

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPATIBLE WITH THE VISION, STRENGTHS, RESOURCES AND GOALS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF NAMIBIA

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses two main components, which are international enrolment management plan and the issues relating to policies that are necessary in creating a conducive learning environment for foreign or international students at tertiary institutions. The enrolment management plan is geared towards finding amicable ways in which foreign students could be enrolled and governed in a foreign land. The policies are therefore seen as tools that are used to ensure there is control of international students to adhere to international and national standards and requirements. It is clear that policies at some stages are regarded as discouraging foreign students to go and study in a foreign land.

**Keywords:** International enrolment, Institutions, Tertiary education, Vision, Students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

International students are important in the life of any tertiary institution in a situation where political cultural, economic, social, linguistic and environment in which a state requires citizens who educated and are able to answer to the demands of a global village. Imperatively, University of Namibia, Namibia University of Science and Technology and the International University of Management in Namibia are not an exception in admitting international students commonly known as foreign students.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The paper focused at the three recognised and reputable tertiary institutions in Namibia: namely, the University of Namibia (UNAM); Namibia University of Science & Technology (NUST) and The International University of Management (IUM) which was founded in 1994 and started with only one student who was taught by the founder of the institution, which saw it growing from one student to about 9000 students today and is the only private university in Namibia. The University of Namibia (UNAM) was established by an Act of Parliament on August 31, 1992 as recommended by a Commission on Higher Education. The Polytechnic of Namibia (now Namibia University of Science & Technology) [NUST] became an independent and autonomous institution in January 1996 (Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia: Promulgation of Act 29 of 1996). It held its first graduation ceremony at which the founding President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr Sam Nujoma, delivered the keynote address on 18 April 1996. These universities are important and worthwhile for creating educational and cultural experiences as a result of international

students in their campuses and communities. The importance of international students at universities is that they are normally closer and have good relations with other cultures or people. The largest population of international students come from Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Central parts of Africa (Murray, 2011; Zambia Education Agents Workshop and Australia Awards Alumni event, 16 June 2015).

Knight (2004:4) defines internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivering of post-secondary education.

Most countries of the world encourage opportunities for students to work, study and experience cultures overseas. It is seen in the light of promoting foreign students in exchange programs which have become more successful. Every international student enrolment program should look at strategies that are working well with other universities in order to benchmark well in this kind of situation (International Student Survey 2012 – Overview Report - April 2013).

As a matter of fact, this paper seeks to come up with an international enrollment management plan, which is compatible with the vision, strengths, resources and goals of tertiary institutions of Namibia.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This paper uses qualitative research methodology that examines secondary data extensively in order to get the information relating to the subject under study. Such secondary data will inter alia be from journals, books, reviews, reports, government plans, etc. The information that will be used to interpret the results that are intended to be exposed relating to the subject under study.

In a nutshell, it is easy to see it through Hudzik in the statements that follow in which he states comprehensive internationalisation to be of importance in that it shapes the ethos and values of an institution. Importantly as well he shows how crucial comprehensive internationalisation is by stating that although it impacts on campus life, it has a wider dimension to that of embracing the institution’s external frames of reference, partnerships and relationships. These are all crucial in the development of the international student enrolment management plan in terms of planning and policy matters. Partnerships are vital as partnering with others increases the capacity of any institution to deal with global trends and requirements. In years that have gone by, we have seen South Africa moving into mergers of university institutions to cater for tertiary education quality and management. Partnerships give sponsorships to tertiary institutions as well as to students who wish to study abroad or in the country of origin (Santiago, Trenblay, Basri & Arnal (2008a).

*“Comprehensive internationalisation is commitment and action to infuse international, global and comparative content and perspective throughout the teaching, research and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values, and touches the entire higher education enterprise. Comprehensive internationalisation not only impacts all of campus life, but the institution’s external frames of reference, partnerships and relationships”* (Hudzik et al, 2011, p. 10).

### **4. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH PAPER**

Like any other institutions in this case, Namibian institutions aim at providing a multi-year enrolment management plan, which will be used in recruiting and retaining students. As a result, the plan therefore has a short, and long term objectives compatible with appropriate strategies, performance indicators and that which encourages outcome assessment. This is crucial for tertiary institutions of Namibia if they want to remain competitive in the international student enrolment environment.

### **5. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH PAPER**

#### **5.1 Environmental scanning**

Findings from (Meek, 2012) revealed that there is a myriad of factors that remain as threats or challenges if one wants to compete for the enrolment of international students at tertiary institutions. Universities across the globe are braced to compete for the world’s brightest international students, which does not only occur as a result of talent scarcity, but also from the point of student mobility. There are drops in the international student mobility to study abroad due to lack of a national policy and a national strategy in recruiting international talents. Western countries that wish to pursue international talents are getting it difficult to achieve or persuade, especially where international students are self-funded, e.g. in countries such as India, China and Korea. These countries have a largest number of students studying abroad. Most countries of the globe prefer European Higher Education Area and thus America is dropped and has a challenge in persuading international students to study there (Jacob & Meek, 2012).

In those government supported efforts and nationally coordinated campaigns by countries such as Britain, Australia, Germany, France, Japan, New Zealand and others fund their own students and international students and this in itself may attract students to study abroad.

Studying outside the country does not only attribute to educational growth and development, but also form different relationships and networks and general life skills (Malicki, 2012).

*“For universities, the evidence strongly shows that student mobility is fundamentally about institutional reputation and student retention. However, it has been observed that one of the challenges influencing students to go to non-traditional destinations such as Asia, is a challenge”* (Malicki, 2012).

The Bologna Process which is comprised of 46 countries across Europe has a great challenge to the U. S. higher education since this process has a major goal of enhancing the attraction of European Higher Education area as a destination for international students. Being a group as they are, Bologna countries therefore are in the third position of attracting international students to the U.S. after India and China. Accordingly, it is likely and observed that more students from India and China choose European and Australian systems due to the fact that they have a three year programs going on in their educational systems. As matters stand, it is likely that Bologna makes European higher education more attractive worldwide and this would mean that more international students across the world would be going to Europe for their undergraduate and graduate education (NASA, 2007).

This research revealed that The United States of America was affected by the 9/11 disaster and it has yet to be seen whether international students will increase. South Africa was also hit hard by xenophobia during April / May 2015 and it is also unlikely to attract international students there. Russia has as well unrests and international students may not be willing to further their tertiary education there.

The next challenge or threat in attracting international students to study abroad is that those countries that were once viewed as “sending countries” of international students to the United States or Europe and Australia have now decided to build their own higher education capacities at home and are consistently encouraging their domestic students to stay at home and study there. This is a clear indication or examples seen in China, India, Korea and other countries including countries of Africa.

The other challenge according the research paper is the issue of rising costs and weak economies of some countries of the world, which are not affordable to such countries in sending their students to study abroad. These if persuaded that you send students to foreign lands where educational affordability is minimal will result in substantial economic strains on students and families at home. Education has become very costly and only few people can afford sending their own children to go and study abroad, regardless of the quality of education out there. The last challenge or threat that this paper brings forward is the fact that there are perceptions that exist in which it is believed that it is difficult for international students to go and study in the United States, Europe or Australia due to rising travel costs, immigration policies, transfers at airports, accommodation and other lifestyles in a foreign land.

## **5.2 Opportunities**

However, the paper found that as enrolment decreased after the 9/11 American disaster a number of international student enrolments are picking up although in recent weeks some black people were killed in a shooting by a youth while attending church services, which means the race issue, will be another challenge for the U. S. International students have for the past decade been dependent on the family funding.

International students according to the (2007 Open Doors Report) indicate that most popular fields of study in which international students are interested are: Business and Management (25 per cent for undergraduate and 15 per cent for graduate students); Engineering (11.5 per cent for undergraduate and 22.7 per cent for graduate students); Physical and Life Sciences (6.8 per cent for undergraduate and 13.1 per cent for graduate students); Social Sciences (9.4 per cent for undergraduate and 9.4 per cent for graduate students); and Mathematics and Computer Sciences (5.8 per cent for undergraduate and 11.9 per cent for graduate students), and Fine and Applied Arts (8 per cent for undergraduate and 4.3 per cent for graduate students).

## **5.3 Targets for international student recruitment**

The idea of this plan is to ensure the recruitment of high quality students that pursue international undergraduate and postgraduate students that will be aimed at raising the reputation of the International University of Management in

Namibia. The goal therefore is to upgrade the university's focus in recruiting foreign students so as to grow it into a reputable institution that will be ranked as one of the most successful institutions in the recruitment of international students in the world. The percentage calculated as at a proposed number of 9000 students that are projected to be enrolled at the proposed tertiary institution by the year 2017.

**Proposed enrolment projections for 2017/18 – 2021/22**

	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Total</b>	
2017/18	50	10	60	0.7
2018/19	70	15	85	0.9
2019/20	90	15	105	1.2
2020/21	120	20	140	1.5
2021/22	200	30	230	2.5

## **6. STRATEGIES USED FOR RECRUITMENT AND ENROLMENT**

### **6.1 Appointment of an international student coordinator**

The appointment of an international student coordinator is crucial at institutions of higher learning who will actually be responsible for overseeing international student recruitments and admissions at the university. He will be tasked with overseeing recruitment strategies and act as a liaison with the departments and faculties. The focal people he or she will be in contact with to ensure smooth services will be recruiting directors of the faculties (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). He will have an office at the campus and will be reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor. This coordinator appointed should be a Namibian and should as well be a marketing person. This person must also have experience in scrutinising undergraduate foreign transcript evaluation and should have the ability to work well with foreign students in the admission procedures and processes. The last requirement the person should have is that of being familiar with the rules of the Namibian government. He should at least have a second language command, strong communication abilities, interpersonal and presentation skills. He should be able to frequently travel outside the country. The roles of the international student coordinator will be to:

- Develop strategic plan that meet international student enrolment goals that are as well compatible with those of tertiary institutions in Namibia;
- Identify and ascertain those countries or geographic areas that give study loans or scholarships to students to study abroad and make sure that he or she establishes regular contacts with those bodies;
- Create a communication and a marketing plan that targets undergraduate and graduate programs
- Record the knowledge we have about international students and alums in order to identify benchmarking and best patterns or practices that will keep our plan afloat at all levels (Tremewan & Lithander (2013);
- Analyse current university efforts and prioritise use of resources for efficiency and effectiveness in our plans to lure international students to come and study at institutions in Namibia;
- Strengthen professional and international networks of the target areas;
- Strive for excellence on international recruitment and enrolment of foreign students to various committees of the university with the focus on discussing student recruitment and enrolment in tertiary institutions in Namibia;
- Have a sound relationship with Namibia Qualification Authority and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Able to address issues regarding international recruitment and admissions efforts in all the levels that are relevant to tertiary education in the country (McMillen, 2012).

### **6.2 Establishment of the International Student Recruitment Advisory Board**

There is a need to create this board and it should be chaired by the International Student Coordinator. This board will be responsible to ensure that it incorporates admissions representatives, faculty, staff, and international students. The major responsibilities for this board would be to:

Identify potential recruitment pools in which international students could be recruited. This will be done by ensuring that the relationship of Namibian tertiary institutional partners abroad is sound and operating fairly well.

### **6.3 The use of international student recruitment strategies**

- For better results, the plan will use international student recruitment strategies that have been found to work well with other institutions. These strategies identified would among others be to:
- Use of current students, international faculty, and Namibian tertiary institutional faculties with international network systems;
- Create internet, e-brochures, flash e-mails, and other forms of communications to international students on website;
- Conduct overseas educational advisors on campus;
- Develop a sound relationship with the Namibian government
- Develop marketing and promotional materials that are earmarked to lure international students to come and study with tertiary institutions in Namibia.

### **Performance indicators and outcomes**

For the enrolment management plan to work properly indicators for performance are required to be put in place and these among others are to:

- Increase the number of international undergraduate and graduate students that apply be accepted at the university
- Increase the number of international undergraduates and graduate students that should be admitted at the university
- Increase the number of international undergraduate and graduate applicants that accept to be admitted and enrolled at the university
- Create a conducive policy environment at the university for international students
- Create a conducive policy environment at the government level for international students, e.g. assistance in applications for visas, study permits, immigration entries, etc.
- Provide temporary job opportunities for international students at the university during their time of study until completion
- Allowing international students to be part of school management such as Student Representative Councils, etc.
- Allowing international students to participates in academic and social events at the university.

## **7. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

It should be noted that international students have different needs as compared to students in the Namibian tertiary institutions. It is important to know that differences come as a result of their citizenship, cultural and national settings and backgrounds. Their needs should be attended to by providing necessary support services to them, which will help them to understand, adapt and live productively in the new educational and cultural environment. The following have been brought forward for the purposes of support services:

- Raise the number of international students that participate in various leadership positions in student organizations at the campus
- Raise the number of students who participate in service learning opportunities
- Raise awareness and educational campaigns on the importance of foreign students

## **8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Hudzik & Stohl (2012:4), identify and examine a subset of issues, which they address as salient environmental drivers shaping the directions of both global and U. S. higher education. These drivers are such as funding, global growth in instructional and research capacity, and widening rationales for internationalisation. They further observe that the United States to have problems in fiscal conditions and budget policy uncertainty at both the state and federal levels within the United States' higher education internationalisation, thus creating an environment of financial stress.

There is need therefore to cater financially for the international students to be attracted to come and study in Namibian tertiary institutions and the following are the strategies put in place to address this:

- Create an International Student Scholarship Endowment for international students
- Allocation of a development staff to oversee the Office of International Education and Development
- Raise the amount of money per year for the Scholarship Endowment for international students
- Ascertain a number of scholarships for international students that was generated for the Endowment per year
- Ascertain the number of international undergraduate and graduate students that receive scholarships per year.

## 9. MARKETING

It must be noted by the Namibian tertiary institutions that there is a great competition for high-quality international student talent needed throughout the world and to stand this competition you should be marketing your products and services well. The goal of marketing for tertiary institutions in Namibia would therefore be to promote planning, communication and effective strategies which help in times of huge competition such as this one. Strategies to be employed for this purpose are among others to:

- To create a data base and other materials for international students in tertiary institutions of Namibia;
- Conduct a survey by consulting foreign embassies in Namibia that sponsor international students;
- Use students, staff, alumni, faculty, and departments to help in the recruitment process of international students.

Performance indicators required for marketing strategy would be among others to:

- Raise the number of contacts made by tertiary institutional staff members to foreign embassies in Namibia
- Raise a number of follow-up communications between tertiary institutions of Namibia and international students;
- Increase in numbers of applications that were received through contacts between the embassies and other sponsoring bodies
- Increase number of students admitted in tertiary institutions of Namibia;
- Increase in numbers of international students that accept admission and enrolment in tertiary institutions of Namibia;
- Increase of quality of materials produced and used in marketing and recruitment of international students in tertiary institutions of Namibia;
- Increase numbers of marketing materials distributed directly to international students wishing to study in tertiary institutions of Namibia in those schools abroad

## 10. FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF NAMIBIA

This budget is for the first year of implementation of the recruitment and management admission for international

	DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	AMOUNT
1	International student coordinator	
	(a) Salary	NAD 108 000.00 p/annum
	(b) Fringe benefits 20% of salary	NAD 21 600.00
2	Travel	
	(a) Domestic travel	NAD 8 000.00
	(b) International travel	NAD 25 000.00
3	Recruitment and marketing materials	NAD 15 000.00
4	Registration of membership to professional bodies	NAD 1 000.00
5	Professional development	NAD 2 000.00
6	Outreach activities at university	NAD 1 500.00
7	International student scholarships	NAD 200 000.00
	<b>TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	<b>NAD 382 100.00</b>



## 11. CONCLUSION

The international student recruitment management plan is seen as a major tool and strategy in ensuring that international students are lured to come and study in tertiary institutions of Namibia. Namibian tertiary institutions are destined to increase the number of international students to be accepted and admitted to study their various courses. The other strategy is to ensure that support service for international students are enhanced at universities. An international student coordinator is sought for recruitment of international students. It is emphasized that every person who is part of the university community should play an important role in the management of international student enrolment management plan if it is to succeed and that those strategies have to be fully implemented and achieved.

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