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The development and implementation of an institutional tuition policy for an open and distance learning institution: A case study of the University of South Africa

by

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DEDICATION

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Gloria in excélsis Deo

Summary

This study explores the development and implementation of a tuition policy at the 'single dedicated distance education institution in South Africa,' which is the University of South Africa. The discussion focuses specifically on 'how different stakeholders participated in the development and implementation of the Unisa tuition policy'. In this context, the author contends that the development and implementation of an institutional tuition policy is influenced by various factors relating to the determination of the roles to be played by various stakeholders in the process. A broader consideration is whether or not and how tuition policy development and implementation influence teaching and learning in distance education.

The perspective taken in this study necessarily includes the different acts and policy documents that focus on the development of the higher education sector in South Africa, which consequently influence the practice and experience of distance education. The main findings of the study concur with the notion that there is contention in terms of Unisa tuition policy development and implementation, which leads to a measure of reluctance to implement the policy. Furthermore, the implementation has not been as effective as it might have been, and this defeats the purpose of the policy, which is to promote effective teaching and learning in distance education. The data derived from the investigation partly support this study's concern that the development and implementation of this policy depend on participants' and stakeholders' mental models. The findings also show that the contention regarding the determination of roles in the development and implementation has negative impacts on the effectiveness of teaching and learning at Unisa, which may not be very obvious to the stakeholders involved. Crucially, it was also found that the stakeholders could not separate their institutional roles and positions from their roles in policy development and implementation. It is in the context of these findings that the author recommends that policy development and implementation for effective teaching and learning should critically define the institutional roles of those engaged in policy development and implementation in a distance education institution such as Unisa.

Key words: Unisa tuition policy, open and distance learning, distance education, policy development and implementation, teaching and learning.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie ondersoek die ontwikkeling en implementering van ’n onderrigbeleid by ’n ‘enkel toegewyde afstandsonderrig instansie in Suid Afrika’, by name die Universiteit van Suid Afrika (Unisa). Die studiefokus op ‘hoe verskillende rolspelers deelgeneem het aan die ontwikkeling en implementering van die Unisa onderrigbeleid’. Van uit die konteks, betoog ek dat die ontwikkeling en implementering van ‘n institusionele onderrigbeleid beïnvloed word deur verskeie faktore wat verband hou met die bepaling van die rolle wat die verskillende rolspelers in die proses vertolk. ’n Meer oorhoofse oorweging is of en hoe die ontwikkeling en implementering van die onderrigbeleid leer en onderrig in afstandsonderrig beïnvloed.

Vanuit die perspektief van hierdie studie is dit noodsaaklik om die verskillende wette en beleidsdokumente wat fokus op die ontwikkeling van die hoër onderwys sektor in Suid Afrika en gevolglik die praktyk en ondervinding van afstandsonderrig beïnvloed, in te sluit. Die belangrikste bevindinge van die studie onderskryf die opvatting dat daar verskillende sienings en uitgangspunte is oor die ontwikkeling en implementering van Unisa se onderwysbeleid wat aanleiding gee tot ‘n mate van traagheid in die implementering van die beleid. Die implementering was ook minder effektief as wat verwag is, en dit verydel die doel van die beleid, naamlik die bevordering van effektiewe onderrig en leer in afstandsonderrig. Die data afkomstig van die ondersoek bevestig tot ’n mate my kommer dat die ontwikkeling en implementering van die beleid afhanklik is van die deelnemers en rolspelers se raamwerkmodelle. Die bevindings dui ook daarop dat die verskille oor die bepaling van die rolle in die ontwikkeling en implementering van die beleid ’n negatiewe invloed het op die effektiwiteit van onderrig en leer by Unisa, wat moontlik nie so voor die hand liggend is vir die betrokke rolspelers nie. ’n Belangrike punt is dat daar bevind is dat die rolspelers nie hulle rolle en posisies in die instansie kon skei van hulle rolle in die ontwikkeling en implementering van die beleid nie. Vanuit die konteks en bevindinge beveel ek aan dat beleidsontwikkeling en implementering wat effektiewe onderrig en leer ten doel stel, die institusionele rolle van die persone

betrokke by beleidsontwikkeling en implementering by ’n afstandsonderrig-instansie soos Unisa, krities gedefinieer moet word.

Sleutel woorde: Unisa onderrigbeleid, oop-en afstandsonderrig, afstandsonderrig, beleidsontwikkeling en implementering, onderrig en leer.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACN	Accounting
ANC	African National Congress
BLD	Bureau for Learning Development
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CPL	Continuing Professional Learning
DE	Distance Education
DoE	Department of Education
ECS	Economics
ETD	Education, Training and Development
FGI	Focus Group Interview
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICC	International Council for Correspondence
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
ICLD	Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDE	Innovation in Distance Education
ITLR	Improving Teaching and Learning Resources
IQF	International Qualifications Framework
IRFOL	International Research Foundation for Open Learning
NADEOSA	National Association of Distance Education and Open Learning in South Africa
NAP	New Academic Programme
NATED	National Technical Education
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NPHE	National Plan on Higher Education
NTTT	National Task Team on Transformation

OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUTLS	Open University Teaching and Learning Strategy
OUUK	Open University of the United Kingdom
QA	Quality Assurance
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SMS	Short Message System
SAUVCA	South African Universities' Vice Chancellors' Association
TELI	Technology Enhanced Learning Investigation
TIP	Theory in Practice
TSA	Technikon Southern Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
VUDEC	Vista University Distance Education Campus