GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: POLICY OPTIONS

by

EUSEBIUS UGOCHUKWU AKOR

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD in Public Affairs in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

STUDY LEADER: PROF. DR. E.J. VAN ROOYEN

AUGUST 2008
ABSTRACT

The primary objectives of this study are to consider the theoretical foundations of Public Administration and specifically public policy; the international context within which higher education in South Africa operates; the South African higher education context, policy processes and reasons for government intervention in higher education; how these reasons relate to the process of transforming higher education; the problems that have or could result from such intervention; the implications of mergers and incorporations for higher educational institutions; the state of higher education funding and its implications for institutional autonomy and academic freedom; the implications of government intervention in higher education in other areas such as the determination of what universities may teach and student admissions; the claim that the autonomy of higher educational institutions is under threat as a result of the extent of government intervention; and how to enhance cooperative governance between universities and the government.

The secondary objective is to identify the best policy options that the government and higher educational institutions could adopt to rectify identified problems, ensure a higher education system that meets the developmental needs of the country and protects institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

Government intervention in higher education in South Africa aims, among others, at reforming the system of higher education to reflect the new democratic order, setting the higher education system on a path of growth and development and meeting developmental needs. However, the higher education policies that the government established since 1994 have not adequately addressed the challenges of higher education, and the policies in fact contradict themselves in a number of aspects.
The policy objectives of the government’s intervention in higher education will not be (fully) realised if the negative implications of the intervention measures, such as insufficient funding, the bankrupting of universities, alignment of institutional cultures, infringements on institutional autonomy and academic freedom are not adequately addressed in partnership with the management of higher educational institutions and their governance structures. Furthermore, the outcome of the restructuring of the higher education system depends on the abilities of universities to adequately resolve the challenges they confront and provide sound and strategic management.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank almighty God, for giving me the courage, perseverance and ability to complete this project, which I started in 2001, especially in view of the various challenges I confronted. I am grateful that although I had to take time off from this project, I was able in that time to acquire another Masters degree, which I have already put to good use in the workplace.

It has not been easy for me to finish this project, during the course of which I have neglected a number of people close to me in order to make sufficient time available, including my daughter Thando Iffy Akor. I had to devote most of my spare time to this project, because what is worth doing at all is worth doing well and worth completing.

It is with a sad heart that I want to give credit to the late Professor Nico Roux, who passed away in 2006. I cannot believe that he succumbed to cancer. His death has reiterated the fact that the future is unknown. I am greatly indebted to him for his excellent supervision, scholarly advice, encouragement and expertise.

I want to thank my supervisor, Professor Enslin van Rooyen for his expertise, insight and guidance. His contributions, scholarly advice, in-depth and excellent supervision are invaluable and greatly appreciated. I thank Professor Chris Thornhill who read my thesis for his contributions, insight, advice and expertise. I am grateful for the invaluable knowledge and insight of the Director of the School of Public Management and Administration (SPMA), University of Pretoria, Professor Jerry Kuye and the other members of staff that lectured me during the first two years of course work.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and good wishes.
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<td>Academic Integration and Planning Committee</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
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<td>ASGISA</td>
<td>Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa</td>
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<td>CHE</td>
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<td>EEPP</td>
<td>Employment Equity Plan and Policy</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
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<td>F'SATIE</td>
<td>The French South African technical Institute in Electronics</td>
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<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full Time Equivalent</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>USA / US</td>
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<td>VISTA</td>
<td>Vista University Mamelodi Campus</td>
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