3 of the document is on Governance and elaborates on the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and its role in advising the Minister of Higher Education on “the policies and mechanisms for student support and academic development throughout the system” (DoE, 1997, p. 9). This suggests that the CHE has a monitoring and evaluation role and should advise on policies and mechanisms on SDS.

In the section on Institutional Governance, the document gives quotations from the NCHE (DoE, 1996) and dedicates an entire paragraph to the Student Services Council (DoE, 1997, p. 42):

Student Services Council:

3.40 Student support services in higher education institutions provide personal, career, curriculum and educational guidance and counselling, life skills and sports programmes, health and financial aid services, and student housing facilities” (NCHE,1996:205). The Ministry enjoins each institution to establish a Student Services Council with a policy advisory role in student services. This council should be democratically constituted but chaired by a senior executive member of the institution. (DoE, 1997, p. 42)

The reference to “personal, career, curriculum and educational guidance and counselling and life skills” (DoE, 1997, p. 42) gives scope to the SDS domain which, while not exhaustive, is “guiding” nonetheless. The medical discourse of guidance and counselling and the notion that students can be “upskilled” emerges. This notion suggests that issues of epistemological challenges and numeracy and literacy issues can be “upskilled”.

In the section on Institutional Culture (DoE, 1997, p. 42), the writers of the document maintain

that institutions are enjoined to develop and disseminate institutional policies prohibiting sexual harassment of students and employees, together with the establishment of reporting and grievance procedures incorporating victim support and counselling, confidentiality, protection of complainants from retaliation, as well as mechanisms for ensuring due process and protection for respondents. (DoE, 1997, p. 43)

The introduction to Chapter 4 on Funding lists the institutional reforms which need to be considered to “improve efficiency” (DoE, 1997, p. 45) and includes “improving student throughput and completion rates, aided by effective academic development and student support systems, and more focussed or targeted public funding measures” (DoE, 1997, p. 45). This suggests that student support services are expected to contribute to throughput and completion rates. Again, the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm is evident, which is shifting universities to market-oriented institutions, introducing a discourse which positions universities as corporate. This portentous discourse is analogous to Luescher-Mamashela’s notion of the market-oriented university, which is run on corporate principles (2008), and is also reflected in the CHE Monitor 9 (Lange, 2010) which describes globalisation discourses in higher education.

5.3.3 Summary: White Paper 3

In sum, White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) makes explicit reference to SDS and begins to define the scope, role, and function as aligned with the core business of creating an enabling environment which promotes throughput and develops the students holistically. It positions SDS as an essential role player in addressing the “under preparedness” and “widespread deficiencies” of learners entering higher education (DoE, 1997, p. 22). How this might be done is left to the internal autonomous management of the institutions.

While this document positions SDS as an essential ingredient in contributing to student performance, it conceptualises it in a supportive, curative, and remedial function with vertical organisational and reporting lines.

5.4 Higher Education Act, 1997 (RSA, Act 101 of 1997)

The Higher Education Act was promulgated by the South African government in 1997 and replaced all previous acts related to higher education.

5.4.1 Contextualising the Higher Education Act

The Higher Education Act (RSA, Act 101 of 1997) has 9 chapters and includes discussions on the CHE, the relationship of higher education institutions with the DHET, structures and governance of public and private higher education institutions, funding, quality assurance, and assessments.

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 provides regulations

- to regulate higher education;

- to provide for the establishment, composition, and functions of a Council on Higher Education;
- to provide for the establishment, governance, and funding of public higher education institutions;
- to provide for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor;
- to provide for the registration of private higher education institutions;
- to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education;
- to provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws; and
- to provide for matters connected therewith.

The Preamble offers the following guiding principles (RSA, Act 101 of 1997):

- to establish a single co-ordinate education system;
- to restructure and transform institutions;
- to redress past discrimination and ensure ‘representativity’ and equal access;
- to provide optimal opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge;
- to promote the values which underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity equality, and freedom;
- to respect freedom of religion, belief, and opinion;
- to respect and encourage democracy, academic freedom, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship, and research;
- to pursue excellence, promote the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee, tolerance of ideas, and appreciation of diversity;
- to respond to the needs of the Republic and of the communities served by the institutions; and
- to contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge.

5.4.2 Findings and Discussion

The Higher Education Act (RSA, Act 101 of 1997) is a broad legal framework and is the culmination of the previous work done by the National Commission on Higher Education (DoE, 1996) and White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997), and provides for a radical shift from the way higher education institutions functioned prior to 1994. This act provides the legal backbone for higher education in South Africa. The Higher Education Act was searched for key words. There were no positive hits.

In searching through the content of the document, the following data were extracted:

Table 15

Higher Education Act: Frequency of Key Words

Key word	Page number
Student Affairs	-
Student Support	-
Student Development	-
Academic Support	-
Counselling	-
Orientation Programme	-
Student Services	-
Guidance	-
Life Skills	-
Learning Support	-

This paucity of reference to SDS begins to change the course for SDS. The two governing documents prior to the Higher Education Act make clear reference to SDS position and structural alignment within the institutions, and refer to the scope, role, and function of SDS. SDS is considered to deliver in line with core business as measured, amongst others, in student success. From 1997 onwards, with the emergence of the Act 101, reference to SDS disappears from the governing policy documents.

5.4.3 Summary: Higher Education Act, 1997

The Higher Education Act of 1997 is the regulatory backbone of higher education and SDS, as an institutionally internal concern, and perhaps because SDS was not part of priority concerns during that time, SDS does not feature in the act.

5.5 National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001a)

Subsequent to the previous documents, which outlined the vision and implementation of the new higher education system in South Africa, the *National Plan for Higher Education* (NPHE) is the first document which shapes and fashions the transformation.

5.5.1 Contextualising the National Plan for Higher Education

In an address to the National Assembly in 2001, the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, stated that

the NPHE (National Plan for Higher Education) provides the framework and outlines the strategies for shaping the transformation of the higher education system for the coming decades. Its central focus and purpose is to ensure that higher education institutions are geared to producing the skilled professionals and intellectuals required to sustain social and economic development. This plan will enable the higher education system to contribute to the building of a learning society that draws on people of all ages and all walks of life and gives them the opportunity to advance and develop themselves, both intellectually and materially. In short, it will enable the Higher Education system to improve the quality of life of all our people. (Asmal, 2001, p. 2)

The *National Plan for Higher Education* (DoE, 2001a) is an ambitious plan to position higher education as the key engine for reconstruction and development in South Africa. Through *the National Plan for Higher Education*, the government emphasises the higher education institutions' role in redressing the inequalities of the past and the institutions' responsiveness to national priorities, while respecting institutional autonomy (Asmal, 2001).

The NPHE has six sections which address core areas, each listing key outcomes that were expected to contribute towards the overall achievement of the goals. The goals of the NPHE are a continuation of the goals stated by the National Commission in 1996, and in White Paper 3 in 1997. The NPHE addresses a) the introduction of the overall challenges, the policy framework, and the steering mechanisms, b) the production of the graduates needed for social and economic development, c) achievement of equity in the higher education system, d) achievement of diversity in the higher education system, e) sustaining and promoting research, and f) restructuring the institutional landscape of the system.

The NPHE has five key policy goals which are

1. to provide access
2. to promote equality
3. to ensure diversity

4. to build high level research
5. to build new institutional identities.

In essence, the NPHE is concerned with fundamental restructuring of the institutions, with measurements of success, efficiencies, and funding issues. SDS is considered an “internal” issue and was left to the autonomous management of the institutions.

5.5.2 Findings and Discussion

In searching through the content of the document, the following data were extracted:

Table 16

National Plan for Higher Education: Frequency of Key Words

Topic/Key word	Page number
Student Support	-
Student Development	-
Academic Support	-
Counselling	-
Orientation Programme	-
Student Services	-
Guidance	36
Life Skills	-
Learning support	-

The term *guidance* is mentioned once in the context of the National Higher Education Application and Information Service, and the document states that its role is “satisfying the information needs of applicants on available programmes, as well as providing careers guidance and information on labour market trends” (DoE, 2001a, p. 36). This is similar to the reference made in White Paper 3 and refers to the pre-admission career guidance which is recommended but for which no structures were set up.

5.5.3 Summary: National Plan for Higher Education

Essentially SDS and its potential contributions are not mentioned in the NPHE. SDS is considered part of internal issues and the state’s reach was not intended to become involved in what was considered micro-management of internal matters (Cloete, 2011).

5.6 White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System

White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001b) is directed at basic education and is written as such. It makes one brief reference to SDS, which is relevant for the purposes of this chapter.

5.6.1 Contextualising White Paper 6

White Paper 6 outlines “what an inclusive education and training system is and how we intend to build it” (DoE, 2001b, p. 5). ‘It provides the framework for establishing such an education and training system, details a funding strategy, and lists the key steps to be taken in establishing an inclusive education and training system for South Africa’ (DoE, 2001b, p. 5).

The work of White Paper 6 is based on the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services (DoE, 1997). The document explicitly refers to the inclusive aspect of basic education and how to transform the current system into an inclusive one and mentions the area of higher education in the latter part of the report, which provides guidance and advice to the DHET.

The document refers to learners, children, and youth and not specifically to higher education. Higher education is dealt with in section 2.2.5 only (DoE, 2001b, p. 31). White Paper 6 has reference to basic education; however, it is cited here because of the paragraph on page 31 which indicates that higher education needs to spell out its strategic plans to increase attracting students with different needs and describe the levels of accommodations institutions are able to make.

5.6.2 Findings and Discussion

The key word search was done for the section on higher education only and SDS is not mentioned.

Table 17

White Paper 6: Frequency of Key Words

Topic/Key word	Page number
Student Affairs	-
Student Support	-
Student Development	-
Academic Support	-

Counselling	-
Orientation Programme	-
Student Services	-
Guidance	-
Life Skills	-
Learning Support	-

The section which refers to inclusive education in higher education does not make any reference to SDS.

With specific reference to higher education:

2.2.5 Higher education

2.2.5.1 The National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, February 2001) commits our higher education institutions to increasing the access of learners with special education needs. The Ministry, therefore, expects institutions to indicate in their institutional plans the strategies and steps, with the relevant time frames, they intend taking to increase enrolment of these learners.

2.2.5.2 The Ministry will also make recommendations to higher education institutions regarding minimum levels of provision for learners with special needs. However, all higher education institutions will be required to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for physically disabled learners.

2.2.5.3 It will not be possible to provide relatively expensive equipment and other resources, particularly for blind and deaf students, at all higher education institutions. Such facilities will therefore have to be organized on a regional basis. (DoE, 2001b, p. 31)

This section indicates that the institutions need to take responsibility for their engagement with issues of disabilities, locating this aspect of SDS internally, within the autonomous realm of the institution. Perhaps the assumption is that SDS is somehow

integrated into the institutional responses. However, White Paper 6 does not make reference to these institutionally internal processes.

5.6.3 Summary: White Paper 6

White Paper 6 shifts notions of development and support into the social model and removes the discourse of deficit from constructions about students. White Paper 6 is aimed at basic education but contains a brief paragraph about higher education which reiterates institutional autonomy with regard to SDS. While institutional autonomy is enshrined in the NCHE, SDS, if autonomously managed, remains an instrument of the institution and is inhibited in asserting its contract with civil society. This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

5.7 Summary and Conclusion

In sum, over the past 15 years, the DoE and the DHET have issued documents which restructure and govern the higher education sector in South Africa. Focus has been on institutional mergers, funding, enrolments, and efficiencies.

The analysed documents' references to SDS can be summarised as follows:

Table 18

Summary of SDS References in DHET Policy Documents

Publication	Source	Reference to SDS
<i>National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation</i>	DoE, 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDS position and governance within the institution • SDS involved in internal institutional policy • Supportive and remedial function to contribute to overall Higher Education goal of student success • Services listed such as counselling and guidance • Students constructed as needing support to address 'widespread deficiencies' in students
<i>White Paper 3: Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education</i>	DoE, 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDS as contributing to throughput and student success • SDS in remedial and supportive role and function • Emphasis on strengthening SDS capacity
<i>Higher Education Act, (101 of 1997)</i>	DoE, 1997b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference

<i>National Plan for Higher Education</i>	DoE, 2001a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference
<i>White Paper 6: Special needs education: Building an inclusive education and training system</i>	DoE, 2001b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference

In the early stage of reconfiguring the higher education sector, during the mid-1990s, SDS featured in terms of supporting and guiding the students in ensuring overall success. SDS is located within the institution in a central position, reporting at high level, and is described in terms of its governance structure and in terms of its supportive and guidance role for students.

There are suggestions that SDS is positioned within a deficit model of focussing on students' *underpreparedness* in order to assist the students in managing the demands of higher education. Perhaps this notion of SDS as a remedial service supporting students emerged from the pre-1994 design of SDS as assisting weak students to cope with the academic demands, firmly locating SDS within remedial discourses. However, the references to SDS suggest that SDS is considered an essential part in delivering higher education's mandate of contributing to South African reconstruction, regardless of which theoretical model might be implied.

Subsequent to the early documents (NCHE, 1996; White Paper 3, 1997) it seems that when South African higher education was reconfigured and restructured, the attention on SDS was not a priority and was, perhaps deliberately, delegated to internal affairs of institutions. There is no reference to SDS in the Higher Education Act or any subsequent governing document.

The current government documents present a formula for higher education functioning which is geared toward supporting teaching and does not explicitly refer to SDS. The framework focusses on funding, enrolment, and efficiencies, and, by omission, locates the responsibility for SDS functioning within the autonomous control of the higher education institutions. These issues will be expanded on in some depth in Chapter 7.

The following chapter presents the findings of the interviews and is augmented with generous use of quotations from participants.

CHAPTER 6:

RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS

This study was conducted as an exploration into the scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education in South Africa. Furthermore, theoretical underpinnings and frameworks of SDS, SDS integration into the institution and into organisational structures, the relationship between SDS and the policies of the DHET, and influences from the national and international context on the SDS domains in higher education were examined.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the debate and challenges in understanding the scope, role, and function of SDS and in illuminating challenges in formulating a national framework for SDS.

The key research questions were formulated around the following research focus areas:

1. Scope, role, and function of SDS
2. Theory and framework of SDS
3. SDS relationship with and position within the university
4. Guidance and policies with regard to the DHET
5. SDS with regard to globalisation and internationalisation.

The research questions were as follow:

1. What are the scope, role, and function of SDS at the three universities in the Western Cape?
2. What theoretical grounding informs SDS practices?
3. What is the SDS position and structure within the institutions and beyond?
4. What is the policy with regard to the SDS scope, role, and function as described in relevant policy documents of the DHET?
5. How is SDS responding to changes in the international context with special reference to globalisation?

From the five research areas and the corresponding research questions, 10 themes emerged, which will be discussed under the following headings:

1. Scope, role, and function
2. Theoretical framework of SDS
3. SDS professionalisation
4. SDS alignments
5. SDS within the institution: Structural and organisational disjuncture
6. SDS relationship with academe
7. SDS beyond the institution
8. Department of Higher Education and Training--DHET
9. Macro influences on SDS: Globalisation and internationalisation
10. Idiosyncratic themes.

In all, 23 participants from executive and senior management at the SDS domains in three universities in the Western Cape were selected by employing purposive sampling. The research questions were purposefully open and general to allow for the emergence of themes (see Appendix A).

The interviews were recorded and transcribed and each participant was allocated a random number as a code to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. A set of new codes was allocated half way through this process, in order to further ensure anonymity. The gender pronouns 'she' and 'her' were chosen for all participants in order to protect the identity of the participants. This seemed necessary as the participants were chosen from a small group of SDS senior and executive staff at three higher education institutions in the Western Cape, and this small pool may compromise the anonymity of the participants.

The allocated participant code is provided in brackets after each quotation, to ensure that the researcher and her supervisor can track the quotations. These source descriptors are only known to the researcher and her supervisor. The number out of 23 in brackets (X/23) indicates the number of participants who mentioned the particular theme during the interviews. The interviews generated extensive, in-depth, and textured data, and a liberal use of quotations is employed to illustrate the themes and subthemes.

Each section containing a theme and subthemes is concluded with a brief summary. The chapter concludes with a summary which highlights the key issues and themes emerging from the findings.

6.1 Scope, Role, and Function of SDS

Given that SDS has no agreed-upon or explicitly articulated scope, role, and function, neither in the South African context nor in the international arena⁹³, it was important to explore how the participants understand the role, function, and scope of SDS within their institutions and beyond. This theme was purposefully explored and a substantial range of subthemes emerged, as discussed below.

6.1.1 Scope of SDS

The participants were asked to elaborate on their understanding of the scope, the range of development and support work, and the domain that defines SDS and perhaps also the boundaries which circumscribe SDS work.

Many participants (9/23)⁹⁴ suggested either explicitly or implicitly that the scope of SDS seems unclear and undefined, as the quotations below illustrate. Five participants (5/23) were explicit about the lack of clarity of scope for SDS, which is illustrated by the rather blunt question of one participant: “*What is their job?*”(1)⁹⁵.

Some participants (4/23) claimed that the scope of SDS is leadership-driven and depends on the subjective interpretation of the person who directs the domain. It seems that the range of work done, and the extent of SDS reach into the institution, depends on the interpretation of the person who creates the vision for SDS. The following quotation illustrates this: “*Scope of Student Development is not clearly defined; it depends on the people who drive it what happens*” (1).

While indicating that scope is unclear, one participant postulated that SDS is moving beyond its domain and into an area which is outside SDS scope. This is illustrated in the following quotation: “*So I think in student support, people constantly want to move into a*

⁹³ The USA is much clearer about scope, role, and function of SDS than South Africa; see for instance, the *Professional Standards for Higher Education* published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education which is a decisive document which is widely accepted as setting the benchmark for the USA Student Affairs departments (Dean, 2006). However, given that the *Professional Standards for Higher Education* is based on “agreed-upon values” (Dean, 2006, p. 3) rather than specific functions, it is a guide containing recommendations, rather than a legal or policy document which defines scope, role, and function.

⁹⁴ This is an example of how frequency is reported: 9 out of 23 participants in this case.

⁹⁵ This is the source descriptor, a number which refers to a participant. The source descriptors were changed half way through this chapter, so that participants have two source descriptors. This is an added method which contributes towards anonymity and confidentiality.

domain that they feel isn't sufficiently being taken care of. The question is—is it their job?” (1).

One participant indicated that scope for her⁹⁶ department within SDS is clear and that an institution-specific internal position paper defines SDS scope at her institution in order to prevent “*mission drift*” (23). This participant stressed that this seemingly clearly-defined scope of her department prevents her department being utilised in a “*gatekeeper*” function (23):

We said, okay, this is what we say our broad purpose is and this is how we operationalise that. I think it has been the third year that it seems to have been working for us and where we really try and don't go on a mission drift, because the university so very easily wants you to start playing the gatekeeper role. For instance to be involved in re-admissions committees and you say: sorry, you can consult us, but we are not gatekeepers. (23)

This illustrates how scope, role, and function are deeply related and that distinguishing between these is perhaps artificial, however useful for this discussion.

6.1.2 Role of SDS

Participants were asked to share their perceptions of their role within the institution and in relation to students and the institution. This includes perceptions about the position and expectations of the role of SDS. Various roles were described, especially in terms of functional roles that emerge from institutional expectations and roles which emerge from participants' references to their own experiences within SDS.

Administrative role of SDS. Five participants (5/23) described the role of SDS as predominantly administrative. While not exclusive, its role was described as being mainly administrative, operational, and to co-ordinate activities. Key roles were to “*administer those bursaries*” (18) and “*getting contracts right*” (6). It emerged that participants had perceptions about SDS being “*driven ... by project management*” (9). One participant added co-ordinating “*out-of-classroom*” (3) activities: “*I co-ordinate all out of class activities of students*” (3).

Two participants summarised their perception of the administrative role:

⁹⁶ The pronoun ‘she’ and possessive pronoun ‘her’ are used throughout this study in reference to participants and do not necessarily refer to the gender of the participant. This is an added method which contributes towards anonymity and confidentiality.

So, a lot of the organisational structures for student development or directorate or whatever you call it, a lot are fairly operational. So, there is a lot of emphasis on getting the contracts for services right. Getting the kind of housing stock sufficiently scoped for the next however many years and so on. (6)

You can go right through and then I think in that sense the only parts of student affairs—which can even be by the remotest extension be called development, being involved in student development, however marginally it is, are student orientation and student development, however again marginally. But student housing, financial aid, wellness—there are 10 sections all together—in the end, they are about making the place run. (19)

Supportive role of SDS. This theme describes the participants' reflection about the empathic, kind, protective, and caring role of SDS. They (4/23) indicated that a key focus is to support and understand the students and hence represent the “*human face*” (13) of the university. Quotations taken from the participants' responses reveal this perception of the SDS role: “*You know that in SDS, at least you are given that comfort*” (14); “*in a nutshell, we simply provide a quiet, safe space for students*” (19) and “*primarily, we give support*” (13).

Contextual role of SDS. This theme refers to the reference to SDS as playing a role conducive to creating a congenial environment and context within which the students can flourish. This role describes the SDS influence on climate, culture, and context. A few participants (3/23) referred to SDS as contributing to a context conducive to a happy study environment, as illustrated in the following quotation: “*Student support is to create a conducive environment*” (1). One participant defined the key role of SDS being an “*architect of culture*” (2), referring to SDS's role in developing an environment for students conducive to academic efficiency.

Advocacy role of SDS. Various participants (8/23) identified advocacy as a crucial aspect of the role of SDS on campus. Representing students' rights, protecting their needs, alerting the university community to student issues, and “*keeping the university on course*” (19) was viewed as part of the SDS role. One participant described this activist role concisely:

Student affairs people are pro students. They are activists for students, but not in a Maverick way. In a meaningful

way that is reasoned, that is considered, that is really moving towards improving a lot of the students' lives. (7)

One participant elaborated on the role of SDS and compared its advocacy function to being a “*watchdog*” (15). Simultaneously, this participant related this role of a “*watchdog*” (15) to SDS’s seemingly powerless position within the institution and laconically commented that “*SDS becomes an institutional nag*” (15). The issue of perceptions of SDS status and position within the institutions, in relation to role, is discussed in a section further on.

Nation building role of SDS. This role refers to SDS’s future orientation and its role in nation building in South Africa. It describes the SDS role beyond the institution and higher education and its role *vis-a-vis* national challenges. Nearly half of the participants (11/23) located the key role of SDS within the broader national objective of nation building, democratisation, and social justice, contributing to a “*better society*” (2) through the students’ “*bigger role in society*” (6) in the achievement of “*national transformation*” (18).

Two participants expressed their perceptions as follows:

We focus on the social character of a student and also, I think of late, probably in the last decade, the focus on citizenship and the issue of learning to live in a civic world that is underpinned by democratic values. Now of course, there is not one form of democracy. There are differences. I won't go into those details, but the democratic values are that we look at a collective good. We look at co-existence. We look at inclusivity. We look at spaces for different cultures and different opinions. That's what we want for our students. (7)

And the fact of the matter is—we need to do it here—also through our development and support. It is for me building the kind of young South Africans who we need to take this country into the future. It is not just about the qualification and academic success. It is a long-term investment in young people and eventually in the future of our country. (4)

The roles described by the participants range from administrative, supportive, influencing contextual aspects, and advocacy for students' lives to playing a role in national issues such as nation building. The perceptions of the roles of SDS are influenced by the participants' understanding of scope and the functions the participants performed within SDS and within the institutions.

6.1.3 Functions of SDS

Participants elaborated on their perceptions of the function SDS performs within and beyond the institutions. The participants described the function of SDS to include the processes and activities SDS carries out. It is described in terms of its operational performances, its implementations, and its deliverables.

The themes that emerged are clustered in terms of management and delivery of services and training and development of students, with particular emphasis on student success and graduate attributes. Moreover, themes relating to the integration of services and development into the institution emerged. It seemed that the discourse on SDS function revealed a conceptualisation of the student as a dynamic entity with multiple, continuous, and complex needs, requiring SDS to perform comprehensive functions.

Management and delivery of services. Almost all participants (16/23) listed management of student service as a central function of SDS. These included managing all aspects of student residences and catering services, managing administrative and financial aspects of student societies, and managing the administration of financial aid and bursaries. The delivery of services included the provision of primary health-care services, career and recruitment programme, managing and implementing orientation programmes, offering disability services, and a range of academic and personal support.

One participant indicated that SDS was conceptualised to deliver services to students, so as the service was required, a service was added. She says:

Students need to be housed—so there is student housing.

Students need to be healthy—so there is a doctor. Then

there was a political decision about state bursaries—so

there had to be student financial aid. The departments are

a lot about making it work. They are functional. (19)

Student training. The theme of student training emerged when participants spoke about SDS function as imparting a set of skills, perhaps discrete skills and abilities, which seemingly need to be learnt and developed by students. Some participants (10/23) described

the training to acquire capabilities and skills with special focus on “*leadership training*” (11, 8, 3) and training student governance structures for their role and function as student representatives.

Four participants (4/23) indicated that they perceive training of various student projects and initiatives to fall within the function of SDS. These include skills training for mentors in peer-driven support programmes, training of students to assist in the delivery of orientation programmes, training for positions within student societies, and training for specific skills such as debating.

Student development. This theme refers to the broader understanding of student development, encompassing multiple internal and external aspects of the students’ lives. Student development refers to the integration of personal, social, and academic (cognitive) aspects of the students with a view towards comprehensive growth, rather than skills development which is part of a segmented, and perhaps reductionist, understanding of education. Many participants (8/23) indicated that student development is a key function of SDS, as illustrated in the following quotation:

My insight into that came about 6 years ago; then I started reading and doing a bit of research myself into all of this. I came across this whole concept of the first-year experience and then also the ‘living and learning’ which was relatively entrenched in the US system, in the residence systems there.

When I looked at it I became quite keen on that, because prior to that, the only real development was probably just what we were doing with the student governance structures in residences. You would take them through a little leadership programme and teach them—not really teach them, but do some workshops on skills training.

But obviously there was a broader sort of base to cover in the sense of what we were doing. So now we do much broader development, development of many aspects of the person, development for life beyond varsity. (14)

The quotation illustrates how development is viewed in broader terms of holistic development rather than reductionistically referring to it as skills training. This is related to

the theme of conceptualising student development as continuous and complex, requiring holistic development on multiple levels. This theme will be further discussed below.

6.1.4 Re-Conceptualisation of the Student

When discussing SDS function, some participants (5/23) suggested that their function has shifted from reductionist notions of providing services and providing extra-curricular and non-academic activities to providing integrated and comprehensive development. This shift in function suggests a move towards viewing the students and their experiences as “*complex beings*” (7) developing in a continuous non-segmented process, which includes development on personal, social, and academic spheres. One participant stated this clearly, saying, “*we see a student as a whole—holistically*” (7).

The terms *holistic* and *co-curricular* were used, which suggests that there has been a re-conceptualisation of student life as a continuous experience:

The key things are that students come with their own experiences, and how do you articulate their experiences and the university climate to that? I think there is a great consciousness about the individual character of a student. We see them as complex beings with personal, social and academic lives which are intertwined. (7)

Our work is starting off with student recruitment, because the centre for prospective students is also part of the bigger student and academic support services. Going through the whole application registration, which is academic administration, then placement in residence is the support aspect and then the teaching and learning in class, which is part of my portfolio until they complete their degree.

I think that really helps us a lot to think of a student—not only as somebody who is engaged academically or in sport or in residences, but holistically what student experiences are on this campus. Our approach is that we want to take into account the life cycle of a student at the institution, and we also want to look at the student holistically in terms of his or her student experience at the institution. In

the classroom, out of the class, socially, just seeing the student in his entirety. (4)

6.1.5 Student Success

Student success is the term that describes retention of students, throughput rate, and graduation rate of students, also described as overall academic success. More than half of the participants (14/23) viewed SDS's key function as contributing towards student success:

Our core business is to focus on student success, so student success is our prime objective. (21)

Its (SDS) role is to contribute to academic outputs and it is about the student graduating successfully, because they come here for this purpose. (7)

Student development leads to academic success as an outcome, that's the university's job and ours. We speak from the same page. (4)

6.1.6 Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are the qualities and skills that universities want their graduates to develop during their studies and to master before graduating from a specific university. Graduate attributes are defined differently by each university but are generally understood to promote students' chances of employment and to enhance their contributions as citizens. White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) indicates the desired outcome to be

graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and ideas. (DoE, 1997, p. 3)

The higher education institutions have aligned themselves with this imperative and have responded to the White Paper requirements, each institution differently. As the development of graduate attributes is complex and reaches across all domains within institutions, SDS is directly affected by this. Many participants (8/23) commented on the graduate attributes and how SDS is responding to this requirement and reflected on their

perceptions and their opinions in terms of SDS function. This theme “*is recognising the space beyond just being an ivory tower. It is grounding universities so they become more than just education for research sake*” (15).

Contribution towards the development of graduate attributes featured prominently in the discussion on SDS function (8/23). The contribution towards student success was described as one of the vital functions of SDS; the participants linked student success with graduate attributes:

Basically the contribution that we make in SDS is specifically linked to the graduate attributes. The SDS goals are linked to the goals of the institution. So what we have to do in the department is make sure that we are aligned with the goals of the institutional operating plan. So that is very important. So where we really operate within that is around developing the graduate attributes which is developing certain skills and strengths of our students that go beyond what they learn within the classroom. We facilitate this. (15)

It (SDS) is aimed at retention, development and success, so that we know that the kind of student that we turn out at the end of graduation has got these attributes. One of the attributes falls directly to us to develop. (12)

A good university would say we are not only here to ensure the people get a degree—we are here to insure that their graduate attributes—that their growth—that their humanness—their out-of-class experience—is part of them. That is what makes an MIT different from the others. We want the same. (23)

The quotations above illustrate that there is a shared understanding of linking SDS’s function with academic success and also linking it to the development of graduate attributes.

6.1.7 Alignment with Institutional Goals

Each higher education institution defines its unique medium-term goals in its institutional operating plan. In addition to its key function as contributing to student success

and graduate attributes, three participants (3/23) emphasised that SDS needs to be aligned with institutional goals. This sentiment is expressed in the following quotation:

If student affairs or student development and support—those sectors within the university—I mean, obviously, they need to be aligned to what the goals and objectives of the institutions are and primarily—doesn't matter how we want to phrase it—or how we put it, but primarily it is about through-put and retention, because that is what ultimately what we need to do at the end of the day in universities. Make sure that students reach their goals and objectives of achieving a degree or diploma or certificate or whatever it is. So, I would say across student development and support—it is their role to be supporting that objective of their various institutions and especially here with us. (10)

6.1.8 Integration of Management and Development

The understanding of SDS as merely delivering services to students seems to have shifted to include notions of development. A number of participants (7/23) indicated that part of their function is to integrate managing student services with developing students in line with institutional goals and graduate attributes. They commented on the shift from narrow definitions of SDS function towards an inclusive perspective of contributing to comprehensive development and institutional success.

One quotation neatly illustrates this intention to integrate operations with development:

There are a lot of organisational structures for student development. A lot of them are fairly operational. But what I have tried to do in coming into this job now is to make it clear that we have to put the emphasis on the development part of student development services, because I don't think we have been putting enough emphasis on development. (6)

Two participants (2/23) referred to the shift from pure administration to focussing on the “out-of-classroom experience” (23) and creating “developmental spaces” (17):

Let us take a practical low-key example like housing. I mean, transforming residences from being very peculiar and dull, to change things to where there are learning opportunities and very different cultures—there is a huge achievement. That would definitely enhance the learning of a student and therefore their ‘graduateness’. I think that has been a dramatic increase. Shift from just doing the residences into a living and learning developmental space.
(17)

Two participants (2/23) elaborated on the shift within, for instance, disability services for students, from management of disability services towards making it a “*broad personal concept*” (19) and exposing all students to “*different aspects of the world*” (19) beyond “*narrowly defined notions of disability*” (19).

Some of the change towards re-defining SDS from administration and management to including a developmental focus was also evident in a comment about financial aid services:

Our thinking is that we are not entirely—especially this leg which is financial aid—it is not entirely number crunching. Yes, there is an element of administration just to administer, but we do think that we are really playing a critical role in ensuring that there is a social element to this financial aid—it can’t be entirely looked at as only finances.

It is an individual that you must think about. The reason this person is here, it is not just statistics; it is with aspirations. We must support. We are here to support them more than just looking at their financial disadvantage. We look at them as the individuals that are really aspiring. Especially if we are going to retain things like financial aid in the student affairs, but I know other universities don’t believe in that. They see there is finance—they don’t see the social side and the development side of financial aid. We do. (18)

SDS functions described by the participants ranged from management of services to integrating development of holistic aspects of the student into the delivery of services. It

seems that a shift in the conceptualisation of the student has had an impact on the function of SDS to address the students' needs for comprehensive development within and beyond the classroom.

6.1.9 Summary: Scope, Role, and Function of SDS

The themes of scope, role, and function were purposefully elicited as these are a focus area of this study. It emerged that scope seemed nebulous and boundaries to be difficult to draw for SDS. Although there appears to be a clear core of roles and functions, the domain of SDS seems undefined and various university functions are apparently clustered with SDS at random.

Roles were less diffuse and included an administrative and support role, performing a role in affecting student climate and context on campus, advocacy for students' needs, and playing a role in the wider South African context beyond graduation. The contradictions and tensions emerge around the exclusive understanding of roles of SDS, where some participants perceived some roles as part of SDS, whereas others did not, and vice versa.

The functions of SDS mentioned by the participants were related to the delivery of services and to the training and development of students and the integration of these two functions. There was little observation made on the relations between some perceived roles and corresponding functions. For instance, the role of SDS in shaping climate and context for students was not reflected in the themes that emerged *vis-a-vis* the functions.

So although there was an appreciation of SDS as contributing towards an environment conducive to development, there seemed no function which would enable this. Similarly, for the role of advocacy, there seemed no corresponding function. This tension between role and function, on the one hand, and position of SDS, on the other, is discussed in Chapter 7.

Alignment between the SDS role in nation building and its function in developing graduate attributes seems well articulated, although this was not reflected in the themes on scope. A shared feature of the SDS role and function seems to be its alignment with institutional goals, especially around student success and graduate attributes. Participants agreed that delivering on graduate attributes is a key function of SDS, and the link to student success was clearly evident.

It also became evident that a shift in how the student is conceptualised has taken place. Notions of students as a heterogeneous group of people with holistic needs and complex lives were expressed. This perceptual shift towards an integrated notion of the

academic experience perhaps mirrors the emergence of student development theories. These themes are discussed in the following section.

6.2 Theoretical Framework of SDS

The theme of SDS theories was explored in order to understand the theoretical grounding of SDS within higher education. Theory is one aspect of a guiding framework, and it was essential to explore this aspect and how it informs practice. The research questions were focussed on this area and were used to explore participants' perceptions and experiences in this regard.

The following section shows the findings related to this theme and includes a discussion on the range of theories which participants indicated they employed and how participants observed theory to evolve and reflect a shift in focus of SDS. It includes an exploration of how theories are articulated and the role of theory within SDS.

6.2.1 Range of Theories within SDS

This theme explored the participants' theoretical understanding of their work, the models they use to guide practice and within which they located themselves individually or as collective SDS. Most participants (21/23) identified at least one theory or model as guiding their understanding, thinking, and practice individually or as a collective SDS. In all, 17 different theories, models, and orientations were named, as listed below:

Table 19

List of Theories and Models Mentioned by the Participants

Theory and Model	Number of participants
Environmental impact theory; specific reference to Tinto and Astin as key proponents	4
Psychotherapeutic theories; specific reference to cognitive behavioural, analytic and psychodynamic understanding, and brief term models	4
Psychological theory, developmental theory, and learning theory	2
Management theory	1
Eco-systemic framework	1
Socio-cultural framework	1

Social model of disability	1
Psycho-educational model	1
Peer mentoring and peer learning model	1
Empowerment model	1
Student-centred model	2
Living and learning model	2
Wellness model	1
Asset-based approach	2

The above table lists the range of theories, models and orientations the participants named as informing their work. It is evident that ‘theory’ which provides an analytic framework for understanding or explaining certain phenomena, was used interchangeably with ‘model’, understood as a representation of concepts emerging from theories. The terminology seems conflated and perhaps the idea of an orientation, understood as an attitude or perspective, has been entangled with the concept of an explanatory theory or an operational model.

Theoretically, the participants located themselves within their professional domains: Psychologists located themselves within psychological theory and residence directors within living and learning models. Disability managers used the social model to assist in thinking about their work. The diversity in theoretical thinking is evident.

It emerged that some participants were unclear about the theoretical principles guiding the work. One participant exclaimed “*whatever this means*” (19) in naming the student-centred model and said that for her, models and theories are not explored within SDS and understanding is not shared. This theme is picked up explicitly by one participant when she refers to issues of theoretical diversity in SDS:

We have different theoretical backgrounds. That is why I am saying theoretically we are from very different places. Some of us don't have theoretical places where they come from. (1)

The eclectic use of diverse theories seems to co-exist with the lack of theories in some areas within SDS.

6.2.2 Diversity of Theories

A multitude of diverse theories and models utilised by the participants, as illustrated in the previous section, seem present in all three institutions. It was essential to examine whether participants were aware of the diversity and how this was perceived.

Two participants (2/23) indicated that the diversity of theory in SDS is useful and reflects the complex reality of their context. The multitude of theories and models appears to contribute towards a deeper understanding and conceptualisation of the SDS work, as one participant said:

I guess it is about having multiple theories and multiple perspectives, because it is complex. You cannot have only one way of looking at it—you can't just have one approach. (10)

One participant (1/23) indicated that she perceived her flexibility of movement across theoretical understanding as useful and essential:

Our domain is guided by many theories, but I would venture to say something that I said when I first was appointed and there was a discussion with a few colleagues from academia. I think they were relieved to hear that I don't choose a particular theory, or theoretical approach. Because it means you put on a certain lens and everybody has to adjust to that lens and there should be enough space—as long as you take the key elements of the theory, whether it is the psycho educational or social theories, whether it is the learning theories of Bandura or whatever the case might be. (7)

Obviously, these two participants appreciated the variety and diversity of theories and models in assisting them in making meaning of various phenomena. The range of theoretical orientations emerging from the different professions within SDS would appear to offer opportunities for rich understanding.

However, with such diversity, the risk of proliferation into divergent directions and of generating ramifications which might present challenges must also be considered. Pluralistic theoretical models offer eclectic use but may also fragment a potentially cohesive conceptual picture.

6.2.3 Articulation of Theory and Context

With the diversity of theoretical understandings in SDS, as illustrated above, it would be prudent to consider how this range of theories is incorporated into and aligned with the context of the institutions. The context is different in the three institutions chosen for this research but there may be some universal and generic theories which offer insights across the institutions and to the key questions within the institutions, particularly around student success.

Some participants (5/23) contended that theory is beginning to respond to central questions, such as understanding the relationship between psycho-social functioning and student performance. The following quotation illustrates this:

In terms of theories talking to each other, I think it is definitely an evolving area. I think much has been done of late and that is looking at students' academic results and looking at the kind of psycho social problems and reasons for student attrition. (7)

One comment raised the issue of local theory development and how this perhaps is beginning to generate excitement: *"I think it is a sort of new or developing field that people become more and more interested in"* (16).

It appears that SDS practitioners are beginning to think about a good alignment between theory and context. Overall, though, it was clear that a variety of theories emerges from professional backgrounds and some spontaneous alignment with theories exists, rather than considering a co-ordinated theoretical framework which is perhaps available for corroboration and critical enquiry. The issue of theory, model, and theoretical framework and how these are incorporated into SDS and aligned with its context will be discussed into more detail in Chapter 7.

6.2.4 SDS Theory Evolves from Deficit to Strength

This theme reflects the shift in theoretical thinking, particularly from deficit models of explaining student functioning to contextualised and strength-based theories. A few participants (5/23) discussed the shift in the theoretical conceptualisation of the student and in the theories informing practice. The *"shift away from all kinds of deficit models"* (7) is apparent:

And you know, just as you have had very different higher education institutions in South Africa—they have taken very different models of how they do student development. For example the old model is sort of looking at students as deficient—the psycho pathology of students and psychologising every single problem which to me is not very helpful. That was the deficit model. So whatever didn't fit into mainstream should be counselled. (16)

We are in the process of moving away from it towards an asset-based approach, where you are saying—yes, there may still be deficits, but instead of focussing on the deficits, we are now looking at what do they have despite the challenges that they face, so we work with their internal resources and supportive factors. (11)

The focus on resources and assets reflects a shift towards student-centred thinking in SDS, away from rigid definitions of essentials which fuel notions of deficiency. More prominent are discussions about strength-based and asset-based approaches.

The issue of diversity of theory was superimposed on the diversity in SDS across institution: “*they have taken very different models of how they do student development*’ (16), which raises the issue of core aspects of SDS, the focus of this study.

6.2.5 Theory in Discrete Compartments

Theories within SDS seemed discrete, and were described as disconnected from other theoretical orientations within SDS. Issues and concerns emerged around the articulation and internal consistency of theories within SDS. Some participants (6/23) indicated that there seems little theoretical consistency across SDS and no platforms to explore these issues.

Two participants (2/23) said that they found theory in discrete compartments and not articulated within SDS. One participant (1/23), in speaking about counselling and therapeutic approaches and academic support, indicated that “*conceptually, I am not clear how we fit together, theoretically, we are from very different places*” (1). Another participant made a similar reference by saying that “*we all come from different points in student development.*

We have a different emphasis, focus and mixed approaches. I'm not sure how it all fits together” (8).

The reference to “*how it fits together*” (1, 8) may reflect that indeed there are challenges in how the theories can best be fitted into a complex space such as SDS, but also, the reference may imply that some theories are antithetical and that fundamental conceptual differences are incompatible and irreconcilable. There was a sense that SDS is neither firmly grounded in a theoretical framework or comprehensive model nor that it has a platform to engage dialectically with these fundamental issues. This will be explored further in Chapter 7.

6.2.6 SDS Within a Theoretical Vacuum

Given that SDS has a strong service delivery and implementation component, the question of how SDS is theoretically grounded seems important. It emerged that some participants (2/23) viewed theory as secondary and subordinate to implementation and project delivery. Some participants (5/23) indicated that theory is secondary to or perhaps even absent from practice, which is reflected in the following quotation:

I do not think that student development services generally– in South Africa and at our institution has any theoretical grounding. I think it is driven more by project management. By programmes and projects and activities. By past evaluation. By trial and error. By experiential learning as we go on. I do not think there is any theory and even to some extent models that actually inform student development practitioners. (9)

The above quotation infers that SDS as a collective in South Africa has no encompassing theoretical framework or grounding. This theme of theoretical vacuum emerged frequently and was dominant in reference to the SDS as a collective, but less so for some of the professional departments within SDS, such as counselling and disability services.

Over half of the participants (13/24) explicitly stated that they perceived SDS as not having a theoretical home. This was expressed pertinently in the rhetorical question raised by one participant: “*what really is the professional home of the Student Affairs staff?*” (1). Another participant indicated that there is value in “*locating it within a complete orientation, theoretical or otherwise*” (6), which generally seemed absent. The overall sentiment that SDS is not located within a theoretical framework that guides the work within SDS is expressed in the following quotation:

No, there is no theoretical frame which holds us. I don't think there is really at all a theoretical underpinning to what we do in SDS. I don't think that there is a real theory or a theoretical framework. There is no perception of who to appoint to make these things work. There is no clear framework that guides our work. (19)

The perception that SDS is not grounded within a comprehensive theoretical framework emerged as a key theme and will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

6.2.7 SDS Name Reflects Orientation

No standard exists with reference to the name used to denote the domain of SDS within the three institutions. Various names such as Student Affairs, Student Services, Student Development, Student Academic Support, and Student Support are used interchangeably to depict the SDS domain. The only common thread is 'student'. A few participants (3/23) commented on the importance of the name of SDS reflecting its orientation. Seemingly, name changes are not uncommon and reflect the vision of the executive directing the domain.

The shift from administrative towards development scope, role, and function is reflected in comments on the name change in SDS. For instance, one participant (1/23) commented on the importance of the name in mirroring its orientation: *"You need to change the name—you have got to use Student Development and Support—the way I think about people is enable development and then support"* (12). In this case, the name directly reflects the vision.

However, this is not necessarily so for all SDS. Some domains use Student Affairs, which does not necessarily imply a less enthusiastic focus on student support and student development.

6.2.8 Holistic Perspective Permeates SDS Constructs

As discussed earlier, the holistic perspective of students appeared to have permeated the constructions about students and hence has permeated theories within SDS. It reflects the notion that the student is a continuous whole in a systemic context, that s/he is a system within a system which includes all aspects of the self in the world. It counters the view that only some aspects are relevant to students' experiences and to student and institutional success. The holistic perspective promotes the idea of the student as a complex and multi-

faceted person and stresses the collective responsibility for student success. This perspective emphasises social embeddedness and underscores the idea of the self as a continuous whole.

The theoretical argument for the position that development is not segmented but correlated is presented in Chapter 2. The argument rests on the constructivist notion that cognitive development is predicated on personal development. In other words, cognitive development is deeply related to the development of a restructured inner world which develops from the active engagement with a context. Academic meaning-making is linked to personal meaning-making.

Four participants (4/23) emphasised holistic notions and holistic concepts when referring to a framework for SDS. For instance, two participants (2/23) indicated that students are seen “*holistically*” (4, 11) and that this translates into a conceptual framework. One said,

If I say we look at students holistically and when you ask about things like the theory and so on—or the concept for framework—I would regard that as our conceptual framework” (4), and another stated differently, “Look, I believe a holistic student is part of a holistic system. So my eco-systemic sort of framework is the theoretical basis from which I work. (22)

This notion of “holistic”, albeit undefined, seems to thread through the themes of theory and the notions about students and to have permeated the discourse on SDS.

6.2.9 Summary: Theoretical Framework of SDS

In the above section, the themes which emerged concerning the theoretical framework of SDS were described. The tension between practice and theory was shown to be evident and particularly pronounced in discussing theoretical grounding of SDS, which at times seems to have little connection to guiding practice.

The participants did not identify theory development as part of the scope, role, and function of SDS, and this seems mirrored in the observations that no collective or shared framework for SDS exists. No platform on which to explore the seemingly pluralist and eclectic existence of theories and models within SDS was identified.

However, the majority (21/23) identified one or other theory which informs their work. There seemed an appropriate alignment between the role and function the participants had within SDS and the theoretical lens chosen. For instance, the psychologists identified psychological theories in guiding their work. The use of theory appears to be closely related

to the professional grounding of the participants. While this is perceived to be a strength, it also poses challenges in terms of divergent thinking and practices. As pointed out earlier, pluralistic theoretical models offer eclectic use but may also fragment a potentially cohesive conceptual picture.

Some participants raised concerns about the theoretical confusion and dissonance and theoretical void in SDS, and issues of poor articulation between theory and context emerged. Another key theme emerging from this section was the issue around the shift in thinking, away from the deficit-based understanding of holistic thinking about students' development, the student herself/himself, and SDS on the whole. It is an interesting shift in SDS towards holistic and systemic thinking, and is important to examine this in the light of the seemingly poor integration of SDS into the institution and the students' academic experience. This issue of poor match of SDS theory with SDS integration into the institution is raised later in this chapter.

The issues of theoretical grounding, its ramifications, and the implications thereof, are part of a larger debate on SDS professionalisation.

6.3 SDS Professionalisation

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

6.3.1 The Need for SDS Professionalisation

The theme of SDS professionalisation emerged spontaneously from the participants as it was not prompted by the research questions. Concerns around professionalisation have been expressed in the literature and amongst SDS practitioners since the benchmark emerged from the United States, where the SDS profession is located within an academic discipline and carries a professional qualification. As one participant explained,

People that are in Student Development or Student Affairs in South Africa, none of them are trained in that line—unlike the Americans who specialise and become professionals, they're called Student Affairs. South Africans--we come from Psychology, Social work all sorts

of training and backgrounds, teachers, and so on, and so the founding theories come from our professions not from student development. (12)

This quotation illustrates clearly that SDS in South Africa is not professionalised as a collective and cohesive discipline, and as a result, or perhaps because of it, SDS is not theoretically grounded in student development theory per se, but relies on its components such as psychological and social work disciplines.

The need to professionalise and the need for collective engagement around scope, theory, and application, as part of professionalisation, were expressed emphatically by some participants (6/23) and are reflected in the following quotation:

What is the professionalisation of student affairs? If you professionalise student affairs and by that I mean identify the scope—the art and the science of this work—what is the craft? So defining it—saying what belongs in student affairs and what doesn't belong—not in a prescriptive way, but mapping it in kind of theoretical documents so that people can contest it and take it on. That's what's needed. (7)

The need for a collective engagement in terms of the professionalisation of SDS emerged as a key theme. This includes a discussion on scope, role, and function, theory and practice, and an organising principle. Given SDS's theoretical pluralism, a cross-disciplinary contestation in the process of deliberation on professionalisation would seem to be valuable.

6.3.2 SDS Attracts a Medley of Professions

The findings in the section on SDS theory illustrate the range of professions located within SDS. Some SDS participants are theoretically located within their professional framework and have commonalities with SDS. However, it appears that a wide range of disciplines are represented in SDS and that there is a medley of professionals within the SDS domain.

Some participants (6/23) commented on the range of professionals and the complexity of professional identities within SDS. The following pejorative comment illustrates this:

I think people end up in these jobs by accident. If you look at people's employment history you see the random folk we attract: nurses, teachers, lawyers, psychologists, social

workers, accountants, some managers and religious folk and mix in a whole lot of good-doers, and you've got Student Affairs. (19)

The above quotation illustrates the range of professions within SDS, also the range of educational level and disciplines within that. The participant derisively added a comment on the SDS personal disposition of “good-doers” (19) which, according to her, seems to permeate SDS.

6.3.3 Challenges Regarding Professionalisation

Given the variety of professional identities, theories and, orientations in SDS, challenges emerge from the potentially competing and incompatible orientations, and from the different levels of qualifications of staff. Many participants (6/23) identified these challenges and lamented the lack of professionalisation.

Some participants (3/23) commented on the nebulous identity of practitioners and added the challenge of SDS as a non-academic domain in South Africa:

It is the same for Student Affairs, there are also some challenges with professional development, I mean, what really is the professional home of the Student Affairs staff? Of our own people. I am talking broadly. If you look at the university sector in SA—how many of the people working in the professional support services—are really not well schooled, because often it is people who are not academics for one reason or another. We need to professionalise ourselves. (1)

None of them are trained in student affairs theory. I think that is lacking. We are not professionals and that has to do with our training—we lack a theoretical base which could unite all the diverse influences we've had here in SA. (7)

I just think there are different levels of competencies within SDS. Different training backgrounds, different job expectations, this causes endless problems on getting people on the same page. (14)

One participant highlighted the problems around lack of professional conceptualisation and the consequent challenges of articulating the performances and key deliverables of staff within SDS.

There is completely no—there is no sense across the board of what skills that person (in SDS) should have and what they should be remunerating, because they expected not to have many skills and so they are paid very little. In some cases they really don't have a lot of skills. (19)

6.3.4 Tensions between Positional and Professional Leadership

The lack of clearly defined qualifications or capabilities for staff in SDS also seems to raise tensions between positional and professional leadership. Three participants (3/23) commented on the tension between the professional and the structural position of leadership and power within SDS. The responses indicate that professionals like psychologists and social workers report to deans and/or executive directors, who might have fewer academic qualifications or are professionally located in a very different discipline and have less content knowledge of the, for instance, psychological work. The two participants who commented on this tension were directly affected by the positional and professional issues. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

The student dean and the student counselling—it is a different thing, entirely. You see traditionally the counselling people are professionals. Whereas the deans have a kind of structural position of seniority. So you kind of report to someone who isn't qualified to understand your work, and if somebody doesn't have your professional standing then that is a difficulty. (23)

6.3.5 Summary: SDS Professionalisation

In summary, the themes concerning professionalisation emerged as key challenges. Responses showed that SDS attracts a variety of professions and that this generates challenges which include poor application of theory and lack of suitability of qualifications for leadership in SDS. Tensions in terms of the compatibility of the theoretical orientations the professions are steeped in were revealed.

The need for a process of professionalisation became obvious. Related to this is an exploration of SDS contextual alignments and influences on SDS, which is discussed in the following section.

6.4 SDS Alignments

The participants made note of SDS alignments and influences on SDS. It appears that SDS is, perhaps not consistently, aligned with institutional and national imperatives. While SDS alignment with its immediate institutional and national context seemed obvious, other less-obvious influences appeared. These included influences from the macro context. According to the participants, neo-liberal paradigms, influences such as consumerist models of education and notions of the student as client, seem to have an impact on SDS.

6.4.1 SDS Alignment with Institutional Imperatives

The alignment of SDS with institutional imperatives appeared as a dominant factor affecting overall SDS, its scope, role, and function. A third of the participants (7/23) asserted that SDS should be, and is, aligned with institutional imperatives, goals, framework, and overall ideologies. They suggested that the alignment with institutional imperatives extended into describing SDS as a tool of the university to assist in achieving its goals. One participant (1/23) gave examples of how she experiences SDS as responding to institutional imperatives, including shape and size⁹⁷ imperatives:

The University is aiming for growth in business, natural health, sciences and post-graduates, and what that means is that our profile of, for instance, residence students, has to change accordingly. We cannot continue to do business as usual when the institutional goals say 'Post Grad', so we need to get post graduates in Business, Natural, and Health Sciences. Another example is the teaching and learning and graduate attributes: Now, we developed the graduate attributes within all of our programmes. Our alignment with the institutional plan is clear—we must deliver on what the university asks of us. (12)

⁹⁷ 'Shape and size' refers to the numbers of students in under- and post-graduate degree programmes and faculties of a university.

According to this participant, SDS is a tool and an agent which contributes to the institutional goals and responds to the needs and directives of the institution. Its goals are aligned with the institution and its *raison d'être* is its service to the institution.

Throughput and retention. Higher education in South Africa is challenged with issues of throughput and retention. There are the challenges around retaining students and enabling them to graduate at a particular rate⁹⁸. The issues of throughput and retention are complex and are slightly different for the three institutions in the Western Cape and impact differently on SDS.

The pressure to contribute to institutional performance and the, perhaps, simplistic and reductionist but compelling goals of throughput and retention, was articulated by seven participants (7/23). The key institutional deliverable of improving throughput and retention of students seems to have been embraced by the participants and permeated their thinking about their work in SDS. The following quotations illustrate this:

First comes the university goal—I think we have to bear in mind what is the university's goal, ultimately. The focus of my work is for them to get a degree. I think that is my focus. Then you also have to think about where this person is going afterwards, so employability has to be something that I look at. Then the third leg is ultimately developing democratic citizens, which is our graduate attribute. All these goals are directly in line with the institution, that is where we are active and that is where our alignment must be. (11)

So we are really linked to the university's mission and vision of throughput and output of students, I serve the university and its goals. (13)

The two participants quoted above insisted on their alignment with their university and seemed informed and committed to its overarching strategy and goals. One participant

⁹⁸ The three institutions from which data were collected have different challenges around these issues. Two of the institutions are historically advantaged and one is a historically disadvantaged university. The challenges are complex, but suffice to say that it is particularly the historically disadvantaged university which is struggling with challenges around retaining students and enabling them to graduate within a particular time, usually defined as N (nominal years for a degree, plus 2, as a maximum for a 3-year degree).

(1/23) made a direct link between executive strategy of the university and the SDS strategy and goals.

What I do is, well, I'm responsible for strategic direction of the division of Student Development and Support. In other words I have to participate in the university's executive and extract from there what I have to set for my division, and re-align what our goals are, ensure that we deliver in line with the university strategy goals. (12)

The participant seemed to position SDS as receiving direction from the executive and she did not elaborate on how SDS thinking and insights might influence university direction, strategy, and goals in a reciprocal way. So the emphasis was on a one-way information flow, from executive to SDS, with no mention of a reciprocal exchange, implying a top-down management structure.

Graduate attributes. The notion of graduate attributes⁹⁹ was mentioned not only in relation to the SDS role and function but also as having a significant influence on SDS.

The higher education institutions use the directives from White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) as a point of departure and define the unique institutional characteristics they desire for their graduates, that is, the graduate attributes. The University of the Western Cape and the University of Stellenbosch have explicitly articulated graduate attributes and these form part of the institutional imperatives.

More than half of the participants (14/23) indicated that developing graduate attributes is a central notion which guides and influences their thinking and their work and that the graduate attributes provide definitions of operationalised deliverables in SDS.

One participant (1/23) was cautious of the notion of 'graduate attributes':

Yes, we have these kind of masculine constructions of the products that we think of. The language has changed. I think that this whole kind of human capital idea of what skills and what capacities are all about has fundamentally steered us all in an absolutely wrong direction. So, we have developed this—what looks like a kind of benign language and we talk about graduate

⁹⁹ Graduate attributes are generic capabilities, attitudes, and characteristics which universities aim to develop as part of the graduates' educational experience, beyond the content the graduates learn in their degree studies (Barrie, 2007).

attributes—and so we wouldn't any longer talk about producing the all-rounded people who are coming out and so on. It is now producing graduates who serve the country. (6)

This participant underscores the fact that SDS is aligned with “producing graduates”; however, she also highlights some of the concerns raised in the discourse around graduate attributes. The notions of linear production of graduates with specific attributes for nationalistic aims seem to be part of the idea of “graduate attributes”. However, the majority of participants aligned their thinking with graduate attributes and there seemed little (apart from the one participant, as quoted above) critique or engagement with this.

6.4.2 SDS Alignment with National Imperatives

In addition to the alignment with institutional imperatives, alignment with national imperatives was noted. SDS was earlier viewed as playing a key role in nation building, through the training for citizenship and in facilitating the development of graduate attributes, with particular emphasis on serving the nation. Most participants (15/23) stressed the importance of SDS contributing towards social transformation in South Africa. The development of graduate attributes was viewed as enabling this change beyond graduation, and SDS alignment with national imperatives was deemed prominent.

The following quotations illustrate the participants' thinking about the position of SDS with regards to serving the nation, nation building, and citizenship:

It is more than just the development of life skill; we include things like citizenship for the common good. (21)

What we try to do in the leadership programme is to include notions of citizenship. (8)

Yes, we develop active citizens, that is, developing citizens, we actually say, taking up active citizenship is what students must learn. (12)

It is graduate attributes, but also what type of citizen do we ultimately want? Who do we desire out there? How do we produce good citizens? That's what we need to think about. (14)

One participant (1/23) extended the notion of citizenship and added the concept of corporate citizen to the theme of nation building:

More and more organisations are looking at what my responsibility as a corporate citizen is. So, as universities, we must ask the same. How do we extend individual citizenship to institutional citizenship to corporate citizenship? (15)

6.4.3 SDS Alignment with the Market¹⁰⁰

Some notions that SDS contributes to the attractiveness of an institution and hence to its marketability and to the marketability of its graduates were apparent from the responses. The idea that higher education is a commodity and can be owned and marketed emerged with the increase of neo-liberal influences on higher education. There seems to be some evidence of influences of a consumerist framework, using systems of incentives and rewards within SDS. Some of it reveals an implicit alignment with emerging neo-liberal consumerist notions of education as a commodity, a means to the end of wealth, as well as individualistic notions of success.

Over a third of participants (8/23) mentioned the importance of an incentive system in making SDS attractive to students and the institution. Underlying this is the idea that SDS needs to market itself amongst competing services and influences on graduates and it needs to position itself as a means to an end, an end which is about individualised notions of success, such as improved chances of employability.

The key sub-themes which emerged concerned incentive-driven interventions which would enhance employability for students:

I think that we are part of a new neo-liberal frame. The issue of incentives and the issue of my marketability are about how much I can do to improve my CV and it is just all about the market. You get notions of 'okay I am doing this because it is going to make my CV look good'. (8)

¹⁰⁰ This term was defined in Chapter 2, but is again defined here: 'The market' is a reference to the market economy as an economy in which goods and services are determined by a free price system with little central or governance interference. This is in opposition to state-directed economic planning with controlling tariffs, regulations and subsidies. The term 'the market' is used in describing the economic climate in a neo-liberal dominated economic-political macro context.

The idea that SDS needs to align itself with these consumerist notions in order to compete and position SDS as a tool to improve marketability and employability emerged repeatedly.

Transcripts and certificates. Providing certificates to students for participation in student development, which document their attendance and provide evidence of their participation, appeared to be standard practice amongst the three institutions.

Six participants (6/23) described how introducing a reward system, such as providing certificates or introducing a co-curricular transcript which attests to participation in the co-curricular domain, would enhance the attractiveness of SDS and hence increase the participation of students. One participant (1/23) expressed this sentiment clearly by saying,

You can also get a certificate which says you completed this kind of leadership course. Yes, it is like a second transcript, students like it to get this confirmation, it's good for their CVs. (2)

One participant (1/23) suggested that combining the common with the personal good via an incentive system would be a strategic way of focussing on social justice as a common good, by enticing students to engage with these issues via opportunities to enhance their CVs:

We are trying to give our students what we think they are not getting in the university at the moment: Sense of their place in the world. Sense of how important the education is for social justice. How important it is that they emerge from the university with a sense of responsibility for society and so on. We are hoping that this programme, which at the moment stands outside of the formal curriculum—but the students will be able to use it in building their transcripts. There will be a thing on their transcript; that is what gets them interested. (6)

Employability. The concept of employability is the notion that students attend university to achieve the goal of employment, thus maintaining or improving personal standards of living. In addition, employability is a key deliverable of higher education in terms of the national transformation, as outlined in *White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997, p. 11), which states that in transforming South Africa, higher education needs to contribute to the “national development needs,

including the high-skilled employment needs, presented by a growing economy operating in a global environment”. Employability is viewed as a tool for national development.

The idea that graduates need to contribute to the economic development in South Africa, and also that graduates seek employability for its own sake, seems to underlie some of the thinking of a number of participants in SDS (7/23). The guiding principle of achieving employability and economic development, both personal and national, was expressed in the following way:

We need to be cognisant of why our graduates are here, it is working towards the world of work. So, whether it is a first year or final year student—we are continually cognisant of how will we prepare this student for the world of work. (11)

Student as the client, the consumer, the participant. The conceptualisation of the student seems to have evolved from the time when a student was understood to enter higher education as a passive recipient of knowledge. The construction of the student is now focussed on being a client, a consumer, and a participant. The notion of a client and consumer is part of the idea of education being a commodity, which implies that education needs to be attractive in order to satisfy the client-consumer-student, to ensure the survival of higher education.

Perhaps the idea of the student as a participant emerged from the concept of *andragogy* within, particularly, teaching and learning circles. It emphasises the idea that students are active partners in their development.

Four participants (4/23) made explicit reference to students as “*active*” (11) and “*taking responsibility*” (12). One participant (1/23) discussed the value of the consumerist model as the forerunner to the “*participatory user model*” (16) in empowering the student as participant and hence enabling a partnership in learning, and enabling a collaborative approach to education. The following quotation demonstrates the progression from seeing the student as a passive recipient of knowledge to the current notion of placing the student at the centre, as an (adult) partner in education, that is, much as the concept of *andragogy* suggests,

I don't know when this whole notion of student centred education came into being. I think it had something to do with placing the student at the centre. Perhaps this whole thing of the consumer or user or—I mean it is the same in

social work: People weren't really concerned about what clients thought—then the whole participatory user movement sort of started and I think it was a very good thing and things like mental health were contested—where you had people talking back and doing advocacy and lobbying for it. (16)

A closely related theme is the idea of the student as active participant who needs to show agency. The following quotation illustrates this clearly:

We will enable, enable an environment of development in a two way street kind of development. You come to the development—we will provide the enablers for you, but we can't provide the enablers and force you to come. You as a student also have got to take responsibility in utilising the environment that enables you to develop. (12)

6.4.4 Tensions: From Social Good to Personal Gains

Some participants (3/23) reflected on the tension of serving the common good and “pandering” (6) to the market and related notions of individualised success. One participant was explicit about the influence of neo-liberal thinking and criticised the move towards the “*university facing the market*” (6):

So the language of economics has fundamentally reconfigured all of our frameworks and all of our paradigms in a bad way. So when we talk about graduate attributes—there will be a whole range of capacities that we are thinking about amongst those attributes, but employability would be the chief one. This whole shift of the university to face the market is deeply problematic—which is what I think has happened. We pander to that repeatedly and over and over and I think 90% of our students in the university sector in the country have—I think—an understanding that they are coming to the university for their sake. Not for the social-good kinds of things. (6)

6.4.5 Summary: SDS Alignments

The themes that SDS is aligned with institutional and national imperatives and influenced by macro-context issues emerged spontaneously, explicitly and implicitly. The overall alignment with institutional frameworks seemed evident; this includes the idea that SDS is contributing to the performance indicators of throughput and retention. Moreover, as the institutions are foregrounding graduate attributes, so also has SDS embraced the graduate attributes as a guiding principle.

In terms of alignment with national imperatives, parallels were revealed between participants' themes and the vision articulated in *White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997). The theme of SDS alignment with national goals for economic and human resource development clearly emerged. The idea that active and responsible citizenship features prominently in the guiding principles for SDS was especially evident.

Some of the discourse employed by the participants suggested alignment with neo-liberal consumerist frameworks, which emphasise incentive-driven interventions and services, such as providing certificates for participation which ultimately improve chances for successful employment by improving students' CVs.

Tensions emerged between alignments, especially in terms of serving the common good and the notion of individualised success for personal gain. This theme will be explored in more detail in the discussion section, Chapter 7.

Issues of conceptual alignment (institutional, national and macro-contextual) were addressed in this section, and in the next section, issues of structural and organisational alignment, position, and integration of SDS within higher education will be explored.

6.5 SDS Within the Institution: Organisational Disjuncture

The theme of SDS's structural and organisation integration was intentionally explored by asking participants about their perceptions of the SDS position and relationship within the institution and the SDS status and alignment with the formal organisational structures of the institution. How participants experienced their relationships within and beyond the SDS structure, their formal and informal relationships across the institution, their position and status within the institution, and their institutional context were explored.

6.5.1 SDS Internal Coherence

Three participants (3/23) felt that SDS is not well aligned with other student development departments across the institution. One participant (1/23) wondered why student development departments focussing on student volunteering and community outreach are not clustered within SDS:

Someone explain to me why SHAWCO is somehow outside of student development and student affairs. There is student development in SHAWCO—surely this should be with SDS? (19)

Some participants (2/23) reflected on the fragmented and unco-ordinated aspect of SDS, and lamented the relative lack of contact between SDS offices and services, suggesting ‘silo’ functioning. This was expressed in the following quotation:

I like to say at (this institution) it is a pretty much fragmented type of student services; we are all over the campus, in what we do and where we do it; hell it’s a mess. (3)

This theme was similarly expressed by another participant who suggested that the contact across different departments within SDS is only sporadic and ad hoc, indicating it is needs-based and not proactively anticipated and planned:

We all go on doing our own thing. We at Disability interact with student housing when we have to. We interact with Wellness when we have to. In the same way that we interact with HR when we have to or with whoever. (19)

Perhaps the issue with internal alignment and meaningful clustering within the institution is related to the theme of how the SDS structure is designed and conceptualised¹⁰¹. A third of participants (7/23) indicated that it seemed coincidental and arbitrary how SDS was designed and why some units are within SDS and others not. Some alignment seems due to “historical roots” (17) rather than intentional:

¹⁰¹ *The National Commission on Higher Education: An Overview of a New Policy Framework for Higher Education Transformation* (NCHE, DoE, 1997) prescribes a co-operative and participatory governance for higher education as a key feature of this new policy framework. In the NCHE diagram (DoE, 1997, p. 12) illustrating internal governance structures and organisational alignment within universities, SDS is placed centrally, reporting vertically. SDS seems isolated in the diagram, without any lateral relationships, separate of senate and other academic structures. See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of this document.

I think organically, as I sort of explained the history; it has been a coincidental process that we landed up here. It happened coincidentally that our office is located here; there was not much design. What I am trying to say—it happened coincidentally—that our office is located here. (22)

Only one participant (1/23) felt that alignment within her cluster of SDS was good enough to create a synergy of work:

Support—we are providing a support structure in my unit, but my unit doesn't function in a vacuum. My unit also depends on a system from therapeutic services—from mentoring, from student health downstairs. So, I am not functioning in a vacuum. There is a circle of support. (13)

This participant expressed not only her sense of being connected with other departments within SDS but also that support programmes were co-ordinated and purposeful across departments within SDS. This is in contrast to the other sentiments expressed above, where participants lamented the seemingly arbitrary and coincidental design of SDS within the institution.

6.5.2 Centralised and De-Centralised Structures of SDS

The issue of the SDS structure as centralised or de-centralised¹⁰² was raised by a number of participants (5/23). It transpired that participants were concerned about the de-centralisation of SDS functions while, at the same time, expressing that the centralised structures were unresponsive to faculty needs.

The emergence of the de-centralisation of SDS was described as the result of the “*centre not responding to the support and development needs of the faculties*” (20), and the centralised management of SDS was described as “*too remote*” (5) and “*too split off*” (5).

Some participants (3/23) described it as a result of the neo-liberal climate in which the “*centre fails to hold*” (5) and where “*central accountability*” (19) has been compromised:

But (this university) is highly devolved. Each faculty has a lot of power over its own income budget and expenditure and it is very

¹⁰² Centralised and de-centralised structures are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Suffice for this section, centralised typically has top-down, vertical management lines, whereas de-centralised as devolved and participative management lines.

difficult to get one model—structural or otherwise, applied. Structurally it is a mess. In another faculty there is either nothing or it is totally different or the thinking is different. There is no consistency. There is a vacuum of central thinking and central direction—different faculties are doing bits any way they like and on their own. (20)

That SDS at the moment has no mechanism for putting staff out in the Faculties—so their whole model is a centralised operation and students come to them and what is more they are sitting way off campus, so you know, the students have to make real efforts to get to them and that is never going to work. It might work with one-on-one's, but is not going to work with any embedding of this SDS idea into the university life. They are too split off. (5)

The tension between the centralised and de-centralised structure will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

6.5.3 Formal Participation: SDS in Institutional Committees.

The position of SDS within the institution can be understood in terms of its formal participation in institutional committees. Almost one third of the participants (7/23) commented on SDS participation in institutional committees and its role and status within these formal structures. It seems SDS plays different roles in different committees, which act at different levels, and that this is not uniform across the institutions.

SDS participation as advisor. Some participants (5/23) commented on the advisory role SDS performs in some committees. The following committees were mentioned: “*rectors’ advisory committee*” (23, 3), “*management team*” of the rector (3, 21), “*academic progression committee*” (8) and advisory to “*readmission committees*” (23, 20). The emphasis on SDS performing an advisory role to executive level and academic matters seems to be prevalent at all institutions.

SDS participation in operational committees. Almost a quarter of participants (5/23) described SDS participation in committees which address operational issues, such as the housing committee, the residence committee, and the financial aid committee. These committees address SDS operational issues, and SDS participation in these committees is about operational decision making within its own SDS operations.

Part of SDS operations is the support of the Student Representative Council. In line with this operational function, SDS supports and represents the Student Representative Council in some committees, as mentioned by two participants (2/23).

SDS participation in governance committees. One participant (1/23) indicated that one director from SDS is a full member of various academic committees: senate, joint committees of senate and council, appointments committee, and institutional forum. In this instance, a senior staff member of SDS is a full member in key academic governance committees. However, this seemed unusual and only applied to this one case. In general, SDS was reported to be excluded from participation in academic governance committees.

6.5.4 SDS Status

SDS status and influence on crucial institutional processes and core business were widely noted. Over a third of the participants (8/23) indicated that they perceived SDS to be rather powerless and side-lined in terms of participating in the deliberation on key issues within the institutions. Only three participants (3/23) felt that SDS was influential at the institutions.

SDS is powerless and side-lined. Six participants (6/23) were explicit in describing SDS status as powerless, side-lined, and outside of important conversations, as “*add-on*” (6), even as “*window dressing*” (19) and “*tokenism*” (19). The following quotations illustrate how participants perceived SDS to be positioned outside of key debates and thus ineffective:

The university requires it of me to do this impossible thing, like with all Student Affairs. We are doing an impossible job from the side, not positioned effectively to do the job. SDS is really window dressing and not expected to make much of a difference; otherwise it would be positioned much more effectively. (19)

It (SDS) is marginalised. I mean SDS is really at the fringes of university life; somehow you either keep yourselves outside of it because you don't participate in the real debates or you have no participation in these. (16)

Being given insignificant status was also reflected in how staff felt treated. One participant expressed this theme by referring to the way SDS staff is treated:

Even doing PHDs and so on and then you sit around a table and you just get told you are a PASS staff member. You don't even need to be told that, you just get treated like that. (6)

One practitioner indicated that her sense was that SDS on the whole is not taken seriously at her institution. She indicated that her general perception of SDS work is that it is trivial, unnecessary, and of little significance:

So student development is neglected—psycho-social affect type of work is in very short supply. At top level and amongst academics—many of (the institution's) academics say it is fluff. We don't need this stuff. (20)

The theme of SDS having insignificant status emerged from how it is perceived to be positioned, especially with regard to key debates, and how staff are treated. This is reflected in the following comment from a participant, which highlights the status of administrative and support staff at her institution and describes her perception of SDS staff being pejoratively considered in “*only these kinds of support and admin kinds of ways*” (6), implying a lower status than academic staff. The participant points out the paradox in mandating a large group of staff to do an important job but essentially relegating this group to a lower status via unfavourable work conditions which are not conducive to theoretical contestation with core ideas.

I am saying how on earth can you employ so many people and you think of them only in these kinds of support and admin kinds of ways. How do you get us all here in this space to be thinking fundamentally about the inequity of 40% of black students never getting beyond the first year and how is it that all of this work that we do—in recruiting, in financial aid, in running student societies and in the residences and wellness—how can you get them to work together a whole lot more effectively so that it is clear that we are supporting learning. (6)

SDS is influential. Three participants (3/23) indicated that they felt that parts of SDS have good standing, are influential, and are taken seriously at their institution. Reference was

made to the executive position of the deputy vice chancellor (DVC), who is accountable for SDS functions on campus, and that this SDS position is at the most senior level:

Well I think—on our campus we are on the highest level that SDS can go. The fact that on our campus we have got a vice rector who has been dedicated to student development—that is the highest any service can go. It is not diluted with other add-ons. I think we have got something going here. At other institutions, it is mixed with other functions. (9)

Particular emphasis was placed on the exclusive focus of the DVC on SDS affairs, and that the DVC is not burdened by other functions which dilute attention on SDS, and this seems to be evidence that SDS is represented at a very high level.

One participant (1/23) made a link between meeting the expectations of the ministry and the university and how this would be “*impossible to do without SDS*” (4), giving SDS a key role in delivering on the minister’s expectations, hence affording SDS a significant status:

You remember what the minister said at the summit—he said: ‘stop complaining about the products that you get from the schools. Those are the ones you are going to get and that you probably going to get for the next 10 years. Make sure that they are successful, without lowering your standards’. So, I think that these expectations of his should let us sit back and say—okay—how are we going to do it? It is impossible to do without SDS. The other thing that I think is clear—in terms of the new minister—is the importance of student engagement and creating an out-of-class experience for students that is conducive to academic performance. (4)

This quotation, while perhaps not expressing the majority view, nonetheless expresses the alignment of SDS with the universities’ commitment to deliver on the minister’s expectations. It positions SDS in a pivotal role and evidences its relevance and status.

6.5.5 Paucity of Formal Relationships

Four (4/23) participants stated explicitly that there are no formal channels or committees which enable information exchange, collaborations, and co-operation between the

academic and the SDS sector. Some participants indicated that there are “no real formal connections” (5) and “no structural links” (17):

Although we from the academic development have always retained a very close interest in it (SDS)—you know from our working together—but there is no real formal connection. (5)

This theme of making formal connections beyond SDS and delivering on “holistic development”, not only conceptually but manifesting in a structural organisational way, was raised by a few participants. The issue of matching SDS philosophy (if *holistic* is indeed a theoretical position which constitutes a *philosophy*) to the structure seems a key issue and was articulated as follows:

Yes, in a sense we struggle to keep the structural connections and to pay more than lip-service to the idea of Holistic Student Development—we have struggled with that for a long time and I will say it’s only in the last five years that we have started coming back into much more genuine manifestation of that. (5)

We are beginning to reach across faculties, and we are reaching beyond the centralised structural limitations. We are perhaps beginning to influence faculties and staff, but we still don’t have formal impact on our student climate, our student lives and their learning experience. (11)

The issue of silo functions was raised, where, simultaneously, SDS seems to be represented at the highest level of executive management at university but remains rather isolated and insular, especially in terms of its reach into the formal academic life of the institution and the academic experience of students. The question of how much SDS infuses the organisational and academic practices, policies, and culture was raised.

6.5.6 Discontinuities: Structure and Experience

The participants’ sense of disconnection from the formal structure of SDS is mirrored in their concerns about students’ experience of discontinuity and fragmentation. Some participants (3/23) indicated that they were concerned about their perceived

fragmentation of the student experience, having “*separated it as if the student experience is in different compartments*” (21). The following quotations illustrate this:

There is no real continuity and really a dedicated space or a person or an office, committed specifically over a long period of time, looking at this area of how do we integrate the bits and pieces of the institution and the student experience. (22)

It's good to be thinking about these frameworks. Locating us organisationally. I don't think we know enough about this: theoretically or otherwise. Locating our organisations within a complete orientation which reflects that I am here to promote the very best that this young person can become. The way these jobs become such offices with these limited and disconnected objectives which get set and you can't locate that in a bigger thing. It is very problematic. (6)

This quotation also illustrates the concern about the disconnection of the offices and services, perhaps working in silos, and how this affects the student experience.

6.5.7 Embedding SDS: The Need for Shared Conversations

The previous theme illustrated some concerns about the fragmented SDS offices and their ‘disconnect’ from the institutional life, and the fragmented student experience and this is continued in this theme. The question of SDS integration at a structural level is related to the integrated experiences at the student level. A concern was raised about the issue of SDS embeddedness into the institutional life and the student experience.

Most participants (18/23) maintained that a need exists for shared conversations of SDS with other sectors across campus. Participants made comments about the value of embedding SDS within the university framework and beginning to find a shared understanding across all domains.

You are needing this integration, but it is not going to work without embedding this idea into the university life. They (SDS) are too split off, structurally. At this point, it can't be integrated into the curriculum and into the

consciousness of people around, so I think they are hamstrung by that; whether they can change that or not, I don't know, maybe it would be too difficult to get a mechanism of spending energy of bringing SDS into the heart of (the institution). (5)

When you look at the picture of the academic side and you look at the co-curricular programmes—that is the side where we work and this is where we contribute. We should get involved in learning, and the moment of learning should be the focus of our work—that is where personal development takes place, at faculty level. Integration is essential for overall success. (21)

The theme of SDS integration into the institution, structurally and organisationally, conceptually and practically, emerged as a key issue.

6.5.8 Summary: SDS within the Institution: Organisational Disjuncture

The findings in terms of the participants' perceptions of SDS integration into the institutions' organisational structure were discussed in this section. SDS was perceived to be rather disconnected and isolated from academic and other core conversations. The impression was created that SDS is loosely structured, perhaps randomly and coincidentally clustered.

Issues around the centralised and de-centralised organisational structures emerged. On the one hand, centralised structures were perceived as remote and cumbersome, unresponsive and rigid, while on the other, de-centralised SDS structures were criticised as independent of central vision.

SDS participation in formal committees at the university appeared to be a measure of SDS integration. SDS was claimed to have some advisory and operational role in some committees but seems to be excluded from participation in academic governance committees. Whether this affects status or is as a result of SDS status is unclear, but overall, it appeared that SDS is perceived as side-lined and powerless within the university structures.

The importance of embedding SDS within the university organisational structure and in the academic experience emerged as a dominant theme. The need for shared conversations was stressed. The issues emerging from SDS integrations, enablers, and barriers are discussed in the next section.

6.6 SDS Relationship with Academe

Academe, for purposes of this discussion, refers to all matters academic, the academic domain of the institution, including research, teaching, learning, academic development, and curriculum design. Academic development traditionally focusses on academic staff, and their didactic and pedagogic practices, and the curriculum. The theme of how SDS and its partners in the academic domain, especially academic development, interface emerged spontaneously and the participants (18/23) elaborated on the aspects of this relationship.

Academic support traditionally works directly with students and focusses on students as the site of impact and site of change. Academic support is typically located within SDS, whereas academic development is located within the academic domain, often within foundation programmes, with curriculum design and with academic staff.

The precise focus of SDS and where it conceptually overlaps with other domains is, of course, an area of disagreement, as the discussion in this chapter on scope, role, and function illustrates. The separation of some of these domains is due to organisational and structural reasons: some are due to content reasons, some are organically evolved, and some are artificial and contested. The boundaries, whether fluid and permeable and receptive to feedback and engagement or rigid and unyielding, are context dependent and vary across institutions.

6.6.1 Integration is Valuable

Most participants (18/23) indicated that a closer relationship with other stakeholders within the institution, in the academic domain and especially within academic development, would be useful. Almost a quarter (5/23) of participants spoke about the value of integrating academic support with aspects of SDS. Linked to this is the perception that the distinction between student support and academic support is perhaps an artificial one. Participants emphasised that integration of SDS and academic support needs to happen at the site of learning, that is, at faculty level. Linked to the suggested value of integration of SDS and academic support and academic development at the site (faculty) was a comment about the integration of SDS functions. The following quotation illustrates this:

Well, we think that academics can learn a lot from support service in terms of who the students are and what their needs are and I think support services obviously need to

link up with the academic experiences of students, because that is what they are here for in the first place. I think linking up with that—gives us that kind of entry point also into student’s lives. (4)

One participant (1/23) emphasised the value in working closely with the teaching and learning division and with academic development so as to have access to students through the timetable and to integrate student development and student support interventions with the curriculum:

There is a Directorate of Teaching and Learning, so now we’ve got to be there to make our voice heard. SDS is part of the Teaching and Learning committee. Academics and us are working together and that brought about the Co-Curriculum focus—you cannot leave us outside of core issues.

One of the things I have been negotiating with Deans this year--we have asked to be accommodated within the timetable, we want to be accommodated in there and the Deans were quite open to that. So it’s working now, we are in the timetable in the Foundation Programme in three faculties. (12)

The issue of “*add-on*” and “*outside*” of the academic experience has emerged repeatedly and refers to SDS operating “*besides*” the curriculum and timetable. One participant emphasised that working outside of the curriculum is less effective in effecting the impact SDS aims to achieve. Participants have indicated that “*we want to be accommodated where it matters*” (12) and SDS does not want to be “*outside core issues*” (12) and that “*the moment of learning should be the focus of our work—that is where personal development takes place, at faculty level. Integration is essential for overall success*” (21).

One participant (1/23) claimed that the curriculum is the most effective site for intervention. Hence, her desire to be “*in the curriculum*” (19): “*I want more space in the curriculum. While we stay outside of curriculum, how effective are we?*” (19).

This theme is also linked to the discussion on embeddedness of SDS and raises questions of SDS reach, effectiveness, and impact on student experience, climate, and culture on campus.

6.6.2 Contested Boundaries

The theme of boundaries between SDS and its potential partners, such as academic development, was mentioned by three (3/23) participants. Two participants (2/23) intimated that the boundaries between SDS and academic support and academic development are “blurred” (16) and suggested that these are contested areas. It was proposed that academic development (AD) should be done by academics and not SDS staff, perhaps also raising the issue of staff position and professional orientation: “*AD should be done by academics, faculties must do to this—supporting students is an academic concern, either by AD staff or the academics themselves*” (1). This sentiment was also raised by another participant, who emphasised that AD and SDS staff are “*different people with different sort of outlooks and very different aims*” (17).

The issue of boundary is contested and raises interesting issues. These appear not to be openly discussed, and neither does there appear to be a platform on which to discuss these issues. These challenges touch on matters of professional identity, scope, role, and function, location and position within the institution, and theoretical framework, not only of SDS within the institution but perhaps also of other domains which potentially work closely with SDS. Issues of boundaries open discussions of multi-disciplinary contestations, potential cross-fertilisation, and opportunities of theory development and spaces need to be provided in which such discussions are possible.

6.6.3 Essentialist Notions Separate SDS from Academe

Two (2/23) participants suggested, either directly or indirectly, that academic development and academic staff, on the one hand, and SDS, on the other, are essentially different because they “*do not work in the same way*” (17), or at the same levels, and somehow have essentially a different nature, one being academic and the other one not. The following quotation seems to imply that academic development aims to enhance the educational process, whereas SDS does not and that there is a distinction (real or artificial) between what SDS does and what academics and academic development do. She said,

*We don't do student development. We take the curriculum-
-this is our issue and things as they relate to the
curriculum rather than for example student housing or
student development or student leadership or things like*

that. These things are not really an issue. Our aim is sort of to enhance the educational process.

What I am saying is student development is very important, because it will contribute--but it is not where our focus is. So our mission is really to enhance the educational process for all students at the institution and we work across faculties to do that. It is very different people actually operating. Very different sort of outlooks and very different aims. Most of our staff are on academic conditions. They are researching, they are teaching. Our staff are academics. Our student development is through the curriculum. (17)

This participant described a fundamental and essential difference between SDS and academic and academic-development staff and pointed out a different focus and a different site of intervention. The distinction is made around claiming certain goals for the domain of academe, as if this goal is not shared by SDS. The sentiments expressed in this quotation seem counter to current notions of integration, of understanding development in systemic and holistic terms, and of aiming to work towards shared goals. The participant inferred that there is an essential difference: academic development seems essentially separate and different from personal-social development, an idea that stems from reductionist notions of education and development (as discussed in Chapter 2). As Bernstein (2000) argued, epistemological access is grounded in the active construction of knowledge, That is, the active interpretation of experience, or as King and Baxter-Magolda (1996) expressed it, “the known is inextricably connected to the knower” (p. 165). Epistemological access is a function of personal development (Jansen, 2001). Knowledge is socially and personally constructed (Boughey, 2005), and hence, the separation of the cognitive from the personal is artificial and reductionist.

6.6.4 Challenges Accessing Site of Development

Half of the participants (10/23) indicated that academic support¹⁰³ and other aspects of SDS should be located within faculties and “*on-site*” (21), “*where the development happens*” (5). They claimed that SDS is not engaging the students where it would be most

¹⁰³ Again a reminder that academic development is not equivalent to academic support.

effective. This idea of alignment, integration, and closer co-operation at “*faculty level*” (1) seemed to make sense to the participants and is especially valuable in terms of increasing effectiveness, that is, working together “*at the site of impact*” (5):

I think the Faculties are where it's at—and it won't be any different with SDS, might be a bit more central controlled, but essentially the faculties are more and more where's it at; that's where the work is and that is where SDS should be active, not outside of faculty—down there, off campus, in an office.

I personally think that the academic development and the student development, what do you call it, the SDS, need to work together—we are not aligning our work enough.

We can work together, ja, there must be a better alignment between academic development and SDS, at the site of impact, which is the faculty. (5)

Participants overwhelmingly made similar suggestions concerning integration of SDS, academic support, and academic development at the site of learning, that is, into the academic experience of the student.

A few participants (3/23) repeatedly indicated that facilitating development and doing student support work remains at the fringes of the curriculum and that the core challenge in doing SDS work is to get access to students through the curriculum and timetable. SDS is often forced to provide add-on services which are added onto the day or tagged onto other programmes. The timetable, perhaps one avenue of access to “*where it matters*” (5), is perceived as impenetrable and fiercely protected:

But there is no space in the curriculum, that's the argument of the academics. I can hear from the academics: we have so much pressure! We have to get through this curriculum! What do you mean—you are going to have a week of lectures on Aids or global citizenship? There is no space in the student's life to do anything else but focus on academics. We have 12 weeks to teach the whole curriculum. (20)

The paradox of infusing the academic experience with SDS support and development, on the one hand, and finding students' daily timetable congested, on the other, needs to be addressed as a systemic issue. The perception of the rigidity of the timetable is connected to the theme of a rigid academies structure.

6.6.5 Rigid Academe as Barrier

The theme described as “rigid academe”, manifested in a protected and perhaps impenetrable academic calendar, timetable, and curriculum, was identified. Three participants (3/23) mentioned the rigidity and inflexibility of academe. One participant (1/23) indicated that one barrier to enabling change and being effective is the rigid timetable and the rigid “sacred” (19) academic domains. She said,

Academics are very conservative. They are very conservative in what they imagine is part of their field. Everyone protects their domain and there is little overlap and co-ordination—so we work in silos. I mean really, how effective is that? (19)

Well, let me tell you, here the purist academic idea is alive! It's like: we don't do that—we don't soil our hands with development and employability and stuff like that. If we are doing humanities, we are doing 'the life of the mind', and that's how they speak. Science is a bit more kind of real world orientated—not hugely—they still want to produce academics. But to be so removed from South African reality, can you believe that? (5)

Because this is not a really sort of instrumentally based institution. It believes in the sanctity of the discipline. It is the discipline that is central. You are not going to fuzz around with these little other attributes. It is nonsense. A well educated person sort of has the thing. (17)

The sense that academe is rigid seems to be related to current notions of flexible provisions, diversity, and inclusivity in higher education. A participant pointed out one of the flaws in maintaining an unyielding system: “We assume—pretend--that our rigid system can

provide for the range of students coming into our sector” (9). This comment highlights the importance of adjusting the higher education system so that it is more suitable for the heterogeneous group of students entering higher education.

6.6.6 Summary: SDS Relationship with Academe

This section presented the themes on the participants’ perception of SDS’s relationship with other domains in the institution. A pronounced sense that SDS integration into the academic experience is essential and that “add-on” or “tagged-on” interventions are hardly effective was apparent. This was also related to conceptual integration, where education and development, cognitive and personal-social, are viewed as interrelated and not segmented. The fact that there are boundaries around these domains seems to raise issues of scope, role, and function, theoretical framework and organisational structures, and other perhaps provocative areas of discussion. Re-defining scope and collaboration poses problems and illuminates barriers to integrated, systemic, and holistic SDS. Rigid and traditional notions about the terrain of academe seem to present barriers to discussions around collaboration and integration.

Participants indicated that theoretical and practical collaborations across the disciplines and domains need also to be reflected in the organisational structure of the institution.

6.7 SDS Beyond the Institutions

The theme of SDS isolation or connectedness beyond the institutions was extracted from analysis of the responses of the participants. Over a third of participants (8/23) spoke about SDS relationships beyond the institutions and potentials for associations, with other higher education institutions or with the private sector. SDS was perceived as fairly disconnected from its peers in other institutions; at the same time, inroads seem to have been made with regards to beginning relationships with the private and corporate sector. It appeared unclear what kind, role, and purpose these relationships may take on.

6.7.1 Risk of Being Self-Referential

Two (2/23) participants commented on the relative lack of co-operation between regional institutions with regard to SDS. They claimed that SDS works within the institution but has little formal or informal relationships with its peers at other institutions. There was no reference to the local and national associations which are platforms for shared conversations

of SDS as a collective. As the quotations below suggest, even on a national level, SDS seems unrelated to other SDS divisions across the higher education sector in South Africa:

The first question I asked was—what is happening on the national level to look at the out-of-class experience and we said—very oddly, every university does its own little thing. It is like with our development workshops, you do yours and we do ours. You do leadership and I do leadership and we don't share—we try now to collaborate a little bit more. I just found it odd'. (23)

Then ultimately we would like to see ourselves ... improve work with you guys. Just reach beyond our own institution and way of seeing things. (3)

This also relates to the issue of standardisations and benchmarks for SDS. Two participants (2/23) commented on the differences in range of work, varying quality and practices, and differing interpretations and comprehensions of SDS across institutions, related to the lack of national standards and guidelines. The participants said that “*services vary widely from one university to the next*” (19) and the SDS divisions “*interpret it their way—each for their own*” (23).

6.7.2 Emergence of SDS Collaborations

Over a quarter of the participants (6/23) suggested that there were beginnings of collaborations between the institutions' SDS domains and also beyond, towards having external partnerships, especially with the private and corporate sector and provincial or government sectors. The following quotation illustrates the shift in focus from self-referential to dynamic and to using these emerging relationships more purposefully.

People are interested—they are interested and there is growing interest, which is great. But I think also we need to look at external partners like for example—we have this partnership with Old Mutual. Or we are doing this work with the government and so—I think it is about looking outside for external partnerships that can really help. And I think we are doing that; we are reaching beyond, not only to other institutions with New Hope and so on, but

also towards companies and the province; it's really beginning to be dynamic. (15)

6.7.3 Summary: SDS Beyond the Institution

The theme of how SDS relates to peers beyond its own campus, and how it relates to any stakeholder or entities beyond campus emerged spontaneously from the participants. Participants spoke about the relative lack of relationships, collaborations, or co-operation of SDS with its peers at other institutions. Although there are a number of existing associations which attempt to organise the SDS components into collective interest groups, these were not mentioned by the participants. This area of SDS association is essential for moving SDS towards professionalisation and towards finding standards and frameworks.

The theme of seeking relationships with peers at other institutions, in the private and the corporate sectors, was identified. Some participants felt this area to be underdeveloped, whereas others highlighted the emergence of these relationships beyond institutions.

6.8 Department of Higher Education and Training–DHET

One of the key questions for this research was aimed at investigating the participants' perception of the relationship of SDS to national policies emerging from the DHET. This question was explored by directly prompting the participants during the interviews. Participants seemed familiar with the documents but also described the gaps, ambiguities, and tensions therein. Some participants identified clear directives with regards to SDS, whereas others spoke about unmet expectations. Overall, there seemed consensus around the need for a broad national framework, neither prescriptive nor interfering with institutional autonomy, but at least guiding. As one participant expressed it, there is a need for a "*national organising principle*" (12) to guide SDS in terms of theory and practices and in terms of its scope, role, and function at the higher education institutions.

6.8.1 cursory Familiarity with Policies

Although three participants (3/23) indicated that they have no familiarity or even knowledge of any relevant policies or documents from the DHET, most others were clear about recognising that there are indeed some policies and that they had some familiarity with the National Plan, the Higher Education Act and White Paper 3. These three documents were the only ones mentioned.

6.8.2 Ambiguity and Gaps in ‘Idealistic’ Policies

Some participants (9/23) indicated, in various forms, that they missed a national framework and that policies had various ambiguities and gaps. Participants described how they often rely on good intentions and “*trying our best*” (20) but are essentially working “*without a framework that guides our work*” (19). Others went as far as saying that “*from the DHET there is only inconsistency where we need guidance*” (15). One participant maintained that “*I think policies for SDS is a huge lack. It is just a glaring gap in our national plans and policies*” (4). Others said,

Policy needs to actually be clear. It needs to be more specific. It is sort of broad, but you also need to be specific at times. So we all drift around in the dark, doing the best we can, but it’s not organised, not structured, the policies are too vague to give us the support or guidance we need. (22)

It is actually a national framework that you are looking for. If it is institutional, how much are we really serving the country? I mean, what if the framework for me is only serving my university, then what about the students I should be taking in. If we leave it to the university, then the public is not protected. We need a top-down directive that our universities need to recognise that student development is a key aspect of our universities, if they want things to change. (10)

I don’t think there is, that’s why you have no national organising principle because everyone is on a different page. That is a very worrying thing. (12)

One participant (12) makes a specific example of the issue of transformation:

For example the minister talks about transformation—the way the document is currently shaped, we could do anything in transformation—you could interpret it any way.

So when it hits us that we are not transformed enough—we actually can argue back and say—you never specified how we must transform, or what kind of transformation is required. So those are some of the areas in there that are problematic. (12)

This need for guidance and regulation may be interpreted to be directed at the DHET or, alternatively, at their own SDS and executive leadership within the institutions. This issue is particularly sensitive in the light of institutional autonomy and SDS historical alignments with national goals, which have seen SDS neglect the student¹⁰⁴. The question of whether SDS is an internal matter or is directly aligned with national imperatives is complex. Historically, SDS has been aligned with nationalistic goals and this has been widely criticised (Cloete et al., 1986; Mandew, 2003).

A few participants (2/23) commented on the “lofty” (22) and “idealistic” (22) quality of the policies emerging from the DHET with regards to SDS. There was a sense that the policies are based on idealistic notions, perhaps unrealistic, and hence not providing real guidance. The following quotation expresses this clearly: “*The policy has also, often, very lofty ideas and is unclear. And people do what they want*’ (22).

The lack of clarity is perhaps complicated by the challenges around implementation of the suggested policies. Participants (6/23) indicated that implementation is hampered by a mismatch of policy with context. Seemingly the resources and institutional structures are not in place to implement the directives contained in the policies emerging from the DHET. Participants indicated that not “*enough support is in place for implementation to happen*” (22):

The issue is—the system is bursting at its seams. We don’t have the infrastructure for the current numbers; we can’t implement what they are saying in terms of transformation and so, it’s pointless (14).

¹⁰⁴ This is in reference to the Apartheid era during which SDS, especially psychological and counselling services, served nationalistic goals which were undoubtedly not in the service of students. This is discussed by Cloete et al. (1986) and Mandew (2003).

The Higher Education Act also speaks like that. When they talk about the graduates that we want to produce—that sits well with the university's vision for the graduate that they want to produce and all of those things, but that is one thing saying it. How do you implement that—without getting the university on board—you need institutional support for this—not just policy. (2)

6.8.3 Narrow Focus on Student Governance

Two participants (2/23) indicated that the DHET gives sufficient guidance for the management and support of student governance and the Student Representative Councils. Both participants felt this to be adequate and appropriate and took much guidance from the policies.

It guides us—it's a guiding policy. For example the Higher Education Act, for example, talks about involvement of SRCs in all committees of Universities, they actually call it co-governance. Now our job as SDS is making student leadership understand, what co-governance means—it's not always understood. (12)

6.8.4 Expectations of the DHET: Guidelines and Accountability

The theme of expectations of guidelines and measures of accountability was acknowledged by the participants. There was a range of expectations, in terms of the guidance SDS requires and also in terms of the quality of the support and guidance SDS practitioners expect, from the DHET.

Some participants (4/23) indicated that it might be useful to set national standards for SDS, which the DHET may want to set. The participants (4/23) also stated that they expect the DHET to do monitoring and some quality assurance¹⁰⁵, or at least set a framework or guidelines as a benchmark. Some participants (4/23) commented on the seeming lack of monitoring and evaluation practices which allow institutional non-compliance with impunity:

¹⁰⁵ As discussed in Chapter 2, some national associations within SDS, such as SAACDHE, or SAASSAP, have set some benchmarks for SDS and some quality assurance guidelines and these seem to inform professional practice linked to the professions within SDS, but these are elective and allow institutional neglect with impunity.

You need policies that can assure the quality of your work outside of the professional body that guides your people¹⁰⁶. So that the work is linked to the universities agenda, to the DoE's agenda and not protected by the professional bodies behind which the people can hide. (5)

We have no accepted benchmark, no national criteria only the SAACHDE one, but it doesn't reach across all SDS. Our own university exec is not holding us accountable, and the DoE is neither. (11)

We are not walking the talk. I mean look at this whole ministerial commission of the whole social-cohesion and diversity issue—there were certain recommendations—what happened to the recommendations? We can't implement, because we just don't have the capacity to implement, there is no overview and follow up to see if we comply with the recommendation and policies. So we don't implement—so what—what happens? Nothing. (14)

The quotations, sadly, indicate that the lack of accountability and lack of monitoring burdens SDS and the institution but that a national framework with non-elective minimum standards and criteria might remedy this lack of “*national criteria*” (11). Again, the question arises whether this national framework should be driven by the DHET or by a national SDS association itself. This debate seems a prerequisite to any discussions on the framework itself.

Four participants (4/23) indicated that the DHET could lend more support to SDS in order to strengthen SDS work within the institution. One participant (1/23) indicated that she would require the backing of the DHET to do her work more efficiently within the institution. The DHET's “*backing*” (12) would provide support for her in creating the vision for her domain within the institution. In addition, it was mentioned that participants expected the DHET to emphasise the importance of SDS work so as to provide more legitimacy for SDS

¹⁰⁶ The reference to the ‘professional bodies’ refers to the associations which represent professionals, such as doctors and psychologists. This quotation seems to suggest that some SDS practitioners ‘hide behind’ professional regulations to the neglect of SDS.

within the institutions. This theme was also reflected in the comment about needing a “*formal continuous relationship*” (8) with the DHET which would strengthen SDS work.

How to change it: get funding from State if you make it important enough. The state must see its value so that it gets legislated. Just like we did for Academic Development in those days. Because we knew, we never were going to get money from the institutions, so you need to force the institution's hand by getting the support from the department (DHET). It's a long struggle, but you must start with the DHET, there is your decisive support. (5)

This illustrates a sense of SDS disempowerment, (needing DHET “*backing*” (12) to strengthen its position), and it gives a direct reference to seeking DHET support in terms of legitimising SDS.

6.8.5 Expectations of the DHET and the Risk to Institutional Autonomy

Three participants (3/23) claimed that the directive from the DHET provides sufficient cues and signals for the university leadership to interpret their meaning for their contexts. Two of the three participants were executive members and it seems important that at this senior level, the DHET is perceived as providing sufficient direction and the guidance the executive recognises as important. One participant stated it as follows:

You remember what the minister said at the summit—he said ‘stop complaining about the products that you get from the schools. Those are the ones you are going to get and that you probably going to get for the next 10 years. The through-put success rate is important and what you get is what you get. So make do and come up with a plan. Make sure that they are successful, without lowering your standards’. So, I think that expectation of his should let us sit back and say—okay—how are we going to do it? It is impossible to do this without the SDS services.

The other thing that I think is clear—in terms of the new minister—is the importance of student engagement and creating an out-of-class experience for students that is conducive to academic performance.

We know there is the task team looking into student residences and all of those kind of things. The big question I think for universities across the country is—to stop saying that we need other products from the schools and start saying how do we change the institution to actually cater for the product that we get from the schools?

I really don't like this deficit approach: students come here and they don't have this and they don't have that. I think we should look deeply at ourselves and say—what kind of institution should we be to enable success with what we get? (4)

This participant's expectations of the DHET are met, and she infers that she has a clear directive from the DHET.

Some participants (3/23) indicated that prescriptive directives would be inappropriate. One participant (1/23) maintained that she would not expect the DHET to be providing specific directives and detailed guidelines:

No, I don't expect them (DHET) to play that role. I see my institution as playing that role. I see my institution—according to its vision and mission and values and institutional goals and objectives—I see it saying as—this is what we want as an outcome for our institution's students and therefore the academics—these are your—this is what we are wanting of you and the support services—in student affairs you play a critical role and from you we are seeking for you to come to the party to do ABC and D.

What I am expecting of the national department to do is to set broad directives and broad goals, but not prescriptive ones and on the broad goals—so the broad goals are basically about how do we have a greater output level and how do we have students that are more sensitive to their environment, the people, plant, animals, etc.?

If universities must be student centred then what are the values of a student centred university? For example openness, democratise practices, good governance, etc. They could put that down as framing and I think that would assist student affairs and SDS.

But at the end of the day that is just my interpretation. So unless at some space there is some framing of–framing and directing of how SDS ought to look as an end result–something that we aspire to–in broad strokes–that would be useful and that would also give all student affairs department (SDS) a coherent kind of direction as well as the organisations that are independent.

(7)

While this participant expects her institution to provide comprehension and interpretations, she is looking towards the DHET for a “*coherent kind of direction*” (7) for SDS.

Three participants (3/23) spoke about the concerns of the DHET providing prescriptive guidelines which may be too regulatory and perhaps not allow autonomous interpretations of the guidelines. The participants elaborated on the need for a framework and, at the same time, the need to preserve the autonomy of the institutions, because of the “*contextual differences*” (4) of the institutions.

They (DHET) should not be prescriptive. I do believe that they can play a really significant role by setting broad values, broad goals and the kind of approach to student affairs. (7)

Generally speaking universities can apply the general policy intention in their own right. It is a broad framework and gives us freedom to interpret as we see necessary for our students. (12)

6.8.6 Lack of Confidence in the DHET

More than half of the participants (12/23) placed little hope and trust in the DHET. The DHET was described as tumultuous, with “*so many changes*” (4), and confused and,

generally, not reliable to give good guidance. Overall, no confidence was shown in the DHET to provide leadership and direction.

The department has no bloody idea itself. The department—the department is completely determined by inefficiency. There is no capacity. So the department is not in a space at the moment to give guidance around all of our issues. In some ways, that is the most urgent need in the country right now. (6)

There is little real direction from the Department. They just give some general recommendations which universities just don't follow. I don't think the Department of Education and Training is even equipped. They can't even run schools. Never mind Universities. That is part of the problem. (19)

This sentiment relates to the previously expressed need for DHET guidance. If, as stated above, the DHET is not capable of providing guidance, then the institutions, or a national SDS association itself, will need to “*come up with a plan*” (4) in order to assist SDS to find “*a coherent kind of direction*” (7).

6.8.7 Summary: Department of Higher Education and Training

The theme of DHET's role and function with regards to SDS was purposefully explored with the participants. Most participants were familiar with a few policies but described them as having gaps, containing ambiguities, and being generally vague and perhaps ill-suited to the context, especially in terms of resources. The “*idealistic*” (22) policies seem not to match the implementation capacities and limitations of the institutions, rendering them hollow and “*lofty*” (22).

Participants described how they had little confidence in the DHET, describing the DHET as confused and lacking the capacity to provide the guidance and framework required for SDS.

Participants described their expectations in terms of a broad framework and a formal relationship with the DHET which could be used to strengthen the SDS work within the institutions and provide a vehicle for monitoring institutional compliance with national imperatives around SDS goals.

However, it was indicated by some respondents that indeed enough guidance is in place and that institutions need to take agency in interpreting the directives themselves. These participants cautioned against rigid or narrow frameworks which compromise institutional authority. The need for a “*national organising principle*” (12) was pronounced and will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

6.9 Macro Influences on SDS: Globalisation¹⁰⁷ and Internationalisation¹⁰⁸

One of the main aims of this research was to explore the perceptions around internationalisation and globalisation, and how, if at all, these affect thinking, theory, and practice in SDS. Given that globalisation and neo-liberal influences have fundamentally reshaped current thinking and practices in and about education in general and higher education in specific, it was important to explore participants’ perception of these influences on SDS.

The themes that emerged are grouped into a few clusters; these are the participants’ perceptions that globalisation and internationalisation offer opportunities and can influence SDS and institutional culture and practices. The influence of the USA is grouped separately as most participants made specific reference to this influence.

6.9.1 Globalisation and Internationalisation Offer Opportunities

Over a third of participants (8/23) indicated that internationalisation and globalisation offered students opportunities to develop themselves, to travel, and to experience different cultures and places. Two participants (2/23) described the opportunities as “*amazing*”.

The opportunities were described in terms of “*personal improvement*” (22) and as offering personal gain, “*improved employment chances*” (15) and improved economic advantages. The following quotations reveal the participants’ thinking about these influences.

¹⁰⁷ Globalisation refers to the increase in global relationships of culture, people, and economic activity. Special emphasis is on the reduction of cross-border trade tariffs and on the assertion that free trade increases economic prosperity as well as opportunity. This impacts on issues of sovereignty and on political and geographic boundaries, which are referred to as issues of nation-state.

¹⁰⁸ Internationalisation, sometimes used interchangeably with globalisation, refers to the fusion and integration of nationalities and cultures. Special emphasis is on the spread of shared values and norms, promoting civil liberties and human rights.

Now our students are learning Mandarin; is that not amazing? So we are getting our students to think much further and look much broader; they have good opportunities to learn from overseas. I think only positive things have come to us because of globalisation; the door opened and we can only learn. (21)

We now have a Confucius Institute because we believe all our graduates should have some exposure to the new powerhouse. We must equip them to be ready to deal with the powerhouse. (17)

The references to these gains were in terms of individualised successes, enriching the self and providing personal opportunities for students. It remains to be explored how SDS marries these two notions of, on the one hand, promoting individual success while, on the other, also ensuring the acquisition of graduate attributes and improving students' contributions to nation-building as citizens, as outlined in White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997, p. 3). This tension between individualised notions of success and SDS's and higher education's contract with society (Kezar, 2004) was discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

6.9.2 Influences on SDS and Institutional Culture and Practices

The theme of the influences of globalisation and internationalisation on SDS is discussed in terms of its effect on organisational structures and ideologies, and on students and special services provision. Over a third of participants (8/23) recognised that globalisation and internationalisation had systemic and direct influence on SDS and referred to the pressure of keeping students connected to our local reality.

Influences on organisational structures. One participant (1/23) related the changes in the structure of the institution as resulting from neo-liberal influences. She commented on the de-centralised organisational structure to the neglect of central vision where the “*centre is struggling to hold*” (5):

I think it is an international phenomenon and it's about-- it's a kind of a post-modern, neo-liberal world--where the centres are struggling to hold, and we are getting the same here.

Well, it's institutional politics, culture, organisation—our faculties are very powerful, you know, we de-centralised in the late 90s. So yes, it's all university money theoretically but the politics of that is that it is the faculties that generate the money. The faculties are the engines in that way. So it is individual pockets which have the power. There is no central vision.

So in a sense there has been a progressive and rather dangerous de-centralisation of a number of functions, not only SDS type of functions, so, for example, many faculties have their own student outreach—recruitment—not many but some; others have got their own marketing people—right, so these are pockets of driving their own agenda, de-centralised, and not accountable to the centre any more. (5)

This quotation describes not only the changes in the organisational structure but also touches on the issue of centralisation versus de-centralisation, a theme which is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Influences on institutional ideologies. In reflecting on influences of globalisation and internationalisation, one participant (1/23) reflected on the “*changes in dominant ideas*” (6) within universities which have become about “*individualised success and self-gratification*” (6) and that this change seems to have affected culture and ideology on campus:

We capitulate all the time, you see. We have capitulated to self-gratification. To this whole commercial sense of accountability, to the loss of our society and collective. The fact that this form of accountability has failed as spectacularly as it has, hasn't dawned on us.

The language has changed. I think that this whole kind of human capital idea of what skills and what capacities are all about have fundamentally steered us all in an absolutely wrong direction.

So the language of economics has fundamentally reconfigured all of our frameworks and all of our

paradigms in a bad way. This whole shift of the university to face the market is deeply problematic—which is what I think has happened. We pander to that repeatedly and over and over and I think 90% of our students in the university sector in the country have an understanding that they are coming to the university for their sake. Not for the social good kinds of things. So we are in a completely different space and it is a problematic space. (6)

One participant raised the issues of education as a consumer good and viewing students as consumers, reflecting education in notions of “fun” (12). She spoke about how this kind of notion emerges from consumerist frameworks and individualised notions of education. Perhaps this links to the idea of “*student satisfaction*” (12), which stems from consumerist frameworks, including notions of education as being self-serving:

Perhaps this whole thing of the student being the consumer or user. I mean nowadays, students go to places where they can have fun; education is expected to be fun. I suppose that is also very middle class, simply maintaining status quo. I mean, students would want to have a good experience, so that creates tensions for us. (12)

These themes of changes in institutional paradigms and ideologies are interrelated in complex ways and the discussion in Chapter 7 will explore this much further.

Influences on students. Three participants (3/23) reported how they perceive neo-liberal influences, based on globalisation and internationalisation, to have influenced student culture, student perceptions, and student behaviours. The influence is seen in terms of consumerist values amongst students, as the quotation below illustrates:

The students struggle with these dominant ideas which are reinforced in their family lives and their schools and they come to university and it is fundamentally all, in the end, about success in this completely individualistic way. Completely.

They behave like rich kids. You think that everybody is in the state of absolute comfort. It is a

delusion. Everybody is playing this game. Even the poor kids here parade like rich kids. They are not rich. (6)

Two participants (2/23) noted challenges in managing private companies' access to students. Students are harvested as potential consumers. One participant (1/23) described how the Student Representative Council has been faced with the dilemma of needing the funding promised by the company wanting access to students, while also needing to address an important social issue on campus. Coping with such dilemmas seems widespread across the universities.

The way corporates are just wanting to come onto campus and how students are just allowing it, in many different ways and it is just such a flood in the storm. We don't have the policies to keep up with the pace of this and now with the new technology—you can't control this. It is difficult to prevent access to students and the way different companies just get around all our policies to get to students and it is either to sell them things or to expose them to branding or whatever the reasons are.

We don't have the capacity to actually filter all of this and understand all of this. They pay the SRC X amount of money. The SRC use it towards the support fund for financially needy students. So you see the dilemma of that, but it becomes a competition. We have had two occasions where we had alcohol companies marketing their stuff on campus. How they get onto campus I don't know, because we don't encourage it, but we don't have a policy against it. So alcohol companies and the SRC at the same time want to have a protest. So, the one year we had the anti-racism protest and the alcohol promotion: it was like half the lunch time was for the Vodka, Smirnoff whatever thing and the other half was an anti-racism campaign. It was hair-raising.

They couldn't make that decision because the money was important. It was just like they were stuck in

this dilemma and they wanted to do this half-half thing which was a disaster. So I think that is part of how students have compromised. I mean in the 80s and early 90s—that would never have happened. It is a very different kind of generation now. (8)

The tensions created by companies wanting access to students, using campus to promote their products, and at the same time, funding social responsibility projects seem to be rife at the institutions.

Influences on size and shape¹⁰⁹. The theme of internationalisation and globalisation was mentioned in regard to the size and shape of student-faculty-funding relations, which determine much of the financial income of universities

There is an increased focus on international students, not only because of increased mobility and increased internationalisation of universities, but also in terms of the increased revenue these international students provide. Institutional planning is increasingly considering revenue-generating, study-abroad programmes. Three participants (3/23) listed the various nationalities which frequent campus and two explicitly referred to “Chinese” and “American” students as “cash cows” (8), a reference to the income that is generated by hosting these students.

Also don't forget the cash cows. International students. Scary. Just looking at how we increased our semester study-abroad cohort in the last few years. I think it has probably doubled. It is an explicit push. It is all about the money. (8)

Influences on special service provision. Some SDS services are provided specifically to international students, such as 24-hour help lines or chronic care at Counselling Services. Two (2/23) participants commented on the specialised services that international students receive, perhaps as marketing tools or to offer what universities from target countries offer:

We also have these groups of service providers for international students who have space in our buildings. Like they just appear out of nowhere. They suddenly get

¹⁰⁹ Size and shape refer to the particular spread of demographic, undergraduate and postgraduate, range of faculties across an institution. The particular spread and size of faculties impacts directly on funding for the institution.

space and we all have been struggling for space and then suddenly they manage to get priority. It makes you wonder—it looks like a sinister sign.

All in favour of the international students, but for us? I feel that education has failed our children and failed despite the promise of a brighter future—it has not happened and it is not delivered. What happens to the child in the township school, rural school? They are completely lost. (8)

One participant (1/23) indicated that special career services are beginning to spring up at institutions to enable recruitment to overseas opportunities:

We try not to have companies from overseas who would want to buy our careers office—and actually recruit students to their places, and we say to them—hell—no! That's a challenge, I mean how do you compete with that? (22)

The issue of internationalisation and globalisation and how it affects SDS will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Influences on funding and agendas. It seemed that neo-liberalist¹¹⁰ influences, especially the alignment with the market and the private sector to attract revenue, has impacted on SDS. It was important to explore this theme further and the participants spoke about the tension arising from funding needs, donors, and compromised agendas.

Eight participants (8/23) explained how global trends of looking towards private funding to support education are influencing SDS thinking and practices. Participants described how they are required to seek private funding to enable SDS programmes. One participant indicated that the university had withheld funding and she has been forced to seek private sponsorship to maintain a leadership programme:

This institute is supposed to generate its own funds to become independent. Which means we are looking for funds now. Just to get this institute off the ground—I had to

¹¹⁰ Neoliberalism is a form of economic liberalism that emphasises the freedom of private enterprise, liberalised trade and relatively open, non-regulated, markets to promote globalisation. The private sector role in achieving outcome is maximised.

say to management the other day—you promise seed money and that is not even forthcoming. There is no real interest if they are not putting money into it. I'm forced to look elsewhere. (3)

Some participants (2/23) indicated that materialist values, perhaps heightened by globalisation, have gripped the campus, which has, in turn, reshaped its ethos and ideology. As some participants (2/23) indicated, in some cases, “*so many of our programmes depend on outside funding or corporates*” (8), that is, rely on private funding which can compromise goals, and agendas become blurred:

We are again on the back foot here. A whole lot of our initiatives here that we undertake require conversations with these donors and these people who might be supporting us. It comes back to notions of what they think we require and what they dictate to us. Like when you put these leadership academies together—you have these middle-of-the-year leadership ceremonies. And it is competitive. The students have to make a motivation for why they want to get into it and there are many more applications than the 160 places that we have.

The outcome of it, in my view, is far too much about individualism and this individualistic sense of what my personal destiny in life is and so on. I think, jese, these are really articulate kids. But they have by and large such a superficial understanding of what their responsibilities are and they too often come out talking about Americanised idea of achievement and so. So yes, we allow the sponsors much more influence than we should. (6)

One participant elaborated on the de-centralisation as a result of revenue being generated at faculty level, allowing faculty to determine their own kind of student support: “*whoever has the funding can also employ student support staff, which is co-ordinated by local faculty need*” (19), and faculties “*have control over these*” (5), perhaps removed from central vision.

Well, they just pay from the extra private funds. It is not funded from the centre. It is not funded through here. In other words, these people aren't seconded from here. Faculties can do it because of contacts with industry, but we don't. Humanity doesn't have those funds. (20)

One participant discussed how she experienced the shift in values depending on income, how income determines priority and focus:

Just give you an example—as a faculty we were always the beggars—then, switch of a funding formula —and we are now not a net loss to the institution—we are a net gain, we've got a new value—I mean—can you believe this? But this is what we are reduced to, in many ways, by this factorised kind of financial arrangements.

So rich faculties are now taking the law into their own hands so then the structural question that you are raising which is a very important one, raises its head—and the only way we think that we can work with it, is to work around this—because we are not going to be able to shift that position at the moment. It is going to take a revolution to shift that. It's like capitalism—it's very hard to undo, once you've got it. (5)

The themes raised above, those of paradoxes and tensions emerging from shifts in educational ideology, perhaps precipitated by shifts in funding source and maintained by neo-liberal influences on higher education, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

6.9.3 Influences from the USA

SDS literature is dominated by literature emerging from the United States of America and hence it was important to explore how this literature and the American influences have been perceived by participants. Participants appreciated the support, guidance, and opportunities which grow out of the relationship with the USA. However, some caution was expressed around this issue.

Over a quarter (6/23) of participants were appreciative of the American influences on SDS in institutions. Some participants (4/23) expressed gratitude for the assistance given by the American Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO-I), with

particular reference to the influence this had on the South African chapter and practices in South African student housing domains. Participants indicated how this association has elevated functioning and has assisted with training and role modelling in terms of SDS operations with specific focus on housing and residence issues. According to reports, it has offered real solutions and has moved the residence sector forward in terms of its thinking and practice:

There is the development the ACUHO-I has brought in the field I am in. It has brought close ties between us, with America, but also locally with you, and that has been wonderful. Now if you take the ACUHO-I, and how much they have achieved, we should really learn from those Americans, you see how organised they are. (2)

I think we can share and learn from the Americans and they can show us a lot about student experiences. I mean just what they do in residences is amazing. And I am glad we in South Africa are partnering with them. Like the ACUHO-I is supporting our residences; they are funding the training and helping us up-skill our profession and our staff, so we benefit from their financial support. (11)

One participant indicated that a United States-based university has been instrumental in assisting with planning and teaching a South African Educational Leadership PhD programme, which focusses on SDS. The participant claimed that the US partnership has been crucial in making the PhD, taught locally, a success. She indicated that the assistance of the US partners is expected to “*rub off*” (12) on the local students:

We have a bilateral understanding with the University of Cal State, California Fullerton University. Next year we are starting a PhD in Student Affairs; we have taken it through and the University has accepted, so they'll come and teach and kind of be rubbing off on people here on campus. We appreciate their help with this. (12)

While many participants were appreciative of the US relationship, influence, and support, some participants expressed some concerns. Some participants (3/23) were cautious

about American influences, describing the benefits as one-sided, highlighting how lessons from Africa and African influences “*are neglected*” (22) and seem less valued:

I haven't seen much other than the bigger strokes in terms of Afropolitan, but for my area, it hasn't had much of an impact. Lots of talk about reaching into Africa, but really, how serious are we? We are still looking and dealing mainly with overseas, despite our claims. (20)

Our universities are being harvested for their knowledge, leaving us bereft of our knowledge. If it was an equal street this would look different. For example, when they offer exchange programmes for students, theirs can travel here—where do we get money to send ours from? So who is it benefiting? We don't benefit much: they get all the benefits. (12)

6.9.4 Keeping it Local

Over a quarter of participants (6/23) recognised the tension emerging from internationalisation and globalisation, especially in terms of the relationship with overseas and American partnerships and student exchange programmes. The risk of losing graduates to overseas institutions was discussed. One participant said, “*We have to try keep our graduates here, but how?*” (22), and another, “*How do we do that? How do we make people global but keep them centred in Africa?*” (17).

This theme of knowledge drain and tensions emerging from globalisation and internationalisation, with special reference to keeping our focus on local challenges, emerged, and the question was raised on how SDS should engage with this concern.

6.9.5 Contract with Society

Higher education's and SDS's contract with society were mentioned by some of the participants (2/23). This concept of higher education's “contract with society” related to the higher education aims of, at least in part, working towards the betterment of humanity, towards the betterment of society. Kezar (2004) reiterated this aim and emphasised that SDS has a tradition of serving the public good and needs to remain focussed on this contract with society. Kezar (2004) echoed Harper (1996) who stated that SDS's contribution is not only to

student success and institutional goals but also to the common good. Two of the participants (2/23) commented on the concern that higher education, and SDS within it, has lost its basic commitment to the common good, the South African people, and South African challenges:

My family, they are very much part of the education crisis of what is happening and so—I feel on a personal note--I feel that education has failed our children and failed despite the promise of a brighter future—it has not happened and it is not delivered. What happens to the child in the township school, rural school? They are completely lost. (8)

The tensions arising from SDS alignment with the common good (society), with the institution, and the state (DHET) are explored more deeply in Chapter 7.

6.9.6 Summary: Macro Influences on SDS: Globalisation and Internationalisation

Participants felt that many opportunities for students are to be gained from internationalisation. Influences of globalisation were perceived to be structural and in terms of ideologies. Consumerist notions of education seem to infuse thinking and practices, and also influence students directly, making education a commodity, with students as the client-consumer. This shift towards individualised notions of success was raised with regards to an earlier theme on SDS alignment with ‘the market’ which reconceptualises the student and education and their relationship to society.

Influences from the USA were seen as positive, and participants welcomed their assistance and ready-made solutions, while also raising a caveat that SDS and higher education need to focus on keeping students and solutions locally committed.

A few participants pointed out SDS’s contract with society and highlighted the risk of neglecting the common good while focussing on individualised student success.

6.10 Distinctive Themes

In this section, the themes which somehow did not “cluster” easily with other themes are discussed. They are stand-alone themes, distinctive and remarkable. One is the theme of SDS emancipation, which is about the participants’ (11/23) sense that SDS needs to take agency and claim its place within the institution. The other, less dominant theme, concerns

SDS theory development, which was raised by a few participants (6/23) but nonetheless emphatically.

6.10.1 SDS Emancipation

Almost half of the participants (11/23) indicated that there is a need for agency and empowerment for SDS to promote itself and its goals within the institutions. The theme of SDS emancipation refers to the participants' sense that SDS needs to develop into an “empowered” (10) domain and needs to “raise its own profile” (12). It was suggested that SDS needs to direct the domain confidently, perhaps move beyond its supportive role and take the lead and say “what is the next move?” (7) and that SDS should “just do it” (11, 6).

Participants indicated that perhaps SDS has a low “self-esteem” (10) and low “self-respect” (12) or “waits to be asked to do something” (7) and “needs to improve its own profile” (8). One participant said,

I think people in SDS shouldn't wait for permission. Not ask for permission for things. I think just the way of these structures that we are trying to set up in the residences—these mentorship structures—these kinds of organisational committees which are thinking about what structure—what organisation structure is going to be best for the residences and so on. All of these things don't need to wait for permission to come up with solutions. We must just do it. (8)

The overwhelming sentiment expressed by the participants (11/23) is that SDS needs to take the lead in terms of its goals and needs to take agency in driving the change. SDS practitioners need to begin to do proactive and confident work in their institutions.

6.10.2 SDS Need for Reflective Practice and Research Development

Traditionally, SDS staff have ‘administrative’ contracts, which do not make contractual allowances for a research component. However, the idea of SDS practitioners engaging in research emerged repeatedly, although it seems that universities “don't understand and accept that people in this division can do that” (12). A number of participants (6/23) indicated that they felt it a shortcoming of SDS is that it does not conduct peer-reviewed research, neither as a focus of the work nor built into the contractual conditions. The tension was expressed in terms of being “locked into the student service domain which is

about doing things rather than thinking” (22), which impairs the “*reflective*” (22, 11) component of the work. As one participant pointed out:

Administrative and professional staff (SDS staff) are not enabled to develop further leadership and scholarship, also to develop expertise. Develop a sense of critical inquiry and a research rich environment that would improve their practice. This is what is lacking. (7)

We can't cope with the numbers, we are just going faster and faster, but we don't think and write about what we do. A lot of it is pioneering work. That is why these things need to be written up and documented. But who is going to do it? Where will you find the time? (14)

This participant highlighted how SDS work seems “*pioneering*” (14) work and how “*we have little research about SDS work*” (14). She pointed out that unless SDS practitioners engage in research and publish their results, SDS may struggle to improve its position and practices. In addition, this raises issues about considering SDS as an equal in a domain in which scholarly output is the currency.

6.10.3 Summary: Distinctive Themes

This section included the two themes which emerged as distinctive and idiosyncratic, presenting valuable thoughts and ideas. The themes did not quite fit the themes discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, and I wanted to retain and highlight these; hence, they stand alone.

The first theme was the issue of SDS emancipation. This refers to the comments about SDS disempowerment and the need for SDS to find its voice. The second theme which did not easily fit into any of the previous clusters was the issue of SDS's need for local theory development and the barriers which the participants raised. The themes are related to each other in that SDS maturation as a profession is related to research development.

6.11 Summary and Conclusion: Research Findings

This summary of Chapter 6 presents a synopsis of the themes which emerged from the research findings. The themes were discussed in terms of 10 clusters.

6.11.1 Scope, Role, and Function of SDS

Although there seemed a clear core of roles and functions, the scope appeared nebulous, the domain undefined, and various university functions clustered with SDS at random.

Roles were less diffuse and included administrative and support roles, which have an impact on the context, advocacy for students' needs, and playing a role in the wider South African context beyond graduation.

There was little articulation between some perceived roles and corresponding functions. Alignment between the SDS role in nation-building and its function in developing graduate attributes seemed well developed, although this was not reflected in the themes on scope. Participants seemed to agree that delivering on graduate attributes is a key function of SDS, and the link to student success was clearly evident.

It also became evident that there has been a shift in how the student is conceptualised. Notions of students as a heterogeneous group of people with holistic needs and complex lives emerged. This, in essence, is the manifestation of massification of higher education. This perceptual shift towards an integrated notion of the academic experience perhaps mirrors the emergence of student development theories.

6.11.2 Theoretical Framework of SDS

The divergence between practice and theory was evident. Participants did not identify theory development as part of the scope, role, and function of SDS, and this was reflected in the themes that showed that no collective or shared framework for SDS exists. There seems to be no platform on which to explore the seemingly pluralist and eclectic utilisation of theories and models within SDS.

However, the majority (21/23) identified one or another theory which informs their work. An appropriate alignment was identified between the role and the function the participants had within SDS and the theoretical lens chosen. Some participants raised concerns about the theoretical confusion and theoretical void in SDS, and issues of poor association between theory and context emerged.

A shift in SDS towards holistic and systemic thinking was noticeable, as was a tendency to examine this in the light of the seemingly poor integration of SDS into the institution and the students' academic experience.

6.11.3 SDS Professionalisation

It emerged that SDS attracts a medley of professions and that this generates challenges which include poor practical application or lack of suitability of qualifications for leadership in SDS. Professionalisation emerged as a critical challenge, especially in terms of creating a shared epistemological community and a shared national framework. While the range of professions within SDS seemed to be grounded in their respective disciplines the articulation of these professions is vital. Tensions appeared around the positional and professional leadership of SDS.

6.11.4 SDS Alignments

The themes that SDS is aligned with institutional and national imperatives and influenced by macro-context issues were clearly expressed. The overall alignment with institutional frameworks seemed evident; this includes the idea that SDS is contributing to the performance indicators of throughput and retention. In terms of alignment with national imperatives, parallels emerged between participants' themes and the vision articulated in White Paper 3 on transformation (DoE, 1997). Some of the discourse employed by the participants suggested alignment with neo-liberal consumerist frameworks which emphasise incentive-driven interventions and services.

6.11.5 SDS within the Institution: Organisational Disjuncture

SDS was clearly perceived to be rather disconnected and isolated from academic and other core conversations. Participants reported that SDS is loosely structured and perhaps randomly and coincidentally clustered. Issues around the centralised and de-centralised organisational structures were noted. On the one hand, centralised structures were perceived as remote and cumbersome, unresponsive and rigid, while de-centralised SDS structures were criticised as being independent of central vision. SDS representatives seem not to be included in academic governance committees, and SDS is perceived as side-lined and powerless.

6.11.6 SDS Relationship with Academe

There was a pronounced sense that SDS's conceptual integration, in which education and development and cognitive and personal-social development are viewed as interrelated and not segmented, would be very useful.

Rigid and traditional notions about the terrain of academe were claimed to present barriers to discussions around collaboration and integration. The current thinking in SDS,

which includes conceptualisations of the heterogeneous student, with a range of needs and capabilities and SDS systemic and holistic theoretical paradigms, seems to be offset by rigid notions within academe. Such tensions are amplified by structural divisions which need to be addressed organisationally.

6.11.7 SDS Beyond the Institution

Participants spoke about the relative lack of relationships, collaborations, or co-operation of SDS divisions with their peers at other institutions. SDS association is essential for moving SDS towards professionalisation and towards finding standards and frameworks.

6.11.8 SDS and the DHET

Most participants were familiar with a few policies but described them as having gaps, containing ambiguities, and being generally vague and perhaps ill-suited to the context, especially in terms of resources. Participants described the DHET as overwhelmed and not capacitated to provide the guidance and framework required for SDS. However, some respondents indicated that enough guidance is indeed in place to signal the DHET's intentions and that members of institutions need to take agency in interpreting the directives themselves, especially in the light of institutional autonomy, which is not only about self-governance but also about institutionally autonomous interpretations of policy.

6.11.9 Macro Influences on SDS: Globalisation and Internationalisation

Influences from the USA emerged as positive while needing to focus on keeping students and solutions locally committed. A few participants noted SDS's contract with society and highlighted the risk of neglecting the common good while focussing on individualised student success.

6.11.10 Distinctive Themes

SDS emancipation around taking agency and directing the domain confidently appeared as vitally important, as did the area of local theory development relevant to South African SDS and Higher Education.

Broad themes emerged from the participants, generating a rich discussion, which is presented in the next chapter. Overall, it emerged that the fundamental concern of SDS is to contribute to the success of higher education in general and the success of students in particular. Deliberations on how to do this need to find a platform and a format, and a process

of professionalisation might contribute towards the collective vision of SDS within higher education.



CHAPTER 7:

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter will present the discussion of the research findings which were presented in Chapter 5 (Document Analysis) and Chapter 6 (Interviews with Participants). This discussion synthesises the findings from the document analysis of the policy documents of the DHET (Chapter 5), and the data drawn from the interviews (Chapter 6) with the literature survey and SDS theories (Chapters 2 and 3), and the analyses and discussion of the findings is done in this context. Recommendations are generated and presented in the next chapter.

7.1 Overview of Themes

The discussion of the themes focusses on the most prevalent themes emerging from the data and which are linked to the research questions. The critical discussion of the themes will generate recommendations for higher education in South African with reference to the SDS domain. These recommendations are contained in Chapter 8.

The themes are discussed under the following headings, which link directly to the research questions that provide the framework for this study:

1. SDS scope, role and function
2. SDS structures and organisational integration
3. SDS theory and framework
4. SDS relationships beyond campus
5. SDS and the relationship with DHET
6. Macro context and neo-liberal influences on SDS
7. Internationalisation.

7.1.1 Theme 1: SDS Scope, Role, and Function

The theme of scope, role, and function of SDS reveals functional and operational contradictions and illuminates implementation issues. Overall, there was a wide agreement

that SDS is “*here to serve our students*”. However, on de-constructing this unformulated service-oriented role and function, a range of challenges emerged.

Discontinuities in scope, role, and function are seen to be related to the tension between structure and integration of SDS and the institution because of the misalignment of some roles and functions and the corresponding nebulous boundaries that result.

Scope: varied, random, and unco-ordinated. The way scope is understood, defined, and delineated informs the overall understanding of the role and function of SDS. The findings indicate that there was a diverse understanding of what constitutes the scope of SDS, where and how to draw boundaries, and what guidelines and principles could be used to articulate the scope of SDS.

Overall, the scope of SDS emerged as unclear, and it seemed some functions and services reside only coincidentally within SDS and others beyond. Across the institutions only 6 of the 23 services and functions recommended by Mandew are consistently within SDS (Mandew, 2003). These are student counselling, student development, student orientation, sports and recreation, student housing and residence life, and student governance. Although consistency was shown around these departments; differences were noted as to the function of these services.

In spite of consensus that provision of non-academic services is well-placed within SDS, locating these as “non-academic services” places them conceptually in a functional area, which, if non-academic and unrelated to the academic life of the student’s experience, will remain outside of the student’s experience. This seems rather iterative, perhaps circular, but is an example of the core tension SDS is faced with: while role and function are service-related and outside of the academic life of the students, SDS remains, perhaps entrapped, outside of the core academic endeavour.

On the one hand, SDS is described as providing non-academic services (Helfgot, 2005; Lumadi & Mampuru, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005), and on the other hand, SDS, as part of higher education, is expected to contribute towards producing “graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and idea” (DoE, 1997, p. 3).

These dual roles and multiple functions are manifest in the range of scope described, and the need for the integration of the dual roles and multiple functions seems to be

pronounced across the three institutions. This has been an enduring theme, and SDS and higher education planners have yet to find a way to integrate these aspects of SDS role and function (Harper, 1996).

The variance of scope of SDS across the three universities might be due to institutions facing different issues. For instance, if issues of harassment, discrimination, diversity, or transformation appear a high-level concern, possibly these issues were raised in a national review or an institutional audit, and the department dealing with them might have been moved to a higher level, to report executively. Perhaps the Soudien report (DoE, 2008) precipitated the move of some of these ostensibly (Mandew, 2003) SDS functions to a higher level and more visible position within the university. The recommendations of the Soudien report put the spotlight on areas such as harassment, discrimination, and transformation, and universities responded by shifting services and functions related to these areas to a higher, more visible level, while also improving these services. This resulted in such services being removed from the SDS scope.

Perhaps one of the disadvantages of removing such concerns from SDS scope is that these areas become isolated and distanced from the existing student development network and fail to be integrated into existing programmes and activities across campus. By moving certain functions from the scope of SDS, they acquire much exposure and authority, but they suffer from some of the disadvantages that add-on programmes experience in that they do not change culture to the same degree as integrated functions. Moreover, the isolation of an office which addresses specific issues will segment and reduce these issues, rather than view them as integrated into a systemic understanding of student experience.

Some of the variance in scope of SDS might be due to different histories of and culture within the university. For instance, the area of student volunteering could be defined as a development vehicle and hence be placed within the scope of SDS, so as to align the volunteering outcome (as described in some graduate attributes) with the outcomes of SDS. Alternatively, volunteering might be placed outside of SDS, perhaps with the institutional marketing or fund-raising department, depending on the intended outcome of volunteering, to enhance the image of the institution.

Different institutional interpretations of SDS's role and function might contribute towards the difference in scope of SDS. For instance, locating student discipline within SDS may be as a result of the interpretation of the disciplinary function as primarily a developmental one. It seems to follow that student discipline is allocated to SDS in order to

ensure the corrective or disciplinary action is located within a developmental framework. However, such intentional, conceptualisation-driven categorisation of SDS seems rare. Perhaps the converse applies: as offices and functions are located within the scope of SDS, developmental interventions are used.

Privatisation and outsourcing are other reasons why some of the SDS departments are no longer located within the scope of SDS and might no longer be aligned with SDS vision and mission or under its guidance and management. For instance, health services and some residence services are privatised and economic principles, rather than student development and support principles, govern their operations. The conceptual tensions emerging from the meeting of potentially incompatible systems such as 'economic' and 'development' (Duderstadt, 2004) need to be intentionally addressed and a meaningful integration of potentially contradictory principles needs to be found.

Another concern around the variance in scope, perhaps reflecting ambiguity and lack of shared comprehension and interpretation, is the resulting problems in monitoring and evaluations, quality assurance, and benchmarking. These accountability processes are compromised if the focus of what is measured, assessed, monitored, and evaluated is not shared and varies greatly across institutions.

The lack of a normative framework for SDS scope might leave SDS vulnerable to institutional agendas and could weaken its ability to assert positions which are in line with SDS national imperatives, perhaps moral imperatives or student development-related imperatives. While these are usually aligned with the institution and faculties, tensions can only be addressed if SDS is located within a normative framework that can withstand situational pressures which could arise.

Perhaps the variations in SDS scope reflect the different kinds of institutions and are a result of an institution's heterogeneous and diverse character, history, and culture. Mandew (2003) indicated that SDS services, role, and function differ across institutions and added that while these are partly due to culture, history, and character, financial and human resources differences are also possible reasons for this variance in scope.

The random and varied nature of scope of SDS presents challenges to co-ordination and integration of role and function which is discussed in the next section.

Role and function: alignments and contradictions. The role and function of SDS were described in diverse terms by participants in the study. However, overall, there was an agreement that the role and function of SDS are to support student success and to work in

alignment with the institution. It emerged that there was a shift from reductionist notions of providing services towards providing comprehensive development which is responsive to complex and individual student needs. This reflects the shifts in notions about students, no longer viewed as a homogenous ‘type’ but as a heterogeneous group made up of diverse individuals, each with a range of competencies.

What was understood as supporting student success and student development ranged from providing services to engaging the institution in addressing contextual issues which have an impact on student success.

In some areas of SDS, scope, roles, and functions were aligned. For instance, in the area of service provision, the role in enabling access to disability services and to providing counselling to students was aligned with the function of managing these services and ensuring compliance with professional and policy requirements.

Moreover, some roles and functions were in line with certain theoretical positions. For instance, the function of contributing to campus climate is commensurate with the environment impact theories, which suggests that SDS is an integrated function and needs to address contextual as much as individual factors. Here, as much as in the preceding example, role and function are aligned with outcome and theory.

Some concerns stemmed from the contradictory perceptions that some roles are decidedly within SDS, while other roles were not within its scope, resulting in it being referred to as “*fragmented*” and “*unco-ordinated*”. As discussed in the section on scope, even within some institutions, there seemed disagreement around which roles and functions reside within the scope of SDS. This lack of clarity generates tensions and contradictions which might create barriers not only in implementation but also in conceptual clarity for SDS.

In some areas of SDS, there seemed little association between roles and function. For instance, while there was a theoretically sound perception of SDS contributing to a healthy campus climate (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), there was no corresponding function which would enable this. This issue of poor articulation is discussed further when the alignment with university structures and campus integration is debated below.

Basic delivery is challenged when scope, role, and function are not aligned; SDS’s impact and influence on institutional practices and institutional culture is impaired when lack of clarity and poor articulation around role, function, and scope prevails.

The varying, and at times contradictory, interpretations of SDS role, function, and scope, as discussed above, might reflect the confusion that any emerging domain within a

constantly changing education system experiences while it attempts to carve an identity for itself.

7.1.2 Theme 2: SDS Structure and Organisational Integration

In the three institutions which form the site of data collection of this study, SDS is managed along vertical lines, reporting to a vice rector or deputy vice chancellor, who either provides leadership to SDS alone or manages SDS as part of a broader portfolio. SDS is represented at the highest level and is managed along human resource line management systems which supervise co-ordination, performance, and efficiency.

SDS seems to function in somewhat isolated vertical columns and appears somewhat separate from the core business or “*core conversations*” of the institution. The authors of the literature consulted suggest that SDS functions most effectively when integrated and infused into university functioning (Dean, 2006; Hamrick et al., 2002; Kuh et al., 2005; SAACDHE, 2007; Tinto, 1993, 1997, 1998) and hence SDS structure and organisation at the three institutions seem at odds with the literature and current research in SDS, which indicates that SDS should function as an open system at multiple levels and be integrated into the institution (Kuh et al., 1991; Kuh et al., 1994; Komives & Woodard, 2003).

Researchers distinguish between centralised and de-centralised structures, each presenting different challenges and advantages (Burke, 1997; Hamrick et al., 2002; Komives & Woodard, 2003). The flexibility and dynamic responsiveness of the de-centralised operational structure needs to be held in tension with centralised vision and co-ordination (Harper, 1996).

Structure: centralised and de-centralised. Centralised structures are top-down, policy-driven management models with vertical reporting lines, while de-centralised structures are horizontally connected, often in reciprocal ways, to the site of learning in faculty and programmes. The findings suggest that the structures of SDS at the three universities are vertically managed and only some departments have selective informal horizontal relationships with departments in other domains across the university. This vertical and central management is in line with the *Overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* issued by the National Commission on Higher Education (DoE, 1996) that prescribes this particular structure for SDS.

This organisational structure prescribes a centralised position of SDS, with vertical management, and separates SDS from academic senate and derivative structures. This centralised SDS organisational structure is manifest in the institutions and has led to a sense

of isolation and being cut off from the core conversations. The findings suggest that centralisation renders SDS rigid and unresponsive, aloof and cumbersome, and hence, at least in part, responsible for the emergence of de-centralised and faculty-managed SDS services and functions. As universities change into “market-oriented universities” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2008, p. 62) faculties are increasingly managed as “cost centres”. This fuels faculty competitiveness and increases faculty-owned and faculty-driven, that is, de-centralised, SDS structures.

In one institution, particularly, there is an interesting emergence of de-centralisation of SDS structure, parallel with the financial independence of faculties as “cost centres”. The de-centralisation of some SDS structures, that is, the location of accountability for SDS function within faculty and not connected to central SDS vision, arises as the faculties develop clear articulations of their need for SDS-type services and as they need to improve the ‘image’ and ‘success rates’ of their faculty. This is in line with ‘market-orientation’ which forces faculty to focus on deliverables to the neglect of central vision.

The issue of centralisation versus de-centralisation extends beyond the institutional to the national context. There is a tension between central control and alignment with national imperatives over SDS strategy, that is, where SDS is an instrument of the state, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a de-centralised structure with SDS-type services and functions and potentially narrowly defined outcomes of servicing institutional and faculty priorities. This tension is described by Luescher-Mamashela (2008, p. 58), who spoke of the “prestigious national university” as serving national goals and compliant with national steering mechanisms, on the one hand, and the “market-oriented university”, in which SDS is used to deliver on goals which are in line with “the market”, on the other hand.

During the apartheid regime, Cloete et al. (1986) criticised SDS’s compliance with state imperatives. It is with this critique in mind that today’s SDS practitioners need to consciously and intentionally articulate SDS’s position and co-operate with others in organisational structure within the landscape of national imperatives and state-steering, market-oriented higher education, and to manifest its contract with society and its commitment for public good (Kezar, 2004).

Kezar (2004) observed the “disturbing trend” (p. 429) of compromising the commitment between higher education and the collective or public good. She described how higher education is “forgoing its role as a social institution and is functioning increasingly as an industry” (p. 429), focussing increasingly on economic and market-oriented goals. While

these critiques are levelled against higher education in general, SDS is not exempt from such influences.

The responses of the participants suggest that there are cases of “*selective attention*” to international students, referred to as “*cash cows*”. This presents an example of SDS “*pandering to the market*” and delivering services which improve institutional branding and image, that is, are market-oriented, while in potential conflict with SDS ethos or philosophy of equitable access (Kezar, 2004).

Another example to illustrate the trends of SDS’s market-orientation can be drawn from the responses of participants (cited in Chapter 6) alluding to the areas of disability, inclusivity, and transformation. There were some indications from the findings that disability or transformation services are mere “*window dressing*” and provide “*lip-service*”, prominently–yet ineffectively–positioned, reporting at high level but “*isolated*” and “*outside of core business*”. These kinds of disability and transformation services might provide obvious compliance with national policy and an additional bonus of improving university image by making the university “look good” (Burke, 1997, p. 4) but in some instances, were reported to be under-capacitated and ill-positioned, which supported negative perceptions of SDS’s market-orientation.

The findings of this study indicate that SDS at the three institutions is indeed structured as prescribed by the National Commission on Higher Education (DoE, 1996) and is managed along vertical lines. However, the context has changed and, along with it, SDS. Seemingly, various needs and pressures have precipitated the emergence of de-centralised structures within faculties, separate of central management and central vision. The implications need to be consciously managed, and compensatory mechanisms need to be found¹¹¹.

Organisational integration: Locating SDS “where development takes place” or “off-site”. Literature sources reveal that student success is correlated to the integration of student development and student support. Student performance, student involvement, student engagement, student persistence, student development, and student support are intricately involved, and infused academic and co-curricular experiences contribute towards student

¹¹¹ Managing this process might involve a top-down (analysis) and bottom-up (synthesis) approach towards policy development, which culminates in a policy in which visionary goals and reality based implementation are articulated. This is what Cele and Menon (2006) refer to as the “complex interplay between the policies and their implementations” (p. 48).

success (Astin, 1985, 1993, 1996; Kuh, 1995; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 1991, 1994, 2010; Pascarella, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993, 1997, 1998; Weidman, 1989).

SDS integration, viewed not only in management terms but also in terms of SDS operations, scope, role, and function, enables a much closer partnership with constituents across campus and improves the effectiveness of SDS. SDS integration reinforces partnerships with academic departments and achieves an effectiveness which is only possible when student development is integrated and not outside of the learning experience (Astin, 1985, 1993, 1996; Kuh, 1995; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 1991, 1994, 2010; Pascarella, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993, 1997, 1998; Weidman, 1989).

The theme of embedding SDS within the student experience and within the academic life of students emerged as a central concern and focus in this study. Concerns around partnership with academic departments, academics, and the curriculum emerged as central themes. The findings suggest that the sense of being removed from the curriculum and removed from the “*site of learning*”, that is, from the academic experience, and “*off-site*” is a source of frustration as it impairs SDS impact on student success. In at least one university, the centralised SDS structure was reported to be “*remote and unresponsive*” to faculty and academic needs, and perhaps this contributes to faculties “*outsourcing*” and “*privatising*” some SDS services and functions. Faculty-managed and faculty-owned outsourcing of SDS services and functions seems to allow faculties to have immediate control over outcome, to enable flexibility in terms of SDS programming, and to improve independence of potentially bureaucratic central policy. Faculties taking charge of SDS services and functions appear to reduce the perceived inhibiting factors of cumbersome central SDS management. The trend is for faculties to bring SDS into the academic experience, to the classroom, and to “*the site where development takes place*”. These moves occur largely without central vision and central co-ordination.

The findings reveal a sense of frustration in SDS participants with being “*split off*”, “*removed from*” and “*outside of*” the academic endeavour, not only in terms of struggling with access to students, timetable, and curriculum, but also in terms of formal relationships beyond SDS with the academic sector, and also in terms of integrating SDS functions with academic functions and finding alignment between SDS and academic outcomes.

There seems to be a barrier of sorts inhibiting SDS access to “*where development takes place*” that is, in the classroom and during the academic experience. This barrier may be structural, because of SDS functioning “*outside of*” and “*next to*” the academic experience.

Moreover, the barrier might be conceptual: viewing SDS as a competitor for already pressurised student time and student attention may inhibit collaboration with the academic sector (Boughey, 2005, 2010).

A telling theme, isolated, but clearly articulated by a senior SDS staff member (cited in Ch. 6), might illuminate this schism between SDS and academe. The idea that “*people in SDS are not like the academics*” and that “*we don’t deal with these kinds of development things*” and “*academics don’t soil their hands with development stuff*” reveals a kind of essentialist notion of the fundamental difference between ‘support and development’ and ‘academe’, suggesting something sacred, impenetrable, and unassailable in the academic endeavour. As long as academe is perceived in these terms and not seen to be secular and available for negotiation and mutation to meet the heterogeneous “*massification*” of incoming students who live in an ever-changing context, SDS will be viewed as an “*add on*” and “*outside*”, merely supporting the immutable academic endeavour.

Another potential challenge to the integration of SDS into the student experience emerged as the theme of SDS self-perception. The findings suggest that there is a sense of “*self-doubt*” and lack of confident leadership in some areas of SDS, potentially entrapping SDS in a supportive, subsidiary role, rather than taking the lead in the integration and infusion of some SDS functions and roles into the academic experience of the students. Contributing to the potentially “*non-equivalent status*” of SDS might be the low knowledge creation, theory development, and research output of SDS. In terms of scope, and also contractually, SDS is misguidedly, not encouraged to partake in research and professional development, which is part of the currency of higher education.

The theme of SDS integration into the academic life of the institution is complex, and challenges within the academic sector, within the SDS domain, structurally, organisationally, professionally, and in terms of local theory development and research output are identified as contributing to the challenges in formulating collaborative partnerships with shared goals of student success.

7.1.3 Theme 3: SDS Theory, Models and Framework

SDS theory, almost exclusively emerging from the USA, rests on a number of theoretical paradigms, mainly psychological theories of human development and environmental impact theories focussing on systemic issues and the relationship between the student and her/his context (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Weiten, 1998). The psychological human development theories describe ‘typical’ development in terms of

cognitive, social, personality, identity, and other facets of development (Baxter-Magolda, 1992, 1995, 1999; Erikson, 1963, 1968; Gilligan, 1981, 1982; Kohlberg, 1971, 1981; Perry, 1970, 1981; Piaget, 1976a, 1976b; Weiten, 1998).

Environmental impact theories focus on the intersection between the student's personal attributes, the higher education context, the institution, the opportunities for engagement with the academic and co-curricular programme, and the historical and socio-economic context of the institution and the student (Astin, 1985, 1993, 1996; Kuh, 1995; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 1991, 1994, 2010; Pascarella, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993, 1997, 1998; Weidman, 1989).

The findings generated interesting themes, which are discussed under the following headings:

1. Theoretical grounding: divergent and convergent.
2. Theoretical vacuum and the need for local theory development.
3. Shifts in theoretical conceptualisations.

Theoretical grounding: divergent and convergent. As researchers have suggested, SDS scope, role, and function are fundamentally influenced by the theoretical position and conceptual framework which locates SDS within its context (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al., 1991, 1994, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The findings resulting from this study on theoretical grounding revealed role-specific and profession-specific theoretical frameworks; that is, the theoretical grounding was related to the professional background and specific location within SDS. As professional backgrounds within SDS vary greatly, a variety of theories co-exist within the SDS domain.

Some of this diversity in theoretical paradigms contributes towards the healthy tension in SDS work, much like a multi-disciplinary team might benefit from the synergy created by diversity in theoretical thinking. One could speculate that there may be a good fit between the range of theories and the range of diverse issues within and beyond SDS and it might be precisely the rich diversity in theoretical thinking which allows for some “*sense-making*” in SDS.

However, it emerged that some of this theoretical diversity might be irreconcilable and thus create tension around theoretical positions that are constructed on contradictory premises. For instance, the deficit model inherent in medical theories traditionally dominating psychological paradigms might be incompatible with eco-systemic sociological theories. Psychological thinking traditionally focusses on the ‘identified patient’ and absolves the

context of responsibility, whereas eco-systemic theories are built on the premise of the interrelated contextual impact (Weiten, 1998). SDS practice informed by these perhaps polemic positions might present paradoxes which need to be explicitly managed and engaged with.

Theoretical contradictions may be engaged with in dialectic ways, which generate a synthesis, with one paradigm asserting itself as meta-framework. Or, perhaps, dialogic engagement might enable the relativistic co-existence of contradictory theories and enable a flexibility and fluidity of understanding, which perhaps is more appropriate for the current, fluid, higher education context in South Africa.

Either way, it is essential that the myriad of theoretical paradigms and models informing SDS thinking and practice are made explicit and are purposefully engaged with. This need for theoretical contestation, theory development, research generation, and critical engagement emerged as a dominant theme from the research findings. Related to this theme is the emerging critique of SDS as neglecting research outputs (for a myriad of reasons, as discussed earlier on). A pressing need exists to develop local theory and to critically engage with current issues in SDS from a theoretically sound and grounded position.

Theoretical vacuum and the need for local theory development. The findings of this study reveal that there seems a shared perception that South African SDS finds itself in a “*theoretical vacuum*”.

The perceived lack of theoretical grounding may be the result of participants remaining within their professional theoretical homes and not having shifted into a synthesised SDS theory, if there is one.

This lack of familiarity with SDS theory (even if mainly generated in North American contexts) may be related to the lack of professional development in the area of SDS. Many reasons for the relative paucity of professional development for SDS practitioners can be proffered. One might be that SDS has a history in service provision and managing student affairs rather than in broad and integrated student development and meaningful student support, which is more theory dependent than operational functions.

This tension between ‘support staff’ and ‘academic staff’ emerged a number of times in relation to various different themes. The conceptualisation of SDS staff as ‘support’, ‘service’ and ‘administrative’ staff locates SDS in a particular paradigm: subsidiary, perhaps doing menial work, perhaps not the academic kind of staff, “*with a different sort of outlook and very different aims*” to academic staff, who are not selected on grounds of academic

achievement, who “*don't do research*”, and hence occupy a somewhat lesser status, certainly not equivalent.

While these perceptions about SDS may be rather unfortunate, they reveal an important area of SDS inadequacy. Local theory development is in short supply. This deficit leads to borrowing existing theories, predominantly from the USA, and without a local platform to examine these imported theories, the local theoretical body will remain poor. Local theory construction is important in so far as it reflects constructions of local realities, which are essential in order to master local challenges. This relates to the earlier discussed theme of SDS entering the domain of knowledge creation and joining the discourses and currency terms which prevail in higher education. The findings suggest that local theory development, high-level theoretical engagement and exchanges, master's¹¹² and PhD¹¹³ programmes researching issues affecting SDS are widely required.

Possibly, structural barriers exist to enabling local theory development. As one participant said, “*We are always rushing off all over, but these conversations are important. We don't have enough time to allow us to reflect on these issues, the pressure to assist students is just too much. There is no allocated time for research and no expectations around that*”. This entrapment in service provision needs to be managed purposefully in order to create space for reflective practice and theoretical engagement.

The alienation and structural separation between academic and SDS domains may result in part from the perception that SDS does not have the theoretical base which will allow for a conversation between two equally ranked and empowered domains collaborating to contribute to the higher education goals of student success.

Shifts in theoretical conceptualisations. In reviewing the themes which emerged from the findings about theories and models, it seems evident that participants recognise a shift away from the rigid notions and binary categories about student adequacy and deficit towards strengths-based paradigms which accommodate diversity and promote supportive factors. The shift from medico-deficit to social-contextual paradigms and discourses was noted by participants in the study.

¹¹² The University of Kwa-Zulu Natal has an MA in Higher Education with some focus on SDS.

¹¹³ The University of the Western Cape, in partnership with the California State University, Fullerton, USA, is offering a research PhD in Education Leadership, focussing on student affairs issues, registered in the Education Faculty. Four PhD students have registered their research proposal so far. This is the first course of this kind in South Africa.

The move towards student-centred thinking and engaging in flexible provisions was commented on by a number of participants. Included is the notional shift in SDS scope, role, and function, away from narrow definitions of service provision to viewing SDS as providing holistic and comprehensive development, integrated into the academic experience.

Simultaneously, a change in how the student is conceptualised was identified. The discourse revealed complex notions about the student, away from a 'type' of student, perhaps described in monochromatic and binary terms, towards the recognition that, through massification, students are a heterogeneous group and complex beings, with fluid identities and a range of needs and capabilities. This emerging complex and diverse student group, coupled with current SDS thinking in systemic and holistic terms, is at odds with rigid and impenetrable academic practices and cultures. This seems an intractable issue in higher education and potentially challenges the status quo, but needs to be explicitly engaged with.

7.1.4 Theme 4: SDS Relationship beyond Campus

Developing a national framework or a shared platform, such as, for instance, a comprehensive SDS association which could facilitate such a development, seems essential in order to professionalise and develop SDS. This theme was deliberately explored, asking the participants to reflect on their sense of SDS relationships beyond campus.

Beyond campus: Well-intended but fractious. It emerged from this study that the participants saw the beginnings of collaborations with colleagues from other universities, especially around programming and student development. However, a predominant sense was that SDS is isolated, perhaps self-referential, and that the associations representing SDS and its components are fractious, competitive, and not aligned around one mission. This is particularly interesting as national associations might be able to provide a platform for the negotiation of a national framework. Rather than expecting the DHET to interfere in internal matters, as one might view SDS, it is the SDS associations which can provide a platform for developing a response to the needs for a framework, including standards and quality assurance mechanisms. Beginnings are apparent and these need to be strengthened in order to develop and professionalise the domain of SDS.

Beyond campus: standardisations and the risk to institutional autonomy. Standardisations, benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance are essential aspects of SDS professionalisation and SDS maturation within and beyond the institutions. These processes ensure compliance with policy and provide accountability.

However, these processes can only be meaningfully implemented if there is some standardisation across universities.

However, universities have different histories, different socio-cultural realities, and as one participant indicated, “*one shoe does not fit all*”, implying that one formula or one model might not be suitable to every institution across South Africa. In the three universities which were the site of data collection for this study, the institutional character, climate, demographics, history, and resources were different. The question of how much these differences matter and how much such differences remain at content level remains to be explored. Perhaps a conceptual meta-framework needs to be explored.

National, non-elective standards or paradigms might be useful in terms of ensuring theoretical grounding, compliance with national policy, ensuring quality and accountability. Some participants lamented the “*problematic*” lack of SDS accountability and that “*leaving it to the university is not protecting the public*”. Moreover, it was suggested that SDS “*needs a national organising principle*” which would assist SDS and institutional accountability and improve overall delivery.

However, tensions around institutional autonomy emerged. Concerns were raised that a national framework might be too prescriptive and might limit institutional interpretations of national imperatives, fundamentally distancing institutions from the Accra notion of the ‘African University’ which should accept the hegemony of the state (Cloete & Muller, 1998). Disquiet arose around the issue of a national organising principle not accommodating “*contextual differences*” of institutions, which might reduce institutional flexibility. This is analogous to Cloete et al.’s account of SDS as a tool of the state (Cloete et al., 1986, cited in Mandew, 2003), when SDS (much like all higher education) lacked independence and autonomy in the face of apartheid; so too, is there a risk of SDS being a tool of the state, which delivers on national agendas without autonomy, which can enable critical engagement with national imperatives. The assumption of the “benign, and a long-lost, view of the state-university relationship” is outdated, and democratisation has enabled a much more critical relationship (Cloete & Muller, 1998, p. 15). The area of the “instrumentalist vision of the university, that of a developmental university serving the developmental needs and objectives of the national state” (Du Toit, 2007, p. 56) has become contested since the 1990s, and hence SDS within the institutions in South Africa needs to position itself in the development discourse.

Perhaps the need for a collective association and the need for a self-governing organising principle might be combined, rather than anticipating a prescriptive, and potentially restrictive, national organising principle. Where the national governing or advising bodies could be useful is in increasing the pressure on national associations to form a collective and focus on the professionalisation of SDS. Again, the tensions arising from the notions of the instrumentalist university need to be negotiated and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) has been prolific in terms of debating the issue of academic autonomy, which is at the centre of these debates (Du Toit, 2007).

7.1.5 Theme 5: SDS and the Relationship with the DHET

Since the 1990s, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has issued policy documents which have re-shaped higher education dramatically and, hence, also influenced SDS, directly or indirectly (DoE, 1996, 1997, 2001). Higher education has become a governed, co-ordinated, open system, which is responsive to steering mechanisms related to performance and funding.

The participants' perceptions of and relationship with the DHET were deliberately explored and the following themes emerged:

1. Perceptions about the DHET and its policies
2. Expectations of the DHET: Autonomy and the need for a national framework

Perceptions about the DHET and its policies. Most of the participants were familiar with at least some policies, such as the *National plan for higher education* (DoE, 2001a) or the *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996) or the Higher Education Act (DoE, 1997). Most participants were able to link SDS scope, role, and function to the central features of such policies.

The overall perception of the SDS participants was that the DHET has been rather inefficient, low on capacity, and perhaps unclear in guiding the SDS sector and maybe higher education on the whole. The dominant theme was that the DHET issues “unclear” and “conflicting” policies with “gaps” and “ambiguities”, which are at times “idealistic” and at times “lack any hope of implementation” due to “capacity challenges and resource shortages”.

Comments were made that there was little accountability in SDS and few systems in place which monitor and evaluate SDS. Seemingly, some pockets of SDS persist with

impunity in being low functioning. There was a perception that the DHET is ineffectual in responding to the needs for leadership, accountability, and monitoring and evaluation of SDS. While the need for leadership, guidance, and accountability might be justified and legitimate, directing this need at the DHET could be problematic.

Some participants indicated that they experience the policies to give sufficient guidance. One participant stated clearly that she perceives the DHET guidance to be adequate and that the DHET guidance allows for sufficient freedom in institutional responses. The participant clearly expressed the need to “*ensure student success without lowering standards—* and as this participant indicates, it is clear that this is “*impossible without SDS*” contributions.

These two clusters of perceptions of the DHET, one as neglectful and the other as giving sufficient guidance, hint at an interesting gap. It seems the need for leadership, guidance, and accountability might be better directed at the SDS executives and it is there where agency can potentially be mobilised. This issue also emerges in the context of SDS needing to emancipate and needing to take the lead in articulating SDS vision in the institutions.

It is the role of the institutional leadership to interpret the guidance from the DHET, rather than assuming that the DHET is issuing narrow and prescriptive instructions. The directives from the DHET were reported by some to be sufficient and to provide enough cues to allow each institution to interpret the directives to suit the university’s own contexts. The implication for university and institutional autonomy is clear: “*so make do and come up with a plan*”. As indicated earlier, the DHET might be useful in adding pressure to SDS associations to take up this challenge, rather than the DHET itself interfering in internal matters of the institutions. However, guidance is urgently needed; that much is obvious.

Expectations of the DHET: Autonomy and the need for a national framework.

From the findings of this study, it was apparent that the need for an “*organising principle*” and “*broad framework*” was pronounced. However, tension appears in terms of the respect for institutional autonomy and non-interference from the DHET in internal matters, which, at the same, time holds institutions accountable for work that SDS is performing within the institutions. This is what Hall and Symes (2005) referred to as “conditional autonomy”, where the state is involved in issues of effective use of resources, while the institutions retain academic freedom. The issue of ensuring that institutional independence and autonomy is balanced with accountability was raised by Cloete et al. (1986, cited in Mandew, 2003) with regards to the implementation of SDS being similar to the apartheid regime’s control over

SDS and higher education and SDS's complicity with the dominant discourse and political system. It appears important that institutions retain autonomy and maintain a co-operative relationship with the state and that notions of "*steering*" are contextually interpreted (Du Toit, 2007).

SDS associations might be best placed to define a position for SDS within the debate on autonomy and the need for a national organisation principle or framework. While SAACDHE (2007) has published a position paper, this is not sufficient to address the need for a comprehensive framework. Key ingredients in a national framework are the issues of autonomy and national alignment, of it being non-elective and ensuring compliance while also being inclusive and ensuring broad participation. However, it seems that the diverse range of contexts and issues facing SDS within the institutions and beyond, and also the range of institutional configurations, contributes to the challenges in uniting SDS and enabling a shared vision.

The suggestion that SDS related matters are entirely institutionally internal matters raises some challenges around SDS structural inclusion. The inclusion of SDS in the interpretations of the DHET's imperatives is compromised by the exclusion of SDS from key, primarily academic, conversations. This paradox is perhaps one of the reasons for the desire for a national framework and operating principle which would assist SDS in doing its work. The participants' expectations from the DHET perhaps stem from an experience that SDS is excluded from contesting the central issues in the institutions, not only because of SDS's structural exclusion and peripheral positioning but also because SDS practitioners cannot compete with their academic counterparts, as they are excluded from using academic currency and academic discourse.

The theme of institutional interpretation of the DHET's "*organising principle*" and "*broad framework*" is also mirrored in the assertion that the South African higher education institutions are diverse, have different groups of students, structures, cultures, institutional climates, and systems. Perhaps a 'blanket' framework would not be particularly useful and would be difficult to apply, given the uneven and inequitable institutions in South Africa. The theme of participants' resistance to aggregation was clear and seems to make sense given the heterogeneous nature of institutions.

This issue is related to the issue of organisational structures of SDS. The tension between centralised and de-centralised power needs to be negotiated in explicit terms. The centre, that is the university executive, should provide guidance and a broad framework to

contain and monitor the SDS divisions. Simultaneously, enough flexibility and autonomy for the SDS domains to articulate with the institutional culture and institutional requirements must be allowed. This tension requires discussion in greater detail as it emerges as a critical concern from the participants.

7.1.6 Theme 6: Globalisation and Neo-Liberal Influences on SDS

Globalisation as a shift in the international macro context and neo-liberal economic principles and practices within the macro context have affected higher education deeply, not only in terms of content but also in terms of structure and culture--how it relates to society and to the market (Buroway, 2010; Carnoy, 2002; Castells, 2001; King & Douglass, 2007; Kezar, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Sidhu, 2006; Singh et al., 2005).

Neo-liberal fiscal influences permeate and impact on SDS explicitly and also implicitly. Changes in the macro context have affected the discourse about and conceptualisation of students and their relationship to higher education and the SDS's role and function within that. Funding changes have affected SDS and reduced state funding has necessitated, encouraged, and perhaps legitimised market-orientation of SDS.

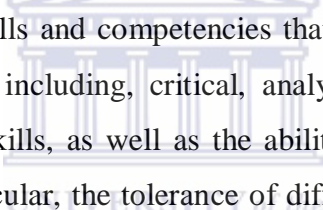
Consumerist discourse: the student as client. The increase in neo-liberal discourse in higher education was evident from the conversations with participants in this study. Words like "*outcome, monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance, accountability, managerialism, marketability, competitive returns, cost centres, efficiency*", and "*reward system*", were used by the participants and all emerged from consumerist frameworks which underpin neo-liberal thinking and practices. Education is increasingly perceived as a commodity, and the student is positioned and constructed as a "client" and "consumer" (Buroway, 2010; Kezar, 2004).

Some of these shifts are useful, especially in terms of accountability (Breneman, 2007; Greenwood, 2009). It is essential that SDS can demonstrate how it contributes towards overall delivery of higher education. However, an exaggerated demand for positivistic demonstration of outcomes is perhaps not ideally matched to SDS work. Furthermore, caution should be exercised in demanding short-term demonstrations of results, which perhaps are not evident in purely positivistic terms.

However, it is crucial that SDS aligns itself explicitly with delivering towards student success and that SDS practitioners find ways of demonstrating how they intend to do this and how they will monitor and evaluate these contributions. Although some attempts have been made, such as the quality assurance document from the SAACDHE (2007), these are elective and seem somewhat narrow in range and, because not widely used, have little real impact.

The trend towards recasting higher education as a commercial commodity heralds a shift towards viewing the student as a client (Kezar, 2004; Buroway, 2010). The notion that the student takes part in higher education as a passive recipient of a service removes the inter-relationship and circularity of collaborative knowledge creation, which is part of the constructivist idea that knowledge is created and relative to its context. The idea of the student as a client positions the student as a passive recipient outside of the knowledge-creation process. This is fundamentally misaligned with higher education's vision, in which knowledge is co-created. Students need to appreciate the relativistic nature of knowledge and need to engage actively in knowledge creation that is relevant to their lives and offers solutions to local problems.

The idea that students are clients who choose the most attractive institution, which offers them the best chance at gainful employment after graduation, is at odds with some of the basic tenets of White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997), which states that higher education needs to develop



graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including, critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and ideas.

(DoE, 1997, p. 3)

Higher education, and especially SDS within higher education, is facing challenges emerging from the tension of, on the one hand, "*pandering to the market*" by positioning itself as an institution which leads to individualised success and panders to "personally-interested thinking" (Bourke & Mechler, 2010, p. 123), while, on the other hand, encouraging students to promote social justice, diversity, and tolerance and to find solutions to the problems which face society as a whole.

SDS divisions need to explicitly negotiate this tension and ensure that social and individual benefits and successes are articulated and aligned with one another. Social and individual development needs to be embedded in an integrated and comprehensive framework that contextualises SDS beyond dichotomous notions of 'market' and 'individual'.

Perhaps a useful illustration of this issue is the conceptual overlap between volunteerism, social engagement, and social responsibility. Volunteering is seen as improving students' CVs, which leads to improved chances of employability. Social engagement and social responsibility embrace the corporate version of improving corporate image in the eyes

of the consumer. While both concepts might be viewed pejoratively, that is, as located in individualised consumerist discourses, both can be used to develop an appreciation for principles of social justice and social wellness. Perhaps it is the skilled navigation of these seemingly irreconcilable positions which is a key challenge for SDS.

Challenges around funding: Reduced institutional provision and market-orientation legitimisation. The language for economics has influenced thinking and practices of funding in higher education and in SDS. The theme of challenges around funding is perhaps a chronic one in more than just the SDS domain in higher education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). SDS is forced to seek private funding because central funding, including government funding, is being reduced. Also, domains are re-conceptualised as cost-centres which need to be financially viable. Hence, SDS shifts in seeking alignment with corporate and private funding sources is inevitable.

Of interest is the alignment of SDS with funders, perhaps to the neglect of non-funded areas, that is, services are no longer subsidised by overall institutional income but are delivered against payment. This is evident in certain ‘scarce skills’ areas, or focus areas, perhaps like the SAICA programmes, which provide funding for special attention and privileges granted to their students, in essence privatising the service. While this is perhaps a standard economic principle, it is problematic in so far as it neglects non-funded students who then struggle to access services which are privatised via the funding structure. This inequitable access to SDS raises concerns such as those articulated by a participant who said that “*we are just servicing those students who can pay for these, that’s really problematic*”.

Many examples illustrate the intrusion of economic and neo-liberal principles into SDS functioning, for instance, the corporate access to students to harvest them as clients, the notion of international students as “*cash cows*”, and the commercialisation of the educational spaces by advertising in academic publications and privatisation of student services.

One of the issues emerging from the commercialisation of SDS is that it shifts the focus of SDS towards appeasing the funder, perhaps to the neglect of the ‘common good’ (Kezar, 2004). SDS’s contract with society to develop graduates who are responsive to and responsible for local and community issues, as articulated in White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997, p. 3) and echoed in the notions underpinning graduate attributes, might become compromised when the focus is on the self-serving and corporate goals of the funders.

Another concern around the neo-liberal shift is the focus away from the ‘centre’ as holding the framework, vision, and meta-position. Financially determined de-centralised

services are less inclined to maintain a focus on shared issues for the common good, but tend to focus on the deliverables of their goals, which might be in contrast to the overall mission of an institution. An example is the emergence of mentoring programmes and leadership programmes in faculties which ostensibly aim at overall student success but at times focus on certain demographics, depending on desirability, and aim to enhance the sponsor's and company's image rather than comply with SDS best practices and ethos.

It is essential that SDS begins to explicitly manage these tensions between the common good, the sponsor's need, the institution, and state and the students' needs. There is much to gain from the relationships with corporate funders, and SDS needs to manage the potential contradictions and maximise the opportunities.

7.1.7 Theme 7: Internationalisation

The theme of internationalisation's impact on SDS was one of the key areas of this study. Internationalisation, also called *cultural globalisation*, is manifest in international student exchange, increased opportunities for cross-border academic collaboration, increased 'overseas' student enrolment in semester-abroad programmes in South African higher education, international internships, and increased theoretical engagements about SDS thinking and practices with international institutions (Collins & Roads, 2008; Kelly, 2009).

Overall, participants spoke about internationalisation in positive terms, emphasising the opportunities and improved exposure to diverse lives. The increase in international influences on student development, perhaps through student exchanges, language development, and cross-cultural development through such places as the Confucius Institutes, and influx of international students with whom to "*rub shoulders*" was viewed positively. This is in line with Kelly's notion of the "knowledge advantage" which she describes as linking internationalisation to the recruitment of the "the brightest minds" in the service of economic advantage of the first-world country (2009, p. 194).

There were some caveats around allowing "*overseas to harvest our talent*" and challenges around "*keeping our students local*", which is perhaps the key concern around internationalisation. In addition, there is a risk of viewing international students as "*cash cows*". As Kelly (2009) pointed out, this is a crisis of ethics, which advantages the first-world country that attracts the "brightest minds" and neglects the development of "global citizens who can respond creatively to the enormous and pressing issues facing human kind" (Kelly, 2009, p. 194).

The issue for SDS is perhaps to maximise the international influences on our student development and find ways to incorporate international students and international practices into SDS, as long as these are in line with SDS principles.

Nussbaum (1997) was vociferous concerning the positive role internationalisation can play in promoting social justice and other value systems which promote equality and human rights, globally.

Gunderson (2005), in reviewing Nussbaum's *Cultivating Humanity* (1997), argued that 'if Nussbaum is right, international study, including study abroad, is at the heart of liberal education and not merely an ornament that contributes to the overall quality of a liberal education' (Gunderson, 2005, p. 246). This seems to also be reflected in the comments by the participants who emphasised the value of including international students in the learning experience and hence supporting the learning and development of local students by infusing an international influence. Kelly (2009, p. 108) alerted researchers to the risk of "the global citizen discourse, which may, at first, appear to be knowledge and skills for social justice, but there is a slippage between education for social responsibility and education for employment". SDS practitioners need to be particularly aware of this risk and devise local programmes to protect against cloaking internationalisation in benevolent terms while the "brightest minds" are being harvested for economic advantage.

The influx of international knowledge has stimulated theoretical engagement in SDS. While there is a risk of importing knowledge systems and ready-made theories uncritically and a suspicion that American SDS colleagues are promoting their thinking in South Africa, for instance, via ACUHO-I or collaborations on PhD programmes, international assistance is, however, generally perceived as beneficial for South African SDS.

SDS developers need to critically engage with the imported theories in order to benefit fully from this international influence. Engagement with imported theory at a local level is the challenge for the internationalising countries, not the questioning of the essential validity of imported theory¹¹⁴. Furthermore, the importance of local theory development needs to be supported by developing SDS research capacity. Although working in an academic context, where research informs thinking, it seems that SDS staff is kept outside of the domain of those who create knowledge. This lack of local research increases the use of ready-made, but primarily USA-based, constructs. The domain of SDS, which is grounded in

¹¹⁴ Cloete and Muller (1998) made this point about policy: It is not the validity of policy itself but how it is interpreted and implemented at a local level, which is the challenge for South Africa.

diverse theories, works on a multi-disciplinary level and is not (yet) guided by a national overarching meta-framework. SDS staff need to reflect on their practices via research, critical thinking, and reflective practice. Local theory development is essential for effective SDS in South Africa.

While the context of knowledge creation seems to exclude SDS from these essential practices, this exclusion is contributing to the paradox that SDS is “*excluded from core conversations*” (cited in Ch. 6) in higher education, perhaps because it is not taken seriously in a domain in which research holds currency and status. SDS is not capacitated in terms of research and that weakens its position across the higher education institutions.

SDS has a large staff cohort. In the three institutions observed for this study, the SDS domains range from 140 to 180 staff at all levels. This is a large group of staff, who are in unique positions to contribute towards the students’ academic experience and to institutional success and an environment and campus climate conducive thereto. It is essential that SDS is not “*thought about in support and admin kind of ways*”, but that it is thought about as a key component of higher education and plays a critical role in contributing towards student success. Unless the work this cohort contributes is theoretically understood and guided, it is a wasted opportunity and a neglected resource.

7.2 Summary and Conclusion to Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

The overall theme gleaned from the responses of the participants in this study was that SDS is in a key position to contribute to student success, defined as graduation rates and the acquisition of graduate attributes. One participant explicitly linked student success with SDS, indicating that universities cannot deliver on the expectations of the DHET without the participation of SDS. Student engagement in out-of-classroom, in-classroom, and co-curricular activities plays a vital role in shaping the academic environment. Participants appeared acutely aware of the significant contribution of SDS. This is an optimistic and promising assertion of SDS’s scope, role, and function within higher education, which requires much contestation, engagement, interpretation, and guidance.

However, there is much scope for improvement for SDS in terms of articulating its scope, role, and function more clearly and explicitly, in terms of asserting its position within the organisational structure of the institution, in terms of theory development and research output, and in terms of improving its collective action through which a shared vision might be developed. It appears essential that SDS develops an epistemological community with shared

constructs and discourses, which acknowledge a pluralist context while asserting a synthesised and clear vision.

The need for a normative framework is pronounced, and despite the tendency to look towards the DHET for a response, it seems wiser to heed Hall and Symes's (2005) assertion about the preservation of institutional autonomy, which was also mentioned by a participant: "*How are we going to do it?*"—thus locating agency within the institutions and within SDS itself.

In this chapter, the key themes emerging from the findings were discussed. The recommendations springing from this chapter are discussed in the following chapter, which also concludes this study.



CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides recommendations, as well as a summary of and conclusion to this study. Recommendations are extensive and focus on viable and realistic possibilities which have the potential to facilitate a process which can promote SDS to a more mature and professional discipline and position SDS as a key contributor to success in higher education.

8.1 Summary of Study

This study is an investigation into the scope, role, and function of SDS within higher education in South Africa. Moreover, it was conducted to explore theoretical underpinnings and frameworks of SDS, SDS integration into the institution and into organisational structures, the relationship between SDS and the policies of the DHET, and influences from the national and international context of SDS.

The higher education system has changed from an elite system to broad “massification”, which addresses issues of equity, access, participation, and relevant skills development at medium and high level in the service of economic and human development in South Africa (DoE, 1997, p. 4). Changes have occurred, not only in terms of governance and institutional mergers but also in terms of notions and discourses in education, teaching, and learning, student development, and student support. The higher education system has become open, responsive, and relevant and knowledge is understood to be relative and context-bound and co-created within the relationship to a heterogeneous group of students who have a range of capabilities and challenge traditional notions of inclusivity and diversity. While the policies urge higher education to engage with indigenous problems, there is also an acknowledgement of the importance of competing at the global level. The SDS domain needs to engage with this pluralist and fluid context and articulate its position within it.

An extensive literature review of national and international literature and research was conducted to locate South African SDS within its national and international context. A

document analysis of five relevant and formative policy documents from the DHET was conducted in order to extract material relevant to student development and support.

Qualitative research methods were employed, and data were collected, using semi-structured interviews with 23 senior SDS staff from three universities in the Western Cape, South Africa. These were transcribed and analysed using grounded theory methods of multiple layer coding. Rich and textured themes emerged.

The findings were extensive and liberal use of quotations (cited in Chapter 6) from the participants substantiate the emerging themes. The key themes that emerged are clustered under the headings of: scope, role and function; theoretical framework; professionalisation; paradigms and alignments; SDS integration into the organisational structure; SDS in relation to the DHET; and SDS within the national and international context of globalisation, with a special focus on neo-liberal influences.

The discussion synthesises the findings and reveals that SDS is facing many challenges which require attention. Some challenges concern the lack of clarity around scope, role, and function, as well as issues around the lack of theoretical grounding and the paucity of local theory development. Challenges also surfaced concerning the integration of SDS into the academic life of the institution. Similar concerns appeared regarding the exclusion of SDS from governance issues. Tensions emerged from discussions on the need for a guiding framework for SDS while preserving institutional autonomy and acknowledging the heterogeneous character of institutions. The findings also suggest that non-elective operational standards and some kind of monitoring and evaluation systems for SDS are required.

Despite these substantial challenges, it appears that SDS is perceived as a key contributor to the shared goal of student success and that there is an expressed commitment to and alignment with national and institutional goals.

8.2 Significant Findings

This utilisation-oriented study will, it is hoped, make significant contributions to the understanding of SDS scope, role, and function within higher education. It illuminates challenges and paradoxes and offers suggestions to enable better articulated contributions to the shared goals of higher education in South Africa. It reveals the pressing need for a guiding framework for SDS and identifies areas which need to be given serious consideration when developing such a framework.

The research questions were as follow:

1. What are the scope, role, and function of SDS at the three universities in the Western Cape?
2. What theoretical framework and underpinnings inform SDS functioning?
3. What is SDS position and structure within the institutions and beyond?
4. What is the DHET policy context within which SDS functions?
5. How is SDS responding to changes in the international context with particular reference to globalisation?

The findings are presented in response to the research questions and in terms of the key themes which emerged. The findings are summarised as follows:

1. SDS represents an indispensable and valuable resource to the institutions in terms of partnering to deliver on the shared goals of higher education.
2. SDS scope, role, and function vary vastly across institutions, are not defined and are not located within a framework.
3. While diverse and eclectic theories guide thinking and practice in SDS, this is a source of confusion and requires clarification and explicit harmonisation with local contexts, while acknowledging global discourses and contexts.
4. SDS structures are not matched to the organisational structures of higher education. An improved match would promote an engagement with current discourses and constructs in higher education, which reflect a shift in the understanding of student engagement, of heterogeneous student demographics, of pluralist epistemologies, and of current pedagogies which impact on the student experience.
5. Perceptions of the relationships with the DHET seem diverse and DHET policies provide little direction for SDS. Some practitioners expect decisive guidance for SDS, while others are apprehensive with regard to aggregations and risks to institutional autonomy, directing their expectations for guidance at institutional executive.

6. Influences from globalisation, especially trends in internationalisation, are appreciated and understood as opportunities, albeit for individual rather than collective benefits. Some participants lamented these trends in self-promotion and referred to the neglect of SDS's and higher education's contract with society.
7. Neo-liberal and market-orientated forces are perceived to have the potential to offer opportunities but also to derail SDS's goals to deliver to the institution, the DHET, and the society. Concerns were raised that SDS might be compelled to deliver on narrow and market-oriented goals.
8. Globalisation has increased internationalisation of higher education, and if this is the "new frontier" (Dalton, 1999, p. 3) for SDS, then SDS needs to locate itself with regard to the issues around the development of students as global citizens responsive to indigenous concerns as well as contributing towards economic advantages which the brightest minds offer.
9. SDS national associations have not yet facilitated an epistemic community around a shared vision and consensus. While significant and potentially wide-reaching initiatives¹¹⁵ have been generated, these require a collective platform to harmonise and synthesis efforts and enable the emergence of marginalised positions.
10. The development of a national framework is of paramount importance for SDS and for higher education. The DHET cannot take responsibility for this, and it seems the national SDS associations are not sufficiently cohesive to mobilise for such a process on their own. A collaboration between the DHET, perhaps under the auspices of the Council on Higher Education as the advisory body to the DHET, and the national associations can move this process forward.

¹¹⁵ These include but are not limited to initiatives of SAASSAP (current attempts to create a national umbrella body), SAACDHE (annual journal and quality assurance documents, as well as suggestions around umbrella bodies), UWC (offers a registered PhD focussed on the area of SDS) and UKZN (offers a registered MA in Higher Education management).

The significance of this study is in its contribution to the research in the South African SDS domain. There is a paucity of research in this area and this study makes a significant contribution to begin to fill some of the identified gaps in understanding scope, role, and function of SDS and determining its positioning relative to higher education. This study helps to illuminate the challenges in attempting to address the identified shortcomings and reveals the pressing need for a framework which can guide SDS within higher education. The complexities of taking agency for such a framework are explored and some potential solutions to navigating the issues arising from framework development in a fractious and fluid domain are offered.

Furthermore, emphasis is placed on SDS immersion and “embeddedness” within the wider context and the findings of the study illuminate how the macro context of globalisation influences SDS in a way that compels SDS to be explicit about its position.

Extensive recommendations on how to advance the development and maturation of this emerging discipline are made as well as recommendations about indispensable local theory development, professionalisation, and capacity building for SDS.

While this research is not entirely a ‘utilisation study’, it is nonetheless hoped that this study will have a ‘knowledge percolation’ effect on institutional and DHET policies which affect SDS scope, role, and function and emerging frameworks. The study and the recommendations emanating from it contribute to the reformulation of discourse and reorientation on perspectives around SDS and offer insights for the “iterative process of decision making” affecting SDS (Bailey, 2010, pp. 7, 11).

The recommendations are developed within the historical-political and social-economic context of 16 years of re-shaping the higher education landscape in South Africa. The landscape is fluid, disparate, dynamic, and complex and the proposed recommendations need to be viewed within this context.

8.3 Recommendations

The recommendations¹¹⁶ are particularly significant because, in a utilisation study, making research applicable and relevant to the participants and the context is of paramount importance to the researcher.

¹¹⁶ Recommendations must be viewed within the fluid and complex context of higher education in South Africa at this historical-political juncture, and are not considered absolute.

Bailey (2010), in a discussion on knowledge production and research utilisation in Africa, highlighted that, for various reasons, African research is generally marginalised by African governments in terms of impacting on institutional and national policy. It is hoped that this study and the recommendations it offers overcome the possible reservations of African institutional and national policy makers¹¹⁷ and will be able to significantly influence the higher education and SDS context.

These recommendations will, it is hoped, precipitate national collective discussions on the issues raised. Recommendations for future research conclude this section.

8.3.1 Familiarity with South African Higher Education Context

It is essential that management in SDS are familiar with the policy context of higher education, not only the policies affecting SDS, but also beyond this, including advisory documents such as the *Monitors* emerging from the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2010). The DHET policies which had the most formative impact on SDS are the *National Commission on Higher Education: An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation* (DoE, 1996) and *White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997). Given that higher education and the national and international contexts have changed dramatically since the mid and late 1990s, when these policies were released, it is of value to review these policies for their suitability to the current institutional, national, and international context.

Issues of institutional autonomy and institutional relationship to centralist steering are vital in considering scope, role, and function of SDS. Issues of increasing specialisation and diversification in South African higher education have an impact on SDS, and SDS management needs to be responsive to the unique university context in which it operates and adjust structural and conceptual issues¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁷ Cloete and Muller (1998, p. 19), cited Abedian (1998), who asserted that “policy management, not policy, becomes the new critical node,” shifting the challenge from policy *per se* to how policy is managed, interpreted, and articulated during implementation. It is hoped that this study contributes to policy development and to the management and interpretation of policy, much in line with the earlier described effect of “knowledge percolation” of research into policy and its application.

¹¹⁸ For instance, SDS might need to alter quite considerably in institutions which have a post-graduate research focus as opposed to institutions which focus on applied or entrepreneurial outputs, as opposed to institutions which are premised on commercial partnerships to promote research and development. This kind of diversification requires SDS to adjust framework, structure, and content in nimble yet principled ways.

Given the national shift towards e- and online-learning at universities, which follows international trends precipitated by MIT's OpenCourseWare Consortium, SDS planners will need to adjust to this medium and will need to translate its operations in order to utilise the increasingly preferred communication technology (Stoltenkamp, 2010). This is an "expansive vision" (Love & Estanek, 2004, p. 125) and combines the creative use of technology with pressures to improve access in line with national imperatives.

8.3.2 Familiarity with International Higher Education Context

It is essential that management in SDS are familiar with international trends, shifts, and policies and other events which occur in the macro context and might have an impact on higher education in general and SDS in specific. An example which illustrates the importance of this recommendation is the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education: Vision and Action in 1998, which culminated in a declaration directly related to areas in SDS (UNESCO, 1998). Another example is the Bologna Process in Europe (Urbanski, 2009), which had implications for internationalisation of South African universities, and the Dearing Report, which initiated performance-related funding in the UK (NCIHE-UK, 1997). Perhaps the Spelling Commission in the USA was one of the most important events in the international SDS landscape. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings' commission's report led to the development of clear accountability measures in Student Affairs in the USA which significantly influenced international SDS (USDE, 2006).

International shifts do not only affect pragmatic issues but also influence notions around pluralistic representations of reality and multiple epistemologies. This emerges from the increase in diversity and in heterogeneous student populations, from the internationalised campus realities impacting on culture and processes, and the national as well as global commitment to massification and transformation. SDS needs to embrace the fluid and pluralist *weltanschauungen* which results from being part of a global international education context¹¹⁹.

8.3.3 South African SDS Collaboration

¹¹⁹ The European Higher Education Area's Bologna Process literature has been prolific in debating pluralist values in a local context, acknowledging global values while remaining indigenous, and identifying the tensions emerging from this (www.ehea.info). Cloete (1998) also raised these issues in his exploration of post-colonial discourses which might assist in moving beyond parochial dualist notions towards pluralism anchored in globalised consciousness.

It is essential that SDS forms close collaborations and associations across the sector. This includes the strengthening of existing associations such as the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP), which might be able to form an umbrella body and can attract other associations under its banner. Other associations, such as the South African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE), focussing on the counselling and development aspect of SDS, which collaborate broadly and add much value to the domain, have also proposed an umbrella body structure (2007). It is crucial that these and other associations find a common vision and develop “advocacy coalitions” (Bailey, 2010, p. 14) which can exert pressure and harness disparate voices to develop a shared platform from which national issues can be discussed. This requires leadership will and resources, and SDS management needs to look internally to how this might be possible. External financial support is unlikely to be offered.

Closer collaborations and more explicit relationships need to be developed with the DHET, perhaps via bodies such as Higher Education South Africa (HESA) or the regional Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) or other vehicles which might engage the DHET in a collective way. The DHET has repeatedly stated that it is willing and motivated to have discussions if only these could be focussed and have clear parameters (Asmal, 2006; Pandor, 2007). SDS and higher education authorities need to take note of the DHET call, and its recognition of SDS, and mobilise themselves to articulate with one voice. The Higher Education Summit in 2010, initiated by the Minister, Blade Nzimande, emphasised that in many universities “student services are fragmented and are not recognised as part of core business” and that “better integration of student support service” needs to be addressed (DHET, 2010, p. 19).

8.3 4 International SDS Collaboration

It is recommended that SDS in South Africa forms formal relations with international associations of SDS¹²⁰, not only with the USA but also with countries in Africa, in order to develop indigenous knowledge which might be more or differently relevant to the South African context, especially with reference to post-colonial nation building and its ramifications. Also, in terms of alignment and framework, the associations in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), such as the European Council for Student Affairs, offer

¹²⁰ This recommendation encourages formal relationships over and above the well-functioning South African - ACUHO-I partnership.

insight into higher education and SDS structural alignments and constellations involving the state. This is a reference to the discussion on historical trajectories of higher education constellations in the Anglo-Saxon and Continental-Roman education models and the post-colonial discourse on the instrumentalist university and its role in the African nationalist movement. This might be an opportunity to move the SDS lens beyond the nation-state towards a globalised sense of ethics and morals (Nussbaum, 1997). The engagements with international associations might facilitate South African SDS's explicit articulation of its position in this regard.

Internationalisation and the dissolution of educational borders will increase dramatically, and SDS needs to harness the influx and refocus to maximise the influence on content and in student and institutional development. The emerging discourse, including ubiquitously used but loosely defined terms such as “global citizenship” need to be deliberately explored in relation to local SDS scope, role, and function.

8.3.5 Structural and Conceptual Integration

This recommendation concerns the structural integration of SDS into the organisational design of the institution. Various models of Student Affairs organisation are explored in project *DEEP* (Manning, Kinzie, Schuh, 2006) which resulted in the book pertinently entitled *One Size Does Not Fit All*, referring to the need for SDS to articulate to its context. SDS seems to have complied with the directive of the DoE (1996), which prescribed a model of SDS governance and which led to a centralised, vertical, and somewhat isolated functioning of SDS. This structure needs to be reviewed in order to ensure structural integration of SDS into the institutional life. A review of central versus de-centralised models needs to assess which model ensures central vision which can permeate the institutional culture and yet enables enough flexibility to respond to faculty needs. Currently, there are SDS-type programmes and initiatives mushrooming across faculties without benefitting from central expertise, experience, co-ordination, and vision.

Moreover, structural integration is important to ensure SDS autonomy in the sense of Moodie's (1996) “representative government”¹²¹. SDS needs to be part of directing itself and influencing the institution in a systemic way, and this is only possible if it forms part of

¹²¹ Graeme Moodie's (1996) definitions of concepts of autonomy are discussed in Chapter 2. According to Moodie (1996, p. 139), autonomy includes not only “scholarly freedom”, and “university autonomy”, but also “academic rule” which refers to “self-government”, “professional self-regulation” and “representative government”.

governing committees and other central structures which govern the institution. This “self-governance” is limited by obvious boundaries, yet refers to notions of self-determination, especially in terms of agency and vision, and SDS needs to take centre stage in this process.

Conceptual notions which inform development and education need to be suited to each other. SDS divisions need to engage the institution in ways that enable the alignment and integration of the currently rather segmented aspects of development. Cognitive, personal-social, and other aspects of development need to harmonise in such a way that underlying assumptions complement each other. Notions of engagement, learning communities, adjustment, and other concepts which are beginning to form part of teaching and learning pedagogies need to be explored to share conceptual interpretations.

The conceptual integration is predicated on the constructivist argument that epistemological access is grounded in the active construction of knowledge (Bernstein, 2000) and the assertion that “cognitive and affective dimensions are related” (King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996, p. 163) and the construction of knowledge is related to the student’s sense of self and self-authorship within wider educational experience. This re-definition of learning as a synergistic and broad process across cognitive, affective, and social domains assists in achieving the educational outcome of higher education¹²². SDS needs to take up a central position in engaging the institutions in exploring these issues.

8.3.6 Epistemic Community Building

This is a particularly generic, recommendation as it might apply to all relatively young disciplines, such as SDS, which must form an identity for themselves in a cross-disciplinary context. However it is fundamental. Building epistemic communities is about collectively developing a conceptual paradigm through which shared interpretations are made but which still remains disciplinary and methodologically pluralist (Adler & Haas, 2009, p. 1).

This recommendation emphasises the need for local theory development, framework development, and generic capacity building within SDS. This is already taking the form of

¹²² This re-definition of learning is nicely expressed in the title of the ACPA and NASPA publication entitled *Learning Reconsidered*, which is premised on the American Student Affairs “philosophical foundation” which understands learning as a “comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development” (Keeling, 2004, p. 2).

PhD and master's programmes¹²³ but also needs to include conference participation, active membership in associations, research, and publications. Capacity building, while a collective issue, is also an individual responsibility, which staff in SDS need to own. Support for capacity building and staff development, especially related to human resource and performance management issues, could be incorporated into line management rather than anticipating national and institutional shifts which are inhibited by structural and organisational practices.

It is imperative that SDS management improve current knowledge and build on, for instance, the impressive beginnings of SAACDHE, which publishes its conference proceedings in an annual journal, in which Mlisa remarked "that nobody should be afraid of conducting research ... and creating academic and professional dialogues" (Mlisa, 2011, p. 96).

SDS's professionalisation is vital and could be built on existing practices which monitor and evaluate, generate quality assurance mechanisms for all areas of SDS¹²⁴, develop epistemic resources, and establish norms which separate those who qualify from those who do not. This process goes hand in hand with various recommendations above and is part of the maturation of this domain.

8.3.7 The Development of a Normative Meta-Framework

SDS needs to develop a normative meta-framework which provides a guide for theoretical and pragmatic issues. The framework should be located within a normative paradigm that accommodates multiple indigenous realities which need to flourish in a global context. The capabilities approach¹²⁵ (Sen, 1984, 1995) and the principles of the ethics of care (Gilligan, 1981, 1982; Nussbaum, 1995, 1997, 2000) seem particularly useful in enabling contextual, constructivist, and narrative thinking in a pluralist context such as South African higher education.

¹²³ As indicated in Chapter 2, the University of the Western Cape offers a PhD in Educational Leadership in collaboration with California State University, Fullerton, and the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal, offers an MA in Higher Education. Both courses aim at SDS capacitation and research generation.

¹²⁴ The SAACDHE tool on quality assurance is only for student development and student counselling and might be expanded to include a broader scope of SDS and more SDS roles and functions.

¹²⁵ The human capabilities approach was originally developed by Amartya Sen (1984, 1995, 2001) and has since been a leading paradigm for policy development around human development issues and was the basis for the United Nations Human Development Index.

It is proposed that bottom-up and top-down framework development models are combined to enable this process to be transformative and action-oriented, while also locating it in a policy, national, and international context.

Representative task teams need to synthesise diverse findings, knowledge, research, and studies into a framework that is at once elastic enough to respond to the diverse higher education landscape, preserve institutional autonomy, and address apprehensions around aggregation, and is also robust enough to withstand pressures for short-term gains and individual political whims.

Kezar's (2004) message on SDS's contract with society should be heeded. History in South Africa has demonstrated the need to be aware of exclusive alignments with state, and hence, SDS too needs to protect itself against being used as a nationalistic tool and triangulate its allegiance with state, institution, and society to promote a culture based on human rights and capabilities.

Another recommendation is to develop a normative framework which can "*hold the centre*" that is, maintain central vision and reduce the random mushrooming of SDS-type offices and services across pockets of higher education. These kinds of de-centralised, usually privatised or corporate-funded, SDS-type support and development initiatives within academic departments or faculties might risk derailment of vision and neglect theory and best-practice principles or might pose high risk to the institution and side-step accountability. However, risks around rigid centralist control, encumbered by bloated bureaucracies, need to be contained with organic and nimble responsiveness at the site of development and learning, that is at faculty level.

Especially given the trend towards university diversification and specialisation, SDS will need to adjust to unique contexts and to align with potentially narrow and specific university missions and visions. This tension between the generic and the central, on the one hand, and the specific and the narrow, on the other, needs to be explicitly negotiated in order to preserve the underlying values and principles of SDS.

The development of a principle- and value-based framework located within a theoretical paradigm¹²⁶ will provide guidance on pragmatic concerns emerging from this study. These include issues around organisational structures, clarity on non-elective standards,

¹²⁶ Various international resources are useful to assist in the development of a South African normative framework. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (Dean, 2006) is a particularly useful resource in this regard.

and self- and peer-review strategies, such as those of the SAACDHE's quality assurance mechanisms.

The proposed 'managerialisms' may appear to suggest a shift towards SDS being managed according to simplistic and generic management principles; however, combined with recommendations on self-governance, this must be seen as an attempt to elevate SDS from an ungoverned and unguided domain to a professional domain, rather than to a 'managed' domain.

South African higher education, much like the Dearing Commission Report in the UK and the Spelling Commission Report in the USA, will demand positivistic demonstrations of impact, and in the context of increasing fiscal austerity and demands for accountability, the framework will need to include paradigms for mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance. SDS will be expected to demonstrate its contribution towards university deliverables in tangible and quantifiable terms.

In essence, SDS needs to develop flexible and eclectic ways of anticipating and responding, while preserving the core of its values and principles.

8.3.8 Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations in this chapter are fairly detailed, and in this way contribute significantly to our knowledge of SDS and its scope, role, and function in higher education. The recommendations focus on SDS immersion into the national and international higher education context, on the inclusion of SDS in the organisational and conceptual debates in the institutions, on the development of an epistemic community, and on a normative meta-framework located in paradigms which accommodate pluralist constructions. The recommendations are related to my current context and knowledge, to the historical-political location of SDS, and to higher education in South Africa. None of the suggestions are absolute, and hence, need to be viewed within these contexts and their related limitations.

One of the participants cogently described the task ahead: "*SDS needs to take agency and just do it*". I want to echo these words and encourage SDS practitioners to use the recommendations generated by this study as a starting point to a national debate culminating in a normative meta-framework.

8.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research focus on areas which were beyond the scope of this study. The recommendations focus on research areas which may contribute towards facilitating the maturation and professionalisation of the domain of SDS and include suggestions of particular interest or assuming a particular methodology which might generate novel and illuminating insights. All recommendations focus on relevance and purpose in terms of user application:

- Exploration of paradigms and framework, their applicability, limitations, risks, and implications
- Theory development: conceptual understandings of SDS work
- Constructions, implicitly and explicitly held, within SDS
- Exploration of component parts and departments of SDS
- Baseline: quantitative and qualitative research establishing baseline functioning in SDS
- Case studies
- Indigenous knowledge construction with focus on theory development and grounded theory principles
- Cross-discipline research and longitudinal designs to explore impact
- Evaluations of programmes
- Explorations of SDS associations
- Perceptions of SDS by staff and students
- Comparative research analysing different SDS structures and models across South African institutions and international models
- Benchmark development.

8.5 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that SDS has huge potential in terms of human resources, experience, and knowledge, and has unique access to students and positional power within institutions to augment higher education's contribution to economic and human development in South Africa.

The “vexing questions” (Mandew, 2003, p. 2) which concern SDS and at once burden and enliven this domain are fundamental questions for higher education and South Africa on the whole. The “stakes are high” (O’Connell, 2011) and we need to mobilise all

efforts to work towards the goals of White Paper 3 which engenders responsiveness to indigenous concerns while acknowledging global contexts. White Paper 3 indicates that “Higher education needs to address the development needs of society ... for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy” (DoE, 1997, p. 3) which supports democratisation of a critical and responsive civil society with a shared commitment to a human rights culture (DoE, 1996). A well-functioning SDS can contribute considerably towards betterment of the higher education system and can assist in the improvement of “the quality of life of all our people” (Asmal, DoE, 2001a) and for SDS, the present is an opportune moment to deliver on this.



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WEBSITES

The following are websites which are referenced in the text and provide useful information:

www.acer.edu.au/sias

www.acuho-i.org

www.aiims.edu

www.apssa.info

www.asa.org.au

www.bnu.edu.cn

www.che.ac.za

www.chet.org.za

www.delhi.gov.ait

www.dest.gov.au

www.direct.gov.de

www.doe.gov.za

www.du.ac.in

www.ecsta.org

www.ehea.info

www.english.pku.edu.cn

www.iasasonline.org

www.jnu.ac.in

www.myacpa.org

www.nasdeve.org.za

www.naspa.org

www.rgu.ac.in

www.saacdhe.org.za

www.saassap.co.za

www.sagra.org.za

www.sagra.org.za

www.sdaindia.org.in

www.strathmore.edu

www.student-affairs.eu

www.sun.ac.za

www.uct.ac.za



www.unigambia.gm

www.unza.zm

www.uohyd.ernet.in

www.uohyd.ernet.in

www.uwc.ac.za

www.acuho-i.org



APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS

Schedule of Questions

Brief Version:

1. What is the scope, role, and function of SDS¹²⁷ at the three universities in the Western Cape?
2. What theoretical grounding informs SDS practices?
3. What is SDS position and structure within the institutions and beyond?
4. What is the policy with regard to the SDS scope, role, and function as described in relevant documents of the DHET?
5. How is SDS responding to changes in the macro context?

Extended Version:

1. Describe your work within the student development and support function of your university. What is it you do that contributes to the goals of the student development and support within your university? Please elaborate on the practice in your work.
2. Describe the overall conceptual framework, or any models or theories which inform your work, SDS ideology and assumptions about students and about higher education, as you understand it. Describe any challenges and gaps you can identify¹²⁸.
3. Describe the overall relationship of the institution and its components, with the Student Development and Support domain at your institution. How does the institution view the Student Development and Support domain, how would you describe its status within the institution, what are the possible and potential alignments, partnerships, areas of intersections or lack thereof, across the institution?

¹²⁷ Student Development and Support, also called Student Affairs in South Africa in some universities, encompasses most of those student development and support functions and services which are non-academic or co-curricular in nature. The domain is loosely defined.

¹²⁸ The point about challenges and gaps applies to all questions implicitly.

4. How would you describe the role of the DHET's policy documents in relation to the Student Development and Support work, its model or framework, its component parts, its practice and theory at your institution?

5. Describe the macro context within which you work, any challenges brought on by globalisation for the student development and support domain. Perhaps elaborate on the impact of internationalisation, or changes in practices or other influences of globalisation on the student development and support domain at SDS at your institution.



APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17, Belville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2246
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 3943
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: birgitschreiber@uwc.ac.za



To participant ...

27 October 2010

Dear ...

Re: Request to participate in my PhD research

I would like to kindly request you to volunteer as a participant in my PhD study.

I am a PhD student at the Education Faculty of the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting this research as part of my dissertation. You are selected as a particularly suitable participant for my research due to your experience in this domain and your position within the University of Stellenbosch.

Title of PhD Thesis

An exploration into the role and function of Student Development and Support Divisions within the changed context of higher education in South Africa, at three Higher Education Institutions in the Western Cape

Purpose of Research

The aim of my research is to explore the role and function of Student Development and Support in three Higher Education Institutions in the Western Cape. More specifically, the research aims to illuminate how Student Development and Support practitioners understand their role and function with regard to the challenges of throughput, retention, and their theoretical consistency and practical impact in contributing to the challenges of higher education.

With this research I aim to contribute to the debate around the roles and functions of Student Development and Support and I hope to contribute to the coherence of a comprehensive model for Student Development and Support services, addressing some of the tension between theory and practice.

Methodology

I am employing Grounded Theory Method which is particularly suitable to my research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I will interview 6 participants from each institution and I have employed ‘maximum variation sampling’ and ‘theoretical sampling’ method to target particular participants. I have identified the potential participants from the group of Deputy Vice Chancellors, Directors of Student Development and Support and Deans of Students.

Procedure

If you agree to be a participant in my research, I will interview you for approximately one hour and record this interview digitally.

You are welcome to review the interview transcripts shortly after the interview and I would like to possibly conduct a second interview to provide an opportunity for you to review the themes if you wish. I would like to incorporate your feedback in my discussion and in this way hope to provide an accurate reflection of the data collected from you as participant.

Participation

I would like to invite you to participate on a free and voluntary basis. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any stage in the process with impunity.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained through our interview will be analysed by myself only. In that way I can assure you of confidentiality. I will encode your name into ‘participant 1’ and in that way will ensure that your identity is not associated with the data extracted from the interview. In this way I can assure you of anonymity.

I will employ the assistance of a peer reviewer who will contribute to the trustworthiness of my content analysis of the interviews. The peer reviewer will review the transcription and hence will not know the identity of the participant, but only the coded name.

I very much appreciate you considering my request.

With appreciation,

Birgit Schreiber

UWC
Cell: 0826637244
Student No: 2971119



APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent Form

I herewith certify, that I, hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the research as proposed by Birgit Schreiber, supervised by Prof Sandy Lazarus.

The information regarding the aim, purpose, methodology and participation in this research was fully explained to me by Birgit Schreiber and I understand the implications of my participation.

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and I have received information to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this research.

I understand that I am free to not answer specific questions during the interview.

I understand that any data and answers to the research question will remain confidential.

I understand that the results of her research will be made available to me and that the process of extracting themes from the data might also involve me.

I understand that I am free to withdraw as a participant at any time with impunity.

I have received a copy of the information contained herein.

Signature of Participant:

Name of Participant:

Address of Participant:

Date:

Signature of Witness:

Name of Witness:

Address of Witness:

Date:



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Researcher Declaration

I declare that I explained the information contained in this document to my participant,
.....(name).

Signature:

Date:

Birgit Schreiber

Education Faculty

University of the Western Cape

Cell: 082 663 7244, birgitdewes@gmail.com

4 Kingston Rd

Rosebank, 7700,

South Africa



APPENDIX D: EXTRACT OF CODING 2

Level 2: Summary of Themes and Frequencies

10 Key Themes

1. Role, function and, scope
2. Theory and practice
3. Framework and ideology
4. Relationship with HEI domain
5. Intra institutional relationships, status and co-operations
6. Alignments and divergences
7. AD
8. DHET
9. Globalisation and internationalisation
10. Other Themes



Key theme (according to Qs)	Subtheme	Participant code	comment	
Role and Function	Scope	Unclear explicit	N1 N1 N2 N3 C2	N1: 'what is their job?', 'mission drift'
	Scope is person/leadership driven	N1 N2 N3 C2		
	SDS beyond their domain (conflation with AD)	N1 N2		N1: 'move beyond into a area that they think is not taken care of' (psych: SDS perception of neglect and compensation for it) mission drift
	Clear	N2		Essence is

					clear to SAACHDE, esp for Counselling and Dev
	Role	Enabler	C3 W1		
		Create conducive environment	N1 N3 C5 C7 W4		
		Care for students, protective, Comfort students	N1 C8		
		Administrative and operational	C2 C7 C8		Fin aid and contracts, eg housing – but shift to infuse this with development (see quote C2)
		Advocate for student needs	C8 C6 W1		
		Watchdog	C8 N3 N2 N4 C5		Alerting exec to issues = feedback, keeping HEI on course re contract with society
		Co-ordinate/structure out of classroom experience	N3 W4		explicit
		Contribute t/w student success	N4 C6 C7 C2 W2 W4 W5		Esp throughput and retention, but not only narrowly defined
		Develop and support from entry to exit	N5 C2 C6 W3 W5		(including enrolment and progression)-key intersection – perhaps not utilised by N5 and C2
		Architect of culture	N7		Beyond res
		Contribute towards nation building	N5 N7 C2 C3 C6 C6 C7 W2 W3 W5 W8	0	N5 quote NB, contribute towards GAs

		Not to teach and affect the learning	N1 C7		(N1 struggles with boundaries/location within SDS at SUN)
		Contribute towards good image	N6		Seen to comply with disability policy (see window dressing) and to react for psych admissions and crisis – seen to care 24/7
	Function	Support student governance, leadership Support leadership training	N1 N3 C2 C3 W2 N2 N3 W2 W3 W4	0	citizenship
		Manage residences	N1 C2 C7 W4		Referred to as ‘living and learning spaces’ –shift in discourse
		Support student societies	C1		
		Support students with disabilities	N2 W1		
		Manage student fin aid	C1 C7		(100 mil at UCT), administratively, not policy work, C1: located in SDS to ensure students are viewed not as number
		Work with developmental issues	N2 C4 W2		Workshops, etc.
		Provide primary health care	C4		
		Career Development	W8		Improved employability (but see NPHE recommendations)

		Address issues of diversity	N4 N7		(But see Soudien commission recommendations)
		Ensure students are prepared for academics through food/shelter	C1 C7		
		Orientation Programme	N2 C2		
		Academic support	N2 N4 C6 W2 W4		For students and staff at SUN- AD part of the Student Affairs – not as staff affairs, facilitate dev of cognitive skills (N4)
		Development opportunities skills development	N4 W8		
		Not only psych issues—explicitly stated	N2 W3 W2		
	HEIs expectation implied	Gate keeper—readmission	N2		
	HEIs expectation explicit	Contribute to student success Contribute towards Gas	N2 N4 C2 W2 W7		Success defined individually (not only for throughput, and HEI alignment)
	SDS linked to academic success		N5 C2		High level recognition

- Shift: explicit articulation of non-psyche focus t/w strength based and development work
- Shift: t/w out of classroom focus (C2)
- See N1 and N2: not to affect learning—but academic support—support outside of ‘learning’, i.e., not in the classroom, but split off/add on
- N7: Contribute towards overall development of graduates – this not only done in classroom and in curriculum – but also in socio-cultural environment – see shifts in residence by N7
- Fin Aid: Tool to affect size and shape of HEI

- Functions: administrative and developmental, (C2)–find complementary ways to have these components work together–NB quote C2: very NB role of SDS but only PASS and on fringes

Key theme (according to Qs) Practice and Theory	Subtheme	Participant code		comment
SDS has no theoretical ‘home’, not theoretically grounded		N1 N3 N3 N4 C3 C4 C8 C8 C8 W3 W7 W8 N7	0	
Theories/models used	Wellness model	N2		
	Astin	N4 W4		Astin and Tinto = environmental theory cluster
	Tinto	C3 W4		Astin and Tinto = environmental theory cluster
	Involvement theory	W4		Astin and Tinto = environmental theory cluster
	Psychotherapeutic approaches	N2 N2 W2 W5		Cognitive short term Analytical brief term dynamic
	Eco-systemic framework	N6		
	Socio-cultural	N1		Bernstein
	Asset based approach	W2 W3		
	Inclusive social model for disability	N6		
	Learning theory	C6		
	Management theory	W6		
	Developmental theory	W2		
	Psycho educational social model	C6		

		Peer mentoring and peer learning	W8		
		'empowerment model'	C3 C6		
		Student centred model	C3 C8		(C8: 'what ever this means') Explore text for cues on meaning
		'living and learning in residences'	W4		
		'holistically'	N5 (in- and out of classroom) N6 (holistic system) C1 (student as whole) W2 (aim of UWC)		Explore text for cues of meaning of 'holistic'
	Meta comments about theory	Theory not important, practice and service delivery NB	C8 C6 C6 W3 W8		(danger of locking into 'one' theory) (SDS driven by project management)
		Conflation of theory and model (terminology)	N2 C3 C6 W3		See C2 quote on economic discourse (most others, see range of terms above)
		Diversity/proliferation of models acknowledged as useful	C3 C6 W2 W5 W7		
		Explicit 'no deficit' 'no discrimination' stance	C3 C6 W3 W7 W2		But see psychotherapeutic
	Scope	Unclear	N1 W3 C2 C5 C8		Explicit vs implied
		Depending on personality	N1 C8 W2 C8 N6		Person driven scope
	Professionalisation	Lack, range of levels of qualification Challenges re development	N1 N1 N7 N7 W3 W4		

		Broad range	C8 (lovely quote) W3 (v similar quote)		Bring theories from diverse professional backgrounds (grounded within that)
	Discrete compartments	Practice and theory is separate and not articulated	N4 C6 W8 C8 W5 W2		
		Beginning to seek theoretical and practical alignment	C6 W7 C8 N5 C5		

- See theory theme: therapeutic by N2 and W5, wellness by N2 and C4, and Astin by N4 = appropriate lens—increasingly macro as level increases
- See N4 and research indicate out-of-classroom is NB but theories mentioned do not reflect that (only Astin and Tinto)
- Opportunity: range of theories and professions can contribute to rich understanding
- Tension: theory and models not aligned with structure (see C3 comment about rigid structure with claims of responsiveness)
- C8: no framework—leads to confusion about who the right person is to do the job
- needs driven practice without reflection and model remains at low level of assisting/reacting (disabilities) without changing status quo (no systemic or institutional reflection or impact)
- diversity of theories and perspectives reflect complexity of work and context (W5)
- Q re systemic—does the system take responsibility for or adjust to the stud. Is there a systemic shared understanding. These theories probs if held by one office.

Key theme (according to Qs) Framework and ideology	Subtheme	Participant code		comment
SDS as tool for social transformation	Public good, citizenship, responsibility,	N1 N3 N5 N5 C2 C2 C2 C2 C3 C5 W2 W3 W4 W6 W8	1	Citizen and responsible citizen – explore differences
	Critq: skills focus (SUN HEQC), needs based	N1 N5		
	Graduate attribute	N5 N5 C2 C2 C2 C3 C6 C6 W2 W3 W4	0	

			W6 W7 W8		
	Benefit driven (consumerist)	Get certificate/2 nd transcript	N7 C2 C3 C2 W4 W7		Certificate to enhance value of volunteer/skills dev - consumerist
		Employability	C3 C3 W2 C2 C2 W8 W8		CV driven, entrepreneurship focus Explore neo-liberal parallels Goals: employment
		Student centered notions emerge from consumerist – also from participatory learner, empowered	W7		
		Corporate citizen	W6		
	Tokenism		C8 W1 N6 N6		Re disability, but also SDS as window dressing (esp from disability units)
	Agenda	Funding and agenda tensions	C4 C2		Psychs funded externally – public and priv tensions – HEI straddle priv and public agenda
	Need driven		W5		
	Institutional leadership driven		W2		
	Name reflects ideology	Affairs to Development, services to support	W3 C8 W8		
	Operational history	Organic and historical reasons for structure and hence ideology	W4 W8 N6 N5 N4		
	National agenda	HEIs throughput and retention	W5 W8 W6		Alignment NB – with national goals and with institutional goals – direct

				line Nationalistic goals - Explore political implications
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- see C2: NB of social good (see his paragraph – but also to put on CV = consumerist – tension)
- See C8: safe spaces = protective, maternal, receptive–not activist role– explore within roles – explore understanding of ‘role’ to the implied ideology
- See C5: spike and wheel model–central and de-centralised tensions– priv and public funding/agenda tensions–‘centre not holding’=neo-lib
- See institutional issues different–reflects different contexts and diff systems (all Ns and all Ws and all Cs)
- For approaches and theories: Com Engagement = differently defined at diff HEIs, eg: com services and pre-professionals as good enough for ‘poor communities’ (W4)
- Eg W3 –emphasis on citizenship but no funding alignment for this (but for entrepreneurship – ‘because students want this’ = consumerist)
- All have keen awareness of nationalistic (?) / the nation’s needs–and SDS ‘s response crucial–intention to respond, but perhaps not co-ordinated
- If DHET gives change in focus–is this enough for SDS to derive its shift in ideology– has this been the case at which HEI
- NB quote from C2 in theme doc

	Key theme (according to Qs) Relationship with HEI status/position/partnerships	Subtheme	Participant code	comment
	Within SDS	no shared understanding of theory	N1 N3 N6 C8	No W
		No shared understanding of goals explicit	N2 N3 C8	Ref to dean and counselling
		Professional and positional power diffs	N2 N3 C2	Dean= position, pyschs=prof, tension if reporting lines

				inverted, PASS staff status (C2)
		Some Clusters internally aligned	N2 C4	Acad and counsel support
		Poor internal alignment	N3 C8	
	Institutional	Systemic understanding	N2 W1	See quote: 'system is responsible', see also N2 reporting to com about systemic issues (pocket of excellence)- SDS in observer status W1 requires system
		Committees (advisory), participatory/operational	N2 N3 C2 C3 C8 Note: N5 C2 W3 at exec level	Advisory to DVC SDS (MF- acad DVC) (N3 and N4) Management team to rector Advisory to readmission N2= see quote: puts SDS in NB position, only 'PASS', fin aid, housing, With/for SRC, 'watchdog'- roles?
		Rel with Academic deans	N3	Shared com advisory to DVC
		Conceptually fragmented student experience	N4 N3 N1 N4 N5 N5 C5 W7	
		Fragmented services within SDS and across	N3 N6	
		Shift towards services as development	C1 C2 W7 N7 N5 C8 C5 W8	See C8 and W1 moving away from

					deficit/medical model
	Cohesive/non std experience	Probs with fragmented exp + segmented, call for shared conversations and collaborations	N5 C2 N5 N7 C3 C4 C5 C6 C8 C8 W2 W4 W7 W8 N5 N6 W2 W7	3	
	Disjuncture btw claims, policies and delivery	Claims of diversity – but failure to make flexible provisions	N6 W7 W2		
	Funding	Private partner	N3 C2 C3 C5 W8		Aim for ‘independence’ – no institutional commitment, seeking reach into priv corporate
	poor of institutional commitment	See lack of funding alignment, support, level of reporting	N3 N6 N6 C4 W2 W7 N3		(perceived)(N B quote from N6) Poor institutional com see lag of appmt of psychs (C4) – hence de-centralised at UCT See SUN leadership insti: ‘not even seed funding’ (N3)
	SRC	SDS conduit for students	N3 C3		SUN dean rep SRC to rector
	Coincidental	Historical and organic reasons for structure (not ideology or needs driven)	N5 N6 C7 C1 C2 C5 C7		Ethos and structure not aligned (N6) Fin aid (student service – hence with SDS, not finance) (focus: get service contracts right,

				eg housing, C2)
	Discourse shift in HE	Economic lang and neo-lib	C2 C3 C5 W6	(NB quote from C2)
	Status	Poor (sidelined)	C2 C3 C8 C5 W2 W7	PASS, see also 'next to curriculum'- no access, or committee, leadership training done a/h, sds as window dressing only, positioned to be ineffective see C8, outside of real debate
		Good (influential and decision making)	N2 C3 C8 W8	Advisory, via SRC, C8 moves towards 'transformation cluster'- high level (but see her comment re tokenism), DVC SDS (no add ons),
	Centralised/de-central	De-central probs	C8 C4 C2 C5 C3 C4	No central coord or accountability, aligned with priv funds, fac powerful and central power erased, different models applied depending on funding and champion, central not responsive to diverse needs to fac, so fac de-centralised
	Viewed as		C5 C8 C4	See C5 quote

	ineffectual		W7		about unresponsive/split off/remote, outside of real debate
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- NB see N2 and N3 re alignment–opposing experiences within one SDS (SUN)
- Which relationships are not there–gaps
- See similarities in institutional commitment and person driven (overlap)
- Status: see C3 positional good, but no real access to time
- NB: explore C4 comment on David Gammon: Deanship on Student Development in Science–how is this understood
- See DVC SDS level and yet no framework in place (HEIs are clearly taking this seriously–yet gaps)

Key theme (according to Qs)	Subtheme	Participant code	Comment
Institutional and HEI tensions within and across domain			
Relationship with other HEIs	no sharing of resources (skills and knowledge)	N2 N6	Lament, opportunity for change
	Begin of collaboration	N2 N3 N7 W2 W4 W6	
Relationship with academic sector	No access via timetable Rigid unyielding timetable	C3 C3 C2 C2 C5 C5 C8 W2 W3 W7	(after hours or vac–split off) Also sports only a/h
	Positional challenges	C8 W6 N6 C2 C5 C8 W7	Poor structural pos ('not positioned to do a good job', C8), outside of crucial conversations,
	Segmented only reactive contact	C8 W5	
	Viewed as functional services	C8 C7	C8: SHAWCO outside of SDS

				at UCT–other UCT SDS mostly functional
		Outside of academic core business	C5 C4 C2 C7 C8 N6 N4 N3 N1 C8 W7 W2 W8 N5 C3 W6	4 Lament and implied re-location and beginnings made to link with core and curriculum, ineffectual due to structural outside, split off and add on = ineffectual, a/h, N5:‘development happens at the moment of learning’
	Structure	messy	C4 N3 N3	Public function funded privately Restructuring confusion
		Not reflecting ethos	C3 N6 W2 W6	Ethos of student centred implies flexibility–but structure at UCT rigid, also N6, W2 Campus not aligned with Mission (staff not delivering on promise – with impunity)
		Accountable to professional bodies	C4	Eg psychs at UCT (protected from institutional agenda, shielded by profession)

- Theme of functional: viewed and self-definition–link to ‘other theme’ of empowerment of SDS and agency is self-determination
- NB see W2 quote in theme doc marked red
- Key: structural location and position outside fac and curr–i.e. central and split off is problematised

Key theme (according to Qs) Alignments and divergences within SDS and within HEI	Subtheme	Participant code	comment
AD and SDS	Tensions	N1	Reporting lines challenges: AD should not report to SDS, is not sharing ideological ground (N1 trapped outside of curr, with rest of SDS)
	Alignments and collaborations possible and valuable	C5 C2 C5 C5 N5 C4 W2 N5	
	Splits	C5 N3	Off campus, centralised, rigid
SDS differences across HEIs	Vision, goals, structures	N2 N5 N7 N3 N6	All N? (difference in essence of HEI – not one structure fits all – see quote by N6)
Scope across		N4 C8	Com Services included? SHA WCO excluded?
Services within SDS	Different emphasis	C3 C8 C5 W1	Focus SRC to the neglect of other services, priorities

KPAs and competencies not articulated		C8	
Range of performance and competences	Challenges	W5 W6 W3	Issues at W – generalised across

- Difficulties aligned with difficulties context and histories—value in diversity (see also above re diverse professions)
- Different emphasis based on vision and funding alignment
- Explore ‘splits’ versus ‘advisory’

Key theme (according to Qs)	Subtheme	Participant code	comment
Academic Support and AD and SDS			
Focus and site of intervention	AD Focus/gaze and site of intervention is/should remain with academics	N1 C5 C5 W7 C7	N1: SDS intrudes on AD space
	AD Focus/gaze and site of intervention is structure of curriculum	C5 C7 C7	C7: SDS not useful in AD space
	Responsibility for support/culture change is with academics – infused in fac	N1 C5 C5 C8 N5 N4 N6 W2 W3 W7	eg ‘disability should be in curriculum’, changes of status quo NB, learning and dev takes place in fac (N5 and N4)
Relationship between SDS and AD	Separation of domains (lack of collaboration)	N1 N1 C5 C5 C5 C7 C7	C7: difference ideologies hence separate, also historical (coincidental?) N1: unable to see good fit
	Collaboration possibilities between SDS and AD	C7 W7 W7 C5 N5 C8 W2 W3 W7 W8	UCT Career located to strengthen curriculum—use for recommendation as not

				discrete Alignment of acad and couns NB (N5)
		Blurred lines between SDS and AD	N1 C5 W7	Shift towards collaboration – ie: not discrete units N1= problematised, Qs re boundaries and scope def
	Support should be at faculty level—on site not split off		C5 N1 N5 N4 N4 W2	See N4 quote

- Interpret this also with context of HEI and where AD located
- Review Hx of AD

Key theme (according to Qs)	Subtheme	Participant code	comment
DHET Relationship to DHET	Unclear, if any	N1 N6 C3 W7	
Knowledge of any policies	No knowledge	N1 W6 W7	
	Knowledge of	N3 N6 N7 C1 W6 W7	
	Familiar with policies	N6 N7 N5 C2 C3 C8 C4 C6 W3 W4 W1	1 C3: 1997 act re SRC, white paper re student council
	Emphasis	C4 C3 W3	SRC, governance, neglect of other areas
	Idealistic unrealistic	N6 C8 W4	Implementation challenges
Competence of and reliance on dept or policies	No trust	N6 C1 C2 C2 C3 C8 C4	C2: lovely quote
Policies	Gaps	N5 N6 C1 C2 C3 C8 C4 C4 W3 W1	Focus SRC, fin aid,
	unclear	N6 C1 C2 C8	

Absence of dept as guide		N5 N6 C2 C3 C8 C4 W4 W1	
Lack of national frame		N6 C1 C2 C3 C8 W2 W4 W1	fin aid: legal directives and admin guides, no development directive 'we need national frame', explicit
Tumultuous, confused	Confusing messages	N5 N6 C2 C3 C8	
No expectations of dept	Ministers focus on student success is sufficient for SDS to take cues	N5 C6	NB position: if familiar with policy-SDS can derive meaning and interpret within its own context NB quote from N5
Dept communication is clear		N5 C6 W3	Use this cue to reflect and change status quo-rather than to look externally for more directives, exec needs to assist UWC to understand meaning/interpret
Sufficient directives	preserve autonomy sufficient for guidance for SRC, explicit	N5 C1 C3 C6 W3	Interpret minister according to own HEI framework and context, university and SDS driven NB (see theme of agency-SDS needs to

					take agency to drive this response) Meaning derived by uct (own interpretation in fin aid)
	implementation	Policy and resources/context not matched	N6 N7 C8 W2 W4 W4 W4 W8		Lofty, idealistic, vague–beyond implementation
	Expectations of DHET	Set standards, QA, benchmark	N7 C5 W2 W3		(QA beyond professional standards)
		Integrity efficiency responsiveness	C2 W2		
		Extend relationship beyond DVCs	C3		Include SDS
		Monitor implementation / HEIs neglect policy with impunity	C8 W2 W2 W3 W4 W6		W2 and W6: exec is neglectful Refer David Solomon middle mngt implementation crisis-universal or specific HEI
		Only broad framework not prescriptive	N5 C6 W3 W8		See level of respondents (N5 and C6)
	SDS to be more active instead of waiting for directives		W2 N6 C6 C2 W8 W6		

- N5 perceives DHET sufficiently providing guidance–she says: up to us to interpret–N5 at high level, perhaps other respondents are requesting guidance from their own leadership (high level) and not necessarily from the DHET–is this generic to middle management or unique to HEI or SDS?
- Explore cues in text: ‘there is no frame’–is that within HEI and beyond, or immediate leadership request?

- See N5 and C6 directing expectations at the institution—not DHET

	Key theme (according to Qs) Globalisation and Internationalisation	Subtheme	Participant code	Comment
	Unable to respond	Respondent feels un knowledgeable	N1 C1	
	Listing of foreign students	International Chinese	N1 N4 C7	
		African continent	N1 N4	
	Internationalisation	Academic trends to go beyond parochial	N1 N4 C3 C7	Learn Mandarin (N4 and C7 celebrate)
		Affecting character of university and structure (de-centralised due to funding) and focus of support	N2 N6 C3 C8 C4 C4 C5 W4 W5	Shift t/w diversity, corporate principles influencing thinking C4: Funding enables de-centralised = shift away from central thinking C4: rich facs and poor facs (Humanities – gets little SDS support) Acuhoi shaping local housing
	Cash cow syndrome	Revenue	N1 C3 W3	China referred to as cash cow N1 C3: quote NB, explicit push for semester abroad as revenue
		Services specially provided	C3 C4	Space for

					international insurances despite space shortage
	Funding	Private funding required to do SDS work	N3 C3		Q: no univ commitment, but univ requirement (SUN Lead inst)
	'overseas' offering SDS functions	SDS has to resist offerings of money to preserve function alignment to HEI and South Africa	N6 C2 C3		Corporate sponsorship for leadership awards, etc = resulting in individualised achievement – notions of success are changed, not african
	Opportunities through open door	Learn and go to overseas – personal improvement	N4 C3 C7 W1 W2 W4 W6 W6		
	EU and USA > African continent	Preference for EU and US models	N4 N5 C4 W3 W5		Existing o/s models can offer much, not enough engagement with Africa, self reflection required
	USA influences welcome	Assist local functioning ACUHO i	N7 W4 C7 W2 W3 W4 W6		C7 Confucius institute , SDS PhD at UWC
	Influence critical	Ideology influenced	C2 C2 C3 C8 C5		C2 Goals shifted: C2 “Americanised individualised achievement”
	Tension with keeping students locally committed	Keep graduates here explicit	C1 C2 C3 C8 C5 W3		
	Keep it local		C7 C6 C5 C2 N6 W3		
	Tension: funding vs agenda	Paradox dilemma Strategies to protect	C2 C3 C2 C8 C3 C5		

		own agenda		
	Individualised success	CV focus, materialistic	C2 C3 C8 C5 W1 W3 W4 W6	
	Students as clients	Brands on campus Access open (viral or e-)	C3 C5 C4	
	Contract with society	Losing sight, neglect of 'township' student	C5 C3 W3	
	Globalisation as personal development	Theoretical position of diversity (within SA and beyond) working in the virtual	C6 C7 W4	Linking it to personal capacity of diversity, global + local application is linked – locally relevant NB while extracting benefits from global thinking to benefit local realities, the self within a range of contexts, focus on conversation, relativity of reality



- Internationalisation understood to increase number of foreign students (see listing)
- Auhoi= perceived helpful, assist where South African Housing has failed
- NB C2 and C3 quotations: new liberal frame shifts funding and agenda–impact of neo-liberal economic discourse and practices
- See C respondents–Afripolitan focus–but EU contact dominant
- Shift towards de-centralised structure esp pronounced at UCT – funding private and centre not responding to fac needs–hence fac driven agenda
- Shift towards faculty identity rather than generic Graduate Attributes (ie EBE students similar to all EBE students, and COM=Com, regardless of which HEI–see Nico Cloete)

- C5: Fac identity due to separate from core and centre (Fac driven SDS, AD and recruitment and marketing)
- See C responses dominate this theme
- PhD at UWC–US thinking central in the PhD–local R but theory from US (the only theory there is)–no local theory development
- Only implied implications for SDS no direct link explicit

Key theme (according to Qs) Other Themes	Subtheme	Participant code	comment
Internal SDS	Need for agency and empowerment in SDS	N1 C2 C6 N5 N5 C6 W3 W5 W6 W2	'no permission required', identification with poor status by SDS, SDS leadership needs to respond- not be asked to, C6 quote NB, raise its on profile, nationally organise, self def of bush college, self esteem probs,
SDS and other alignment	SDS infused into academic experience	N1 C2 N5 N4 C6 W2 W3 W4	
HEIs	GA as core deliverable	N2 C2 N5 W3 C6 W3 W4	Shift in role of HEI (tension with academe)
Residences	Acuhoi and its role in re defining purpose of residences	N3 N4 C6 W2	
Reflective practitioners	R required – reflection and local theory development	N6 C2 C8 C5 C6 C5 C6 W2 W3 W4 W8	Academic connections are important – enabling academic dev in students, R, crit enquiry, critically

				engage with USA (current) theories, (W3: exec refused and denied access to research funds). HEI considers SDS admin function,
	Academic disciplines	Rigid boundaries	C2 C8 C7 C5 C6 C7 W8	<p>Differs for SDS to affect this space</p> <p>Academic protective over own definitions—prevent SDS from entering spaces (R spaces and fac) C5 quote: ‘soil hands’”</p> <p>(C7: discipline has sanctity—while this notion is upheld—curriculum cannot be changed for AD or SDS inclusion). Structural separation (admin vs acad)</p>
	Crisis in edu and throughput	All must rally, SDS needs to include itself, agency NB	C2 C6 W3	Resentment by 40% directed at privileged—SDS needs to engage this—crucial conversations
	Shortage of resources		C8 W4	
	Positioning challenges		C8	



Professional challenges	Range of professional attracted/proliferation , no minimal requirements	C8 N7 C6 C5 W2 W3 W6		SDS needs to professionalise and organise itself, come of age, empower, follow footsteps of AD and T&L, range of profs and level
Counter-culture		C5		Kathy Luckertt: AD challenging academia, now also SDS
Taboos	In loco parentis	C6		
	Low grade staff functioning	W3 W4 W6		Sheltered by EEAct
Middle/senior management malaise /incompetence	Accountability/QA/imp lementation	W2 W6 C8 N6 W3 W4		Unique SDS or HEI or S Africa or Global
Student satisfaction	Issues of needs assessments – middle class and consumerist (edu as fun)	W7		Tension edu fun = compete with satisfaction motivated world yet edu demanding
Historical realities	SUN res culture and hostels	W8		Very real impact of histories – intractable
Employability	See tension with Chapter 4	W8		
consequences	Huge failure rate breeds resentment with HEI/whiteness/authorit y	W8 C2		Long term
Barriers	Assumptions about HEI homogenous (historically and now politically)	W8		But heterogeneous requires flexible provisions

General:

- “You can’t have one model fits everyone. We are different. “(N6 and N5)– assertion of ‘apart’ and fear of aggregation, assertion of individual needs re SDS

and independence and autonomy from DHET, why N only? Comb through C and W for cues.

- Q: if history determined structure—but moved beyond previous regime: problem re still using old structure—perhaps explore with current lens (and needs and context) of HE
- W6: social transformation also aimed at corporate transformation, link to funding partnerships—changes is bidirectional—mutually affecting domain
- W8: “on campus we talk about student development. I think we have made great strides”—recognition and affirming
- Shift in discourse: residence=> l&l spaces, affairs=> sds, services=> support
- Shift in discourse re managerial and corporate structures (see W6 quote)
- Shift in discourse: from leadership to participants (N1)
- Academic discipline—not instrumentalist training or vocational training—but pure academia: GA have not place in it (UCT-C7)—tensions between acad and AD/SDS



APPENDIX E: EXTRACT OF CODING 3

Theme: Theory and Practice

Level 3: Coding key font, colour, underline

Because they (SDS) feel the lectures aren't doing it properly. Or they don't care about certain students. So yes, the scope of Student Development is not clearly defined, it depends on the people who drive it what happens.

Because if they do and this is why we aren't happy, because it is a student and academic support and we feel that we are not part of it. So conceptually we don't feel – I like working with Ludolph because he is a very kind man and he does things and never gets in the way and that is it. I love working for him, but conceptually i am not clear how we fit together (BS quote used for AD).

The other part of it is the lack of professional development of people in our field. I think some of the people who work in teaching and learning cannot write. Cannot anything. It is very embarrassing teaching other students how to write. It is the same for Student Affairs, there are also some challenges with professional development, i mean, what really is the professional home of the Student Affairs staff?

theoretically we are from very different places.

Of our own people. I am talking broadly. If you look at the university sector in SA – how many of the people working in the professional support services – are really not well schooled, because often it is people who are not academics for one reason or another. We need to professionalise ourselves. (BS- see in other theme – need to empower)

Our overall model would be the wellness approach. Obviously within that model – that we do not see wellness as the absence of illness or that illness is necessarily the cause of unwellness. So over arching and we did quite a – not – we did quite an extensive religious study about the whole concept of wellness and it is almost a thesis. It needs to be updated. So that is our model. Within that of course we have different perspectives and approaches towards being scientific practitioners towards – the one that was lacking was to take the wellness model which is an approach – not actually a model - as you know and within that go and look a little bit more about development. It is actually that which started my interest in this project as well. So within the package that you also got – there is a document about student development. But then if you look at the psycho therapeutic approach – there is very strong – within our centre – focus on cognitive, but a move also very much to more short term approaches.

Yes, i don't think it is pretty much a theory based thing. It is – it is different programmes.

That question is continually asked. I think i can say i am not sure it is theoretically based and in theory.

Astin and all these people – that if you look at student development in broad terms we've – I think – for many years we have separated it as if the student experiences – the University experience in compartments,

where as we know that the student experiences it in as a whole and that - and we - we find that so in our first year experience and our first year academy research – its abundantly clear that often – the out of class variables impact more on the students eventual success than what's happening in the classroom

BS: (tension- out of classroom but theories do not reflect that –only Astin IEO)

If I say we look at students holistically and when you ask about things like the theory and so on – or the concept for framework – I would regard that as our conceptual framework. Our approach – that we want to take into account the life cycle of a student at the institution, but we also want to look at the student holistically in terms of his student or her student experience at the institution. In the classroom, out of the class socially, sport etc.

Look I believe a student is part of a holistic system. So my eco systemic sort of framework is the theoretical basis from which I work. Students comes from a family, comes from a specific community, specific school – is coming from a specific context here – has his or her specific problems – where they are psychological, physical or sensory or whatever. So already that is my theoretical basis and then I am driven on a practical level by the inclusive model and the social model that sort of become what the ... on support students with disabilities. Also education policies. They speak about access and diversity and redress – when it comes to students with age – in terms of age and gender and race and disability. So, it is already looking at all of that as a basis from which to push forward that agenda on campus

none of them are trained in student affairs theory. I don't think that we are very well underlying in that. I think that is lacking. We are not professionals and that has to do with our training – we lack a theoretical base which could unite all the diverse influences we've had here in SA.

Basically we would like to think of ourselves as the – we don't want to separate ourselves from the academic because we are the enabler. Like in the housing sector we are the home away from home for the students.

And we – the development side of it – we pay a lot of amount for that, because we see a student as a whole. Not just an academic machine. We see them way beyond their time here when they are playing a big role in the society and the businesses where they are in making their mark in the world. We want them to have that – they must be distinct. They must separate themselves from the other graduates by the way they deal with issues. By how they conduct themselves in the bigger society. So we pay a lot of investment for leadership and the governance issues.

I think Tinto's work has been used and quoted widely.

– in our discussion certainly we have talked about what is our model. Is there one model? Is there different models? We all come at different points in student development. I have even questioned whether yes we deal with – we have a different emphasis than say what the faculties are doing and say what wellness is doing. So even the name student development – is it an appropriate name for –

We have mixed approaches here even within how we work with student leaders and the issue of agency and promoting this whole thing of agency theory and capabilities and how do you empower – it being an empowering model rather than – we are quite conscious. The one thing we are very conscious about – nothing must be deficit and nothing must be discriminatory.

Yes, so the structure is more administrative rules focussed rather than being student centred. A student development model in my mind – should be more flexible and responsive and if you – it should be all over.

Part of it is who are the people, who is the leadership, who is the management? Are we the right people? Do we need to be better skilled? Do we need to be better – not even skilled? It is not having the theory to understand and grounding. So that you have a broader perspective

No, there is no theoretical frame which hold us. I specifically and I don't think there is really at all a theoretical underpinning to what we do in DSA. I think there is this notion of student centeredness – whatever that means. Like the student comes first – which I think means you can't say to the student – I am having my tea come back 15 minutes later. Literally.

I don't think that there is a real theory or a theoretical framework that anyone could point to and say – you know – we subscribe to whatever theory. I don't even know. I wouldn't even know what example to use. I think – you see – in the end really – it is about student service and not what we think about it, but how we concretely deliver services. We are not meant to reflect on our work, but just react.

(BS connect lack of theory with lack of space for developing theory)

I think though that one of the problems that most institutions – is that there is no concept. There is no perception of who to appoint to make these things work. There is not clear framework that guides our work.

That is right. I think people end up in these jobs by accident. That is my point. If you look at peoples employment history you see the random folk we attract, nurses, teachers, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, accountants, some managers and religious folk and mix in a whole lot of good-doers, and you've got Student Affairs. NBNB

(BS professional variety)

I mean in disability it is quite – it is worse probably than in other fields because what happens at a disability unit really – entirely depends on the insight and knowledge and experience of the person who leads that unit.

(BS person driven)

Our domain is guided by many theories, but I would venture to say something that I said when I first was appointed and there was a discussion with a few colleagues from academia. I think they were relieved to hear that I don't choose a particular theory. Theoretical approach. Because it means you put on a certain lens and everybody has to adjust to that lens and there should be enough space – as long as you take the key elements of the theory and that is – the key elements—whether it is the psycho educational social theories – whether it is the learning theories of .. or whatever the case might be, but the key things are that students come with their own experiences and how do you articulate their experiences and the university climate to that. It is again shifting away from the kind of – probably before my time – deficit model of you come as an empty vessel. We teach you, we fill you up. I think there is a great consciousness about the individual character of a student. The social character of a student and also I think of late – probably in the last decade – the focus on citizenship and the issue of learning to live in a civic world – that is underpinned by democratic values. Now of course there is not one form of democracy. There are differences. I won't go into those details, but the democratic values are that we look at collective good. We look at co-existence. We look at inclusivity. We look at space for different cultures and different opinions – so long as they are not whatever.

In terms of theories talking to each other, I think it is definitely an evolving area. I think much has been done of late and that is looking at students' academic results and looking at the kind of psycho social problems and reasons for student attrition and so there are projects in place that are – I would say one is what Ian is leading. Another one is what Edwina is going to be starting this year.

Their work is basically – their projects are prominence by prior research and kind of looking at the need to make sure that students are – they cannot come from the school area and jump straight into university and be left to go. Even with A level or Z levels or whatever the case might be. That they would need different kinds of support – whether that support is about time management. Whether it is about workload. Whether it is about understanding the nature of the academic project and how they align their different academic requirements. Their class room work. Their assignments. Their field work etc. So the theories are – we are not propagating any particular name. but we are taking the values – if there is a – let me say a model that somebody is – a residence system – would favour at this point in time – there are 3 models that they are favouring and they are all to do with actual learning model and which is about things – a student as someone who has their own talents and furthering that. On my self – I think some of my discussions with my colleagues has been about taking – not locking us in into psycho socio models – which is where student affairs evolved from, but rather to look further and look at Back... Gold... [both talking at the same time].... Yes and all of that and to look what I call self authorship in – which is a terminology – which is all it means it is not students writing books, bit it is about them authoring their own voices. So, doing everything to enable them so that they are kind of more confident. Greatly empowered and they can then find their voice to articulate whatever it is they wish to articulate. So one of the things that she speaks of in her theory is that you have got – when you propagate – and it came out of a multi – I think 3 or 4 year research that she had done and she had produced elements of her findings – which I personally find very interesting and I have a last planning workshop.

Discussed one of her papers. Said this is not a new way of doing it. This is just something that channels all the different thoughts. That all of it is towards the student's empowerment. The students speaking for their rights. The students being in charge of their own -

Well run – let us take a practical low key example like housing. I mean transforming residences from being very peculiar to attach things to where there is learning opportunities and very different cultures – there is a huge achievement. That would definitely enhance the learning of a student and therefore their gradueness. I think that has been a dramatic increase.

My wish list is also one that we have access to a sign language interpreter on the staff. They might not be able to assist everybody, but we should have at least one person on the staff and have the financial ability to go and get in for different sessions. Because that is the one disability that we do not accommodate.

(BS=needs driven practice without reflection and model remains at low level of assisting disabilities without changing status quo).

R I think within academic support – I think developmental theory is probably one of the important theories that I look at, because I find when you are looking at an adolescent coming into university – you cannot ignore it. When you think about what informs your interventions – you need to be aware of developmentally where are they at? I think developmental theory for me is really important, but then I also find that when you look at CBT models – there are almost – I would say that I work – I draw from different theories.

There are, Okay, firstly that remember that people that are in Student Development or Student Affairs in South Africa, non of them are trained in that line – we didn't going through, unlike the Americans who specialise and become student, they called Student Affairs. South Africans - we come from Psychology, Social work all sorts of training, teachers and so the founding theories comes from our professions not from the student, it's reading that people like Birgit and the rest of us have done on our own, Birgit is now researching student development, but that is not her training, her training is Psychology. The same with me, my training is social work and so what I can bring into this area is how I understand working with people, in my reading of Student Development – I found some of the theories we did in social psychology because I took psychology up to honours level and it more or less the same theoretical basis, but different emphasis in how – what they pick up – PAG's are there – the concepts of how people understand things, anything to do with theories are young people, because students are assumed to be all young, but you still have to touch on some theories on students who will go work and come back, their life learning – life long learning – from learning kind of theories, you need to settle both, but because we haven't had training in Student Affairs or Student Development – we brought to what we understand – that is a South African Student Development.

my insight into that came about 6 years ago, because of – then I started reading and doing a bit of research myself into all of this. I came across this whole concept the first year experience and then also the living and learning which was relatively entrenched in the US system, in the residence systems already there. When I looked at it I became quite keen about

that, because primarily prior to the 2004 – prior to that – the only real development was probably just what we were doing with your student governance structures in res. You would take them through a little leadership programme and teach them – not teach them, but do some workshops on skills and obviously there was a broader sort of base to cover in the sense of what we were doing. Then when these guys – the students came along with the mentoring programme – that is where we got behind it and put our support into it and then we looked at other opportunities for development – for students on res. Then we came up with the whole S-REP programme.

Well, I think for us it was sort of a reaction from what we were seeing in the literature – like I say from – the literature and also some of my visits abroad to US campus.

There are definite links. If you look at some of the literature – especially like Tinto – no Astin – Astin speaks to this whole sort of involvement theory. He speaks about that involvement theory and there are a number of components he speaks to that and one of them is actually the whole sort of psychological and physiological involvement of that person in his or her community. How he starts to unpack that and then he looks at how the impact of individuals within the community contribute to the well being of the community. Now if that well being creates that environment that is conducive for me – that I can go and sit down and read without you blaring your music or shouting down the corridor – banging doors – then obviously I have a much better chance – if it is not in that environment where people are just totally disrespectful.

(BS theory used to explain our plans and prgms)

analytical perspective

I think the model we use is brief term in therapy, but I think in terms of the way we use theories – I think there is a very strong psycho-dynamic aspect to it.

I think there is almost a minimisation of the extent of the vulnerability of the student population that we deal with. And so when we say we restore function, restore function to what? What was the function to start off with? So for example that is why I think we get so many students come to us when their problems are so severe already and there has been such a lot of fall-out by the time, because there is no sense of self understanding or self monitoring or self awareness. I do feel there is a tension around saying our students are resilient and of course they are resilient.

(BS: healthy tension in range of theory)

I guess it is about having multiple theories and multiple perspective, because it is complex. You cannot have one way – you can't just have a strength based.

management theory

I think it is a sort of new or developing field that people become more and more interested in and you know just as you have had different – very different high education institutions in SA – they have taken very different models of how they do student development – for example the old model is sort of looking at students as – the

psycho pathology of students and psychologising every single problem which to me is not very helpful. I was just having a conversation with James, because he said he is starting a 1st year academy so I said what are you going to do? He said we are going to have a test which shows which students – within the 1st 6 weeks are failing and then we will refer them to counselling if they have mental problems. The disability unit have their eyes tested.

That is the old model. You are very right. That is the deficit model. So whatever didn't fit into mainstream wants to be counselled.

I do not think that student development services generally – in SA and at UWC has any theoretical grounding. I think it is driven more by project management. By programmes and projects and activities. By past evaluation. By trial and error. By experiential learning as we go on. I do not think there is any theory and even to some extent models that actually forms student development practitioners. That is most of the times a pity. There are some components of it that would. Like for example if you take psychological services – that is – that is the nature of their training. There are some components of it, but the components outside that – my feel is that generally it is not. That is – that maybe a lack but there is also possibly good reasons for that.

I must say that as an example of orientation – it is a particular programme at UWC that while originally in the early starting days – it might have been driven by need and want to request. I think at UWC it is well grounded. That is not by accident. It is by design. So much so that the problem has been written up contextualised and modelled on a peer mentoring model. That is the model that the ... orientation programme has been built. That is by design – not by default or by accident. There are many other orientation programmes driven by need and that is why – the orientation programme particularly is held in high esteem by colleagues elsewhere. If more programmes – government programmes could be – could mirror that - it could make a world of difference in the whole student services delivery.

(BS: sds driven by need and some programmes then by design)

From almost a deprivation model that where we come from. Students are a deficit model. These are the needs. This is what they don't have and what can we do to fill that and we don't do that or rather we are in the process of moving away from it towards an asset based approach where you are saying- yes there may still be deficit, but instead of focussing on the deficits and how we can change that we are looking at – what do they have despite the challenges that they face.

If you are developing someone holistically – I think we have to bear in mind what is the university's goal ultimate.

our image and impact relies on individual people, if they don't champion our cause, then nothing will happen. So we depend on champions, systems are not in place.

Okay – Now – what we do enabling the development we have a philosophy in STS, STS is the Student Development and Support – we have a philosophy that we work with, which is a strength based approach which has a theoretical foundation, you can find it either social record, in Psychology depending on which book you are

looking for – what it say is that you look at people in terms of their health, there is nothing wrong of them – the reason why we use this is because in my thinking – because we deal with students with a history of oppression in our country changes are which I have seen as an academic was that some, not most – some students have this victim mentality that someone owes them something and that you should be getting them whatever it is that you owe them. So my – my directing this division is to say within in a strength basis perspective is that nobody owns you anything, actually there is nothing wrong with you – you healthy – you on your way – what we will do, we will enable – enable an environment of development in a two way street kind of development. You come to the development – we will provide the enablers for you, but we can't provide the enablers and force you to come. You as a student also have got to take responsibility in utilising the environment that enables you to develop.

For me that it is based on my understanding of development of human beings, I don't believe that anybody develops anybody, including the fact that when you teach as an academic you provide the capacity for students to develop – it's what they do with that capacity that develops them.

