

The Interplay between South African Higher Education Context and Academic Development

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ABSTRACT The design and implementation of pragmatic teaching and learning agenda is fundamental for universities to attain their vision, mission and strategic objectives/plans. It is within this background that this concept paper examines the interplay between the South African Higher Education context and academic development principally at a formerly disadvantaged Black South African university. This concept paper draws predominantly from the review of South African higher education landscape and academic development related literature since 1994, the year in which a democratically elected South African government assumed office. The organisational and analytical framework underpinning this concept paper is informed by the social realist concepts of structure, culture and agency. The concept paper proceeds by discussing the impact of South African Higher Education context on the institution, students and academic staff, the way academic development is conceptualized and structured at the university before concluding and making recommendations. It emerges that the structures of the university need be in place and functional so that different agential roles can be executed amidst several constraints and enablements. The importance of the role of the Centre for Higher Education and other structures in nurturing a culture that enhances the production of graduates with attributes required by the world of business came to the fore.