UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU – NATAL

STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AT MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU).

BY

TATENDA CHINODA

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION – HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION - HIGHER EDUCATION.

DURBAN, RSA

YEAR: 2013

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the University of KwaZulu-Natal for acceptance; a dissertation entitled: *Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Role of Student Affairs at Midlands State University,* submitted by **Tatenda Chinoda** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education – Higher Education.

....

Supervisor(s)

....

Programme / Project Coordinator

....

External Examiner

....

Date

DEDICATION

To all the Saurombe families of the Chinodowenyu tribe, my living, loving and lovely Kerita, sons Tadiwanashe Sydney, the late Tamirirashe Samuel and Malcolm Nyasha.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine what university stakeholders see as the role of the division of student affairs in university education. 20 participants were drawn as follows: 5 students; 5 lecturers; 5 administration and senior management staff; and 5 student affairs staff. Recorded open-ended interviews were used as the data collection instrument in this qualitative research using the interpretive social science as a paradigm. Categorisation and coding of data centred on Blimling's (2001) communities of practice in student affairs. The 'Other' category was added to cater for any other responses which did not fall within the espoused four communities of practice in student affairs by Blimling. Thematic and content analysis was employed in addition to the Lacey and Luff's (2001) stages in the analysis of qualitative data. The study used both the first-order and second-order interpretations in assigning significance. This study revealed that the division of student affairs is perceived as primarily responsible for provision of student services - a non-academic, non-complementary yet supplementary role to the teaching of students in a university. Secondly, student affairs is also perceived as responsible for student development programmes targeting the growth of the 'person' in the student amid concerns, though, that this tends to be haphazard hence risks being branded 'a secondary thing' that requires less human and material resources. In the main, this study recommends that all units of the university operation must collaborate in so far as the total learning and development of a student into a responsible and meaningful citizen is concerned. As faculty does much of this role in the lecture room, so does the division of student affairs outside the classroom. However, the latter is challenged to develop planned scholarship in an outcomes based education (OBE) fashion. Finally, it is also recommended that universities recognise, reward and award students' achievement out of class by any means necessary if not by way of another transcript that reveals the student's learning and development out of class. It has been claimed that more than 90% of what a student learns takes place outside the lecture room.

ACKNOWLDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the following people for their support which went a long way in shaping this thesis: my supervisor, Ruth Searle, for your insights and relentless encouragement; Thandiwe Mkwananzi, Executive Dean of Students, Midlands State University (MSU), for making it possible for me to make MSU my research location; my wife Kerita Chinoda nee Zambezi for all the hope and hype; my 5-year old son Tadiwa for all the kindergarten creative distractions and the Creator of the universe, for creating me with so much potential. I would not end without mentioning the professional editor of my thesis, Hatikanganwi Florence Chikandiwa nee Mapudzi, for spending sleepless nights proof reading this write up.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

Appendix 1: Abbreviations

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Appendix 3: Interview Schedules

Appendix 4: Ethical Certificates

Chapter 1: Research Outline

1.1 Introduction

Research shows that there are conflicting views on the role and value of student affairs in university education (Manning et al, 2006; Dungy & Ellis, 2011). Therefore, there is need to establish the role of the Division of Student Affairs at a university in order to affirm or reaffirm its status. Manning (1996) contends that often there are myths and misconceptions about the role and function of the Division of Student Affairs. Fried and Associates (1995) allege that there are tensions between faculty and student affairs. In the same vein, Dungy and Ellis (2011) claim that these tensions tend to keep members of faculty operating separately from the latter. If there is a low opinion of the role of student affairs, the division is easily disadvantaged in terms of resource allocation. Considering the current higher education climate where there is depleted funding and universities are forced to do more with less, all units are required to be productive and worthwhile. If a university decides and is convinced that it can do without student affairs, what can stop it from outsourcing it or worse still retrench it?

On 31 March 2011, Allie Grasgreen[1] reported that there was a massive dismantling of the student affairs infrastructure at Texas Tech University thereby 'eliminating three top administrative positions and startling others in the profession' (Inside Higher Education, 2011). This is a direct challenge on the role of student affairs. According to that report, the university says it will save $500,000 a year without the senior vice president for enrolment management and student affairs, dean of students and associate vice president for student affairs, and external relations. The online news report said budget was a 'catalyst' to the elimination of the administrative positions. The issue of available funding and the subsequent resource allocation is therefore, key to the ranking and definition of who does what at a university.

If this happened at Texas Tech University, in the high income United States of America, what more could happen in African universities in general and Zimbabwean universities in particular? The latter situations are in dire need of cost saving strategies more than the former example, given their prevailing ailing low-income economies. Midlands State University

---

[1] Student Affairs and Athletics Reporter

(MSU) was established in the year 2000 at the height of Zimbabwe's hyper inflationary economic conditions coupled with government's ill-advised termination of state university education funding.

The government of Zimbabwe, with only one university by 1990, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), stopped its funding of university education barely ten years after independence. This was received by a hurricane of student protests which the division of student affairs was and is always expected to extinguish (Hwami & Kapoor, 2012).

The euphoria of independence in 1980 saw Zimbabwean students generally being supportive of the widely popular government of the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (Zeilig, 2007). The adoption of IMF and the World Bank Structural adjustment reforms at the beginning of the 1990s brought economic challenges to university students as government reduced its funding support (Chikwanha, 2009). It introduced what Share (2009) refers to as capitalist 'education'. Zvobgo, (1999) referred to this move by the government to scrap grants and require students to pay up 50% of their fees as a 'cost-recovery' measure. According to the Daily Mirror (2004), UZ stopped providing catering services in 1998 after the accommodation and catering departments were dissolved. This led to a wave of student protests in 1998 and the subsequent closure of the university in 1999. According to Omari (Mlambo, 2010), academic life and student welfare are inseparable especially in universities requiring full-time attendance. The lives of students outside the classroom cannot be shrugged off just like that. It is not pleasant for professors to teach hungry, angry, haggard fellows in tattered clothing, wearing bathroom sandals, 'some made out of old car tyres' (Mlambo, 2010).

It is against this background at UZ that, a year later, Midlands State University (MSU) was established. Given this economic stress being experienced by public higher education institutions in Zimbabwe and the concomitant student anger, it is essential to explore the role of student affairs in university education.

In the first student affairs guidebook for South Africa by South Africans, published by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in 2003, Mandew contends that the division of student affair

... has to shout loudest to secure some semblance of viability as resources are channelled to what is ostensibly core business (the assumption is that student services are not the core business of the university) (CHET 2003, p. 2.)

Often there are tensions, role confusions and role conflicts between members of faculty and those in the division of student affairs (Fried & Associates, 1995). In the same vein, Dungy (2004 quoted in Dungy & Ellis, 2011) confirms that there are tensions between student affairs and academics that reinforce negative stereotypes and serve to keep members in opposite camps. Therefore, this study hopes to unlock and interrogate some of these tensions, negative stereotypes and challenges posed by the globalisation and capitalisation of higher education.

A university comprises various units, departments, faculties, divisions, schools and committees which primarily focus on the provision of adequate instruction and support for the student. As revealed in Chapter 2, there are many different views on what the role of student affairs should be, especially in this era of reduced funding, the subsequent commodification of higher education and student unrest largely due to national political influence (in the African universities scenario).

Students learn both in-class formally and out-of-class informally. Generally, lecturers (academic staff) are responsible for students' in-class activities while student affairs are responsible for students' out-of-class activities. Students' out-of-class activities, as detailed in Chapter 2, involve students' interaction with real life experiences which provide opportunities for moral, intellectual and physical development which is intended to complement what students are taught in-class (UNESCO, 2002).

This study is an exploration of what selected students, lecturers, student affairs staff and administration staff at Midlands State University (MSU) perceive as the role of the Division of Student Affairs (student affairs) at a university. From my experience as a university student, the role and value of student affairs at a university are often not as clear as the role and value of faculty. While faculty has a transcript and certificate for the student at the end of the course, student affairs, in African universities, has hitherto nothing to show for the students' achievement out of class. Therefore, the definition of the role of student affairs is often shrouded in constraining beliefs, misunderstandings and misconceptions (Fried & Associates, 1995).

Faculty and student affairs appear to exist and operate independently of each other. Fried and Associates (1995) claim that faculty and some senior university administration staff do not fully understand and appreciate the mission of student affairs at a university. According to this source, the net consequence of this lack of understanding is that students get separate, fragmented and sometimes conflicting attention from both faculty and student affairs. When students' experiences in the lecture room fail to relate to what they encounter out-of-class, I think holistic student learning and development are compromised. However, the current developments in universities today and as noted at MSU, indicate that there are frantic efforts, largely initiated by student affairs, to forge meaningful educational partnerships between faculty and student affairs. Latent in this initiative, as alluded to by Astin and Astin (2000), is the longing by student affairs to be recognised as a significant other in the higher education enterprise. In African universities in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, a lot more still needs to be done to enable deliberate meaningful trans-disciplinary and trans-departmental collaboration. This is what Astin and Astin (2000) referred to as faculty – student affairs 'border crossings' which seek to cultivate a 'seamless coat' of learning for the student in university.

In order to explore the extent to which student affairs and faculty relate, this qualitative study drew on interviews with 20 participants chosen through purposive sampling. In this first chapter, the researcher highlights key research questions, the statement of the problem, the focus, purpose and significance of the study. Immediately before the conclusion of this chapter, there is a section on definition of terms and abbreviations. Chapter 2 explores literature related to the study. First is a statement on student affairs terminology. Second is a review of the origin of the field of student affairs in general and in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. This is followed by a critical analysis of conceptions and misconceptions about the field of student affairs. At the end of Chapter 2, the conceptual framework of this study is elucidated. Blimling's (2001) four communities of student affairs practice are adopted to guide this study.

Chapter 3 deals with the research design and methodology. This is a qualitative study which adopted the interpretive social science approach premised on inductive logic. The researcher also draws from his experience as a former MSU student activist and leader from January 2000 to December 2003 as well as student member of the University Council and Senate in 2001 and 2003.

Chapter 4 analyses, synthesises and interprets collected data. Finally, Chapter 5 gives the discussion of the research findings and the conclusion of the study.

1.2 Key Research Questions

The key questions that this study seeks to answer are:

- How is the role of and function of the Division of Student Affairs perceived by key stakeholders at Midlands State University (MSU)? and
- What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of student affairs?

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There is no clear and mutually agreed upon role of student affairs at a university. Some members of the university community seem to under-value the role of student affairs in university education. Thus members of the university community could have reasons as to why they might have a low opinion of the Division of Student Affairs. These reasons have to be elicited and be addressed. Notwithstanding, if this thinking is shared by university decision makers, it negatively affects the Division of Student Affairs in terms of resource allocation. The university administration tends to allocate funds to those departments regarded as core to the performance of the university. Therefore, it is important to understand how the role of student affairs is perceived by different stakeholders who may have a part to play in decision making that affects the development or demise of student affairs.

1.4 Limitations of the Research

The limitations of this study are consistent with those of a qualitative research case. The research findings are not transferable. The sample of 20 MSU participants is not necessarily representative enough to warrant generalisation of the research findings. The research location too may not reflect the situation in other institutions. This however, provides a useful beginning for further studies on the attitudes of members of the university on the role of student affairs. Similarly, the views of 5 members of a selected group cannot be treated as a substantive representation of the views of the entire group. The practice of student affairs staff often hinges on the university top leadership's style and orientation. Therefore, what happens at MSU does not necessarily reflect what might happen at the other ten state universities and the seven private universities in Zimbabwe.

Be that as it may, this study remains useful. While the responses of the selected participants may be particular to these participants, they may broadly reflect the trend on perceptions about the role and function of student affairs which can be significant in the total understanding of the field and its practice. In addition, this study also remains useful in so far as literature on the field of student affairs in Zimbabwe and Africa is concerned.

1.5 Focus and Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on eliciting the perceptions of different members of the university community on the role of student affairs. Five respondents from each of the following groups within the university: students; lecturers; university administration and student affairs staff were interviewed. In all, I did twenty (20) interviews. The narrative of my experience as a former student activist and leader (2000-2003) is also highlighted in order to reveal my subjectivity that could affect me as a researcher.

It is claimed that, more often than not, there are tensions, role confusions and role conflicts between members of faculty and those of student affairs with regard to their discharge of duties. According to Fried and Associates (1995) this creates a 'border' that divides academic education from student development education. Magolda and Magolda (2011) reiterate that there are tensions between student affairs and academics that reinforce negative stereotypes and serve to keep members in opposite camps. Student affairs division needs to be seen as an integral part of the entire university process. Therefore, there is a need to get the views of different members of the MSU community so as to ascertain their prevalence at MSU. Possibly, this study will also help different members of the university conceptualise the role and function of student affairs.

The purpose of this study, thus, is to
- delineate empowering and constraining beliefs, myths and misconceptions about the role of student affairs
- explore what selected members of the university community perceive as the role of student affairs
- conceptualise the dynamics of the role and function of student affairs

- identify areas of dissonance or border tensions between faculty and student affairs and

- generate more literature around the role of student affairs in the search for best practices. This might be small but important literature on student affairs and its role and position in African universities.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Firstly, this study will generate more literature on the field of student affairs in general and in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. Student affairs, as a field of study and discipline, is relatively under-theorised in Zimbabwe. Available literature relating to student affairs in Zimbabwe (Mlambo, 2010; Zeilig, 2008; Hwami & Kapoor, 2012; and Gaidzanwa, 1993) tends to be biased towards student activism and leadership at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) (the only university in Zimbabwe then until the early 90s) in colonial Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and in post-independent Zimbabwe towards formation of a main political opposition movement in 1999, The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) at the behest of student leaders at state universities in Zimbabwe. Evidently, issues of student movements, activism and leadership dominate the small literature in this area. Nevertheless, this available literature provides an informed entry point into this exploration of the role of student affairs at MSU, one of the state universities founded in the year 2000.

Given the background of the effect of the neo-liberal globalisation economic imperatives on higher education in Zimbabwe, the privatisation (out-sourcing) of food and residential services, the drastic cuts by government on university student grants and loans, the concomitant economic meltdown in an unprecedented hyper-inflationary environment and the 'commodified' UZ students' anti-government protests and hooliganism (Mlambo, 2010; Hwami & Kapoor, 2012) that characterised the period immediately before the establishment of MSU, this research is critical in discovering how student affairs practice at MSU might have been shaped by this coarse socio-economic milieu.

Furthermore, this research on the role of student affairs at MSU also draws on my own personal, first-hand university experience as part of the pioneer column of students (the MSU March 2000 in-take) which directly interacted with student affairs. As SRC president, I automatically became a member of the university Senate and Council and also sat in various

university committees and sub-committees. This critical personal window of experience might afford me with a frame of reference which may cultivate a new insight into the dynamics of the role of student affairs.

Finally, this study may also contribute to the debates around the conceptualisation and re-conceptualisation of the role of student affairs in university education. Faculty, university administrators, students and the student affairs community itself would benefit from the findings of this research as they grapple to fully understand and appreciate the value and the dynamics of the role of student affairs.

1.7 Conclusion

This qualitative study is an exploration of the role of student affairs in university education with particular reference to MSU. It draws the views of 20 selected members of MSU (including five students, five lecturers, five university administration members and five student affairs members) in a triangulation of methodology with the my personal narrative of my four-year experience as a student activist at MSU from March 2000 to December 2003.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There is need to review the theoretical grounding in which this study on the role of student affairs in university education is premised. Basically, the terminology associated with student affairs is explained. A reflection on the origin of student affairs and the ancillary significant events and trends is elaborated. This reflection covers the origin of the field of student affairs in general and in South Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The chapter then outlines literature on the role of student affairs covering empowering beliefs, constraining beliefs, myths and misconceptions. At the end of the chapter, the conceptual framework of the study is highlighted. According to Maree (2007), a concept provides a set of general sign posts for researchers in their contact with a field of study. Maxwell (cited in Leshem & Trafford 2007, p.93-105) adds that a concept map is a picture of the territory you want to study, a picture of what you think is going on with the phenomenon you are studying.

2.2 Student Affairs Terminology

There has been and may still be confusion about not only student affairs' mission and goals, but also the terms used to describe it and perhaps what it encompasses. This section seeks to establish basic understanding of the terms associated with the student affairs field. Miller, Winston and Mendenhall (1983) clarify the concept of student affairs by advancing the following understanding that:

- *student affairs or student services* (cited in Mandew, 2003) is used to describe the organisational structure or unit on a campus responsible for the out-of-class education of students
- the title given to the basic administrative unit of student affairs is *division of student affairs* under which we find departments such as housing, sports, catering and student development. These departments can have units under them called *offices*
- the administrative head of the division of student affairs has the title of Dean of Students or, elsewhere, Vice President for Student Affairs

- the terms *student personnel* and *college personnel* (both obsolete terms used to refer to student affairs) are anachronistic terms that are no longer a suitable description, they appear only in quotations

- *student services* are specified activities designed to support the educational mission of an institution, but are not designed to contribute directly to the education of students. Such services entail the processing of students' applications for financial aid, housing and catering, and

- student development is both a theory base and a philosophy for education and student affairs practice. *Student development programmes* describe the activities designed to stimulate self-understanding, and / or to strengthen skills, and / or to expand the knowledge of students.

This clarification is fundamental to the total comprehension of the terminology associated with the field of student affairs. It should be noted that 'unlike in the USA, the field of student services in South Africa [and in Zimbabwe] was yet to evolve to the level of being ... studied for qualification purposes ...' (Mandew, 2003, p.19). This might have been the case of an existing field of practice not written about. Therefore, the importance of the clarification of these terms cannot be overemphasised.

2.3 The Origin of Student Affairs

It is essential to focus on the genesis of the field of student affairs in general as an entry point. Doing so might help illuminate some of the principal roles and function of the field. Rhatigan (cited in Manning et al, 2006, p.4), observes that:

> One could argue that student affairs work actually began the first time a faculty member talked with a homesick student about transition to college, or that student affairs began because presidents [Vice-Chancellors] needed help regulating student behaviour.

In this revelation, the need to provide for the welfare of students and manage their discipline is central to the discovery of the essence of student affairs. This means that practical campus demands, not theoretical ones, necessitated the birth of the student affairs profession. Such

practical campus needs may include financial aid, health services, food, career guidance and residences.

The exact date of birth of the field of student affairs remains a matter of opinion (Brubacher & Rudy, 1958; Rentz & Associates, 1996). Rentz (Rentz & Associates, 1996, p.29) sums up the origin of the debate by postulating that:

> Many contemporary writers agree that the 1st and 2nd decades of the 1900s are generally considered the embryonic period of the student personnel worker or what we know today as student affairs.

The significant events outlined in the subsequent section of this chapter account for why many contemporary writers agree that this period is the incubation stage of the field of student affairs.

Someone has to be responsible for student behaviour and actions on campus. The rise of student activism, hooliganism and student unrest in both colonial and post-independent Zimbabwe is a classic example of the case for student affairs. The notion of fee paying students becomes vital. Such students can be regarded as clients and the 'client is king culture' can be developed by the university in order to retain these students. If a university has a bad reputation in terms of student unrest and hooliganism, prospective new students might shun enrolling at such an institution. There are now more than ten state universities and six private universities in Zimbabwe. Therefore, competition for enrolment among these institutions cannot be ruled out.

Brubacher and Rudy (1958) argue that the concern for the development of a holistic student, which was sometimes associated with the *in loco parentis* doctrine (a paternalistic model), was evident from its practice in the colonial campuses of Harvard, William and Mary, Princeton and Yale in the mid-1600s. This refers to the realisation that a university has an obligation to develop a complete human being in the student in terms of his/her mind, body and character. If this argument is anything to go by, then I think it presupposes that some students graduate from university without having fully developed one of the three domains of personality development namely: the cognitive, the psycho-motor and the affective. This

concept of the holistic development of students is further elaborated in the subsequent sections.

The Student Personnel Point of View (http://www.naspa.org/pubs/resources.cfm) written in 1937 and 1949, further developed the area of student affairs. According to NASPA (http://www.naspa.org) the student development movement - the study of the student as a whole – physical, mental and emotional, was introduced in the 1960s. It affirmed holism as a basic assumption that should guide practice in higher education. This philosophy imposes upon educational institutions an obligation to consider the development and growth of the student as a whole: their intellectual capacity and achievement, their emotional make-up, their physical condition, their social relationships, their vocational aptitudes and skills, their moral and religious values, their economic resources, their aesthetic appreciations and axiology. This underscores the concept of the development of the student as a fully functioning person rather than their intellectual training alone (Astin & Astin: 2000) which has been highlighted in the preceding paragraph.

The Student Personnel Point of View (1949) is a revision of the 1937 chapter (one that was arrived at in 1937) with members debating whether the student affairs field should be secondary or complementary to the academic mission of the institution. Notwithstanding, the shared position was that the 'extra-curriculum' done by students out of the lecture room provided spaces for students to learn a variety of skills as they moved toward personal, economic and social security. The debate still rages on in the imbalance today. The question is on the value of the role of student affairs on the one hand and the value of faculty on the other. Students apply for admission at a university to pursue a programme. This programme is offered by faculty and hence, faculty plays a conspicuous primary role in university education ahead of student affairs. One might argue that student affairs provide an enriching environment for students' learning to take place. This is true in a big sense but the point remains that if we are to juxtapose faculty and student affairs, certainly the faculty accrues more prominence. There are significant events and trends that were to shape the place and role of student affairs in higher education.

2.4 Significant Events and Trends

Since most African universities were modelled after their former colonial masters' higher education systems, it is relevant to explore the significant events and trends that gave birth to student affairs' role and place in these European universities. The issue of student protests and the reaction of university administration are quite similar to the Zimbabwean higher education experience in both the colonial and post-colonial epochs.

Harvard was established in 1636 (Brubacher & Rudy, 1958) using European institutions as models: *pro modo Academarium in Anglia* (according to the manner of universities in England). Similarly, early and subsequent universities in Africa were established according to the manner of universities in Europe. During that era, it is reported and has been noted earlier, colleges took on a parental role (the *in loco parentis* role cited in the preceding paragraph) as humans were felt to be flawed and incapable of innate understanding of the absolute eternal truths without restraint and focus on reason (Rentz & Associates, 1996). Since students were perceived as immature, requiring counsel, supervision, remediation and vocational guidance, spiritual grooming was central to the actualisation of this goal. As such, according to Stan Carpenter (cited in Rentz & Associates, 1996, p.11), faculty invested its resources into training the students' intellect and moderating their base desires – 'helping each individual to actualise the spark of the ideal that is within'. Subsequent events were to change this idealist view of student affairs.

As Rentz (Rentz & Associates, 1996) puts it, the Harvard food riot of 1766 saw several members of faculty and students dying and getting injured. Secularisation of education, industrialisation and mass higher education saw the hitherto predominantly male, private and residential American higher education institutions rethinking their relationship with students. Public colleges like Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia were established. In the findings of Knock (1985), Jefferson had a first abortive attempt to establish a student government. Research reveals that women's admission into higher education brought with it a new concern uniquely about women's affairs. Student populations increased in the 1870s. Black institutions emerged in the North – Cheyney College in 1830, Lincoln College and Wilberforce University were both established in 1836. Students themselves rebelled against

the narrow classical curriculum and the emphasis on piety and discipline. They created debate clubs that evolved into literary societies.

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA), in a document 'The Student Learning Imperative' (http://www.fullerton.edu/sa/saoffice/roleofsa.htm) thus have reason to argue that students benefit from many and varied experiences during their years at a university and that learning and personal development are cumulative, mutually shaping processes that occur over an extended period of time in many different settings. The association maintains that the concepts of learning and personal development are inextricably intertwined and inseparable.

Higher education traditionally has organised its activities into academic affairs (learning, curriculum, classroom, laboratories and cognitive development) and student affairs (co-curriculum, student activities, residential life, affective or personal development). My experience as a former student leader and activist at MSU makes me believe that the better the balance between curriculum (classroom learning) and co-curriculum (out of class student activities), the more students gain.

Notwithstanding, Fried and Associates (1995) highlight that faculty devoted more time to research than teaching and had little concern for students' life out of class. Students initiated their own sports, clubs and intercollegiate contests. Gradually, 'extra-curriculum' scholarship was born. The prefix 'extra' is taken by some to mean 'support' or an afterthought hence diminishing the role of student affairs to something of an option that can be dispensed with. To refer to it as 'co-curriculum' may also bear the undertones of something like an appendage, an add-on. If the call for the student to be developed as a whole is to be treated seriously, then student affairs as a field needs to demonstrate that it is actually embedded in the 'core-curriculum' of a student at university. Yet of-course we know that in order for an individual to learn effectively, they have to be healthy both physically and psychologically. Therefore, sports and having a safe and secure environment where there is enough of the right kind of food is important.

However, student affairs is yet to be reconsidered and re-conceptualised as a core-curriculum considering the following viewpoint. Robert L. Palmer, then Vice President for Student Affairs, California State University (CSUF),

14

(http://www.fullerton.edu/sa/saoffice/roleofsa.htm) admits that the academic mission of CSUF is preeminent because colleges and universities organise their primary activities around the academic experience: the curriculum, the library, the classroom, the studio and the laboratory. He warns that the work of student affairs, a partner in the educational enterprise, should not compete with, and cannot substitute for, that of academic affairs. The implied role of student affairs in this view is one of a partner in the higher educational enterprise.

According to Gaston-Gayless et al (NASPA, 2005) the 1960s were years of turbulence and riots accompanying student activism and the Civil Rights Movement in America. Student affairs staff found themselves in a buffer situation, torn between the need to support the students and their development and the need to comply with institutional requirements. Student affairs professionals took on roles such as educator, advocate, mediator, initiator and change agents in order to effectively resolve issues that arose on their campuses. This concurs with an earlier noted point that student affairs developed as a result of campus need to facilitate student diversity and student movements. Thus, student affairs deans evolved in the 19th Century as a 'pain-killer' approach (Hartley, 2001). Nichols (1990) states that many student affairs staff were put in precarious positions, torn between the demand by college and university leadership to mete out discipline to students who fail to follow the prescribed campus rules and the desire to support the students and develop their critical and social conscience.

Be that as it may, the drive to 'humanise' higher education intensified. Tomorrow's Higher Education (T.H.E.) Project was launched in 1968 (http://www.fullerton.edu/sa/saoffice/roleofsa.htm) by the ACPA to work toward the re-conceptualisation and systematic reconstruction of the fundamental conceptions of the specific role, functions, methods and procedures that would characterise student affairs' future practice (Brown, 1972). The 1987 NASPA statement recommends a re-emphasis of the primacy of learning as the cardinal value of higher education. The employment of the learning theory, conjointly with the student development theory, was to be an essential tool in planning experiences and programmes that would advance the learning process (Rentz & Associates, 1996). Eventually, the 1993 ACPA conference, under the presidency of Schroeder, convened a group of leaders in higher education to consider how the student

affairs field might enhance their role relative to student learning and personal development. According to ACPA (1995) this conference cultivated the genesis of the *Student Learning Imperative* project. This project espoused five characteristics that student affairs divisions committed to student learning and development should exhibit. These characteristics are explored in the subsequent section on student affairs role and functions.

The aforementioned significant events and trends bring us to the current polemical dispensation of student affairs practice where:

- focus of professional practice is argued to have moved from being reactive to being proactive
- there is shift from orientation of student services to student development
- undergraduate years are perceived as a developmental sequence rather than four discrete years
- students are no longer perceived as adolescents but young adults still experiencing a critical period of growth and development and thus need more liberal institutional policies
- students are given seats on governing boards like university council and senate and
- student advisory committees are put up in many areas of the campus.

This shift in student affairs role and functions is confirmed by Ralph Berdie, ACPA President, in his Presidential Address (1966, p. 211-212) in the answer to the question 'What is student personnel work' in which he postulates that:

> The primary purpose [in student affairs] is to humanise higher education, to help students to respond to others and themselves as human beings [not wild animals] and to help them formulate principles for themselves as to how people should relate to one another and to aid to behave accordingly...

These sentiments are not without their weaknesses but, nevertheless, they provide a blueprint on the on-going concerns about student affairs as well as its philosophical and professional

heritage. This thinking also highlights what employers often say they want to find in an employee.

Furthermore, the Dean of Students' leadership qualities determine the extent to which student affairs roles manifest. Dungy and Ellis (2011, p.3) propound seven competencies of exceptionally effective student affairs leadership. They argue that if these competencies are lacking then tensions between student affairs and faculty (academic affairs) abound. These competencies are:

- ❖ responsibility and accountability
- ❖ learning from personal and professional experiences
- ❖ the power of knowledge
- ❖ listening and communicating
- ❖ functioning in a large, networked universe
- ❖ collaborations, partnerships, and relationships; and innovation and creativity.

Having outlined the genesis of the field of student affairs in America, there is need to refocus on the origin of the same field in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the latter being the context of the study while the former gives a regional perspective. This is regardless of the fact that this field of study is relatively under-theorised in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular.

2.5 The Origin of Student Affairs in South African Universities

The origin of the field of student affairs in South Africa is traced back to the origin of the university itself. According to Mandew (2003), universities and technikons in South Africa took after the British model. South Africa, just like Zimbabwe, is a former British colony. The University of Cape Town (UCT) was the first to be established in sub-Saharan Africa in 1829 (ibid). This gives us an opportunity to trace the roots of student affairs not only in South Africa but in sub-Saharan Africa.

Scott (2000) maintains that although the emergence of the oldest higher education institution, the university, can be traced back to the High Middle Ages (between the years 400 and 1500), in terms of social development, it was only in the second half of the 19th Century that universities began to admit women. Surely, older institutions existed in Asia and Africa

before this period indicated by the source. However, I think emphasis is on the social development of universities – gender and welfare issues. For example, UCT, which was founded in 1829 and developed as a fully-fledged university between 1880 and 1900, only began to admit women in 1887 (Mandew, 2003). It is this social development of students that implies the need for student affairs personnel. The student affairs services offered then included accommodation, catering, sports and recreation. Students' Loan Fund (financial aid) was set up in 1923 albeit on separate development (apartheid) application regime (ibid).

On student governance, UCT's first Student Representative Council (SRC) was set up in 1906 and the first students' centre building, Hiddingh Hall, was built in 1911 (Mandew, 2003). The role of the SRC was described as advisory. It also represented students' interests in all situations and had authority over clubs and societies.

Without choice, student affairs officers found themselves performing the role of gatekeepers of the then politics of dominance and resistance. Even if the then segregationist policies of apartheid were conceptualised and engineered at macro-political level, it was at the student affairs level that these policies had to be implemented in respect of student recruitment, enrolment planning, and student admissions (Mandew, 2003). On the other hand, apart from the labour movement, it was from student affairs that the most vociferous and militant resistance to apartheid and its policies emerged emanating from students: the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS); the South African Students' Organization (SASO); and the South African National Students' Congress (SANSCO) formerly the Azanian Students' Organization (AZASO) (Badat, 1999). As highlighted in subsequent chapters, the afore-cited scenario puts student affairs officers in a dilemma: between what Mandew (2003) describes as 'speaking for' / 'with' the students (advocacy for student issues and rights) and 'speaking against' students (a constructive challenge of students' actions and behaviours). Consequently, maintaining neutrality becomes a tall order for student affairs professionals (ibid).

2.6 Origin of Student Affairs in Universities in Zimbabwe

There are more than fifteen fully-fledged universities in Zimbabwe, nine of which are state universities under which MSU falls. As chronicled by Gaidzanwa (1993), the history of student affairs in universities in Zimbabwe is in the history of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), which was established in 1955 as the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland under the Royal Charter. It was then the only university in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. It became the University College of Rhodesia in 1966 and evolved into the University of Rhodesia in 1971. After independence in 1980, it was re-named the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). It was a residential university with vibrant faculty based clubs and societies. As it grew in terms of mixed student populations (including the admission of former freedom fighters in the 80s) there were emerging related challenges for student affairs.

Student political protests before and after independence reflected the dynamics of the student affairs role which can be regarded as a 'fire fighter' role. Gaidzanwa (1993) further argues that, as from the early 90s, issues to do with increasing enrolment over limited accommodation and food against dwindling government-student support and harsh macro-economic milieu fuelled student-government confrontations both on and off campus. This consolidated the need for student affairs to keep students' tempers cool and constrain them against protests and hooliganism.

Two chosen recorded cases of student unrest cited below help emphasise and ignite the conceptual background for which the role of student affairs in Zimbabwe's universities is grounded:

> In September 1991, drunken students disrupted the Miss University of Zimbabwe beauty contest in the Great Hall and caused $8,000 worth of damage to university property in the process. Their reason for doing so was an objection to the $15.00 entry fee … they alleged was [prohibitive]… Gaidzanwa (1993, p.28), and

> The antagonism between students and government erupted yet again in May 1992 when students tried to march into town, demanding a 45% increase in their grants, a repeal of the University Amendment Act, a trimming of cabinet posts, and the resignation of the Ministers of Lands, of Trade and Commerce, of Home Affairs, of National Affairs and of National Security (ibid p. 28).

These two selected cases are among the many cases of student protests in Zimbabwean universities that reveal the critical focus of student affairs role thereto. From the reasons cited as triggers of the protests and hooliganism (by the drunken rowdy group of students in the former case) the need for adequate financial aid by students is a direct critical requirement in order for students to sustain their studies. However, the national political environment, though external to the students' bread and butter issues, is associated with selected groups of student activists who are sponsored by interested external political activists to reflect the intended national political change paradigm. According to Leo Zeilig (2008), student activists have played a vital part in the popular movement against the ruling party in Zimbabwe since 1995 and the subsequent development of the MDC in 1999. The case was the same during colonial Zimbabwe when student activists demonstrated in favour of the liberation struggle.

Another related and critical development was the privatisation of the catering and accommodation services at UZ. According to the *Daily Mirror,* 2004, UZ stopped providing catering services in 1998 after the accommodation and catering departments were dissolved, meaning that students then depended on private caterers. This led to a wave of protests in 1998, and the subsequent temporary closure of UZ.

While afore-stated indications of student unrest at UZ might casually appear unrelated to MSU, the case study, this is a significant background against which MSU was to be established in 2000. It serves as the barometer of references and experiences that were to be faced at MSU. This background may in a way influence the conception of the role and function of student affairs.

2.7 The Establishment of MSU

The idea of a University in the Midlands, according to the university's online website, www.msu.ac.zw and my understanding as a former founding student leader and activist, dates back to the foundation of the National University of Science and Technology when Gweru, which was identified as a possible site for a second university campus in the country, lost its bid to Bulawayo. Two other opportunities to host institutions of higher learning (the Open University and the Catholic University) were also missed by the Midlands Province, when the two universities were founded in Harare instead. It was in the midst of such disappointments

that two initiatives gradually converged to give birth to what has since become the Midlands State University. The President R.G Mugabe, on the nudging of the Provincial political leadership of the Midlands, accepted to the idea of a national university being built in the Midlands. This coincided with the then Ministry of Higher Education and Technology's policy of devolution, which was aimed at expanding access to higher education by converting teachers and technical colleges into degree granting institutions. It was through the process of devolution that, beginning in 1998, Gweru Teachers College started to enroll students studying for the Bachelor of Commerce with Education and the Bachelor of Science with Education degrees offered by the University of Zimbabwe.

In the meantime, although the devolution policy inaugurated an irrevocable process of bringing university education to the Midlands, there was a strong feeling, especially in the province, that what was being done did not quite amount to the President's promise of a fully-fledged state university in the province. Responding to these feelings, but without losing sight of constraints imposed on Government by declining national funds, the then Minister of Higher Education and Technology Cde Herbert Murerwa, transformed the devolution project at Gweru into Zimbabwe's third state university by means of the State University in the Midlands Act of April 1999.

The new University, whose name was later changed to the Midlands State University, was to be initially housed at the Gweru Teachers College premises. The mandate of the institution was contained in its broad objects which are the advancement of knowledge, the diffusion and extension of arts, science and learning, the preservation, dissemination and enhancement of knowledge that is relevant for the development of the people of Zimbabwe through teaching and research and, so far as is consistent with the objects, the nurturing of the intellectual, aesthetic, social and moral growth of the students at the University.

Student affairs at MSU was born the same time and year the university was established. I was there when the university first opened its gates to the first intake of undergraduate students. It was in March 2000 when I was among the pioneer column of students to enter MSU. There was a student affairs team led by the then acting Dean of Students, who was later replaced by the hitherto Executive Dean of Students. We went through orientation. There were issues to do with allocation of student residential space and the student applications for Vocational Training Loan (VTL). Then, we would pay for our university subsidized three meals per day

in advance and get them supplied by the university caterer. That glory of having three meals per day ended before the end of our second semester when the university decided to privatize the catering services much to the suffering of the majority of students who hailed from low-income peasant families. I enjoyed drama, volleyball, tutorials and student governance politics. I was elected the first Dzapasi Residence sub-warden (the overall student leader of a hall of residence). I reported to the then first Dzapasi Hall Warden, Mr Magwa, now Professor Magwa and the Vice-Chancellor of the Reformed Church University (RCU) in Zimbabwe. A year later, I was elected the first SRC President. All these functionaries were administered by the Division of Student Affairs.

All in all, I was an active part and parcel of the origin of student affairs at MSU albeit as a student leader and activist. From a small enrolment of less than 200 students, the university has had an astronomical growth in both enrolment and infrastructure. To date, the student enrolment stands at about 12,000 students of which 500 are post-graduate students (www.msu.ac.zw).

Having discussed the establishment of MSU, the following section reviews literature on the different perceptions about the role and function of student affairs.

2.8 Perceptions About Student Affairs

Fried and Associates (1995) claim that the education and activities of the student affairs staff are not perceived as education within the dominant epistemology. Some members of the university community, including some student affairs staff themselves, see what student affairs do as management and housekeeping or metaphorically, domestic responsibility. However, there are also some empowering beliefs about the role of student affairs which are outlined in the subsequent sections of this topic (Astin and Astin: 2000).

2.9 Constraining Beliefs, Myths and Misconceptions

Astin and Astin (2000 p.66) suggest that many 'constraints exist in the minds of the student affairs practitioners', and these operate at both individual and professional levels. They maintain that there is a direct relationship between our individual beliefs and the individual actions we choose. In other words, if student affairs practitioners believe themselves to be an

inferior lot to faculty, then they shall be, and vice-versa. Similarly, 'if the institutional culture is characterised by a belief that the work of the student affairs division is not related to the learning enterprise' (ibid), then the institution will develop academic governance structures and policies that reflect a peripheral role for student affairs professional. This is a critical highlighting of the role of beliefs in defining the role of student affairs at individual, professional and institutional level. Beliefs can be liberating, but most beliefs tend to be limiting. It is important to observe that this belief system is informed by opinion and not science. As a result, such beliefs can easily become myths and misconceptions especially if they border on negative perspectives. Astin and Astin (2000, p. 66) aptly describe the type of institutional culture constraints student affairs professionals work under as deriving from:

> Many current structures and policies within our institutions [which] relegate student affairs professionals to the margins in discussions about learning, in part because there is a shared belief that teaching is the sole province of faculty and that learning occurs only within the classroom.

The specific individual and group constraining beliefs propounded by Astin and Astin (2000) shall be listed later in this section. Some faculty members believe that student affairs as a professional discipline lacks 'professional philosophy', that it was formed 'by default' and must have 'an educational mission equal to that of faculty' (Manning, 1996). Manning (1996) argues that this may seem to be so due to the historic lack of design that characterises the birth of student affairs. She claims that the current form and content of the field did not emanate by default but resulted from a legitimate campus need essential to the mission of higher education. These myths, according to her, border on negative and inadequate interpretation of the origin of student affairs.

The injury that these myths cause is to convince some members of the university community to believe that student affairs, as a higher education field of practice, does not need as many resources as given to academic affairs. When students enter university they are socialised into these myths. The time-table they are given does not necessarily show or highlight their out-of-the-lecture-room curriculum. At the end of their studies, a successful student gets an academic transcript that does not highlight the student's personal growth, experiential learning and development out of class. In the process, the role of student affairs is

diminished. Some students and lecturers alike see engaging in out of class activities as a sheer waste of time and resources.

According to Astin and Astin (2000), the following list comprises constraining beliefs in student affairs at both individual and group level. The internal and external constraining beliefs about the role of student affairs at individual level are that:

- My perspectives and ideas would not be taken seriously by others at the institution
- The work I do is not appreciated within the institution
- I am a second-class citizen within the institution
- Individual staff members do not speak their mind or share their perspectives at meetings
- Staff members do not ask to participate in institutional decisions or institutional forums and
- Individual staff members do not attempt to influence the institution's values, future plans of goals.

There are also internal and external constraining beliefs about the role of student affairs at group level. These are:

- The work of student affairs is peripheral to the main work of the academy
- Student affairs professionals are 'service providers' rather than educators
- Learning happens mainly in the classroom
- Student affairs staff are generally not included in the discussions of 'academic' issues
- Resource allocation does not reflect the contribution of the student affairs division and
- The administrative structure leaves student affairs out of the academic 'loop'.

With the current neo-liberal scramble for resources by departments at a university (Torres & Burbules, 2000), the division of student affairs is likely to face a stiff competition. Larry Moneta and Michael Jackson (cited in Dungy & Ellis, 2011) in their article, *The New World of Student Affairs*, concur that in the search of the value of student affairs, there are some dilemmas inherent in the work for which there are no easy answers, particularly during

difficult economic times and the rapidly changing face of higher education. Hence, the tension of the roles, responsibilities, and effectiveness of student affairs programmes are under continuous scrutiny.

While it is true that student catering and accommodation at a university can be outsourced, it is catastrophic to think that their learning and development out of class, their grooming into responsible future leaders and citizenry (Lloyd, 2004) can be equally outsourced. Food and accommodation for university students are particularly important in Africa. Most of the universities are residential institutions. The reduced government funding of universities in Zimbabwe and the privatisation of catering services means that the average student from the low-income peasantry family cannot afford decent meals. From my experience as a university student, a hungry student body is an angry student body. Hunger tended to trigger student unrest more than anything else. It also negatively affects students' cognitive engagement. When students fail to concentrate on and cognitively engage their studies they may fail or drop out of college. In order to get food provisions, some female students resorted to prostitution or simply put, the 'sugar daddy aid'. This obviously puts university students at risk of STIs, unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection.

In spite of the above stated sad reality, if people have negative frames of mind about the role of student affairs, this generates other related perceptions:

- students see student affairs professionals as not essential to getting a degree (Lincoln and Carpenter, 1999)
- some student affairs professionals see themselves as doing work which supplement and extend the learning of the classroom
- a portion of lecturers, especially from the old school, see student affairs as superficial, unnecessary, non-intellectual, non-academic, and even anti-intellectual
- the student affairs worker is the 'maid of all work' and
- the student affairs workers are 'technicians in the ante-chamber of the Great Hall' (Hopwood, 1961, p.458).

2.10 Empowering Beliefs and Conceptions

On the other hand, Manning (1996, p.457) seeks to remind higher education practitioners that '… non-cognitive factors play an important role in achievement, and … that the environment press of college greatly influences the final product'. In other words, student affairs are also concerned with students' non-cognitive and campus environment factors as they impact on students' learning and development.

The critical research point being raised in this study is eliciting what members of the university see as the role and functions of student affairs in university education. This study also highlights whether these perceptions are shared or isolated.

The bottom line of the issue is that there seems to be no mutual understanding of what student affairs staff do at a university. Available literature, largely by American student affairs professionals, seeks to validate and authenticate the place and existence of student affairs division in higher education practice. Student affairs theorists like Astin (1996) assert that the so called 'affective' outcomes for higher education are as 'affective' as they are 'cognitive'. By the same token, Astin (1996, p.558) poses a critical question: 'what are the most desirable student qualities that we seek to develop?' This may be a fundamental starting point in an effort to rethink, reconceptualise and reconstruct the role and functions of the student affairs field. Astin (1996) is convinced that if such questions are left unasked, lecturers, left to their own devices, would usually exclusively stick to cognitive outcomes – knowledge, cognitive skills and critical thinking, at the expense of affective outcomes – leadership, self-understanding, citizenship, tolerance, self-direction, honest, social responsibility and psycho-motor outcomes planned by student affairs.

Lucas (1996) claims that colleges and universities exist primarily for teaching. If this claim is anything to go by, then Hansen's idea of instruction in universities which involves 'teaching students in classrooms, residence halls, student activity centres and all kinds of informal non-credit courses' becomes an entry point for student affairs practice (Hansen & Associates, 1980:267). Teaching and learning in this context thus entail the totality of a student's experiences involving all planned programme activities, in or out of class and on or off campus, that contribute to student learning. In my view, it can also include unplanned activities which students discover for themselves. If we limit the concept of 'education' to the context of academic textbooks and classroom lectures only, then the work of student affairs

professionals can more easily be marginalised (Astin, 1996; Dungy & Ellis, 2011). The implication is that universities and colleges would continue with the teaching of 'content' and overlook the teaching of the 'person' recipient of that content. Torres and Burbules (2000) refer to this education of the 'person' as the dialectical process of forming the individual as a self and a member of the larger community. Therefore, one of the roles of such an education system is to create loyal and competent citizens. In light of this, I think the functional human being, the person in the student, must also be taught how to receive the content, structure it into the long term memory for future application and interaction with fellow persons / human beings.

The net consequence of marginalising the development of the student's affective domain is the churning out of half-baked college graduates in terms of transferable skills which should enhance their employability agenda. According to Eddy and Murphy (2000), many college students ruin their careers with dishonest behaviour. They claim that these students are graduating with a paper degree on the one hand and an inability to function in the real world on the other. As such, they ruin not only their careers but also themselves, their families and their communities in the process due to their lack of human face and direction. In my view, such an unfortunate sad crop of college graduates can be referred to as academic outcasts.

Some of the internal and external empowering beliefs, at individual level, about the role of student affairs propounded by Astin and Astin (2000) include the feeling that:

- I can make a difference in individual students' lives
- Learning and development should be viewed holistically as well as individually
- I can be creative and innovative in my work with students and colleagues
- I am a full partner with faculty in facilitating student development
- Individual staff members are proactive in their work with students and colleagues
- Student affairs staff regularly promote an integrated / holistic perspective in their dealings with faculty and
- Student affairs staff members take the initiative to promote student learning by proposing and trying out new approaches.

At group level, internal and external empowering beliefs include the feeling that:

- Student affairs are partners with faculty in promoting the holistic development of students
- Student learning occurs outside the classroom, as well as within. Education should be student centred
- Equity and diversity are high priorities
- Community is a critical part of effective education
- Institutional mission statements articulate the importance of holistic development
- Teaching and mentoring receive significant weight in the faculty reward system
- Student affairs sponsors workshops, seminars, and classes on diversity and equity for students and staff
- Student affairs builds collaboration into its work with students and other employees in the institution and
- Student affairs division creates learning opportunities and experiences that facilitate holistic development of students.

Certainly, these empowering belief systems provide an overarching paradigm of the role of student affairs in university education. Indeed, there is need to justify the existence of the Division of Student Affairs so as to guide what people think about its role. Otherwise in this era of dwindling resources and accountability, student affairs can be adversely affected when it comes to resource allocation. This is evidenced by the case of the Texas Tech University cited in Chapter 1.

Therefore, the role of student affairs must be clear and be perceived as essential for the holistic development of the student. The student affairs professionals themselves must prove that they are a significant factor to consider in so far as wholesome student development is concerned.

2.11 The Role of Student Affairs

In order to establish the role of student affairs, it is important to discuss the philosophical grounding of this field. Knock (cited in Manning, 1996 n.p) postulates that

> Student affairs practice is grounded in rationalism (e.g. the development of intellect and reasoning power), neo-humanism (e.g. education of the whole person within the context of mind / body dualism), pragmatism (e.g. an experiential theory [John Dewey] and practice approach based in democracy and liberalism), and existentialism (e.g. responsibility for development rests with the student).

The above proposition is added to enrich this study's conceptual and theoretical framework. John Dewey's (Astin, 1993) pragmatic philosophy of education forms a major highlight of the fundamental basis of student affairs role and functions. To this end, Dennis Roberts (Personal Communication, 2001) propounds the main tenets of pragmatism as that:

- every individual is worth of respect
- knowledge is best gained from experience
- cognition, affect, and morality are intertwined and each is an important component of knowledge – this is the equal role of thinking, feeling and working in a person's life and
- every individual has the potential for growth.

These tenets help clarify pragmatism as a philosophical underpinning of this study's conceptual framework.

According to Mandew (2003, p.21), '… in South Africa there is no philosophical framework or explicit theory that informs practice in the field of student services'. However, the same author is quick to acknowledge that, as way back as the year of publication of his book, 2003, fledgling structured efforts to establish a structured and credit bearing programme was noted at the University of Natal (now University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) through the efforts of Devi Rajab, then Dean of Student Development.

Manning et al (2006:4) acknowledge that

> … there is some debate as to what constitutes student affairs. Whereas few would dispute that faculty deliver courses, evaluates student projects, and are engaged in research and other scholarly activities or that the physical plant of staff maintains the

institutional facilities, what constitutes student affairs is somewhat more debatable in that functions that are part of the student affairs division in some campuses may be positioned organisationally elsewhere on others.

According to the SPPV (1937) the Division of Student Affairs exists to assist the student in developing to the limits of their potentialities in making their contribution to the betterment of society. There are competing views though but according to this view, there is need to develop the student as a person. Robert Clothier (Rentz & Associates, 1996, p10), supporting this holistic development of the student, posits that:

> Personnel work [student affairs] in a college or university is the systematic bringing to bear on the individual student all those influences ... which will stimulate him and assist him, through his own efforts [agency], to develop his body, mind and character to the limit of his individual capacity for growth, and helping him apply his powers so developed most effectively to the work of the world.

This statement on the role of student affairs connotes that the division's work involves a planned (systematic) out-of-class scholarship – course outline that is sensitive to students' individual differences. It implies that student affairs professionals develop an enabling environment for students to kindle their potential for growth in the body-mind-character trinity. This definition also suggests that the student is an agent of their own development and learning. They are main actors in their active learning matrix and never spectators or passengers. The division of student affairs fires-up this active learning and development by students through cultivating and providing supportive and inclusive communities and spaces.

On the same subject, Mandew (2003) believes that the role of student affairs must be informed by the philosophy that student affairs plays a fundamental rather than a merely ancillary or incidental role in the core function of higher education institutions. He further asserts that in essence, core business in higher education is education, research, training and development of lifelong learners and self-programmable workers. To this end, Castells (2001) highlights the outcomes of higher education as, amongst others, the development of critical lifelong learners who will provide leadership for society in general and the training of self-programmable workers for the new economy.

In other words, student affairs should be conceptualised and re-conceptualised as being located at the centre rather than at the margins of the core business of higher education

institutions. In this light, the role of student affairs is to support student learning and success. Mandew (2003) elaborates that in order to develop critical thinkers, lifelong learners and self-programmable workers, it is imperative for student affairs to design critical developmental learning programmes and facilitate effective learning experiences outside the traditional lecture room situation. Kuh (1995) refers to this as the 'other curriculum' while others refer to it as 'extra-curricular' activities. Sharp and Grace (1996) add their voice by underscoring that there is need to complement and add value to the 'first mode of learning' (the in-class curriculum) with an equally effective 'second mode of learning' (the out-of class curriculum) also referred to as the 'co-curriculum'. In this regard, student affairs professionals are challenged upon engaging students so that each moment and encounter they share with students is a teaching moment and learning encounter.

From another angle, Winston and Saunders (cited in Astin, 1993) argue that the division of student affairs is undeniably a collection of disparate functions united by the philosophy of holism. In the same vein, Astin (1993, p.303) elaborates this point by remarking that:

> Student affairs work consists of all kinds of scholarship, borrowing from dozens of fields and facilitating environments in which education can make sense, wherein students maximize their own learning, come to understand more about their place in the communities they interact with and trust their own decision making at an even higher level, all the while creating patterns of personal development that will establish a foundation for lifelong learning.

The composition of 'all kinds of scholarship', and 'facilitating environments' are referred as the essential ingredients for vibrant student affairs workforce and output. Dungy and Ellis (2011) add that student affairs work has changed dramatically, and today's senior student affairs leaders (deans of students) have portfolios that encompass a wide range of responsibilities. 'They are business people, architects, contract readers, negotiators, landlords, landscapers, and proposal writers' (2011, p.3). Mandew (2003, p.1) had prophesied when he calculated that student affairs has a daunting challenge 'as it struggles to find its voice, provide appropriate leadership and articulate a compelling vision in an environment of change and uncertainty'.

31

It becomes clear, in light of the fore-going, that the knowing, steering and education of a student in higher education cannot be confined to any one department. Therefore, there is need for a college or university to create a 'seamless coat of learning' where students, lecturers, student affairs staff and university administration forge meaningful educational partnerships and collaborations. They do this when they cross their 'borders' of operation and toe the interface of 'functional interconnectedness' to ensure and assure planned whole student learning and development as propounded by Terenzin, Pascarella, and Whitehead (Blimling, Whitt & Associates 1999).

Miller et al (Blimling, Whitt & Associates 1999, p.213) conclude that:

> In the educational enterprise, teamwork and collaboration must be encouraged and emphasised when developing the total student, for no single individual, program, or institutional sub unit can do the job alone.

The highlight here is that every unit of the college or university complements, in a functional way, the system of development of the student. It is therefore, crucial to view the functioning of any higher education system as a biological system that is enhanced by every single sub-system. I see the concern for developing the whole student as akin to putting together cut slices of bread to make a whole loaf. If one or more slices are missing there would still be bread but not a complete loaf of bread. Similarly, if units of a university do not stick together and team up in the development of a graduate there would still be a graduate anyway but an incomplete one.

Therefore, as stated by Manning (1996), student affairs professionals teach outside the lecture room using an informal style based on an affable relationship with the learner. The student is challenged, intellectually and physically. The student affairs curriculum, as revealed in the succeeding conceptual framework of this study, is experientially structured. On the other hand, lecturers teach a disciplinary structured curriculum in the classroom in a formal manner. As has already been noted, the former teach the 'person' (the human being) in the student while the latter teach the 'content' to be accommodated by the student. There is, however, no clear demarcation between the two operations of the learning and development of the student. Overlaps cannot be ruled out.

2.12 The Case of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ)

Declining government and international donor funding to the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) due to the 'anti-university rhetoric and policies of structural adjustment' proved disastrous (Mlambo, 2010, p.120). This resulted in low salaries for teaching staff and low pay-out for students. UZ had to adjust through cuts in programmes, hikes in student fees and financial diversification. According to Zeleza (1997), the diminishing financial resources meant a deterioration of research, teaching and physical infrastructures, the demoralisation of faculty and students and the social devaluation of the status of academics and the scholarly enterprise. For student affairs, this situation caused frustration amongst the students and triggered student related disturbances.

International donor organisations withdrew their funding from UZ citing alleged growing human rights violations by the government of Zimbabwe and the hitherto political instability in the country (Mlambo, 2010). According to the *Financial Gazette*, June 2001, Sweden withdrew its assistance to UZ in June 2001 because of the rising political tension in the country ahead of the 2002 presidential election. The government of Zimbabwe blamed the poor university funding on the Western imposed economic sanctions which among other things, froze international credit lines to the country.

It was this same year that I was doing my undergraduate 3rd year studies at MSU. Thus, the cut in funding was a common scenario at other state universities including MSU. Our student grants fell far below the cost of living in a highly inflationary environment. Our welfare was worsened by state universities' determination to privatise student catering and accommodation services. First was the pay-as-you-eat policy that required us to pay directly for meals taken instead of the previous arrangement where the cost of all meals was included in the fees paid at the beginning of the year. Poor students like me, who comprised almost 90% of the student body, were badly affected. We resorted to what was popularly known as the '0-0-1' grazing. This meant zero breakfast, zero lunch and a meagre supper a day to sustain the body. There were unconfirmed reports in the newspapers that some of our desperate female students frequented night spots and clubs to raise money for upkeep and were tempted into prostitution (Mlambo, 2010).

The privatisation of the Department of Accommodation and Catering (which falls under the Division of Student Affairs) at the UZ was, according to Mlambo (2010), ostensibly because

its work was not 'core activity' of the university and because the department was losing money. This case gives us an insight into how the role and function of student affairs is perceived and valued. Chimhete (in Mlambo, 2010) believed that the dilemma facing the UZ was typical of African countries undergoing stringent International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment programmes which emphasise cost recovery measures triggered spontaneous riots by students. I recall vividly that student unrest and hooliganism became a common feature during this period. Equally disturbed and restless were student affairs personnel who were expected to contain the student disturbances on the one hand while at the same time ensuring that the welfare of students was adequately provided for. I remember that around the year 2000, the Chaplain's office at MSU established the Student Hardship Fund (SHF). The office was to mobilise funds to support students in different forms of hardship. The fund was obviously overwhelmed in light of the fact that almost 90% of our student body were classified as poor and came from a peasantry background and hence needed support from the SHF.

The 'fire-fighter' role of student affairs is thus implied whenever there are student disturbances. The Dean of Students at MSU would always be summoned to Vice Chancellor's office to explain cases of student unrest and the measures she was putting in place to curb it. What provoked acts of hooliganism from students (like the sad torching of the Bindura University Library by students in 2002) was external national political influence. MDC and Zanu PF's political struggles were filtered into student activism sometimes in a cut throat style. The Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) and the Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union (ZICOSU) were formed and funded along political lines. The former is an MDC student wing while the latter is a Zanu PF student wing. In as much as students wanted to focus on their bread and butter issues, desperation forced them to embrace 'commodified' student activism. As a former vibrant both SRC and general student leader and activist, I can reveal that all the three MSU student demonstrations that I witnessed, one of which I led during my tenure, were engineered by external national political influences. Indeed, student affairs staff found themselves stuck in a precarious role of trying to maintain student stability in campus yet the root cause of the instability was and could still be national political forces. I think the reason why political parties stampede to win the support of university students and staff is the need to control the intelligentsia who tend to be respected opinion leaders in both the communities and the labour market.

2.13 Conceptual Framework

According to Weaver-Hart (1988, p.11) a conceptual framework is a tool for researchers to use rather than a totem to worship. It is a 'structure for organising and supporting ideas; a mechanism for systematically arranging abstractions, sometimes revolutionary or original, and usually rigid'. In other words, a conceptual framework establishes and defines boundaries of a study. Bryman (1988, p.68) sums up by maintaining that a 'concept provides a set of general signposts for researchers in their contact with a field of study'. This clarification is essential for our general appreciation of the models of student affairs practice discussed below.

In delineating models for student affairs practice, Manning et al (2006) note that although student affairs has grown tremendously over the past 20 years, it remains a grassroots field in which some believe that there is little need for theory or conceptual framework to organise practice. These beliefs hinge on the notion that common sense rather than theoretical expertise can guide high quality student affairs practice. However, according to the above-cited authorities, research and administrative developments in student affairs continue to render this common sense approach obsolete:

> … there is developing sophistication in student affairs practice [with models emerging which] can be 'pure' or 'hybrid'- no longer does one size of practice in student affairs fit all (Manning et al, 2006, p. 4).

Student affairs role, functions and values can be summarised into student affairs three models cited in Mandew (2003:4) namely: the In-Loco Parentis Model, the German Model, the Hybrid Model and or Blimling's (2001) espoused four communities of practice (experience) in student affairs namely: student administration, student services, student development and student learning. These communities of practice reveal three broad categories of the student affairs role which are: administrative role, managerial role, and educational / developmental role. With this in mind, the following section discusses the three models cited in Mandew (2003).

2.14 The In-Loco Parentis Model

In loco parentis literally means 'in place of the parents'. This model is argued to be the oldest student affairs philosophical framework. In some texts it is referred to as the 'paternalistic approach' and has its roots in the English residential system which was adopted in former British colonies like Zimbabwe and South Africa. The entire university staff, both academic and non-academic, was responsible for the welfare and support of students intellectually, socially, morally and spiritually. Relating to this, Mandew (2003) states that Hope Mill, a woman's residence at UCT, was headed by a non-faculty member until its closure in 1928. The role of the head of a woman's residence hall, as articulated by Phillips (1923, p.123) was to

> ... inculcate gentility into her 'girls' in keeping with the position of middle class white women in the wider society. This she did with appropriate delicacy, emphasising the 'done thing' and setting what a satisfied University Council described as 'a fine example of womanliness'.

2.15 The German Model

This is also known as the intellectualist model. The model was influenced by the establishment of the Berlin University in 1810 with its exclusive emphasis on intellectualism. Berlin University also pioneered the modern standards of academic freedom. Higher education institutions become increasingly more complex and specialised and hence, inevitably resulted in the delegation of student affairs work to non-academic specialists. As noted earlier on, academics exclusively focused on teaching and research (Allen & Garb, 1993; Mandew, 2003). The universities tended to have older students who had to find their own accommodation and arrange their own extra-curricular activities. This model engendered personal and academic independence and left students to their own devices outside the classroom.

2.16 The Hybrid Model

This is a mixture of the in loco parentis and the intellectualist approaches that is currently dominant many in higher education institutions at least in Africa. There is a deliberate attempt to try and involve both academic and non-academic staff in the support, development

and welfare of a diverse body of students: men and women, heterosexual and homosexual, religious and non-religious, physically able and physically challenged and spanning all classes, races and nationalities. For the South African higher education situation, this model has been criticised for failing to appreciate the country's socio-political history and its impact on the education system (Mandewu, 2003). Hence it failed to address the challenges of a post-apartheid South African higher education system. Mandew (2003) states that even though the hybrid model is still dominant, there are moves to have greater participation by all sectors of the institution in the life and development of students outside the lecture room. Nevertheless, '... students are increasingly becoming resistant to being 'parented' and insist on taking charge of their lives as young adults' (ibid, p.12).

Upon scrutiny, these three models are encompassed and surpassed by Blimling' (2001) models / communities of practice in student affairs which I have adopted as the theoretical framework of this study. These four communities of student affairs practice are elaborated below.

2.17 Student Administration

This broad student affairs role is concerned with the administration of resources available to students focusing on organisational and leadership issues. The overt student affairs role is that of administrator or manager of institutional resources to support students. Focus is on quality of student life through procedures, policies and processes with legal issues framing much of student affairs' interaction with students in a more of 'in loco parentis' relationship. Students' financial aid, social welfare and career development are key items for the student affairs' duties. Leadership and organisational theories shape the student affairs administrator's philosophy of practice. Students are seen as participants (NASPA, 1987; Kuh et al, 1994).

2.18 Student Services

This is another of the management role of student affairs. Proponents of this community of practice, influenced by the student consumerism movement of the 1980s, see the role of student affairs as supporting the academic mission through provision of comprehensive support services. Students are seen as customers. Focus is on improving quality and

efficiency of services. Every service that the student receives is quantified and marked up. Whereas shortage of parking space may be a source of frequent student unrest in developed universities, the cost of accommodation and food may be a subject of frequent student turmoil in less developed universities in terms of services. Therefore, in this domain of practice, customer services and management theories inform operations. Student satisfaction and retention are highly valued. The student customer becomes 'king'.

Therefore, student affairs is administration driven and management-oriented rather than development driven and student-oriented. According to Moja and Cloete (2001, p.249), 'managerialism' is characterised by the new management language of strategic planning, students as clients, core business, outsourcing, cost centres and privatisation. Succeeding related research has argued that this model or approach to student affairs retards development possibilities and kills creativity in students.

2.19 Student Development

The formalisation of student development as a student affairs operating philosophy is best captured by Brown (1972). This model, an outgrowth of the humanistic movement in psychology, suggests the student affairs division as an equal in the education of students by focusing on their personal growth and development. Lecturers are seen as addressing some of students' cognitive needs while student affairs educators are seen as addressing the psycho-social, moral and cognitive development (taxonomies of growth) of the student. Students are regarded as clients. Focus is on individual student growth and development which practice is informed by human development theories.

Related to this community of practice in student affairs are the following recent remarks by Prof H. Russel Botman, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University and Vice-President of the Association of African Universities, in his keynote at the 13th Annual Conference of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP, 2011, p.2).

We aim to produce graduates who have the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and self-confidence to not only make a good living for themselves and their families but to also make life better for their communities and the rest of society.

He believes that the best way to do as stated and intended above was to both maintain an academic excellence and build a value-driven student culture. To this end, he advocated a holistic, integrated approach to student development so as to 'aid the academic project and promote a sense of civic responsibility' (ibid).

In the same vein, Garratt (1994) talks about developing well-rounded lifelong learners while Castells (2001) (quoted in Mandew, 2003) is keen on developing students into self-programmable workers. Aspin and Chapman (2000) give the five functions of lifelong learning as:

❖ the preparation of individuals for the management of their adult lives
❖ the distribution of education throughout an individual's life span
❖ the identification of education with the whole of life and
❖ the fundamental transformation of society so that the whole society becomes a learning resource for the individual.

Moja and Cloete (2001) clarify the qualities of a lifelong learner by asserting that he / she possesses the following skills:

❖ an enquiring mind
❖ a 'helicopter vision' – the ability to rise above the immediate and personalised situation so that the wider perspective is seen and its important features can be analysed and evaluated
❖ information literacy and management – the ability to find, use and evaluate information
❖ computer literacy
❖ a sense of personal agency i.e. being positive about oneself as being capable and autonomous
❖ a repertoire of problem-solving and learning skills in the context of application
❖ team building skills
❖ negotiation/ mediation competencies and
❖ social sensitivity.

In light of these various forms of student development, it remains to be established by this research whether university stakeholders perceive student development by student affairs in this way.

2.20 Student Learning

Student learning is argued to be the latest model of practice in student affairs as captured by SLI (1996). Student affairs professionals are regarded as active partners in the student learning mission. Students are regarded as learners and student affairs staff as educators. Practice is premised on student learning theories. Students engage in experiential and active learning. Their experiences result in knowledge and skills consistent with the learning mission of higher education. Focus is on knowledge, information, skills development and personal growth. In this context, learning is defined as

> a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development processes that have often been considered as separate, and even independent of each other (NASPA & ACPA, 2009)

Transformative education is taken to mean a holistic process of learning that places the student at the centre of the learning process. Literature supporting this community of practice is also promulgated by Blimling (1993); Whitt and Associates (1998); and Whitt and Associates (1999).

I see a very thin line dividing the student development and student learning communities of practice particularly in respect of the end product, that is, the quality of student each of the two seeks to produce. Be that as it may, these four communities of practice have been adopted in this study as the specific frames of reference for the placement of the university stakeholders' perceptions on the role and functions of the division of student affairs. The 'Other' category is added to cater for any other elicited perceptions that may not fit into the adopted four communities of practice in student affairs.

2.21 Conclusion

This literature related to the role and functions of the Division of Student Affairs forms bedrock on which the collection and collation research data is premised in the next chapter. As has been highlighted, there a number of models on the role of student affairs. However,

this study adopted Blimling (2001)'s communities of practice in student affairs as a working conceptual framework. In this chapter various views on Student Affairs have been explored, and the theoretical framework for the study outlined, in the next chapter I will explore the methodology used in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have provided the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to highlight the choices of research methods employed in carrying out this study. At this juncture, it is imperative to reiterate that the primary aim of this study is to delineate stakeholders' perceptions of the role of student affairs in university, as a way of appreciating the feasible transformative power of the student affairs division. In doing this, the methodological approach of this study is broadly qualitative, the subject of which will be discussed briefly in the following sections. It is however essential to note that data for this study was gathered using mixed methods, which are all qualitative: starting from inductive reasoning to individual in-depth interviews. Thus, prior to discussing the research design, it is imperative to explain the qualitative approach in detail.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Approach

The epistemological position in this investigation hinges, in a broad sense, in the interpretive research tradition, as the study aims to form an appreciation of stakeholders' perceptions on the role of student affairs from the experiences of those who have first-hand knowledge of the practice as well as those who are linked to the department in one way or another.

Although there are many forms within the 'qualitative paradigm' research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Pitman & Maxwell, 1992), this study, which is descriptive in nature, employed the interpretive approach to qualitative research. Kerlin (1999) defines qualitative research as a process we can use to deepen our understanding of complex social and human factors in ways that cannot be understood by numbers. The qualitative model is particularly suited for this study since it is good at answering the 'what', or 'how' questions which characterise the key research questions given already. Also, qualitative research deals with soft data (Neuman, 2000). These data are in the form of impressions, words, sentences, photos or symbols and as such are less easily or sensibly quantified. This study deals with concepts in the form of themes, motifs, generalisations, and taxonomies as interpreted from the participants' responses.

This research is also premised on inductive logic. Maxwell (2005, p.22) confirms that:

The strength of qualitative research derives primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people and its emphasis on words rather than numbers.

To summarise the definition, induction is a reasoning process in which a conclusion is drawn from particular cases. McCreath (1999, p. 23) defines induction as "any kind of inference in which we move from a finite set of observations about an 'object' or a 'concept' to a conclusion that is a general description of the object or the concept". This is in contrast with deduction. Mill (1874: 208) offers the classical definition of induction as simply a generalisation of experiment. In fact, he understands the concept as the means of generalising cases from particular cases (ibid). The inductive perspective is necessary as it helps researchers to assume a reflexive position. As a qualitative approach, inductive reasoning puts the researcher in a constructivist methodological position which respects the influence of the researcher on the data. Importantly, the method allows researchers to adjust their methodology, their tools and to take new ways of research (McCreath, 1999).

3.3 Participant Selection

To achieve the objective of the study, 20 participants were drawn using the purposive sampling strategy (Patton, 1990). According to Tongco (2007), purposive sampling, also known as judgemental, selective of subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling technique. The units that are investigated are based on the judgement of the researcher. Therefore, for the sample of 20 participants used in this study, I relied solely on the convenience of my judgement. I focused on particular characteristics of students, lecturers, student affairs staff, as well as administration and management staff. I needed participants with the basic appreciation that student affairs exist at the university. Although the sample being studied is not representative of the population, it is critical for this qualitative research since I decided what needed to be known and found people who could and were willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge and experience (Bernard, 2002).

I established initial contact with one member of the group to be interviewed: the then Chairperson of the MSU Lecturers Association as for the lecturers, the Dean of Students as for the student affairs staff, the Director of Information as for the university administration staff and finally, the SRC Secretary General as for the student body. I then got subsequent participants through purposive sampling outlined earlier on. In order to contain the number of participants so that I would not be overwhelmed by responses and the potential amount of

data involved, I limited the number of my respondents to 20. The five students that I chose from, about 12,000 students, would be able to give their views on the extent of their involvement with and benefit from student affairs. There were 150 lecturers at MSU during the period of my study. Lecturers are members of faculty who teach the students inside the classroom. In the review of related literature in Chapter 2, there are allegations that faculty thinks low of student affairs and regards it as solely responsible for university 'house-keeping' issues. As such, their voice is relevant in assessing the role of student affairs. The student affairs employees themselves have what they think is their role and function which might not necessarily be shared by members of the university administration and management staff. There were 10 student affairs workers at the time of my research. The university administration and management staff are key players in the allocation of resources and university policy formulation, implementation and review. Hence, they are a significant lot when it comes to this analysis of the role and function of student affairs. There were about 15 senior members of the administration, management and executive staff at MSU.

3.4 Interpretive Social Science

The interpretive social science approach "assumes that people's subjective experiences are real and should be taken seriously" (Terre-Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This approach, founded by Max Weber (1864-1920) and Wilhem Dilthey (1833-1911), is grounded in relativist ontology and mediated in subjectivist epistemology and hermeneutic methodology (Guba, 2000). I employed the empathetic framework to understand meaning in the stakeholders' perceptions.

Meaning is central to the interpretive approach to social science (Maxwell, 2005). Common sense is important, ordinary people use it to guide them in ordinary living; it contains meaning that people use to understand when they engage in routine social interaction (Neuman, 2000). In this approach, reality is argued to exist only in the context of the mental framework (construct) for thinking about it. This is why some authors (Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2000) regard it as a 'constructivist' approach. They argue that inquiry cannot be value-free. If reality can be seen through a window, it can equally be seen through a value window (Guba, 2000).

Neuman (2000) further notes that the interpretive approach is both ideographic and inductive. It is ideographic in as far as it provides a symbolic representation or 'thick' description of stakeholders' perceptions of the role of student affairs in university education. Into the bargain, this interpretive model employs research techniques that are sensitive to context, which use various ways to get inside the way others see the world. These techniques are more concerned with 'achieving empathetic understanding of feelings and world views' (Neuman, 2000:75). The essence of context is to aid interpretation of meaning as is explained in the next section. In this study, this is an understanding of meaning for the 20 sampled different university members, for events, situations and experiences that affect them and affected me during my tenure as a student leader and activist at MSU.

I have operated from a transcendent perspective (Neuman, 2000) which more closely fits the interpretive social science approach that I have adopted in this study. Unlike the positivist technocratic perspective, this transcendent perspective has its research questions originating from the point of view of the researched not outsiders. 'Its goal is … to treat people as being creative, compassionate human beings, not objects' (ibid: p.123). By so doing, this approach tries to help people grow, take charge of their lives and engage in social change – that is to transcend current social conditions.

The subjectivism, typical of interpretive social science, is often under heavy criticism by proponents of competing approaches. Notwithstanding, I have taken this seeming limitation for the positive development of this research as narrated by Alan Peshkin (cited in Maxwell, 2005, p.38):

> The subjectivity that originally I had taken as an affliction … could … be taken as 'virtuous'. My subjectivity is the basis for my story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a researcher, equipping me with perspectives and insights that shape all that I do … from the selection of the topic clear through to the emphasis I make in my writing.

Therefore, my experiential knowledge as a former MSU student activist and leader and then a student affairs professional, which others may see as an affliction in as far as it may be a cause of bias, is taken as virtuous in this research. I have had an opportunity to 'mine' my experience for valuable experiential data. Seen from this perspective, it becomes what Reason (1988; 1994) (Quoted in Maxwell, 2005) calls 'critical subjectivity' which involves:

A quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary experience nor do we allow ourselves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process (Maxwell, 2005, p. 38).

In support of this notion, Mills (in Maxwell 2005, p.38) argues that:

The most admirable scholars within the scholarly community … do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other.

Maxwell (2005) summarises it all by asserting that separating one's research from other aspects of one's life cuts you off from the major source of insights, hypothesis and validity checks. Subscribing to this school of viewing subjectivity in interpretive social science went a long way in empowering me to establish a better understanding of the dynamics of the role of student affairs.

Furthermore, Neuman (2000) notes that qualitative research applies 'logic in practice' as opposed to 'reconstructed logic'. The former is the logic of how research is actually carried out. The only limitation is that logic in practice is relatively messy with more ambiguity and tied to specific cases (inductive logic) oriented toward practical completion of the task with fewer set rules.

There are other limitations though. The question of bricolage (Neuman, 2000) may be a cause for concern. In qualitative research, the researcher is a bricoleur, meaning that he learns to be adept at doing many things – an ability to draw on a variety of skills, materials, and approaches as they may be needed, but usually without being able to plan for them in advance. This however, requires a person to have a deep knowledge of one's materials, a collection of esoteric skills, and the capacity to combine them flexibly. In addition to this, the use of open questions, the probing of answers and the exploring of individual understandings is important because those understandings affect practice.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis Tools

3.5.1 Open-Ended Interviews

I employed audio-taped open-ended interviews. These open-ended interviews, according to Trochim, quoted in Maxwell (2005) permit a number of responses from which to construct meaning. Again, the technique gives the subjects some room to clarify and qualify responses, which was deemed necessary in this study. Open ended questions also allow the researcher to find the unanticipated from the comprehensive responses, in as much as it reveals the respondent's thinking process. By so doing, I gave respondents room to think of their own responses and express them in their own words since this is a collection and analysis of soft data.

However, the open ended questioning is not without its challenges. During the interviewing, I noted that it took some of the participants more time and effort to respond. Having collected all the data, it came to my attention that some of the responses were just irrelevant. The biggest challenge of course was the coding of the data, it seemed very tedious though I eventually managed, and the process was made easier by the adoption of Blimling's (2001) four communities of practice in student affairs as the study's conceptual framework. These are outlined in the conceptual framework section in Chapter 2 and outlined on Fig. 1 below.

3.5.2 Content and Thematic Analysis

Content analysis can be summed up as an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seeks to objectively and systematically describe the manifest of surface content and quantify it in terms, usually, of predetermined categories. The most common definition of content analysis is given by Berelson, who argues that it is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (1952, p.18). This definition is essential as it is a pointer to some important aspects of the method's origins and concerns, as revealed in the claim to "objectivity" as well as the emphasis on "manifest" (i.e. observable). Like the quantitative techniques, content analysis is meant to reproduce the rigour of the natural sciences on the study of social phenomena (Deacon, *et al.* 1999, p.115). However, the assumption that the method affords value-free

insights into the study of content has been queried. Hansen, *et al*., for instance, note that 'objectivity' in content analysis is not a feasible ideal serving only to mystify the values, interests, and means of knowledge production which underpin such research:

> Content analysis, of course, could never be objective in the value-free sense of the word: it does not analyse everything there is to analyse in text – instead, the content analyst starts by delineating certain dimensions or aspects of texts for analysis, and in so doing, he/she is of course making a choice – subjective, albeit generally informed by the theoretical framework and ideas which circumscribe the ideas which inform his/her research (Hansen, *et al*. 1998, p.95).
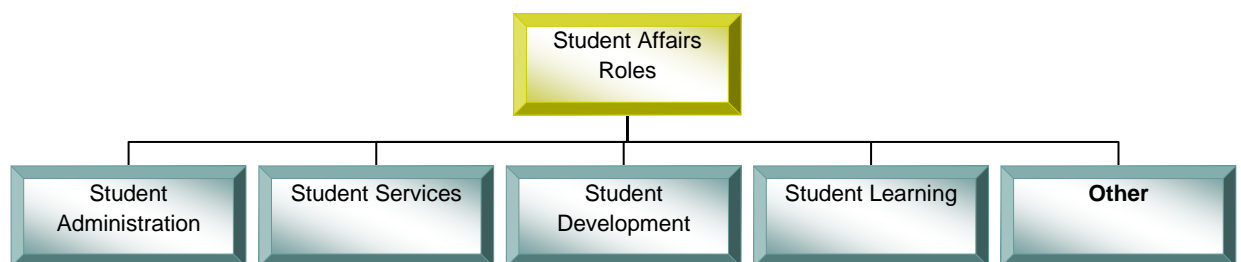
In that regard, some definitions of the method omit out the references to "objectivity" while emphasis is put only on the condition that it be "systematic" and "replicable". For instance, Kaplan highlights that content analysis helps state the frequency of occurrence [or non-occurrence] of signs in a given body of discourse in a systematic and quantitative fashion (1943, p.230). But Berelson's original usage of the term, 'objectivity' in content analysis has to be taken as referring to the requirement that the categories and units of analysis used must be defined so accurately by the individual researcher that if applied to the same body of content by different analysts, they can produce the same results (1952, p.16). So, objectivity in this sense refers to the way in which the method is carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules, in such a way that if personal decisions about data are made, it entails that these decisions are directed by a clear set of rules that minimise the likelihood that the findings reflect biases rather than the content of the data being studied (Berelson, 1952, p.17).

Holsti (1969) talks about 'latent content' which is the opposite of 'manifest content'. While the latter is concerned with surface content and its denotative meaning, the former is concerned with connotative meaning of content – an analysis of meaning that lies beneath the superficial indicators of content. Uncovering latent content means probing beneath the surface, interpreting meaning that lies beneath the manifest content: the verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic (the sighs, laughter and pauses) cues given by participants. This study, as evidenced in the next section on interpretation of content, attempted at establishing both manifest and latent content.

The utmost advantage of content analysis is that it is methodical, in the sense that all sampled material is submitted to the same set of categories. It is in this way that it affords the tools for

the systematic description of great amounts of data output, while at the same time allowing for verification of findings (Holsti, 1969, p.127). It is also because of the fact that the method allows to produce the 'bigger picture', hence, the reason why the method was adopted for this study.

Maxwell (2005) presents 3 types of developmental categories through which qualitative data can be analysed. This research has developed these sets of categories. Fig. 1 below shows the organisational categories employed for this study. These are broad areas that have been established by anticipation prior to the interviews carried out. Blimling (2001) gives the first four communities of practice in student affairs that have been adopted. The fifth category '*Other*' is my input after anticipating that there could be data that (that may go beyond saturation point) may not fit into the four categories espoused by Blimling (2001). Such data were put into the 'other' category (see Figure 1 below).

```
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │ Student Affairs │
                        │     Roles       │
                        └─────────────────┘
```

| Student Administration | Student Services | Student Development | Student Learning | **Other** |

Fig. 1: Communities of Practice in Student Affairs adapted from Blimling, 2001.

The second stage of categories involves the substantive categories. These are primarily descriptive. They include description of participants' concepts and beliefs. 'Emic' categories, which are categories taken from participants' own words and concepts are usually substantive though many substantive categories are not 'emic', being the researcher's description of what is going on. The third stage of categories and most abstract is the theoretical categories which place the coded data into a more general or abstract framework. In this study, these categories represent the researcher's own inductively developed concepts (known as 'etic' categories) (Maxwell, 2005:98) rather than denoting participants' own concepts. It should be understood that substantive categories are especially important for ideas (including participant's ideas) that did not fit into existing theoretical and organisational categories which may get lost or never be developed unless they can be captured in explicit categories.

Thematic analysis can be synthesised as the examination of all the units of the discourse of the data collected. This includes both genre and discourse analyses – words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and whole text analysis. Here the text is coded in terms of discovered subjects and themes. Such coding demanded a more interpretative approach, that is, the search for both manifest and latent content.

3.5.3 Stages in the Analysis of Data

I used some of Lacey and Luff's (2001) stages in analysis of qualitative data which include:

- familiarisation of the data through intensive reading and review
- organising and indexing (coding) of data
- identification of themes
- development of provisional categories
- exploration of relationships between categories
- refinement of themes and categories and
- report writing, including excerpts from original data.

Familiarisation involved listening and re-listening to my tape recordings and reading and re-reading of the narrative of my tenure as an undergraduate student leader and activist at MSU. During this active reading and listening stage, I also wrote memos which I used for reflection and analytic insights. These memos are like concept maps that involved any writing that I did in relation to the research other than actual interview conversations and written text of the document that were analysed. I also did a verbatim transcription of the tape recordings as part of my familiarisation with data.

Coding is also referred to as 'indexing'. This is regarded as the main categorising strategy in qualitative research. The goal behind coding, according to Strauss (1987), is to 'fracture' the data and rearrange them into the categories outlined in the preceding section. It also involves organising the data into broader themes and issues. As part of the organisation of data, I coded my respondents as shown on Fig.2 below.
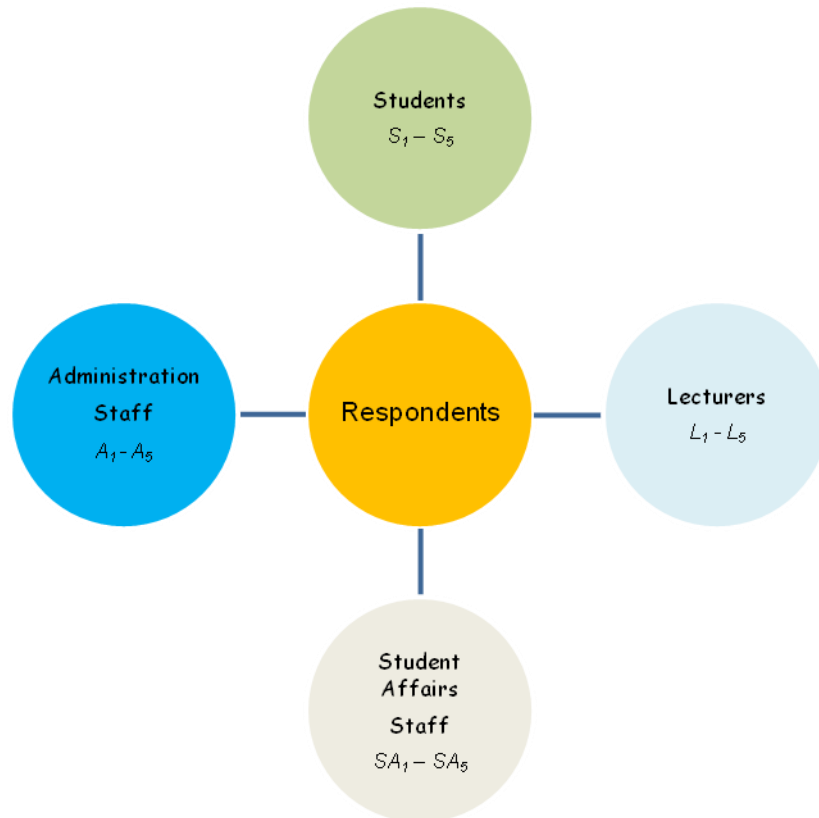
Fig. 2: Codes for Respondents.

3.6 Interpretation

Neuman (2000, p.148) defines interpretation as "assigning significance or coherent meaning". I assigned meaning by interpreting data, translating them and making them understandable. When giving this meaning, I began with the point of view of the researched. Thus, the interpretation was through finding out how participants perceived the role of student affairs, how they defined the student affairs functions and what this definition meant for them. These participants had motives (reasons) for their perceptions which I sought first. This is the first order interpretation.

The discovery and reconstruction of this first-order interpretation is the second-order interpretation. According to Neuman (2000), the proponent of these orders of interpretation, it is in this second-order interpretation where one elicits underlying coherence or sense of meaning in the data (latent meaning). Second-order interpretation places the human behaviour being studied in the 'stream of behaviour' or events (context / milieu) to which it is related. In this case, I placed the stakeholders' perceptions into the mainstream perceptions of student affairs roles.

51

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As a student member of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, I am bound by and have complied with the institution's Research Ethics Committee's code. This code of ethics is a set of rules that govern the way researchers behave. It spells out the rules of right and wrong doing when undertaking research. Firstly, before the research proposal was approved, I had to complete the University of KwaZulu-Natal's ethical clearance form and sign the declaration that goes with it. Secondly, I also developed an informed consent document for my participants. All the 20 participants signed thus agreeing to the terms and conditions of this study. This document sought for the research participants' consent to be involved in the research after reading and understanding the information on the document which spells out the following:

- the nature and aims of the research
- that the interview, lasting at most 20 minutes, would be audio-taped solely for the purposes of data analysis
- that code names (on Fig. 2) instead of their real names would appear on my memos and transcriptions for the sake of anonymity and confidentiality
- that the audio-records and related memos would be kept under key and lock at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Higher Education Studies for 5 years in the custody of my supervisor/s and be destroyed by burning
- that participation in the study was voluntary
- that the research would not harm the participants in any way physical and / or psychological
- that the participants reserved the right to withdraw their participation should need be, and
- an informed consent declaration in which they signed for their informed consent.

I also obtained a clearance letter to do this research at MSU from the university registrar in conjunction with the dean of students. I have attached copies in the appendix. Consistent with the academic culture, I have acknowledged all contributions of literature in the references section. There is also an acknowledgement section in which I thank all those who helped me in a way.

3.8 Conclusion

This qualitative research has adopted the inductive paradigm of reasoning premised on interpretivism of both latent and manifest data. Blimling's (2001) four communities of practice in student affairs have been adopted as the conceptual framework of this study. Since there is always room for participant responses to go beyond saturation point, I have added the 'other' category. This category takes care of any other data that could not fit under any of the predetermined categories. I used some of Lacey and Luff's (2001) stages in analysis of qualitative data. In this chapter I have outlined the approaches to the research and the methods for data collection. The findings of this research are descriptive in nature and thus read more like a novel since handling of soft data is core in this study. The next chapter deals with data   presentation and interpretation.

Chapter 4: Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to critically establish what different members of the university community see as the role and functions of the division of student affairs. These members comprise five students, five lecturers, five student affairs personnel as well as five administration and management staff.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, interpretation was mostly through inductive logic. This is reasoning that operates from given specific established perceptions by various sampled members of the university community. The specific tools of interpretation (assigning of significance / coherent meaning) are an interplay of the empathetic framework, common sense, content and thematic analysis. The interpretation is at two levels as is already alluded to in the research design and methodology section of this write up. The first level called the 1st Order Interpretation focuses on the point of view of those interviewed and their motives in giving their selected perceptions. The second level called the 2nd Order Interpretation dwells on eliciting underlying coherence in the perceptions that would be given.

Prior to presenting data from the participants, I find it necessary to give a brief narrative of my experience with the division of student affairs at MSU. The narrative is important in, among other things, highlighting my subjective personal frame of reference that I used in analysing feedback from the twenty participants interviewed. The previous chapter clarifies how this subjectivity can be taken as a virtue in the interpretation of meaning and assigning of significance in this qualitative study. All this is an attempt to offer a comprehensive qualitative response to the research question that has been raised in Chapter 1: How is the role and function of the division of student affairs perceived by key stakeholders at Midlands State University (MSU)?

I was there when the university was founded in 2000 albeit as a student. I went through orientation and also helped in the orientation of other new students, and it is through this process that I realised that orientation is an empowering programme to all the new students and hence very critical. I also participated in a number of university activities both in and out-of-class. Due to the hyper-inflationary economic situation prevailing at the time, student life on and away from the campus became very difficult. Importantly, financial aid from the

government was discontinued after only one semester into our university life. The catering department of the university became privatised at the same time, and then students started to pay for their meals. The effect of the privatisation of catering was directly felt amongst the students as well. Sex, alcohol and drug abuse became rife on campus, with some female students resorting to commercial sex and extra - marital affairs to supplement their basic needs. It cannot be denied that some of the male students might have resorted to criminal activities. Nevertheless, not all students were engaged in such immoral syndicates, as some had to persevere and focus on student development activities both inside and outside the class. It was evident that students thought that these activities would make them forget their day to day financial challenges.

In short, the above narrative, as well as other issues that have not been indicated here, highlights how the role of student affairs revolves around issues to do with orientation, extra-curricular activities, financial aid, residences, catering, counselling, discipline, leadership development and learning out-of-class. Most importantly, the issue of students organizing themselves and pursuing their own learning, development and other activities outside the lecture room is revealed as key to students' active involvement in student affairs. Otherwise without this sense of agency, self - drive, some students may attach less value to the status and role of student affairs.

Having done so, what follows is a presentation of what the selected members at MSU expressed as their views about the role of student affairs. First I give students' views followed by lecturers' views, university administration and management staff's views and the views of the student affairs staff themselves.

4.2 Students' Perception of the Role of Student Affairs

All in all, the respondents argued that universities cannot do without the student affairs division for varying reasons. It is true though that students' perception of the role of student affairs seems to be largely shaped by the extent of their interaction with the division of student affairs. The following is a detailed analysis of the views of the five students who were interviewed. These students are coded S_1 to S_5.

My interview with S_1 lasted 12 minutes 25 seconds. This student was in the leadership of Rufaro Hall of Residence for male students. Therefore, the student had had some leadership

training, among other workshops, as is the norm for student leaders at MSU. Probing him about what he thinks is the role of the student affairs division, he had this to say:

> …obviously dealing with students' welfare, which, among other things include food, sports and the student health as well. These are the basic human rights. It also has to assume the advisory role, which is chipping in with ideas, engaging in leadership development issues, cultivating students' communication skills. In short I would say the student affairs assumes the 'go between' roles, and it is very instrumental in the tripartite relationship of the students, the faculty and the administration.

From the above, Blimling's management and administrative roles of student affairs are evident in the student's perception of student affairs as dealing with students' welfare, problems and also performing the role of a 'junction' at the centre of the three 'routes': students, faculty and administration. I see this as rather a conjunction role in which student affairs staff are expected by university administration to provide unity and coherence among these departments. S_1 believes that one needs food and shelter in order for one to attend lectures. Such is a services support role of student affairs that many perceive and are limited to. The question of grooming leaders and cultivating communicating skills hinges on student development and learning models of student affairs practice. However, two issues remain to be ascertained. These are whether student affairs should cater or caters for every student and whether there could be chaos at a university without student affairs. Maybe 'chaos' is too strong a word to use but the question remains whether a university can do without student affairs.

Adequate financial aid is key to the attainment of the needs highlighted above. The issue of sustainable student funding is the bigger picture underlying these needs. Apart from external national political influence and 'commodified' student unrest, inadequate food and accommodation for students due to inadequate financial aid is a common trigger of student unrest at MSU and similar state universities in Zimbabwe and abroad. A similar case in point is the student protests that took place in some South African universities including the University of KwaZulu Natal and the Durban University of Technology at the beginning of the 2014 academic year.

When student affairs lobby for policy change in favour of students they assume 'go-between roles'. At MSU, the Executive Dean of Students sits in all the major university committees

largely for the reason of conveying and relaying the voice of the students. This is also married to the 'advisory role' of student affairs. University faculty and administration need to be appraised and advised on student affairs issues. On the other hand, the students themselves need academic and social advising. This is best done by student affairs. Part of the advising is often done during the orientation week. This however, is an on-going student affairs role. This advocacy role of student affairs cannot easily be classified under the existing and adopted communities of practice by Blimling (2001). In my own interpretation, this can fall under the 'Other' category.

S_1 mentions that the student affairs division is responsible for cultivating students' communication skills. He argues that this includes:

> 'grooming of leaders, people who are able to speak, talk, negotiate terms, people who are flexible and prepared to engage anybody.

The above assertion tallies with leadership development aspect explained earlier on, as one of the student affairs communities of practice. In the process, student development as well as student learning are likely to take place simultaneously.

My interview with S_2 lasted 12 minutes 18 seconds. An ordinary student, S_2 agrees with S_1 on the role of student affairs as 'dealing with students' welfare' and helping students with problems. This role has been discussed comprehensively in the afore-going detail on S_1. In addition to those arguments, S_2 brought in an especially important point that the student affairs division deals with aspects of graduate employment as well as student's social growth. On that aspect he notes:

> It is of course not just about looking at our day to day lives whilst still in school. It goes further than that, as it also incorporates issues like preparing us for the work environment after graduation.

Graduate employment unit had a special office at MSU, as detailed by SA_1 in the succeeding discussion. This is a very critical dimension to consider. There is also the Department of Work-Related Learning at MSU, but this does not fall under the division of student affairs. All the same, the department does not directly work towards the placement of graduates after graduation. It is, however, responsible for the placement of students for work-related learning during their 3rd year. If the student affairs division were to be involved in the placement of

graduates after college, this would add great value and publicity to the role of the division. Graduate unemployment and underemployment are very high in Zimbabwe. This role would also fall under the 'Other' category of student affairs roles.

Tied to the point of placement of graduates is the employability of the graduates. How easily graduates are employed by the labour market hinges on relevance of the graduate's qualification and their civility. S_2 could have been referring to this when he the student affairs division being responsible for the 'social growth of the students'. This role revolves around the student development community of practice in student affairs. As has been discussed in the review of related literature in Chapter 2, there is need to develop the student as a whole. Social growth of the student involves their content of character as shaped by their personality traits. In Chapter 2, this has been cited as the training and teaching of the 'person' in the student. Issues to do with morality, ethical behaviour, responsible citizenry and 'ubuntu' are critical when assessing the content of the character of a student. It is here where a distinction between student activism and hooliganism must be made. Violent protests characterised by rape, assault, vandalism and property damage (like the burning down of the library by student demonstrators at Bindura University of Science Education in 2001) are certainly acts of hooliganism. So, as given by S_1, student affairs should train student to engage in dialogue and even peaceful demonstration. The new constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe allows for freedom of expression [with civility]. I am sure if the university administration (employer of the student affairs division staff) learns that student affairs is also teaching students how to engage in peaceful demonstration tension would brew. You might lose your job since the tacit labour contract (at least at state universities in Zimbabwe) seems to suggest that a student affairs worker shall ensure that no student shall demonstrate against the university. It may be that when things go wrong, as they sometimes will, students should have the right to demonstrate but legally and peacefully. Student affairs can then guide students on the legality and peacefulness of their activism.

S_3 and S_4 were non-resident female students. Their interviews lasted 10 minutes 17 seconds and 11 minutes 17 seconds respectively. These participants both felt that the student affairs division is not doing enough to cater for the welfare of the non-resident students. They contend that:

> Student affairs also deals with non-academic stuff like doing sports after college and everything, residences, student problems or complaints, and also student health.

Student affairs is valuable in the sense that you have got your life to think as a whole, and, most students here are non-residents therefore the student affairs unit should attend to their problems. In other words, student affairs is the place to go when you have got problems, and when the problems have been solved I can be able to attend my lectures (S$_3$).

Yes, by working with and training the SRC, student affairs is dealing with the social life of students but I don't think it is that valuable, because it's yielding no fruits at all especially pertaining to the social life of students. Again, if you look at it, most students here are non-residents so the residence issue is a key issue, we need accommodation (S$_4$).

S$_3$ also presents the view that student affairs 'keep students occupied' when they are out of the lecture room. This perspective tends to easily minimise the role of student affairs since it views student affairs as a time-pusher. It is like saying when students are out of the lecture room they need to be occupied so that they are not idle and only think of demonstrations. Some lecturers share this view, as would be seen later in this chapter. The points on roles are similar to the ones mentioned by the preceding students as in falling under student administration and student services. That is why I deemed it also necessary to find out from members of the administrative staff whether they see one of the roles of student affairs as keeping students occupied outside the lecture room so as to curtail student unrest. This student finds no time to do sports since she stays out of campus and it is therefore a challenge to student affairs to see how they can engage as much of non-resident students in their activities as possible. Another major highlight from this student is that of student affairs' contribution to the holistic development of students. Whether by design or not, this point hinges on student development and student learning models.

The same respondent adds that 'student affairs is a place to go when you have got problems and when the problem has been solved you can be able to attend my [sic] lectures'. This statement implies that student affairs division is only important in so far as it attends to students' problems. If students have no problems then student affairs has no role, at least according to this view. Nevertheless, there is a lot more to student affairs in terms of developing intangible gains in the social quality of students a university can produce. Thus,

student affairs unit is seen as troubleshooting and preventing problems from arising amongst and involving students.

S_4 talks about student affairs being responsible for 'working with and training the SRC'. Indeed, student affairs play an administrative role in terms of the establishment of the SRC and its day to day operations. The division of student affairs also plans and coordinates orientation of new SRC members. This is directly the student leadership training and teaching role of student affairs which fall under the student development and student learning communities of practice.

However, the above two respondents have complaints about student affairs, one being about sporting activities which are done 'after college and everything, I find no time', says S_3. It should be pointed out here that the time-table that students get at a university does not indicate sports and recreation time. The assumption is that students are supposed to create their own convenient schedules for sports and other co-curricular activities. The student said she finds no time. This is true given that some lectures are run in the evenings and during weekends due to shortage of lecturing space during normal working hours. Notwithstanding, some innovative non-resident students find time to do very well in sports under the circumstances. This suggests that the academic formal curriculum takes precedence over student affairs activities. As a result of this, there might be tendencies to assign more value to faculty activities than those done by student affairs.

Another complaint noted was about the student affairs 'yielding no fruits at all' especially pertaining to the social life of students'. The gain in the quality of social development of a student is intangible and hence not easily measurable as the student's academic performance is where results are published at the end of every semester. Like in social marketing, the impact of the role of student affairs on the social development of students may not be easily measured. Sometimes the gain is realised by the student long after college. As such the respondent's comment may result from the fact that the gain from teaching students out-of-class is not and it may not be possible to immediately evaluate.

This student sees no need for student affairs at a university. In other words, she never benefited anything from this unit of the university. This challenges the claim by the other four students that a university cannot do without student affairs and hence a point for further

interrogation. Also, for the three years the student has been at the university she has seen no clear connection between faculty and student affairs. It means that at no point during her stay did anyone make a conscious move to relate faculty business to student affairs work and vice versa. Maybe she misses some of the activities done by student affairs at night, in halls of residence and during weekends because she is a non-resident student but the point remains that this student and many in her shoes are left out. It would be interesting to find out what student affairs staff and lecturers say about such students.

S_5, whose interview lasted 7 minutes, concurs with S_2 that apart from dealing with essential services for students, student affairs also 'deal with issues to do with graduate employment'. I have discussed this point under S_2 above. The student further elaborates already noted points on the role of student affairs by observing that:

> Student affairs try to make life outside the classroom more meaningful and valuable to students, in as much as it complements the classroom. It does of course address the needs of the social man, which I believe is one of the concerns of universities: being holistic in their approaches. This means catering for both the academic and social man. That also shows that there is a connection between student affairs and faculty, as all work and no play makes John a dull boy.

This respondent is a more senior student in terms of age and college experience, given that he is attending university after three years of a secondary school teacher training course hence, his deeper reasoning. After talking about student affairs' administrative and management roles he sums it all by mentioning that a university must be holistic in its approach by providing both the academic and the social to a student. The question therefore is to find out whether other university stakeholders see the social needs of a student as equal to or more important than their intellectual needs.

Indeed, man is a social animal. He needs to socialise. Man gets to be acquainted with his environment through socialisation. Learning and development take place in the process. Hence student affairs is said to address the 'needs of the social man'. It further implies that in this day and age of HIV and Aids, it is the duty of student affairs to educate students to both live positively and abstain from unsafe sex. This is commendable education for living. The views of students on the role of student affairs are invariably related to the fact that students need essential services like catering, residences and health. These services cannot be provided

for by faculty. Therefore, student affairs complements faculty by providing such services. Non-resident students feel that the student affairs division still has to do a bit more in terms of catering for their needs, for instance, the issue of graduate employment discussed earlier in this chapter. Given the above student views, it is also critical to discuss what lecturers say, as they are also an essential part of the university and could also be influential in shaping the students' views about the role of student affairs since they have more direct formal interaction with them.

4.3 Lecturers' Perception of the Role of Student Affairs

A notable difference between the lecturers' and the students' feedback was that the views of the lecturers tended to be richer and more comprehensive than those of the latter. My interview with L_1 lasted 17 minutes 25 seconds, $L_{2:}$ 20 minutes 4 seconds, L_3:14 minutes 48 seconds, $L_{4:}$ 6 minutes 28 seconds and finally, and $L_{5:}$ 16 minutes 20 seconds. The duration of the interview with each respondent did not necessarily reflect the depth and quality of the response. Some participants were brief and to the point while others were going round their points.

Asked about the role of the student affairs division, L_1, a junior lecturer, put it this way:

> The student affairs division should have the interests of the students at heart, prioritising the needs of individuals as well as the student body as a whole. That includes developing the whole being (intellectual, spiritual and moral) of the students. As the advocacy officers, student affairs must conscientize students of their rights and responsibilities and at the same time helping them with career decision making through those career guidance workshops. Outside the academic circles, student affairs is also responsible for student welfare which include counselling, healthcare and even religious services, in addition to organising sporting and other outdoor informal activities.

Interesting to note was the fact that this interviewee indicated not being involved in any student affairs activities but that he would have loved to have been. In that regard, the interviewee indicated that student affairs should publicize their events to lecturers as well, so that those who are interested can also take part in some of those student affairs activities. It was also interesting to realize how the respondent shared all of Blimling's four communities of practice in student affairs and added another category that I termed 'Other'. This one

involves student affairs advocating students' rights and making sure that students are aware of and exercise these rights. I perceive this as a direct clash of the interest of many university administrative staff in Africa as they normally want deans of students to act like 'granite' walls between them and students. While it is acknowledged that students should marry what they learn in class to what they do out of class with student affairs, there is however a 'border' between these two camps due to lack of conscious efforts towards collaboration both at administrative and at operational level. This is indeed a cause for concern for all units of the university: faculty, administration and student affairs.

Outdoor informal activities, as mentioned by the respondent, include sports. This can fit under both student services and student administration communities of practice as propounded by Blimling (2001). When the student affairs role encompasses training for governance skills, leadership and social responsibilities, it could therefore fit in the student development community of practice. In this perspective, students are trained to develop governance and leadership skills through workshops and other forms of experiential learning. Emerging from this point is the student affairs role of helping students develop life skills including assisting them with career decision making as mentioned by the respondent. This is a function of the student learning community of practice in student affairs.

The advocacy role highlighted by the respondent is closely related to S_1's indication that student affairs play 'go-between' roles. This is the 'Other' salient yet tacit role of student affairs that might put student affairs at loggerheads with university administration. The university administration is obviously the employer and would want student affairs to support its policies. On the other side, there is nothing wrong with student affairs advising the student who has been summoned before a disciplinary committee of their legal rights and freedoms. However, the dilemma of the student affairs staff is thus caught between siding with students for genuine causes and protecting the interests of the university. Be that as it may, the professional student affairs staff ought to strike a meaningful balance between the two sides by levelling convincing arguments for or against any course of action. Nevertheless, this is also dependent upon the prevalence of an enabling institutional ethos.

In further elaborating his points, L_1 noted that he drew his view of the role of student affairs in university education from his experience as a university student. However, the fact that the participant understands student affairs role from his experience as an undergraduate student

might be revealing an existing information gap between student affairs and faculty. By highlighting the fact that student affairs should research together with faculty, in as much as they should publicise their events to lecturers, it automatically implies that student affairs should engender the forging of meaningful partnerships with faculty despite the disempowering beliefs about the role of student affairs which have been highlighted in Chapter 2.

L_2 was an executive dean of faculty who had been in student affairs leadership development programmes and hence, displayed a better appreciation of student affairs role across Blimling's communities of practice. He claimed that his experience with students' involvement out-of-class:

> …enabled me to understand the student better unlike my colleagues who may not engage students outside the lecture room. Besides providing services, administration and development for students, I would say the student affairs team is the icing on the cake. We do a lot of things, starting from the orientation of new students so as to enable them to be in the study mood, counselling of students who quite often break down. We also do a lot of confidence building, so that students tend to believe in themselves – for example, leadership confidence which involves the ability to lead self before leading others…

The metaphorical view of the student affairs team as the 'icing on the cake' is quite interesting and deserves a bit of discussion. The 'cake' can do without the 'icing' on it yet the icing cannot do without the cake. In this sense, faculty is the cake, the core business of the university, while student affairs division is the icing. This lecturer's perception of student affairs' role as subordinate yet supplementary to the role of faculty has been revealed in the review of related literature. Notwithstanding, some can argue that the 'icing' on the cake is the most important part of the cake that whets one's appetite to eat the cake. In this regard, student affairs is seen as essential in order for students to concentrate in the lecture room.

Further to this, L_2 observes that students are 'human beings' who cannot spend 24 hours reading books. He argued that they have a life that goes beyond that hence, the need for diversion, which is catered for by the student affairs through the provision of extra curricula activities to the students. 'The growth of the human being must be looked at in total.' This links with the view by students that student affairs must address the needs of the 'social man'

that has been explained earlier in this chapter. In other words, besides the academic individual in the student, there is a social person in the student. This person needs to socialise and behave outside the textbook knowledge. The knowledge gained from textbooks is ideally supposed to edify the interaction of the person with the real world – at home, at work and in the community. This point appears to hinge on the issues of civil, ethical and moral behaviour that a student must demonstrate. Student affairs divisions are strategically set to enhance the development of this 'content' of the character of students. At the end of it all, the student must be able to distinguish between right and wrong, moral and immoral, activism and hooliganism.

In my experience as a student, I have discovered that the majority of students seem to lack in the qualities espoused in the above paragraph. They tend to have the organisation and thinking done for them by others especially when it comes to student protests. Many a times when students are involved in demonstrations, violent or peaceful, almost 99% of them do not think. The thinking is done by 1% of the students, the rest simply follow like sheep to the altar. The 1% of students comprises the ring leaders who might not even participate in the demonstration they have orchestrated. I discovered this in the single demonstration that I led at MSU in 2001. In order to convince the student union against a demonstration, astute student affairs personnel concentrate on the 1%. The rest of the students tend to follow others due to mob psychology. They are the kind who when quizzed why they are demonstrating would answer: 'we have been told to demonstrate by our leaders'. I doubt if such a type of students is capable of proper planning and organisation of their academic work in class.

It was really evident that the respondent in this discussion has been involved in student affairs leadership development programmes, based on his practical responses. Maybe this is a typical example of the kind of staff that universities should seek to engage towards the development of innovative and enterprising graduates. With regards to the employee demographics, he criticizes the recruitment of motherly and fatherly figures (in loco parentis model) in student affairs, arguing that they do not relate to students' issues as easily as would young and dynamic staff. This obviously is debatable though, taking it from the perspective that the more mature and the more the experience that one has in his or her job, the more the productivity. In that view, the kind of staff to employ in student affairs thus highly depends on which of the four of Blimling's communities of practice in student affairs does the university believes in.

The *in loco parentis* model is directly under challenge in this aforementioned view. Who to recruit for work in the student affairs division is obviously a bone of contention and a matter for further interrogation. May be what kind of staff to employ in student affairs might be dependent on what role is expected of them. However, the critical issue is that student affairs staff need to be relevant and qualified enough in order to adequately deal with the dynamics of their role.

Amongst the lecturers I interviewed was a Teaching Assistant, L_3. The participant confessed that he had never been involved in any student affairs activities either as a student or as a Teaching Assistant. This might not be true though since it is impossible to spent four years at a university without having interacted with student affairs – health services, catering, orientation, accommodation, sports, clubs, societies, career guidance and student development programmes. He, however, outlined that the role of student affairs involves:

> …dealing with students' problems which they face on a day to day basis, like taking the mediator role during student quarrels. It also has the obligation to provide moral support to the students. The division also gives counseling to students with different personal problems which might be affecting their studies. Importantly, it is the duty of the student affairs to manage disciplinary issues. So in other words, the student affairs staff are the resource persons whose main role is to give relevant information at the right time and place. Career guidance is also another aspect that the division has to deal with, that means making arrangements with companies to come and do company presentations as well as organizing career guidance workshops for students. Above all, the student affairs unit strives to make student life as bearable as possible by inspiring students –that involves keeping their morale high by offering different activities especially after school hours.

The functions noted above largely fall under student administration and student services. His other notable observations were that:

> Student affairs should tell lecturers what they want and lecturers will disseminate the information to students. In that way the division can also learn from us hence, the need for a mutual relationship amongst all university stakeholders. It becomes feasible that way as students can also emulate us, and the fact that we have a direct contact

with students could also make the student affairs' job much easier in terms of getting their message through us to the students.

The 'us' in these statements refers to the lecturers. Underlying the responses given is a superior 'we know all' attitude in some members of faculty hence, the belief that student affairs should learn from lecturers how to handle students. He also mentioned that students themselves should emulate lecturers. One wonders if a student can still emulate a lecturer even if the lecturer is not exemplary. This is yet another example of the lack of understanding between lecturers and student affairs staff on what the latter's roles are. This may indeed see the former calling the latter 'non-academic', service technicians, housekeepers and metaphorically, domestic workers of the university (Fried & Associates, 1995). Also noteworthy is the fact that all the roles that have been given by this respondent fall under student administration and student services.

A notable departure on the general functions of student affairs is the mention by L_3 that student affairs must 'inspire' students. This role can be classified under the 'Other' category. There are overlaps in these categories though. Inspiring students includes motivating them to achieve their academic, career and leadership dreams. It also entails stimulating students to be unrelenting and resilient in face of adversity. Even if there is suffering, the students would know that the suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces hope, and hope builds a strong character. The conflicts students encounter at universities are a mirror of real life situations ahead of them. Hence, student affairs must facilitate the development of conflict resolution skills in students. The inspiring of students is on-going and permeates through other communities of practice in student affairs.

My next interview was with a senior lecturer, L_4, who emphasised the need for student affairs to prepare a whole student. One of the ways he pointed out was for student affairs to create the world of the student after university during university. This is what he had to say:

> There are skills that students acquire under student learning and student development in student affairs which are fundamental to the life of the student after university. Such skills can include self-management, job seeking, conflict resolution and survival skills. Remember these students are senior and mature but they still need to be guided in their operations, that is, the responsibility of the student affairs unit. The other

reason they are here is that we have the mandate to prepare them for the world hence, student affairs division should create that world before students leave university. I also believe that the Vice Chancellor should strengthen the department so as to reduce conflict within and among university groups so that everybody would be able to understand who does what.

The last statement in the respondent's words above implicitly suggests an acceptance that often there are conflicts among units of the university as has been discussed in the reviewed of literature. Be that as it may, the major point is that the rest of the members of the university, staff and students alike, tend to be socialised into the attitude that the leadership of the university displays towards student affairs. If the university leadership genuinely values the status of student affairs and has a very high opinion of its role (as was highlighted by SA_5), then the rest of the members of the university would follow suit. Therefore, the university leadership ought to empower student affairs divisions to believe in themselves and stand up and be recognised by the university community. This might help polish sentiments of low regard and low status given by some lecturers about the role of student affairs as has been noted in L_3 discussion above. The student affairs staff themselves must also prove their worth.

My last interview with the lecturers involved another dean of faculty, L_5. Like L_4, apart from citing the general student affairs services highlighted already, the respondent also highlighted the need for student affairs to produce 'all-round and worthwhile citizens'. The concept of education for citizenship is gaining ground in higher education practice currently. There are also critical issues about the role of student affairs that emerged from this interview. Below is an extract from the above mentioned interview:

> I should hasten to say that I do not take direct interest in student affairs but I am developing a commissioned study of sexual harassment in colleges. I do realize that there are things that affect students which can only be addressed by student affairs, but my most fear is that the student affairs seem to lack what I would call a guideline on how best to deliver their services. What I am saying is, in class, we have a syllabus that we must work on. Now student affairs without a syllabus want to play soccer. It becomes too much. It interrupts study. Some students really get carried away. Sometimes I feel student affairs get too much. First year students cannot chart recreational programmes when they have not known what the demands of their course

are. We give too much attention for students to direct their own society. Yes, student affairs is useful in open university system like ZOU or UNISA but sometimes I find them overdoing it. I don't think the post-graduates require as much student affairs services as undergraduates do. So, maybe it's high time the universities re-invent the wheel. Members of character, people who can lead by example, who students can emulate, should be employed to work in student affairs.

The above assertion is quite honest. If all members of faculty would realise this truth it would be an easy starting point for the forging of meaningful educational partnerships with student affairs. Among others, certainly lecturers have fewer opportunities for the moulding of students' body and character than student affairs. On the other hand, student affairs division has equally fewer opportunities to mould the mind of a student than faculty. It should be noted that it is only a question of different opportunities and not different values.

Generally, the respondent demonstrated a low opinion of the role of student affairs by advancing that 'they have no syllabus [course outline]' and hence tend to do too much for nothing (instead of doing more with less). The question of whether students should be given a double transcript (one for in-class and the other one for out of class experiences) and that student affairs practice should be guided by professional philosophy and an educational mission is definitely coming up (Manning, 1996). Indeed, in order to have members of the university appreciate what student affairs do, the student affairs functions must be systematic and clearly set. Haphazard approaches tend to expose the student affairs. Nevertheless, participating in sports has become a profession. It also edifies the health of the students. So, playing soccer might not be as valueless as implied in the afore-cited response.

If lecturers view the role of student affairs in university education as has been outlined above, there is need to find out the views of members of the university administration and management team. There is not much variation between the voice of students and the voice of the lecturers on the role of student affairs save for the roles that I have decided to put in the 'Other' category. The voices of the university administrators and managers on the role of student affairs are equally essential.

4.4 University Administration and Management Staff's Perception

The five respondents in this category were drawn from the information department, bursary, university secretariat and the Vice-Chancellor's office. The duration of my interviews with each of the participants varied. My interview with AM_1 lasted 27 minutes 45 seconds; AM_2, 9 minutes 35 seconds; AM_3, 17 minutes 30 seconds; AM_4, 21 minutes 20 seconds; and AM_5, 20 minutes 12 seconds.

AM_1 was the most senior member in the information department of at MSU. It turned out that indeed, he had quite some information about student affairs. This was probably owing to his position that required him to have all sorts of information and understanding about university issues. This participant indicated that the student affairs division is responsible for:

> …planning outside activities for students – sports, drama, music and accommodation, because outside the lecture room students interact with the actual world. It also has the duty to assist in bringing up a wholesome adult in students, to teach students about responsibilities and essentially, learning out of class. These I believe are very important because most of the learning that a student picks up take place out of class. Not only that. If students have a very rich social life, they are more likely to do well in class. It is the responsibility of the student affairs unit to reach out everybody in much the same way as lecturers do in the classroom. Administration also comes into play, as the management should also take time to listen to reports from student affairs department.

In the light of the above, what is important therefore, is what happens to the student out of class. Similar to a point raised by one senior lecturer, administration is urged to be keener on reports from student affairs. It may have emerged that less attention is given to reports by student affairs staff. The respondent put more emphasis directly on student learning outside the classroom. There is no doubt that as a director of information he is aware of the dynamics and operations of both faculty and student affairs. The challenge that has been raised by one non-resident student is given again to student affairs to reach out to every student as lecturers do in the classroom. Maybe due to the fact that student affairs have no time table for their programmes, it remains a big challenge to reach out to every student.

Evidently, emphasis has been placed on students' interaction with the real world outside the lecture room. This means that students engage in experiential learning that enables them to

discover a better understanding and performance of real life issues. In order to effectively deal with life outside the lecture room, the students also depend on what I have called textbook knowledge – their lecture room experiences. This combination of in-class and out-of-class experiences enriches the life and performance of the student both during and after college. Certainly, if students have a very rich social life, they are more likely to do better in class.

Although it appears a mammoth task, it is crucial that student affairs should reach out to every student. In fact, student affairs programmes are designed for every student but since there is no clearly defined time-table for these activities, some students might not find time to pursue them as highlighted by some students earlier on. Also, since student affairs activities are done out of students' own drive, some students might lack the agency to do them. This is unlike in faculty where it is compulsory for students to do the courses they would have registered for. Apart from this, some of the students interviewed openly said that student affairs is not essential for attaining a degree (an instrumentalist view of education). Currently, there is no form of credits or recognition of the good that students achieve out of class. If there are any gains, the gains are intangible values that go uncelebrated. That is why at some universities in the developed nations, they are implementing the double-transcript approach to university students' graduation. Reward and recognition are immense stimulators of students' participation out-of-class. It would also follow that the labour market would also recognise the dual transcript mechanism in its recruitment and selection of human resources.

Similar to the sentiment raised by L_4 earlier in this discussion, the university administration is urged to read and understand reports from student affairs. To take the respondent's words, 'administration should take time to listen to reports from student affairs'. What this statement implies is that university administration does not take time to listen to reports from student affairs. The reports are received just as a ritual. Nothing becomes of them. Maybe this is largely caused by the attitude of the ultimate leader of the university and the overall institutional ethos.

AM_2 revealed all the basic student affairs services that have hitherto been discussed. This participant was a senior member of the university finance staff commonly known as bursar. Above all the responses given, it is notable that he mentioned that student affairs role revolves around:

…grooming students for their work places…developing communication skills and mothering function, especially for educators through and through. Another thing is that student affairs play second fiddle.

Certainly, the above assertion puts emphasis on the *in loco parentis* role of student affairs – 'mothering function'. According to the literature reviewed in this study, this is regarded as the traditional view of the role of student affairs. There is evident lack of understanding of student affairs as playing student development and student learning roles.The response also confirms the assertion by Manning (1996) that many members of the university misconceive student affairs as playing second fiddle role. I think that a university must deliberately set up a multi-disciplinary system of collaboration which ensures that members of the university community develop basic mutual understanding of operations. This will undoubtedly blend university operations into an integrated outcome.

Like the previous respondents, AM$_3$ reiterates that student affairs is responsible for: 'extra-mural activities', 'preparing students for the world of work', 'transformation of the lives of students' as well as 'learning in social interaction'. Relevance of these responses to the adopted communities of practice in student affairs is clear. However, it should be noted that both faculty and student affairs are equally involved in preparing students for the world of work. Hence, their collaboration would be for the greater benefit of students. In addition to the above, the respondent noted that:

> Student affairs activities are voluntary, so it is only those who are willing to engage with the department who do so. However, I feel that the whole academic and administrative staff should play the student affairs role, or should attend to student affairs. This means that lecturers themselves need to be involved, as they can link their teaching to real life situations. Of course I understand that to work in student affairs one need to have been a student him or herself as a basic requirement – interest in student affairs is more important rather than doing the job – wardens are really there because of the allowances as opposed to interest in students.

That lecturers themselves need to be involved in student affairs work in their bid to link their work to real life experiences sounds a plausible point but this throws us back again to the polemical question in higher education of who trains the lecturer who teaches the university student. If the 'who' part is answered then the 'how' part can now follow. Two important

points are made by this respondent. Just to recap, another respondent earlier on commented on who should work in student affairs, arguing that it should rather be the young people who relate more to students. Another almost similar version is reported here that at least one needs to have been a student himself. I would add and say that one needs to have been a student with traceable achievements in student development and learning out of class. Another point raised here is that one needs to have the interest of students first before anything else. A career path would then follow for one after these prerequisites. Surely in some universities, some members of staff especially lecturers, are recruited as wardens simply for the perk that goes with it. This point is to be revealed later by another responded. The participant went on to encourage lecturers to be involved in student affairs programmes so that they can 'link their teaching to real life situations'. L_2 confirms that being involved in student affairs work enabled him to understand the student and teach him better. The fact that students are social beings who need that social aspect has come up again. Earlier on, I discussed this point under the input given by S_5 who maintained that student affairs division addresses the needs of the social man.

The issue of having been a student in order to work in student affairs might really mean that having been an active student with a traceable record of achievement out-of-class. It is next to impossible to find an officer in student affairs who had never been a student. This viewpoint on who should work for student affairs was also raised by L_2 as discussed earlier. Indeed, interest in students should form the backbone of the calling by whoever needs to work in student affairs. At MSU, I found out that some members of university staff were appointed wardens of residences simply for the perks that went with it – the free accommodation in campus plus a cash allowance. This sentiment is also given later by SA_2.

AM_4 turned out to have been a former head of a faculty department and warden. His views could be three in one: lecturer, student affairs and administrator. Therefore, his perception of the role of student affairs is likely to have been shaped by these three windows to his status. Thus he maintains that the role of student affairs revolves around, among other things, shaping the whole being or complete person, 'not a square peg in a round hole'. He also added that student affairs staff members are educators who play an equally important role like the one played by lecturers. Moreover, he believes that student affairs helps in promoting an atmosphere of relaxation whereby after one is stressed up with books. Like other respondents, he concurs that 95% of what a person knows is acquired out of class. However, the

respondent further bemoans the fact that the university does not have an academic qualification geared towards student affairs.

It is true that then, at MSU and the rest of the universities in Zimbabwe, there was no career path for one to follow in order to become a student affairs professional. May be the recruitment done then was premised on the assumption that if one had an educational qualification background, one would be able to perform the role of student affairs. However, in American higher education, the student affairs profession had since grown. Even in universities in South Africa, programmes of study towards a professional qualification in student affairs had already begun.

My last interview in this category was with AM_5. It also turned out that she was also the warden of a female residence in campus. This means that she, like AM_4, was partly a member of the Division of Student Affairs. She noted that student affairs division is responsible for:

> …the promotion of social and intellectual growth of students, as well as the development of a holistic graduate. I would like to refer to the Division of Student Affairs as the 'Faculty of Student Affairs', because I believe that student affairs is the largest single 'faculty' at any university that caters for all students. For example, all the 12,000 students at MSU are catered for by the division. When I was a student I learnt out-of-class. I spent a better part of my time out-of-class. I think that is the most important time. For your own information, faculty only wants a student when they are well and good. When they faint etc., they call someone from student affairs.

Having discussed the perceptions by students, lecturers and university administration and management staff, now it is time to find out what student affairs say is their role. Do they understand their role? Do they think the rest of the university members understand their role the same way they do it? Do they cater for all students? The answers to these and more questions shall be sought in the succeeding discussion on what student affairs staff themselves say is their role in university education.

4.5 Student Affairs Staff's Perception of their Role

I interviewed five members of the division of student affairs from the Graduate Employment, Accommodation, Health and Sports departments. My last interviewee was a senior member of student affairs at MSU. The duration of the interviews were as follows: SA_1 lasted 20

minutes 50 seconds, SA_2: 10 minutes15 seconds, SA_3: 14 minutes 2 seconds, SA_4: 20 minutes 4 seconds and SA_5: 27 minutes 30 seconds.

SA_1 emphasised the need for student affairs to ensure graduate employment and placement, job hunting skills, CV writing, job applications and interview skills, in addition to creating fertile ground for student development. In his own words, he noted that:

> To a larger extent, students do not know why student affairs is there. In the first place, they think we are a group of prefects there to monitor and punish them when they misbehave. That is not true. It is because of this that we need to market and raise awareness to ensure that students and faculty know about student affairs. However, our biggest challenge is to try and motivate students to take part in these development programmes.

The issues relayed by this participant largely reflect the day to day activities of his office. Graduate employment is critical. Unfortunately, this area that concerns where the student goes after university, or simply what happens to students after graduation, is not given the requisite prominence it deserves. As has been noted earlier, levels of unemployment and underemployment in Zimbabwe have reached alarming rates. This has been exacerbated by economic, political instability and illegal sanctions by the Western countries which characterised our country in the past decade. This caused a gradual depletion of investor confidence, closure of both local and foreign firms and brain drain. I think the situation is so dire that for every ten youths you meet two of them might be unemployed while three might be underemployed. Universities cannot afford to ignore such vicissitudes of the economics and politics of the labour market. Another measure of success of a university is surely the level of employability of its graduates.

SA_1 further claims that 'student affairs is home away from home'. This implies that student affairs division also seeks to create a living and learning environment for students. However, the respondent alleges that 'academics still are not aware of what we do'. This contrasts with another respondent who is a lecturer, who argued that it is the student affairs division that does not inform academics about the activities or events on their diaries. Therefore, there seems to be an information gap on the understanding of the role of student affairs. Communication to and involvement of faculty and administration members in student affairs programmes seem to be a sustainable solution to filling the information gap. Thus, SA_1

offered the solution towards creating mutual understanding about the role of student affairs when he reiterated that there is need to market the student affairs division and raise awareness to ensure that students and faculty know about the department.

The issue of students viewing student affairs as a group of prefects can be assigned a lot of significance in terms of perceived, constructed or real student affairs roles. Among these 'prefects' roles include monitoring, controlling and punishing student behaviour. It has also emerged that some students and some academics alike do not know the role of student affairs. While university authorities need to give due recognition of what student affairs do, it is also imperative for student affairs to prove their worth. As is suggested by this respondent, they must produce tangible results (OBE)[2] lest faculty will always try to embarrass them. Finally, it is fundamental to analyze the input that the role of student affairs has changed over time to include the concept of outside learning. That the role of student affairs has changed over the time especially from in loco parentis to student development and student learning is also captured in the literature review of this thesis. Now the change has been confirmed.

It has, for the fourth time now, been reiterated by the respondent that 85% of what you know comes from outside the classroom. There is need to comment further on this point, even if it does not fall within the envisaged Blimling's theoretical framework of the function of student affairs adopted in this research. By way of implication, student affairs being home away from home means quite a lot in terms of roles. These roles range from in loco parentis to student growth, development and learning as provided for in the Blimling's framework. It can even go further than student learning to encompass a fifth model of student affairs roles which this research can reveal. This is student synthesis. This is a blend of what the student becomes after college. Some may want to call it student production. Whichever way, it has emerged that student affairs contribute toward student synthesis (production) in a number of ways, some of which have already been outlined in the preceding analyses. However, at this point, it is important to note that student synthesis, in the context of this thesis in which it has been born, incorporates continuous student development and student learning and surpasses this by blending these two into fruition (synthesis). In essence, this is the functionality of what has become of the student during and after student learning and student development. The issue of alumni is also covered in this model of student affairs roles.

---

[2] outcomes based education

SA$_2$ worked in the Department of Residences. He mentioned all the basic student affairs services that have been discussed so far, which include, among others, personal growth of students, student problems, accommodation and the whole student development. The respondent further alleged that 'faculty's only interest in students is when they want a house in campus as a perk'. This is the second time this point has been highlighted. Finally, it was interesting to note how SA$_2$ distinguished between lecturers and student affairs staff. He observed that lecturers are teaching the students, classroom teaching while the student affairs staff teach the students the skills they require when they leave the classroom. In this sense, the role of student affairs as a teacher /educator outside the classroom is under spotlight.

SA$_3$ worked in the Department of Health Services. She indicated that the role of student affairs revolves around the welfare of students and 'equipping students with skills to cope with challenges that lie ahead after their graduation'. This has been represented by another respondent as creating 'life after university during university'. This is critical since students need to fit into the larger global village after college. If this is done, it will ensure that students 'do not graduate with a degree in one hand and an inability to function in the real world on the other' as was noted in Chapter 2.

The respondent further noted that student affairs exist at a university in order to 'ensure peace and stability'. She maintained that 'if we remove student affairs there will be so much unrest. There will be chaos.' This view of the role of student affairs can be classified under the 'Other' category. It appears to be a popular view of the role of student affairs by the employer. If students boycott lectures or worse still mount protests of any scale, the media are awash with negative publicity about the university's assumed poor management of student affairs. What with the political instability of the past decade in Zimbabwe, state university Vice-Chancellors, for both fear of the unknown and fear of non-renewal of their contracts should they expire, would not want student unrest at their campuses. The interviewee might have taken this view from the employer. In other words, student unrest is viewed as a sign of poor administration. Therefore, according to this view, student affairs are employed to ensure that students do not demonstrate against the university.

SA$_3$ further noted that:

> Students think that student affairs is not very important. Moreover, most of the
> academic staff see the student affairs division as a secondary thing or service

provider. It's not our core business. So I think that's why students look at it in this way.

Indeed, two of the interviewed non-resident students expressed that student affairs is yielding nothing and is not essential to obtaining a degree. If students view student affairs as not important, it means the students in question would not have derived any value from what student affairs offer. Hence, student affairs should offer value to students. Similarly, the respondent said most of the lecturers see it [student affairs] as a secondary thing or service provider. This sentiment has been discussed before. Students' view of the role of student affairs appears to be influenced by the university administrators and their lecturers. In this light, the role of student affairs needs to be so clear that it convinces outsiders that it is not second class. As I have noted before, student affairs should demonstrate its worth. The OBE noted earlier on is crucial as an operating philosophy of student affairs.

SA$_4$ worked in the Department of Sports. He indicated that student affairs' role include 'organising sports for students and staff'; 'refreshing role'; and attending to 'students' problems'. The negative view by lecturers is mentioned again:

> I think at the moment, lecturers feel that we are here to entertain students. They do not see us playing a role in student's learning activities. They view us as just people who are not learned, hence we are only playing with / entertaining students.

In my discussion of input by SA$_1$, I have argued that student affairs staff must prove their worth in terms of qualifications, scholarship and professionalism. It seems that at the time of the research, most of the student affairs staff at MSU had first degrees since SA$_4$ remarked that:

> …once a student affairs worker attains a second degree they tend to cross over to the academic side because of lack of recognition of student affairs work'. Student affairs department is regarded as 'non-academic'.

May be the low perception of the role of student affairs at a university contributes to this discrepancy in the recognition system.

My last interview was with SA$_5$, a senior member of the Division of Student Affairs. She did not waste time but went straight into the student learning and student development communities of practice in student affairs. The respondent pointed out the following:

> As far as the student affairs is concerned, learning is at the top of the agenda. Learning outside the classroom. We see ourselves as educators. Student development is our core business. We strive to provide a conducive living and learning environment in halls of residence. Most importantly, we also work on training students how to live healthy and humane lives during and after college.

She was also quick to note the need to 'come up with an association of all student affairs practitioners like they do in South Africa'. Then, there was no such an association in Zimbabwe. Currently there is a Deans of Student Affairs in Zimbabwe Forum. The much anticipated association of student affairs practitioners has not been fully operational. I feel the establishment of such an association is long overdue. It is one such a professional platform that would go a long way in doing public relations for the field as well as staff developing its own members. I see this as one way in which student affairs can empower themselves and focus on producing 'tangible results'. It will also double as a forum for educating stakeholders about the transforming role of student affairs.

The question of developing a whole student not just an academic youth resonates with the sentiment that has been discussed earlier that, while lecturers teach / train the student in class, student affairs teach / train the student outside the classroom. By so doing, the student is trained to live a 'humane' life during and after college. I can confess that sometimes student behaviour during and after college can be wild and indecorous and hence, unacceptable. We can have mature students and immature ones. The maturity is not physical but intellectual. So students who go on the rampage destroying property and perpetrating all forms of hooliganism can be branded immature. Human beings are not dogs or jackals. However, due to the commodified student protests especially in Zimbabwe's current economic and political instability environment, students end up behaving inhumanely for want of financial aid however small. The ability to argue one's case peacefully and even demonstrate peacefully is an epitome of intellectual actualisation.

In addition to this, SA$_5$ chronicled an interesting historical development of the role of student affairs. She claimed that:

In the late 80s, student affairs was regarded as a non- academic support unit responsible for students' control and welfare. However, the role of student affairs changed over time and has become dynamic and specialised.

As also noted by AM₁, she lamented the lack of a 'career path' for student affairs in Zimbabwe. By this she was referring to the training of student affairs professionals just like in any other professions – teaching, nursing and construction. She noted that a number of lecturers from 'the old school struggle to understand student affairs because they did not go through it'. From the discussion of the views of the lecturers on the role of student affairs above, such instances of lecturers from the old school can be depicted. It was however encouraging to be told by SA₅ that they were 'building the bridge between student affairs and faculty'. Furthermore, she noted that those lecturers who went through student affairs were eager to participate in outside learning and that the issue of calling student affairs 'non-academic' was moving away.

She also alluded to the already noted point that student affairs operations are at the mercy of the institutional leadership:

> If our Vice-Chancellor moves we are in trouble again, you start not being called to some critical meetings, the system falls back. We are enjoying it here but I don't know whether other student affairs staff elsewhere are enjoying as well.

This goes to reiterate the fact that if the university leadership has and demonstrates a genuine appreciation of the role of student affairs, allocation of resources for student affairs programmes is assured. The reverse can be true. To sum up this part, this study has in its own way managed to interrogate and forward some of the polemical concerns about the field of student affairs. The next final chapter gives the conclusion and recommendations.

4.6 Collation of Responses

Table 1 below is an indication of the collated views of the respondents against the adopted Blimling's model of communities of practice in student affairs. Each view is allotted the participants' codes to show the frequency of the view.

Table 1: *Collated Views of the Respondents*

Communities of Practice	Students	Lecturers	Administration and Management Staff	Student Affairs Staff
Student Services	–welfare: food; health; accommodation (all). –sports (all).	–welfare (all) –sports (all) –spiritual needs (L_2) –counselling (L_2, L_3)	–welfare (AM_2) –Sports (AM_2) –counselling (AM_2) –sports (AM_4) –spiritual needs (AM_4)	–welfare (SA_1, SA_2, SA_3) –sports (SA_4,
Student Administration	–students' problems (all). –disabilities (S_5) –mediator (S_1)	–informal activities (L_1) –disabilities (L_2) –orientation (L_2) –students' problems (L_3) –mediator (L_3) –disciplinary role (L_3)	–informal activities (AM_1, AM_3, AM_4) –disciplinary role (AM_5)	–students' problems (SA_2, SA_4) –orientation (SA_5)
Student	–leadership	–leadership	–moral growth	–whole

81

Development	development (S_1, S_4) – communication skills (S_1)	development (L_1, L_2, L_5) –confidence building (L_2) –moral growth (L_1, L_3, L_4) –whole student (L_4, L_5)	(AM_1, AM_2, AM_5) –whole student (AM_1, AM_4, AM_5) –leadership development (AM_1) – communication skills (AM_2) –mothering function (AM_2) –moral growth (AM_4)	student (SA_1, SA_2, SA_4, SA_5) –student development (SA_1, SA_2, SA_5)
Student Learning	–social growth (S_2, S_5) –graduate employment (S_2, S_5)	–social growth (L_1) –life skills (L_1, L_4) –career guidance (L_1, L_4)	–learning out of class (AM_1, AM_3, AM_4) –social growth (AM_1, AM_3, AM_5) –life skills (AM_2, AM_4) –career guidance $(AM_2,$	–graduate employment (SA_1) –career guidance (SA_1, SA_2, SA_5) –life skills (SA_3, SA_5) –learning

			AM$_3$, AM$_4$)	(SA$_4$, SA$_5$)
			–educator role (AM$_4$)	–educator role (SA$_5$)
Other	–advisory role (S$_1$)	–advocate roles –inspiring (L$_1$) students(L$_3$)		–ensuring peace & stability (SA$_3$)

Table 1 summarises the participants' views on the role of student affairs in university education. It is clear that students lacked detail in their responses as compared to the views given by the other participants. There is general consensus amongst the responses about Blimling's two communities of practice: student services and student administration. This guides us to the thinking that, in the main, people regard student affairs role as revolving around student services and student administration. Hence, the issue of student affairs attending to 'students' problems' is a recurring motif in the responses captured above.

Under Blimling's student learning community of practice in student affairs, the 'social growth' of students dominated the responses. There could be learning in the process of students' social growth. The same can also be said that there could be student development in the process of their social growth. Social consciousness is critical to the social growth of students. This social awareness also tends to empower students to embrace moral values and ethics thus, enhances whole student development. Basically, there has been consensus by respondents that student affairs role entails student services (residences, sports, counselling and catering), and student administration (orientation, welfare, financial aid and discipline). However, there are notable variations on participants' feedback on the role of student affairs in student development and student learning communities of practice as propounded by Blimling (2001).

The 'Other' category is characterised by student affairs' advisory and advocate roles, the need for student affairs to inspire students, and above all, the need for student affairs to

maintain peace and stability at a university. Maintaining peace and stability implies that there should not be any form of violent student unrest. According to my experience with student affairs as a student and as captured in my brief narrative, indeed, student affairs tend to measure their success in the level of peace and stability that would have prevailed on campus.

4.7 Conclusion

The key research questions in this study are how the role of student affairs is perceived and the implications of such perceptions. It can be confirmed that indeed one's perception of the role of student affairs is dependent upon one's constraining and empowering beliefs about the field as promulgated by Astin and Astin (2000). Manning et al (2006) calls these constraining beliefs 'myths and misconceptions' about the role of student affairs.

One key point by Astin and Astin (2000) is the indication that some university structures and policies tend to relegate the role of student affairs. This relegation of the role and status of student affairs may then become the immediate frame of reference of some members of the university community and hence tend to see the role of student affairs in this way. This explains why there have been calls for the university executive to strengthen the position and status of student affairs so that the rest of the members of the university could follow suit. Manning et al (2006) note that the myths and misconceptions about the role of student affairs often border on inadequate information about what student affairs does. While what faculty does is largely known, what the student affairs department does is not as clearly cut as it should be.

The narrative that I have given of my experiences with student affairs as an undergraduate at MSU (which is also the location of this research) accorded a deeper analysis of the role of student affairs in university education by drawing parallels to participants' views. It also reveals a practical window from which one can relate to the dynamics of the role of student affairs in university education.

This study has made an attempt at exploring the role of the division of student affairs in university education with particular reference to MSU in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. This area of study can never be exhaustive but recommendations can be made. These recommendations might be useful as both an insight and a continuation of further enquiry into the subject under study. The participants have given their views. In light of these

views, the next chapter delineates the recommendations made. However, it must be borne in mind that there might never be a one size fits all forms of practice in student affairs. Student affairs communities of practice are bound to differ from one institution to the other due to varying institutional ethos.   In this chapter I have presented the data and analysed the responses and in the final chapter I will draw these together as a conclusion, with the addition of some recommendations and areas for further study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the key findings of the study, based on the methods applied. It is imperative at this point to reiterate that the purpose of the study was to get an appreciation of the role of student affairs in university education, with special reference to MSU. That aside, the purpose of this chapter is to further highlight, in summary though, some of the pertinent issues that emerged during the data collection and analysis phases. The chapter does highlight a few of the most prominent issues, all of which endeavoured to portray the role of student affairs in university education. These issues mainly emanated from participants who either appreciated that student affairs is a key function of the university, which the university cannot do without, or those who lamented that the student affairs department is doing less on student life at college. Many of the roles of student affairs revolve around issues of students' accommodation, food, health and the overall social life of students, as given by the respondents.

There could be other roles, but as far as the MSU sampled participants and the narrative are concerned, quite a number of basic yet unique and related issues came up. These include the following sentiments that:

- ❖ student affairs roles are still seen as playing second fiddle
- ❖ student affairs educators are still regarded by some members of faculty as inferior non-academic technicians
- ❖ student affairs operate without a syllabus
- ❖ student affairs disturb faculty business
- ❖ student affairs should educate members of the university community on what they do
- ❖ the attitude of top management is central to the recognition of student affairs status and efforts
- ❖ national politics infiltrates into student politics and sometimes influences the behaviour of students as they engage in commodified student activism. This ultimately affects the role of student affairs as they grapple with the need to inculcate peace and dialogue amongst the student union.

- student affairs should reach out to every student in the same way that faculty does, and
- the challenge for student affairs educators is to try and motivate students to participate in their out of class learning and development programmes.

These critical issues which have been quoted in this study can be subjects for further debate and research.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in order to, among other things, possibly help conscientize all members of the university community and concerned stakeholders in higher education practice in Zimbabwe and beyond about the contested role of student affairs in university education, drawing from the MSU context. By so doing, it is hoped that the myths and misconceptions about the role of student affairs may further be engaged and interrogated. In the main, these recommendations are critical to student affairs educators themselves in so far as they wish to benchmark their performance against some notable principles of good practice for student affairs happening in higher education elsewhere in the world.

Having carried out this study of the perceived student affairs roles by stakeholders, having given my own narrative on the role of student affairs, having read extensively on student affairs as a discipline and having made observations captured in this thesis, the following points are therefore, forwarded as recommendations:

- student affairs mission must not only be to maintain order, but also to educate students
- student affairs' main job should be to assist the university in meeting the educational needs of all students by fostering student growth and development
- the mission and goals for out-of-class activities should be stated as learning outcomes
- student affairs should communicate to students the intended educational outcomes associated with specific programmes
- students should evaluate programmes and activities in which they participate

- ❖ students should be informed that their institution has high expectations for their academic and personal achievements and active involvement in campus life and activities that increase their self-understanding and self-confidence
- ❖ university institutions should recognise outstanding student accomplishments through rewards, honorary organisations and other forms of public recognition
- ❖ faculty and student affairs educators should be rewarded for outstanding work which improves the quality of student life
- ❖ records of student accomplishments and involvement in meaningful educational activities out of class should be maintained as an express proof of what student affairs do
- ❖ student affairs educators should be actively engaged in research to assess student learning outcomes, measure student satisfaction, needs, and outcomes and understand what students are learning to improve programmes and services
- ❖ research priorities on student affairs should be included in the institutional research agenda
- ❖ research results and their implications should be communicated on a regular basis to faculty, staff and students
- ❖ student affairs educators should be knowledgeable about the literature of their profession and apply its theories and practices
- ❖ student affairs staff should be involved in professional associations and present research findings both on and off the campus
- ❖ educational outcomes should be used to determine the design and use of indoor and outdoor learning spaces
- ❖ the division of student affairs should recruit, hire, and train student affairs educators who are knowledgeable about learning theory and human development
- ❖ faculty, students and student affairs educators should collaborate to link academic programmes with out of class learning experiences, and
- ❖ faculty and administrative staff from other divisions should be invited to student affairs staff meetings to discuss campus issues and programme planning.

This area on the role of student affairs in university education is indeed not new given the outline of related literature reviewed, but certainly, the enquiry is relatively new in the context of higher education practice in Zimbabwe. As has been noted under the history of

student affairs in Zimbabwe, there is not much literature written about student affairs in Zimbabwe save for the history of student activism in the context of the emergence of MDC as an opposition national political party to reckon, the imposition of illegal economic sanctions on Zimbabwe by America, and the then hyper-inflationary economic milieu amid international calls for corporate governance, democracy, rule of law and regime change. Notwithstanding, the role of student affairs in university education has been generally proved to reflect Blimling's model of the communities of practice in student affairs. There is also the 'Other' category of student affairs roles that has been created and discussed in order to cater for the participant feedback that could not be easily categorised under Blimling's model. The respondent's points and related issues from my narrative have been collated on Table 1 in Chapter 4.

5.3 Further Research

Further research still needs to be done on the status given to student affairs in the university system of operations. This status is likely to be influenced by the views that people have of the role of student affairs. For example, it is alleged (in Zimbabwe) that lecturers are rewarded better than student affairs workers. If this is true, then this reward system, slanted in favour of faculty, could be a reflection of the value and status accorded to the division of student affairs. There is also need to investigate that out of a student population of approximately 12,000, for example, how many students benefit from student affairs. There is also need to investigate the role of student affairs with regard to non-resident students. The other area that certainly requires further interrogation is the feasibility of a double transcript award system in universities in Zimbabwe and Africa.

5.4 Conclusion

Based on the results, especially from the student affairs staff, what has been noted is the progress that student affairs staff is making in integrating student learning and development outcomes assessment into their professional practice. Through their knowledge of student characteristics and attitudes, through their ability to devise services aligned with the academic mission of the institution, as well as with their understanding of student learning outside the classroom, the general perception is that student affairs practitioners are striving to bring a unique and informed perspective to their institution's learning and development programmes. However, for various reasons, such contributions have not been appreciated or fully utilised by other stakeholders like some students and academic staff who allege that the student

affairs is not doing enough to cater for their needs and tend to waste time. They also claim that student affairs is not essential for attaining a degree. Having said all that, an important issue that came out of this study is the fact that all the stakeholders of the university need to work together in order to achieve the mission and vision of the institution. Fully comprehending and appreciating student learning and development activities both in and outside of class require collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals. By so doing, I am confident that student affairs practitioners would be ready, willing, and be geared towards embracing their challenges in a manner that is in line with their profession.

As we consider the future role of student affairs in the teaching and learning process, the prominent proverb "All our past proclaims our future" can give us predictive insights. Looking at the recent past to see outlines of the future, one can be reminded that student affairs emerged out of the reluctance of faculty to become involved in the "hands-on" aspect of college student life. With this in mind, it is apparent that the teaching-learning role of student affairs would engross new and creative combinations of the hands-on/hands-off process. This emphasis on new ways of professionalism is critical, given that the students of today, and even more, those of tomorrow, are very different from those of yesterday. They are much more diverse in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, lifestyle and technology, to mention but a few. Therefore, as we focus on amplified student learning as well as a greater sense of "community within diversity," student affairs would have to go beyond many aspects of the renewed past as they construct an unpredictable future for students. In that instance, effective and creative student affairs staff responsibilities would embrace the future while remaining deeply rooted in the past. Of course the challenge is exciting but energising at the same time.

References

Allen, K. E. and Garb, E. L. (1993) 'Reinventing Student Affairs: Something Old and Something New', 30(2), 93-100.   American College Personnel Association (ACPA) (1995) *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications   for   Student   Affairs*. Washington D.C.: Author.

Aspin, D and Chapman, J.D. (2000) 'Lifelong Learning: Concepts and Conceptions'. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 19, 2-19.

Astin, A. W. (1996) 'Involvement in Learning Revisited: Lessons we have Learned'. *Journal of Student College Development*, 40, 587 – 597.

Astin, A. W. (1993) *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited.* San Fransico: Jossey –Bass.

Astin, A. W. and Astin, H. S. (2000) *Learning Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*. Kellogg Foundation: Michigan.

Badat, M. S. (1999) *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid: From SASO to SANSCO, 1968 – 1990.* Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Bernard, H.R. (2002) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods.* 3rd Edition. AltaMira Press: California.

Blimling, G. S. (2001) 'Uniting Scholarship and Communities of Practice in Student Affairs'. *Journal of College Student Development*, 42(4), 381-395.

Blimling, G. S., Whitt, E. J. And Associates (1999) *Good Practice in Student Affairs: Principles to Foster Student Learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Botman,[3] Russel (2011) Keynote Address at the 13th Annual Conference of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP), 19-21 October.

Brown, R.D. (1972) *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education – A Return to the Academy.* Alexandria VA: American College Personnel Association.

Brubacher, J.S. and Rudy, W. (1958) *Higher Education in Transition.* New York: Harper and Row.

Carpenter, S. (2001) 'Student Affairs Scholarship (Re) Considered: Toward a Scholarship of Practice'. *Journal of College Student Development,* 42 (4), 301-318.

Castells, M. (2001) 'Universities as Dynamic Systems of Contradictory Functions'. In: J. Muller, N. Cloete and S. Badat (eds.) *Challenges of Globalization*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Chikwanha, A. B. (2009) 'Higher Education and Student Politics in Zimbabwe'. In: D.P. Chimanikire (Ed.). *Youth and Higher Education in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Daily Mirror (2004) 'UZ Likely to Delay Opening', 18 August.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2000) *Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dungy, G. J. and Ellis, S. E. (eds). (2011) *Exceptional Senior Student Affairs Administrators' Leadership: Strategies and Competences for Success*. Maryland: NASPA.

Eddy, J. P. And Murphy, S. D. (2000) *International Higher Education Systems.* Maryland: University Press of America.

Financial Gazette, 8 June 2001.

Freeman, J. P. and Goldin, A. (2008) *The Increasing Importance of Student Leadership Development Programs in Higher Education.* NASPA: NASPA Net Results.

Fried, J. And Associates. (1995) *Shifting Paradigms in Student Affairs*. Maryland: University Press of America.

---

[3] Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University and Vice-President of the Association of African Universities.

Gaidzanwa, R. B. (1993) 'The Politics of the Body and the Politics of Control: An Analysis of Class, Gender and Cultural Issues in Student Politics at the University of Zimbabwe'. *Zambezia*, 20 (1), pp.15-33.

Garratt, B. (1994) *The Learning Organization.* London: Harper Collins.

Gaston-Gayless, J. L., Wolf-Wendel, L. E., Tuttle, K. N., Twombly, S. B. and Ward, K. (2005) 'From Disciplinarian to Change Agent: How the Civil Rights Era Changed the Role of Student Affairs'. *NASPA Journal*, 42 (3).

Grasgreen, P. (2011) *A Return to the Academy.* Inside Higher Education, http://www.insidehighered.com.

Guba, E.G. (2000) *The Paradigm Dialog*. California: Sage.

Hansen, G. R. (1980) *Instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hartley, M. (2001) 'Student Learning as a Framework for Student Affairs – Rhetoric or Reality'. *NASPA Journal*, 38(2).

Hopwood, K. (1961) 'Who is for the Ark?'- An ACPA Presidential Address. *Journal of the College Student Development,* 40(5), 457 – 462.

Hwami, M. and Kapoor, D. (2012) 'Neo-colonialism, Higher Education and Student Activism in Zimbabwe'. *Postcolonial Directions in Education,* 1(1), 31-66.

Kerlin, B. A. (1999) *Qualitative Research: Analysis Without Numbers*. http://kerlins.net: 10/02/06.

Knock, G.H. (1985) *Development of Student Services in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G. D. (1995) 'The Other Curriculum: Out-of- Class Experiences Associated with Student Learning and Personal Development'. *Journal of Higher Education,* 66 (2), 123-155.

Lacey, A. And Luff, D. (2001) *Trend Focus for Research and Development in Primary Healthcare: An Introduction to Qualitative Analysis.* Thousand Oaks: Trend Focus.

Legge, K. (1999) *Human Resource Management: Rhetorics and Realities.* Palgrave: Macmillan.

Leshem, S. and Trafford, V. N. (2006) 'Stories as Mirrors: Reflective Practice in Teaching and Learning. *Reflective Practice,* 7(1), 9-72.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Carpenter, D. S. (1999) *The Responsive University: Methods and Rationale.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research.

Lloyd, J. (2004) *The Perceptions of the Purpose and Assessment Process of Leadership Development Programs.* Unpublished manuscript: University of Georgia.

Lucas, C. (1996) *Crisis in the Academy: Rethinking Higher Education in America.* New York: St Martins Press.

Magolda, P. M. and Magolda, M. B. B. (2011) *Contested Issues in Student Affairs.* New York: Stylus.

Mandew, M. (2003) *A Guide to Student Services in South Africa.* Pretoria: Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).

Manning, K., Kinzie, J. and Schuh, J. (2006) *One Size Does Not Fit All.* New York: Routledge.

Manning, K. (1996). 'Contemplating the Myths of Student Affairs'. *NASPA Journal*, 34(1).

Maree, K. (ed.) (2007) *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. London: Sage.

Miller, T.K., Winston, R.B. and Mendenhall, W.R. (1983) *Administration and Leadership in Student Affairs: Actualizing Student Development in Higher Education*. USA: Accelerated Development.

Mlambo, A. S. (2010) *Postcolonial Higher Education in Zimbabwe: The University of Zimbabwe as a Case Study 1980 – 2004*. Kleio: Published online.

Moja, T. And Cloete M. (2001) *Vanishing Borders and New Boundaries*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

NASPA and ACPA (2004). *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus Focus on the Student Experience*. http://www.myacpa.org: 10/02/12.

NASPA (1987) *A Perspective for Student Affairs.* Washington DC: Author.

Neuman, L. W. (2003) *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches.* 5th Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Neuman, L. W. (2000) *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches.* 4th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Nuss, E. M. (1996) *The Development of Student Affairs.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pitman, M. A. and Maxwell, J. A. (1992) *Qualitative Approaches to Evaluation.* San Diego: Academic Press.

Ralph B. (1966) *ACPA Presidential Address*. 211-212.

Rentz, A. L. and Associates (1996) *Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education*. Illinois: Charles Thomas.

Robert L. P. (2011) Student address. Available at: http://www.fullerton.edu/sa/saoffice/roleofsa.htm. Accessed: 10/8/11.

Roberts, Dennis[4] (2001) Personal Communication, March 27.

Schroeder, C. C. (1999) 'Forging Educational Partnerships that Advance Student Learning'. In: Blimling, Whitt and Associates. *Good Practice in Student Affairs: Principles to Foster Student Learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Scott, P. (2000) *Globalization and the University: Challenges for the 21st Century.* http://www.chet.org.za: 20/9/2012).

Share, F. (2009) 'Accommodation Crisis Forces University of Zimbabwe Students to Live in Slums'. *The Herald,* http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13369:accommodation-crisis-forces-university-of-zimbabwe-to-live-in-slums&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=30

Sharp, D. L. and Grace, C. G. (1996) *Student Development: An Integrated Approach to the Age Old Pursuit.* Ann Arbor: Society for College and University Planning.

Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) (2001) *NASPA Journal*, 38 (2). Strauss, A. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists.* Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Terre-Blanche, M. and Durrheim, K. (eds.) (1999) *Research in Practice*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Tongco, Ma. D. C. (2007) 'Purposive Sampling as a Tool for Informant Selection'. *Journal of Plants, People and Applied Research*. http://hdl.handle.net: 12/1/2013.

Torres, C. A. and Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Globalization and Education: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

UNESCO, (2002) *The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education. A practical manual for developing, implementing and assessing student affairs programmes and services.* Follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris 5-9 October 1998).

Weaver-Hart, A. (1988) 'Framing an Innocent Concept and Getting Away with it'. *UCEA Review*, 24(2), 11 – 12.

Zeilig, L. (2008) 'Student Politics and Activism in Zimbabwe: The Frustrated Transition'. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43(2), 215 – 237.

---

[4] Then NASPA President

Zeilig, L. (2007) *Revolt and Protest: Student Politics and Activism in Sub-Saharan Africa.* New York: Taurus Academic Studies.

Zeleza, P. T. (1997) *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises*. Dakar: CODESRIA Book Series.

Zvobgo, R. J. (1999) *The Post-Colonial State and Educational Reform: Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana*. Harare: ZPH.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Abbreviations

ACE – American Council of Education.

ACPA – American College Personnel Association.

AZASO –Azania Students' Organization.

COSPA – Council of Student Personnel Association.

MSU – Midlands State University.

NASPA – National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

NUSAS – National Union of South African Students.

SANSCO – South African National Students Congress.

SASO – South African Students' Organization.

SLI – Student Learning Imperative.

SRC –Student Representative Council.

UCT – University of Cape Town.

UZ – University of Zimbabwe.

ZICOSU – Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union.

ZINASU – Zimbabwe National Students Union

Interview Schedules

Interview Questions for Student Affairs Staff

1. What does your job entail?
2. How clearly defined is your job as a student affairs worker?
3. Briefly explain how you became a student affairs worker?
4. What qualification do you think is necessary for one to do the job?
5. What do you think is the connection between what students do with lecturers in class and what you do with students out of class?
6. Of what value is student affairs work to students?
7. What kind of recognition may be given to what students do out of class?
8. What more can student affairs offer to students?
9. What challenges do you face in doing your work?
10. Comment on the statement that universities can do without student affairs.
11. What else would you like to say about student affairs?

Interview Questions for Students

1. What does student affairs division do at this university?
2. What aspects of student affairs are you familiar with?
3. What aspects of student affairs have you used?
4. How valuable have these aspects been to you?
5. How well does student affairs do its work?
6. What is the connection between what you do in class with lecturers and what you do out of class with student affairs?
7. What more can student affairs offer you?
8. Comment on the statement that student affairs can do without student affairs.
9. What more can you say about student affairs?

Interview Questions for Lecturers

1. What do you think are the roles of the student affairs staff?

2. What aspects of student affairs roles are you involved in?

3. What kind of qualification and training do you think student affairs workers need?

4. What is the value of what students do out of class with student affairs staff?

5. What is the relationship between what students do in class with you and what they do out of class with student affairs staff?

6. What kind of recognition should be given to students' developmental experiences out of class?

7. What more do you think students affairs can offer to students?

8. Comment on the statement that universities can do without student affairs.

9. What else would you like to say about student affairs?

Interview Questions for Administrative and Management Staff

1. What are the roles of the division of student affairs?

2. How are these roles constructed?

3. How are these roles consistent with the mission and vision of the university?

4. How does one become a student affairs worker? What qualification and training is needed?

5. Of what value is student affairs work to students?

6. What is the relationship between what students do in class with lecturers and what they do out of class with student affairs workers?

7. What recognition do you think should be given to students' developmental experiences out of class?

8. How would you comment on the statement that student affairs workers are educators?

9. What more can the university administration and management do to improve the division of student affairs' discharge of duties?

10. What policy is there to regulate student affairs practice?

11. Comment on the statement that universities can do without student affairs.

12. What else would you like to say about student affairs?

GUIDELINES FOR DRAWING UP AN INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The Informed Consent document could either be

1. in the form of a letter to the participant, containing information on the items listed below and concluding with a declaration allowing for the name of the participant, signature and date, or

2. drawn up as a declaration with a separate information sheet containing information on the items listed below

Note: in the case of 1 above, a copy of the signed consent has to be given to the participant.

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

. **The project title understandable by the lay person.**

. **A statement of the projects aims, in terms understandable by the lay person,**

. **The names, affiliations and contact details of the investigator/s, with qualifications where appropriate,**

. **Name, contact address or telephone number of an independent person whom potential subjects may contact for further information, usually the project supervisor, team leader or school director,**

. **A brief explanation of how the subject was identified,**

. **A clear explanation of what is required of the subjects who agree to participate, including descriptions of any procedures they will undergo and any tasks they will perform, together with an indication of any possible discomfort or any possible hazards involved. The estimated total time of involvement and the number of occasions or duration of time over which this involvement is spread should be stated.**

. **Potential benefits to be derived from participating in the study should be stated,**

. **An indication of payments or reimbursements of financial expenses incurred by subjects,**

. **A statement on the use of any written, audio or video recordings made,**

. **An indication of how and when the gathered data will be disposed of,**

. **A statement assuring confidentiality or anonymity as appropriate,**

. **A statement that a decision not to participate will not result in any**

form of disadvantage,

. A statement that participation is voluntary and that subjects are free to withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason.

EXAMPLE OF DECLARATION

I……………………………………………………………………(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE
………………………………………………………………………………………………

NOTE:
 Potential subjects should be given time to read, understand and question the information given before giving consent. This should include time out of the presence of the investigator and time to consult friends and/or family.