

Managing the Link between Academic Development and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Case of South African Universities

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ABSTRACT The link between Academic Development (AD) and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in the South African Higher education quality context is as blurred as the conceptualisation of the terms. Academic development is a relatively 'young' discipline. It has come into being due to a wide variety of education pressures and needs locally and worldwide. Currently in South Africa, there appears to be no unified understanding of the purpose, role and practices among Academic Development practitioners. As such, managing AD practices is still quite 'ad hoc' and needs driven to the extent that even in one institution there are possible differences in how the practitioners conceptualise their roles and practices as data herein will show. Using three South Africa Universities and the 'Best Practices' frame of reference, this paper attempts to reveal the assumptions and perceptions that underline AD practitioners' understanding of their (AD management) roles which ultimately shape their (scholarship of) teaching and learning practices. The intention is to establish if respective AD models and practices influence significantly on teaching and learning within respective institutions. Five purposively selected AD practitioners responded to a questaview that sought to unravel these assumptions and perceptions. Data were qualitatively analysed to discern trends if any. Recommendations and implications on higher education quality and access and teaching and learning policy are discussed within the context of the results.