Editorial

The new political dispensation in South Africa following the attainment of independence in 1994 sought to address imbalances in, among other issues, access to higher education. This has resulted in a growing diversity of students entering universities. Universities have been called to be responsive and better prepared to deal with student diversity. In line with this, many universities in South Africa have established teaching and learning centres whose mandate is to coordinate academic development for both students and staff.

The need to adequately support staff and students in the enhancement of teaching and learning is mandatory. Academic development programmes assist to bridge pedagogical distance, which is often an impediment to epistemological access. It goes without saying that access to higher education without the requisite success is a futile endeavour. University lecturers also require academic development to ensure that they are kept abreast with latest philosophies and approaches in teaching, learning and assessment. As moves towards professionalising teaching in universities the world over are becoming strong, academic staff development becomes central to university operations.

It has been observed that universities have different approaches to academic development practices. A collection of research articles and concept papers from academics working in academic development in South Africa sought to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas on academic development practices. The institutionalisation of academic development programmes as integral components of the core business of teaching and learning is critical as reflected by most of the articles in this issue.

This issue on academic development in higher education has papers on five thematic frames namely students’ academic development (6 articles), staff academic development (3 articles), scholarship of teaching and learning (2 papers), academic developers’ roles and functions (2 papers) and e-learning (2 papers). There are six papers under students’ academic development. The papers tackle various issues pertaining to students’ academic development as advanced by scholars in the academic development field.

There were thirty-eight scholars who submitted full articles from which 15 articles were selected for publication in the Special Volume of the journal ‘The International Journal of Education Sciences’. We sincerely express our profound gratitude to all contributors and hope that articles contained in this edition will promote debate and development of the relatively new field of academic development in the South African higher education landscape.

We thank Members of the Editorial Board of the journal ‘The International Journal of Education Sciences’ for their assistance in ensuring publication of this special issue.

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Guest Editors

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