

Siyaphumelela Convening Swot Analysis

10th October 2018

Strengths

Tools, Data, Evidence

- South African models of student data collection are emerging and we now have a shared vocabulary.
- Tools have been developed to be shared.
- Data collection has improved and there has been an increase in capacity and infrastructure for student data collection as well as the integration of processes in academic development and planning divisions. This includes related services such as institutional research and technology.
- We have exemplars of our data capacity, analysis, and uptake.
- There is a greater awareness of the importance of institutional research.
- There is now a greater focus on evidence in our data collection.
- The project has enabled institutions to pilot software that could not have been achieved on operational budgets.

Student Success

- A national dialogue for student success is emerging with a greater awareness of the importance of evidence supporting student success.
- All participating universities have student success as a key strategic area and note the importance of raising the student success profile as well as creating an awareness of how data can be used to identify student support interventions.
- Institutions are embarking on focussed research on how to improve student success, noting the importance of the adoption of SASSE, surveys of student engagement.
- Other interventions to raise awareness of the importance of improving student success are through conferences, dialogue with and sharing across institutions.

Multi-Institutional/Linkage Support Programme

- There has been exposure to international innovative best practices, but particularly the USA through the Achieving the Dream Conference, other conferences and support from the data coach.
- There is collaborative support to higher education challenges in the country, through strong partnerships with national government and associations, namely the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Council on Higher Education (CHE), Universities South Africa (USAf) and the Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR).

Co-operation and Sharing Within the Siyaphumelela Programme

- An increase in collaboration amongst partners, including the building of cross-institutional trust.

- The programme has provided a platform for sharing experiences, learning from one another and an opportunity to develop shared understandings and vocabulary.
- The programme has also provided an opportunity for partner institutions to work collaboratively on projects.

Change

- There has been an impact on the higher education system as a whole, particularly through systemic initiatives such as advising, data warehousing and Maths interventions.
- A greater alignment across the system and change in policies.
- The requirement of the involvement of the leadership (VC's and DVC's) of partner institutions has been important.

Weaknesses

Tools, Data, Evidence

- An assumption of data literacy skills in institutions where little exists and insufficient data analytics capacity. There is also not a clear strategy on how to build analytics capacity among academics to enhance teaching.
- There are insufficient publications on data analytics and a lack of software for predictive analysis and case management.
- An inadequate focus on a shared vocabulary.
- The website is not used sufficiently as a support tool.

Student Success

- None, or very little, focus on post-graduate students.

Multi-Institutional/Linkage Support Programme

- Insufficient engagement and accessibility to players such as CHET, CHE, DHET to build a "stronger nation".

Co-operation and Sharing Within the Siyaphumelela Programme

- Missed opportunities for collaboration.
- Resistance by some university structures to engage with the project aims.
- Change in institutional leadership resulting in less engagement in the project.
- Indicators for goals could have been developed earlier than they were.
- Institutional projects and initiatives take precedence over institutional transformation.
- Cost constraints at universities are hindering project aims.

Change

- Lack of a more deliberate attempt to get other institutions involved, particularly HDIs and new institutions.
- Insufficient roll-out models and collaborative initiatives to support national needs.

Opportunities

Tools, Data, Evidence

- Expand the capacity of experts in the field of data analysis, with a focus on up and coming researchers.
- Build on our experience as local experts in the field of data analysis and develop a corps of South African data and leadership coaches.
- Integrate student behavioural data into learning analytics and tracking models.
- Increase more international and widespread evidence-based practice.
- Conduct iCAT/BMGF assessments.
- Collaborate with software companies.

Student Success

- Consolidate and deepen gains made regarding effective practices/initiatives to enhance student success.

Multi-Institutional/Linkage Support Programme

- Continue seeking support and linkages with key stakeholders, such as DHET (particularly through the new Minister) and CHE.
- Formalize relationship with Georgia State University.

Co-operation and Sharing Within the Siyaphumelela Programme

- Build on the culture and sharing among partners.

Change

- Increase advocacy role where policy is a hindrance.
- Encourage more support from university management.
- Develop a strategy that involves some appropriate support for HDIs.
- Introduce the concept of Siyaphumelela Fellows.
- Collaborate with software companies.
- Sol Plaatje Data Science BSc.

Threats

Tools, Data, Evidence

- Poaching of analytics capacity to other institutions or exit of critical skills to the private sector.

Student Success

- Pressure to extend to further/additional student success initiatives and as a result lose depth and focus.
- Increase student numbers too rapidly.
- Deliberate ignorance in not wanting to know what students are experiencing.

Multi-Institutional/Linkage Support Programme

- No threats were listed.

Co-operation and Sharing Within the Siyaphumelela Programme

- Not being able to create a culture of sharing of resources within and between institutions.
- Duplicate or rogue student success efforts.
- Persisting silos.

Change

- Changing university leadership and possible lack of commitment.
- Loss of focus on quality.
- Staff distracted due to other objectives or competing priorities.
- Unstable institutions with priorities other than student success.
- Geo/political/socio-economic national challenges, which include student unrest and new funding scheme.
- Lip service to evidence-based decision making.
- Only one private funder.
- Lack of deep penetration through the institution of gains made.

Goals

Tools, Data, Evidence

- Implement recommendations/outcomes of the M and E study and use 2019 report to inform the next steps.
- Focus on broadening capacity by integrating data analytic work with student success initiatives to enhance impact assessment.

Student Success

- Institutionalise student success efforts nationally and in each institution, which should include a succession plan.
- Promote service-oriented systems.
- Increase student success nationally.

Multi-Institutional/Linkage Support Programme

- Develop partnerships between HDIs and advantaged institutions.
- Develop a closer partnership and alignment with USAf with regard to student success.

Co-operation and Sharing Within and Beyond the Siyaphumelela Programme

- Clarify what range of services the Siyaphumelela partners have developed to offer to other institutions.
- Develop a strategy to include a wide range of universities in the programme and at different levels.
- Ensure authentic engagement takes place with institutions based on capacity and needs.
- Involve Siyaphumelela partner institutions to reach out and establish regional partnerships around our initiatives.
- Prepare a case study and good practice publication.
- Continue with annual conferences.
- Maintain and upgrade website.

Change

- Seek additional private donors.
- Mobilise the private sector to support the Siyaphumelela Programme.