THE PARANORMAL CLOUD THAT OBSCURES ACCESS, SUCCESS AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to deliberate on the mystical veil that obscures access, success and retention in the institutions of higher learning. The paper argues that, although access to higher education is virtually universally available, many students who start in a higher education programme dropout prior to completing a degree. A desktop approach was used to interrogate what literature says on issues impacting student access and success within the South African higher education system. The main contributory factors seem to be largely attributed to, inter alia, low entry level competencies of students, financial problems, a lack of resources for lecturers and students, large and overcrowded classes, and a lack of enthusiasm of all role players. It is on these bases that we suggest that institutions develop and sustain existing intervention programmes and services whose core focus is to provide educational access and retain students.

Key words: Higher Education, student access, success, retention, dropout, repeater rate, attrition.

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1. INTRODUCTION

> *Worrying developments within the South African higher education scenario since 1994 are encapsulated in a document by South Africa's Council on Higher Education (CHE). The document noted: "Although South Africa has since 1994 witnessed a significant growth in enrolment in both the schooling and higher education sectors, graduate output has not kept apace with the country's needs. High attrition and low graduation rates have largely neutralised important gains in access" (CHE 2013: 9).*

The above quotation reflects the views of the Task Team of the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2013) that was appointed to conduct a comprehensive investigation into higher education access, success and retention rates of students. As a sequel to the CHE study, this paper attempts to reveal intervention strategies adopted by two South African higher education institutions in their endeavour to retain students who had gained entry through the widened access afforded by the transformation of the education system.

Based on the report, massification of the higher education sector (by increasing student enrolment) served as a yardstick for social transformation. Issues of race or colour, which hitherto had been the cornerstones of apartheid, were replaced with a system that promoted racial equity. Subsequently, a series of reforms were put in place to try to redress this imbalance of an education system that was based on segregationist policies with regards to allocation of educational resources, including funding. Due to this fact, institutions of higher learning (universities) in South Africa witnessed an increased diversity which included an increasing number of students from outside the middle class and a large number with poor schooling.

In order to clarify what transpired then, the Council on Higher Education (2004: 24) asserted that the transformation of higher education had been informed by the principles of equity, effectiveness, and efficiency: Firstly, the system had had to be transformed to redress inequalities of access, participation, and success within higher education; and to reduce radically deeply-embedded inequalities between higher education institutions (HEIs), which included their resources, staff complements and student bodies. Secondly, the higher education system had had to produce effectively and efficiently, with limited resources, the range of graduate, research and service outputs required to drive national development in a global knowledge-driven economy.

This form of transformation of higher education also meant opening access to students who had previously been excluded. In amplification, researchers such as (Cloete, 2002; Motala, 2005) posit that within the South African higher education context, it could be noted that great strides had been made in improving access, particularly for the disadvantaged. Moreover, Yorke, (2006) asserts that institutions, educators and students in higher education were increasingly challenged by governments to contribute to national economic achievement. One aspect of this challenge, according to Yorke (2006), was a drive to improve student success, understood as increasing or widening participation, achieving high levels of course completion and attaining a passport to employment with a positive attitude to lifelong learning.

2. HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACCESS

In the Preamble to the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the vision for higher education is stated as "to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person." The strategic objective of higher education was identified by the then Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal. The purpose of higher education according to Asmal (2004) was to:

> "Produce graduates who are well rounded and thoroughly grounded;

> who are skilled and competent; who are creative, flexible and adaptive to new challenges; who are adept in critical thinking and cultural literacy; who are enabled and empowered to participate fully in their economy, their society and their globalising world."

To carry on with this task, it became necessary to expand South Africa's competitive participation in the global context by addressing the basic needs of its population, and enriching the intellectual and cultural life of its people. This expectation faced some opposition with some academics and researchers voicing concern. Badat (2007), for instance, criticised the highly unrealistic expectation placed on higher education as an instrument for social transformation. He argued that:

> "…universities must take their point of departure as social and moral imperatives that flow from our apartheid legacy and our constitution, and engage with the pressing development challenges of our society and continent, they cannot, however, on their own transform society (Badat, 2007).

This, according to him, required political and social programmes and interventions that are guided by what he termed 'principled political leadership'. Such leadership, Badat (2007) argued, recognises universities' core functions, as those that contribute to social transformation albeit, in contradictory ways. Inversely, Rajkaran (2009: 60) opines that universities' core business is teaching and learning that focuses on positive throughput rates. This could be achieved through restoration of the culture of learning and teaching which in some institutions is lacking. The restoration of a culture of learning and teaching is supported by Kruger (2003) cited in Deventer and Kruger (2003: 3), who state that an important issue that faces South Africa is the restoration of a sound culture of learning and teaching because the majority of institutions continue to reflect the characteristics of a poor culture of learning and teaching.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION and SUCCESS RATE

Within a short period of time, cracks in the system started to emerge. Although access to higher education became universally available, many students that started registering in some programmes, dropped-out prior to completing a degree or before achieving their individual academic or social goals (CHE, 2010). Statistical evidence is available to back up this assertion within the South African context (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Frazer & Killen, 2005; Letseka & Maile, 2008; Taylor, 2011; Zulu, 2008). This scenario has been noted in the United States as well (Astin & Oseguera. 2004; Barefoot, 2004; Carey, 2004).

As early as 2005, it became evident that the success rate of students in higher education had not been very pleasing over previous years. Pandor (2006:10) confirmed this trend by arguing that

> "in order to give our nation value for (higher education) investment,

> universities must attend to the low throughput rates at first year level. Furthermore, they must develop effective academic programmes and devise some means to anticipate failure and must be competent at promoting success".

It was argued that, South Africa's university graduation rate of 15% was one of the lowest in the world (HSRC, 2008). In this study, it emerged that at some institutions, the drop-out rate was as high as 80%. The HSRC (2008) stated that about one in three university students and one in two Technikon's - currently known as Universities of Technology's - students had dropped out between 2000 and 2004. This raised serious questions about the Higher Education sector's ability to generate and sustain viable throughput rates. In 2005, the Department of Education revealed worrying statistics. From a student population of 120 000 in Higher Education in 2000, 36 000 (or 36%) reportedly dropped-out in their first year of university study. Thereafter, about 24 000 (or 20%) dropped-out in subsequent years. A paltry 60 000 (or 22%) graduated in the regulation time of a three-year generic bachelor's degree. According to the *Mail & Guardian* (2005) newspaper press release by the Department of Education, the South African Government had lost approximately R4,5 million (half of the actual subsidy paid) on subsidies paid to higher education institutions because of high drop-out rates between 2000 and 2003.

The preceding trends became a cause for concern as higher education institutions in SA are funded by the state through the public funds account. As such, they could not be left alone to champion academic and scientific excellence of their work by seeking answers to questions they generated (Tamir, 1985). They were expected to be in the forefront of providing answers to questions raised by those who consumed knowledge and skills produced by these institutions. It was in this context that the Council on Higher Education (2000) recognised the well-being of any developing nation as being dependent on the input of higher education. It was through the contribution of universities that a country's citizens would develop socially, economically and politically.

In 2005, the Department of Education (DoE) acknowledged that the university drop-out rate was costing the fiscus around R4.5 billion in lost grants and subsidies due to student attrition. This was viewed as disproportionate to initial investment in further education. Poor graduation, poor retention rates and high drop-out rates represented a huge waste of both financial (Crosling & Heagney, 2009) and human resources. According to CHE (2010), the drop-out rate of 20% implied that about R1, 3 billion in Government subsidies was spent each year on students who did not complete their study programmes. These wasted funds could invariably have gone a long way in not only expanding the higher education system, but in improving the much needed funds for redressing historical inequalities. The cost to those who dropped-out in terms of the moral and psychological damage associated with "failure" was there, but could not easily be quantified.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ATTRITION

It has been established that higher education student attrition is not only confined to South Africa but cuts across countries, where colleges and universities face an ever-increasing problem of student attrition (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Barefoot, 2004; Carey, 2004; Cishe, 2012; Frazer & Killen, 2005; Letseka & Maile, 2008; Taylor, 2011; Moody, 2004; Mouton, 2007). Cishe (2012:19), for instance, maintains that high drop-out, low throughput and retention rates, as well as the increased need for quality academic development, bridging courses and foundation programs are not uniquely South African challenges. Evidence from the United States shows that the completion rate in six-year programmes in public universities ranges between 50-60% (Roberts & McNesee, 2010; Astin & Oseguera, 2002).

It has emerged that a number of students are enrolled into South African Universities with the minimum entry requirements to Higher Education (HE) (Letseka & Maile, 2008; Mabila, Malatje, Addo-Bediako, Kazeni & Mathabatha, 2005; Makura, Skead & Nhundu, 2011). The learners are mostly under-prepared due to their poor performance in the General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) bands (Lesteka & Malle, 2008; Makura, Skead & Nhundu, 2011). Students from weak academic backgrounds enter university and contribute to extreme forms of academic inequality. This scenario invariably creates financial stress, affects cultural capital and creates inequalities in other resources as most students with weak pass rates come from poor backgrounds. A lack of academic preparedness in terms of both social class and high school curriculum is cited as one of the reasons why students fail or take longer to master degree requirements (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007). This problem is further compounded by the fact that there have been massive enrolments of undergraduates. Massification has led to overcrowding in lecture halls thus stretching the limited resources such as learning space, computers and other teaching and learning materials. The University set-up has also been understaffed in most departments (Bundy, 2006).

The large classes of under-prepared students with low cultural capital, spell disaster for the students who would normally need specialised individual attention. There is thus the need for interventions to bridge the huge content gap. These students lack basic numeracy, literacy, writing and comprehension skills which are prerequisites for the academic world. Studies have shown that, the transition between high school and university is not an easy one for many learners, especially those from disadvantaged high schools (Nel, Troskie-de Bruin & Blitzer, 2009; Anderson & Jacobs, 2000; Thomas *et al.* ,1991). This transition is often associated with stress, anxiety, and tension which lead to students failing or withdrawing from university regardless of race, gender, background or class (Darlaston-Jones *et al*. 2003; Abouserie, 1994; Petersen, Louw & Dumont, 2009).

Whilst it is generally agreed that the majority of students in historically black university institutions come from the local (largely rural) high schools, it could be argued that, their success rate seems to correlate with a lack of academic

engagement, a lack of motivation to study and they eventually drop out. Hence, whilst we acknowledge that it was one of the CHE's requirements to give colour and shape to a new order on the premise that statistical replacement of the old with the new would bring about a future radically different from the past, we argue that the problem is systemic and these institutions need a strong foundation in the core business of HE, which is managing and providing learning and teaching.

Write (2009) asserts that the culture and environment in which children are raised may play a role in the achievement gap. Thus, many students who are poor, regardless of race, come from homes that lack stability, continuity of care, adequate nutrition, and medical care creating a level of environmental stress that can affect the young child's academic development (Tzanakis, 2011). Resultantly, the children have decreased word knowledge that affects their language skills, which influences their experience with books and the creation of different perceptions and expectations in the classroom context (Sullivan, 2002).

In addition, the CHE (2013) painted a gloomy picture of South African Higher Education. Their findings revealed that, despite there being a small intake that had academic potential, performance in higher education was marked by high levels of failure and dropout. For example:

- Only about one in four students in contact institutions (that is, excluding UNISA) had graduated in regulation time (for example, three years for a three-year degree).
- Only 35% of the total intake, and 48% of contact students, graduated within five years.
- When allowance was made for students taking longer than five years to graduate or returning to the system after dropping out, it was estimated that some 55% of the intake would never graduate.
- Access, success and completion rates continued to be racially skewed, with white completion rates being on average 50% higher than African rates.
- The net result of the disparities in access and success was that under 5% of African and coloured youths were succeeding in any form of higher education (CHE, 2013: 15)

These performance patterns are not compatible with South Africa's need to develop the intellectual talent in all its communities. Moreover, there are no grounds for hoping that the patterns are a temporary aberration. They have not changed significantly since the intake cohort of the year 2000, which was the first to be subject to sector-wide longitudinal analysis; and it is evident that, given the conditions in the education system as a whole, they will not improve without decisive intervention argued the CHE task team researchers.

Consequently, most undergraduate students fail to graduate within the stipulated time frame which spans six years. To mitigate this quandary, most universities have instituted programmes, services, and processes e.g. Supplemental Instruction, aimed at enhancing student retention rates and throughput rates (Makura, Skead & Nhundu, 2011; Ning & Downing, 2010; Seidman, 2005a; Tangwe & Rembe, 2014; Zulu, 2008; Barefoot, 2004). Indeed, the impact of student attrition extends beyond institutions of higher learning to the nation itself.

Seidman (2005a) explains that a strong, vibrant, varied, and expanding national economy depends in part on the educational attainment of its citizens. A nation that values and promotes the educational attainment of its citizens is a nation that is concerned with its ability to compete in the global economy. (P. *xi*). These are some of the factors that these two institutions recognised when they decided to embark on this study, seeking intervention strategies that could help solve this problem.

5. INTERVENTION/RETENTION STRATEGIES

The CHE 2013 Task Team Members suggested that an intervention strategy needed to be developed as a matter of urgency. In addition, they advised that, more programme time, more flexibility, more systems self-awareness, and more rigour and steadfastness around the principles designed to hold the system together were needed (CHE, 2013: 9). Their suggestion was not based on the fact that nothing was being done by some institutions of higher learning. The Extended Programme had been designed as a bridging element where faculties enrolled under-prepared students over a minimum period of 4 years opposed to a 3-year period.

The CHE 2013 Task Team view aligned with Brew (2002) who opined that many effective academic development initiatives are conducted by Centres for Teaching and Learning. According to the plan for the transformation of higher education (DoE, 1997), the White paper 3 provides an implementation framework and identifies the strategic intervention and levers for the transformation of the higher education system as the engine driving and contributing to the reconstruction and development of South African society.

Hunter (2006) contends and buttresses the preceding assertion by highlighting that, “Institutions in all sectors of higher education are attempting to increase student success by focusing on student retention” (p. 5). The ability to maintain retention impacts on both the students and their institutions. Both entities experience financial losses as a result of attrition hence should strive to remain within the institutions and programmes.

Berger & Lyon, (2005) and Astin posit that Higher Education Retention or intervention strategies are campus-based phenomena. Different Respective institutions tend to attract a unique cohort of student whose stay within respective institutions is a function of their previous school. The task of the tertiary institution is that of providing new students an academic environment that is cognisant of their prior learning and object characteristics. Henceforth, Berger & Lyon, (2005:3) argue that, “each institution must tailor retention to fit the specific needs of its students and the context of that particular institutional environment” (p. 3). However, Bitzer (2010) argues that the programmes are not being effectively implemented.

Based on the Higher Education intervention strategies, we put forth two questions that academics in higher education institutions need to address. These relate to their understanding of the causal factors to high failure, drop-out and attrition rates in their respective institutions. Secondly, they need to ponder and proffer the intervention strategies (if any) currently being used to

address/improve learner retention and reduce drop-out rates.

5.1 Academic Development programmes and student output

The term academic development is conceptualised by Boughey (2003) as an open set of practices concerned with improving the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. The ultimate aim of academic development activities is to improve the efficiency of the HE system by addressing issues of student disadvantage or under-preparedness. Widely held conceptions of disadvantage or under-preparedness are underpinned by assumptions that depict students as:

- Lacking skills
- Experiencing gaps in conceptual knowledge areas
- In need of language development
- Lacking the ability to think critically

While Brew (2002) notes that many effective academic development initiatives are being conducted by Centres for Teaching and Learning or Centres for Higher Education Development, Bitzer (2010) argues that academic development programmes remain largely marginal in many HE institutions with some universities not having such programmes at all. Consequently, students do not receive an optimum environment for learning with the ultimate effect that many of them either fail or do not graduate within the regulated time.

In the light of the foregoing, sustained development of academic skills and competencies of lecturers remains a critical strategy of improving the quality of graduate outputs. The clarion call for all universities is that they need to develop and maintain effective programmes of academic development so that academics are subjected to a process of continuous professional development achieved through workshops, training and one-on-one sessions. It is important to indicate that such academic development programmes should not just exist in name, but should have noticeable impact on throughput and graduation rates. As articulated by Volbrecht (2003) higher education institutions have a moral and educational responsibility to ensure that they have effective programmes in place to meet the teaching and learning needs of the students they admit. This is critical given the large numbers of underprepared students who enter higher education.

Therefore, academic development programmes play a crucial role in improving the efficiency of the HE system in terms of graduate outputs. This study thus recommends that sustainable collaborations between and across universities could go a long way in mediating challenges related to academic development in South African universities. Such collaborations will enable universities with less experience and expertise in running academic development programmes to benefit from the substantial experience that exists in other institutions. Alternatively, universities and governments can also explore regional collaboration in the development and delivery of academic development programmes in order to ensure that experience and best practices in academic development benefits the system of higher education as a whole.

5.2 University Pedagogy

While it may be argued that higher education experience, especially at undergraduate level, is potentially a time of great intellectual stimulation and

personal growth, a large number of students are diminished by the experience. In terms of Pityana's (2004) argument, the way the academic community chooses to do things in the design and delivery of the curriculum makes a material difference to outcomes. Several local and international studies have shown that institutional ethos and approaches to the education process are a key variable in who succeeds and fails in higher education (Cloete 2002; Cele 2004; Clarke 2007). A study on the performance of minority students in American higher education institutions conducted by Clarke (2007) showed that most successful institutions were those that applied the academic values of empiricism and deep inquiry to their own practices. Thus, the type of pedagogy used in universities is critical as it acts as a medium through which knowledge can be communicated and acquired in the teaching /learning trajectory.

Academics in HE in SA should respond creatively to the diversity of the student body through teaching approaches that cater effectively for the realities and diversity of the student body. As Higgs et al. (2000) observe, relevance and adequacy of learning systems in HE institutions should be given top priority. The traditional education on which so much higher education teaching has depended, has major limitations in meeting the challenges of contemporary South African teaching and learning conditions, which are more complex than ever before (Clarke 2007). The onus, therefore, rests squarely on universities and academics to find fresh approaches to teaching so as to reach the needs and aspirations of most students. The change strategy that is needed to influence the prevailing academic culture in universities is complex and multifaceted and calls for a coordinated approach to issues that relate to pedagogy. Lecturers should, therefore, put in place teaching and learning strategies, structures, systems and processes that improve meaningful participation of learners and enhance leaning potential for all learners. Motala (2005) argues that pedagogy can improve significantly if the challenge of attracting and retaining the best academic talent is overcome. There is, therefore, a need to offer appropriate incentives and rewards to academics in universities so that universities are not deprived of the human resources they so desperately need for their own development through brain drain.

5.3 The issue of underprepared students

While the massification of higher education has helped improve the participation rate in HE, it has the undesirable consequence that many mediocre students, many of whom are least prepared for HE, can now access it in increasing numbers. This paper treats the student level of under-preparedness as another aspect of social exclusion that requires deep analysis. This is so because students who are not fully prepared for higher education studies are denied their right to excel in higher education either through failure, grade retention or dropping out. This section focuses specifically on student levels of under-preparedness as a variable that makes the achievement of equity elusive.

Research by Scott (2009) has shown that a large number of black students in many universities have problems in following the standard degree curricula in its current form. According to Erasmus (2010), this is a clear indication that the structure of the undergraduate qualifications is not effective for the

majority of the current intake. Given the different educational and linguistic backgrounds from which students originate, the need to redesign a flexible curriculum becomes an urgent imperative that needs no further postponement. Erasmus (2010) believes that this argument becomes more credible given the fact that it is unlikely that there is going to be a radically different type of student body any time soon. Admittedly, the need to align the curriculum and HE pedagogy to suit the calibre of the current student population should not be overemphasised.

Nevertheless, the Department of Education (2003) views this issue from an interesting perspective when it argues that the existing cohort of students in HE institutions is not necessarily under-prepared as failure to succeed lies more in systemic weaknesses in HE. Universities and academics are, therefore, urged to develop a deeper understanding of who students are, so as to be able to develop them to their full potential. This line of thinking implies that any strategy for revitalisation should entail a paradigm shift on the part of universities and academics so that students are viewed as individuals with their own identities and who have the potential to thrive in HE (Department of Education1997). Scott (2009: 29) offers an illuminating view when he asserts that, "the assumptions on which traditional first-year degree courses are based originated in a period when the intake was predominantly homogenous and privileged, and have not changed to match the major diversification of the student body over the last three decades." It is most likely that the large number of students who fail or drop out would most likely benefit from a different curriculum. Thus, if the academic curriculum is not adjusted to suit the changing student profiles, then such curricula will act as an obstacle to the success of a large number of students.

The current student profile in South African HE institutions make it incumbent upon universities to create additional opportunities to enable disadvantaged students to succeed in HE. Thus, the provision of suitably structured foundational provision, extended curriculum programmes, bridging courses, access courses where the emphasis is on the total student experience could give the much needed scaffolding to many students. According to Higgs et al. (2000), student support programmes in many universities are fragmented and are not recognised as critical core business. The crux of this paper is, therefore, to instil an awareness that it is not enough to merely ensure that student profiles in higher education progressively reflect the demographic realities of the South African society without providing sufficient resources and support to ensure that student performance meet the required benchmarks.

Astin and Oseguera (2004) argue that student support programmes should directly address the systemic articulation gap by taking account of the realities of students' prior learning experiences. However, it is important to point out that student support should not only be confined to the foundation level because the challenges facing undergraduate students transcend the first year of study into senior phases as well. Building on this argument, Bitzer (2010) succinctly remarks as follows:

"Concentrating exclusively on the introductory undergraduate phase such as foundational provisioning can have the

unintended and highly undesirable consequence of just deferring failure, if articulation with the senior years is not smooth and if the educational process in these years is not effective."

We are, therefore, in solid agreement with Scott (2009) who argues that extended programmes should not be perceived and thus used as a means of extending access to students who do not meet regular admission criteria, but also as a means of improving the success rates of at-risk mainstream students. The shape of the curriculum, therefore, is central to student success in HE. As aptly argued by the South African Department of Education (2003) the nature, content and organisation of the curriculum is fundamental to the educational process as it influences who succeeds and fails in it. This, in other words, means that the way the curriculum is designed can either serve as an enabler or a limiting factor for students from different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This idea is extended by Clarke (2007) who asserts that whether or not students will pass largely depends on the alignment between the assumptions of the curriculum and the preparedness, capabilities and orientation of the students. Thus relevance, appropriateness and adequacy of content and assessment methods are critical to the success of students, particularly those who originate from disadvantaged backgrounds.

According to Cooper and Subotsky (2001), the current university curriculum is de-contextualised and socially removed from most students' lived experiences and this acts as a contributory factor to lower success rates in HE. Goma (1997) goes further to argue from a global perspective that university education refuses to acknowledge the knowledge present in African society. The author substantiates the argument by citing literature, poetry, art, history, religion, culture as typical examples where African philosophy has been ignored and at best tolerated within the content of the higher educational system. This study suggests that strategic planning could be the first most important step that South African universities must take in reshaping their curricula. Strategic planning is an inclusive process of consultation involving the university leadership, representative of the academic staff, industry, students, representative of the state and other constituencies in society. This process should result in understanding and consensus among stakeholders thereby ensuring the support needed for implementing the approved curricula. Alluding to this idea, Matos (1997) asserts that in order to generate responsive curricula, universities should partner with the private sector in the development of curricula. He further suggests that industry-university liaison committees should be set up to ensure regular review of university programmes, to promote their relevance and quality in the light of rapid scientific and technological advances, and skills requirements. This is critical if universities are to acquit themselves from the usual accusation from industry that they churn out graduates who are ill-equipped for the labour market.

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have sought to navigate the challenges that HE institutions experience in their bid to make HE of a superior quality, accessible to the majority of students. The issue of access, success and equity in the provision of HE served as the fulcrum around which the

discussion revolved. Adding on to the work of earlier scholars and researchers, the paper established that the HE system is characterised by numerous challenges which make the attainment of equity, access and success more elusive. Nonetheless, we remain convinced that such challenges are not insurmountable. This, we have sought to prove by way of suggesting practical strategies of vitalising the system so as to make it more effective and responsive to a wider student base. The paper has cited the issue of student support, academic development programmes and pedagogy as areas that easily lend themselves to revitalisation and strengthening of the HE system overall.

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