



in this issue

**An Eye for Eye -
Nothing but the
Truth**
page 2

**New Business Plan
"takes Off!"**
page 3

**Engineer Ntyikwe
keeps beating the
odds**
page 4

**Choosing Your
Future Ideal
Employer: On What
Grounds?**
page 5

**ETDP-SETA Funding
Allows NMMU
Students to Engage
in Experiential
Learning On
Campus**
page 5

**Magnet South
African Graduate
Survey (SAGS)
Results 2004-2007**
page 6

**Preparation of
Students for the
Corporate World**
page 7

Foreword

by **Brian Forbes Vice Président SASCE**

Once again welcome to this second issue of Newslink for 2008. In this issue we once again bring you exciting news on matters Co-operative Education and related news on skills development and graduate employment.

This edition of Newslink coincides with the start of our SASCE International Conference hosted by DUT from 19 to 22 May 2008. This conference undoubtedly is the highlight of the SASCE calendar for this year as it will create a platform for stakeholder partners to explore new challenges, successes and best practices on a wide range of co-operative education models in use nationally and internationally.

Prominent Keynote speakers, workshops, symposia, workshop streams, exhibits and parallel sessions will be featured in the conference programme. Another exciting aspect is that the main venue is the Durban International Convention Centre but the Conference will also move to the uShaka Marine World and conclude at the Tala Private Game Reserve.

At our SASCE Merit and Excellence Awards Ceremony we will be honouring our industry partners for excellence in their support and participation in Co-operative Education. The SASCE AGM, which precedes the Awards will see the election of the new SASCE Exco that will lead us for the next two years. On this occasion new resolutions will be debated and if adopted will set the tone and agenda for SASCE to play an even more meaningful role in partnerships that will enhance students learning.

The South African Technology Network (SATN) will be having their first Annual SATN Conference on the back of the SASCE Conference starting on the 22 May also at the ICC and again hosted by DUT. The Conference theme will address "Matters and Characteristics of South African Universities of Technology"

The South African Technology Network has established six Project Working Committees. SASCE has been chosen as the Project Committee representing Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning. Each Project Committee made presentations to the SATN Board. Terms of reference, mandates and action plans were presented that will ensure that UoT's remain proactive, responsive and at the forefront of supplying work ready graduates into all economic sectors.

In other related developments it is encouraging to report that a number of initiatives are exploring synergies and mechanisms for collaboration between FET and HE institutions. The aim is to explore synergies between work place learning and other modes of learning that will complement public institutions such as FET and HE involvement in workplace education and training. This will include issues of articulation across NQF levels and also the more pertinent question of supply and demand provision of graduates into the economy in response to priority and scarce skills provision.

Co-operative Education and therefore membership of SASCE is the ideal place to engage on these matters as we represent established partnerships between institutions of learning, industry and communities that will give our students the best chance of graduate employability and immediate effectiveness in the economy.

I trust that you will enjoy this edition of Newslink and may it stimulate you and motivate you in your future support and involvement in Co-operative Education.



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An Eye for Eye - Nothing but the Truth

Has the Southern African Society for Co-operative Education claimed its rightful place in the education and skills society? Is the presence of SASCE felt in and by the society? Why is SASCE not receiving the attention and the support it deserves? What is the difference between SASCE and other peer and glamorous associations? Something is not right!

Did the co-op movement ever want to answer these questions or have they become so rhetoric that they deliberately ignore or avoid responding and adequately so. In an eye for an eye, the author as an integral part of the association seeks to challenge the status quo and the conspicuous absence of criticism thereof, or you may call it disquiet in the co-operative education arena. By year in and year out observation through the SASCE members' meeting (the Forum) where business is executed as usual and critique is avoided. Over the years, the Forum meetings have become a platform to vent anger and dissatisfaction about the lack of progress by co-operative education or individual uncertainty about the future of coop as a philosophy and viable method of teaching and learning. Sadly, as if SASCE is an 'alcoholics anonymous' kind of a body in some of the meetings there is engagement of reassurance manifested via a sentimental speech by the usually invited Vice Chancellor to make coop practitioners understand the situation (almost paying lip-service to the contribution co-op makes?). Amazingly, most practitioners are persona non-grata in their own institutions. An eye for an eye seeks to strip naked the dysfunctional state of the role of the Southern African Society for Co-operative Education.

Strangely, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) would fund other groups to carry out work integrated learning projects and similarly give support to the Joint Education Trust (JET) to offer workshop 'events' and to produce glossy publications, yet is Service Learning truly accepted and integrated into curricula of Higher Education programmes? This is an example of the power of adequate business planning and the establishment of an enabling network of support. As SASCE, we have a long history of existence but we are yet to send the right message and sing the right tune to the authorities. Something is wrong. I continue to be flabbergasted by the continued ignorance of this illness an eye for an eye. Guilty as charged! The daylight robbery is perpetuated by the system which promotes Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) in terms of resources, with various examples of gross mismanagement to be quoted. This to be seen against the backdrop of SASCE, an organization that was to



be supported for the promotion and improvement of the tried and tested model of cooperative education via the structured on the job training component. Has SASCE done anything to lay claim to levy monies paid by the companies? No! It operates in the background yet, on the other hand, if SETAS provide a few bursaries to students and issue out discretionary grants to a few in-service training students it's big news. Not fair!

In addition, the lack of funding for the work integrated experiential learning component as part of the academic programmes by the Department of Education is continually a subject of debate. Task team after task team has found inadequacies, differentials and disorganization in the system. As a result funding proposal for in-service training/experiential learning/ work integrated learning remains in limbo. Have we as SASCE responded to this disjuncture? SASCE has a major task to challenge some of these issues. It is amazing how in institutions co-op is regarded as an add on. In some cases lack of morale and material support is the order of the day the careers of the co-op practitioners are forever a subject of possible restructuring. Are we as practitioners relegated to the fire extinguishing role, placing students, driving up and down in the name of monitoring and assessment, producing flashy placement statistics and watching from the sidelines as our products ascend the stage to graduate? Who then gets the credit? We (as SASCE and co-op practitioners) are victims of our own ineptness when it comes to stating our case, submitting compelling proof of our relevance, providing empirical evidence of our achievements as well as the contribution in the development of the global workforce. In most cases, we are the victims of a 'smash and grab' from the employers!. Industry would elect to be active members of organizations such as the South African Graduate Recruitment Association (SAGRA). Once again SASCE is its own victim by

virtue of its lack of infrastructure to avoid such almost criminal acts. Higher Education South Africa (HESA) our own Community of Practice partner is doing good work with SAGRA in what is called Weekly Higher Education News. What have SASCE and HESA done so far within the neatly tabulated agreement with SASCE a once-of collection of student data for JIPSA purposes!

An eye for an eye! What about personality clashes and egos? By self-introspection has SASCE as a body interrogated itself. Why have we suffered an exodus of members? How strong is the veterans system? Have we given enough thought on the retention of the experienced SASCE members who would serve as advisors and patrons of the movement? In my opinion, the culture in SASCE is flawed by the 'old boys' club system. If you look at the past few years SASCE allowed only a few of the members to become a clique, alternatively the Exco of SASCE seems to become the only active group. It is futile to have Exco being both governance and operational structure. Who plays the oversight role if the executive committee determines the agenda and plays the operational role at the same time a player and referee scenario? Many students have come out of the system of co-operative education and yet the government and industry alike is not convinced that coop is a career of choice, why?

In an eye for an eye. I believe that SASCE has an opportunity to demystify these issues by the implementation of the new Business Plan that would be the answer to raising the voice of Co-op on the African continent. A two-man task team comprising of the writer and Mr. Brian Forbes was set up by the SASCE Forum to articulate the turn around strategy for the association.

The author of this document is the SASCE Secretary and Director of Co-operative Education at the Vaal University of Technology. He wrote in his personal capacity and the opinion expressed is a personal viewpoint and shooting from the hip. He wishes that with this article SASCE would continue to debate and dissect some of these issues with vigor. The author calls on all in sundry to join SASCE, the past Co-op activists, Alumni, patrons and the "believers in learning by doing as the best way of learning". Readers are invited to forward factual responses to alpheusm@vut.ac.za

Eye for an eye

New Business Plan "takes Off!"



2007 was the year in which SASCE adopted a new business plan that would see SASCE taking on a more proactive role in profiling co-operative education as a model that significantly contributes to graduate employability. In 2007 alone over 21000 students graduated from UoT's and CU's with the benefit of work experience through their work integrated learning programmes.

The new SASCE Business Plan adopted at the Forum Meeting at VUT

in March 2007 sets out a new operational and implementation plan with 4 Strategic Goals. The new strategy will position SASCE as the national convener and authoritative voice on Co-operative Education. SASCE will market Co-operative Education nationally through a representative membership database. SASCE will promote and build capacity, linking curriculum and quality management for work integrated learning. SASCE will also promote research capacity toward a body of knowledge on co-operative education practice.

One of the negative impacts of the institutional mergers has been that the gains made by co-operative education in the Technikon era have been diluted and fragmented in the new UoT's and CU's. New senior management and at many of the merged institutions have had new challenges to contend with and this has shifted the focus away from the importance of co-operative education. This all at a time when skills development, graduate unemployment and job creation have become a top priority for the Government, in addressing the skills shortage and wanting to grow the economy.

SASCE's contribution over 21 years has kept the passion alive, and given our established partnerships with commerce and industry, the new business plan will ensure that co-operative education will increasingly become the strategy that will enhance and develop partnerships. These partnerships will ensure that the supply and demand side of graduate placements into the economy is quantitatively and qualitatively enhanced.

It is not always appreciated and recognized that co-operative education is alive and well in most of our institutions. While acknowledging some areas of decline due to lack of resources and no subsidized funding from the state, many programmes at institutions still deliver good practise models through hard work by commitment passionate staff.

This in turn enables our students to have a successful and meaningful work integrated learning experience as part of the undergraduate programme.

SASCE's Business plan will specifically showcase and promote these successful partnerships between institutions and industry at a national level to key stakeholders in Government and industry. At the same time SASCE, representing the national

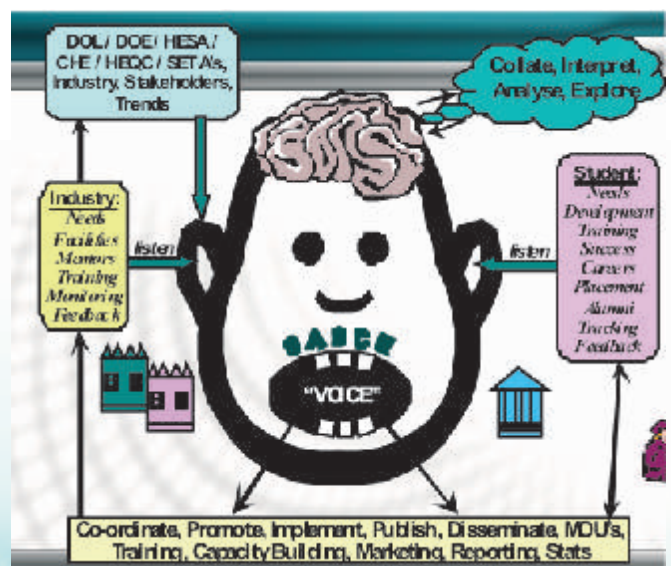
membership can identify gaps, areas of need and support to take co-operative education to a new level in line with the new qualification structures for HE and FET's.

At the SASCE Forum meeting in February 2008 in Bloemfontein, Convener and Task teams were constituted at all the member institutions. These Task Teams, consisting of academic staff, co-op practitioners, industry representatives and students, will form branches at a regional level. These branches will serve as an information supply conduit that will provide a wide range of news, events, student and industry success stories, employability trends and related research data that will be put out there at a national level. In this way we are sure that Government and Industry will increase their support, resources and funding on a par with other forms of teaching and learning pedagogies.

Another exciting development from the Forum meeting is that SASCE has agreed to set up a full time National Office with the appointment of a CEO and administrative support staff to ensure that SASCE can provide a continuous service to our membership. At the Forum Workshop the membership formulated key recommendations for improving the role of SASCE through the national office. These recommendations have been translated into objectives and deliverables, as part of the broader KPA's aligned to the goals of the new business plan.

So watch this space, the SASCE new structure is about to take off, hopefully by June 2008 when the new office should be established. SASCE will then be able to energize Co-operative education activity and priorities in our member institutions and in industry. This will ensure that co-op and work integrated learning continues to be the main service delivery driver that can bridge the gap between the demand and supply side of skills development and graduate employability.

Brian Forbes: SASCE Vice-President



Just in Passing-Some food for thought

Ever heard speakers and individuals when talking about “Co-op” sometimes say you can call it whatever you like such as experiential learning, in-service training, work integrated learning, work-based learning or whatever.....? Here are some more (tongue in cheek) ones to help you on your way, over 40 options in fact.

work integrated learning
experiential training
experiential learning
in service training
service learning
learnerships
work based learning
work place learning
internships
clinical practice
vocational training
professional practice
sandwich programmes
block release
articles

occupational practise
practicums
placement programmes
industrial placements
practise orientated education
work related learning
school to work programmes
education and training
recognition of prior learning
professional practice
indigenous knowledge
occupational education
housemanship
multi-sited learning
practise teaching

industry exposure
sabbatical
apprenticeships
community engagement
exchange programmes
technology transfer
externships
field based learning
field placements
job shadowing
project based learning
summer hire programs
work experience
job placements

The problem of course is that as academics we create confusion in the corporate world by hanging on to our own perceptions and experience of what we are trying to articulate and practise. Co-operative Education started in 1906 and the common denominator and principle has always been and will always be an education partnership between an institution of learning and external stakeholders in industry and communities where the only purpose is co-operation to give students an enhanced learning experience. The CHE (Council for Higher Education) has captured this as its official definition.

All the terminologies above are methodologies that have evolved over time to suite circumstances and needs at a particular point in time. Work integrated Learning, Vocational Learning and Service Learning appear to be the options relevant to our current situation. We should therefore focus our understanding on best practise and service delivery and translate this into producing better students rather than using our energies to convince each other on the “right” terminology.

Engineer Ntyikwe keeps beating the odds

By Slyabonga Kaupa

Five years ago Simazile Ntyikwe, who lost his legs in a train accident at 13, made headlines as one of the bravest people in Cape Town because of his daily struggle to get from Nyanga to Rondebosch to study. Now Ntyikwe 24, of Delft is well on the way to achieving his dreams, against all the odds. He is doing his experiential learning with a company called Unitemp in Lansdowne for 12 months after finishing his Mechanical Engineering course at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Sizamile lives with his unemployed mother, his sister and brother. The family depends on him and his 28-year-old sister to bring in money. Ntyikwe matriculated at Heideveld High School, did a bridging course at Leaf College in Rondebosch in 2002 and then began studying at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. When he was at school he became a top wheelchair athlete. But from the very beginning of his tertiary education things became difficult. The secretary of the college in Rondebosch didn't know he was wheelchair-bound, and for his entrance interview gave him directions that involved going through the station subway. He had immense difficulty making the interview.

When he was doing his bridging course he battled further because his arrangement for a lift from his home in Sweet Homes, an informal settlement in Nyanga fell through. He had to go through a daunting journey every day from where he stayed, taking two taxi rides and then wheeling himself for 4km. And the wheelchair he so desperately depended on was in a poor



condition. This week he said that at the University he faced problems of accessibility and the attitudes of some students and lecturers who kept on asking him how he was going to work as an engineer. But it was all worth it as he has now finished his diploma and is well on track to achieving his goals. "I've been working here for four months now but my contract is for 12 months, and it is not difficult to come to work because we have a lift club," said Ntyikwe. "I'm still doing wheelchair racing but now it's difficult to juggle between work and sport as I work every day of the week. My other problem is that I don't have a sponsor, so when we go outside the province I have to pay out of my own pocket."

Choosing Your Future Ideal Employer: On What Grounds?

In the same way that companies invest their resources in trying to encourage you to buy their latest products, companies are now investing a lot of time on campus in trying to market themselves as 'ideal employers of choice.' How many of you have been given fancy brochures, free lunches and T-shirts by companies who try any possible means to convince you that they are your ideal employers? On what grounds do you choose your future 'ideal' employer? The challenge for you is to decide which company will deliver on their promise so that you are not fooled into making the wrong decision where things like lousy pay, boring colleagues and bad management may become an issue.

In a recent study by independent research company, Magnet Communications, students point out that they would prefer to learn about potential future employers via company websites, newspaper and magazine articles, internships / work placements and on-campus company presentations. Instead many companies treat them to free gifts and promotional giveaways in the hope that this will make them attractive in the eyes of South Africa's top graduates.

Furthermore, students cited that they would most like to work for companies who offer; international career opportunities, competitive compensation and flexible working hours. Indeed the most attractive employers according to these students all have the following characteristics in common: financial strength, competitive compensation and market success.

Research findings also indicate that the average South African graduate think that R160 900 p.a is fair pay. An average Vaal University of Technology student expects to earn R 142 600 p.a after graduation. Note however, that these expectations do not necessarily reflect reality. Salaries are likely to differ by things such as industry, area of study and geographical location.

When students were asked to name their 'Ideal employers,' over 15 000 students across South Africa voted for the following companies.

Commerce	Ranking	Science & Engineering	Ranking	Humanities	Ranking
Absa	1	Sasol	1	SABC	1
KPMG	2	Anglo Platinum	2	Media24	2
SA Reserve Bank (SARB)	3	Eskom	3	Nat. Prosecuting Authority	3

Nevertheless, the challenge is for you to decide which company is the right one for you. The best place to start would be to speak to these employers directly at the next Careers Fair or at an on-campus company presentation. Be careful not to dismiss specific industries as boring, valuable learning opportunities exist in the most unexpected places.

Reading about the company and doing thorough research is another way of gathering information about potential future employers. After reading about the company, decide if it all 'makes sense' to you. Find out exactly what this organisation can offer you in terms of career development, the corporate culture and working environment. Lastly, you should be talking to lecturers, friends and family, who may have first-hand experience of working for this company and can, therefore give you the full story. Talk to your careers advisors for more guidance regarding your career search.

For companies to have a better idea of what today's graduates are looking for, and to them become better at communicating what they can offer you complete the Magnet Graduate Survey, and make your voice heard! The next Magnet Graduate Survey will take place in August and September of this year. Look out for paper questionnaires distributed on campus or complete the survey online at: <http://universumsurvey.com/sags/vut>

ETDP-SETA Funding Allows NMMU Students To Engage In Experiential Learning On Campus

The Education Training Development Practice Sector Education & Training Authority (ETDP-SETA) has once again afforded 20 of our learners the opportunity to do their experiential learning on campus for a period of 6 months by entering into Workplace Agreements with the SETA as well as the NMMU.

This resulted in a win-win situation for both students and the faculties and departments where they are being hosted as the ETDP-SETA pays each learner a monthly stipend of R2500,00 per month. Experiential Learning is a formal practical requirement of 67% of Technikon-type programmes at the NMMU, without which students are unable to graduate.

Our sincere thanks go to staff within the following departments who have agreed to accommodate learners and act as mentors:

North & South Campus Chemistry, Innoventon, South Campus Main Stores, Automotive Component Technology Station Public Management, Centre for Academic Engagement & Collaboration, Centre for Teaching Learning & Media, North Campus School of Language Media & Culture, 2nd Avenue Campus HMS & Sports Management, Student Counseling, Career & Development Centre, Student Governance, Office for International Education.

Learners are (pictured below):

Carolynn Neethling, Nonkululeko Sonthi, Lwandiso Madaza, Zintle Mangisa, Sive Mboza, Ziyanda Ndesi, Driaan van Zyl - **National Diploma:**

Analytical Chemistry

Clint Botha, Khataza Ndabambi - **National Diploma: Mechanical Engineering**

Mulalo Matshivha - **National Diploma: Inventory & Stores Management**

Zandile Maqoko, Erin Jantjies, Jadey Bosman, Lindy-Lee Page, Nosithembele Mrara, Zingiswa Goduka, Sandile Mpepo, Abonga Landu, Simlendele Manqina - **National Diploma: Public Relations Management**

Rowelna Venter - **National Diploma: Sports Management**



Here are comments from some of our learners on their experience thus far: Clint (Main Stores) "So far so good. I think I might be getting a permanent job!" Simlendele (Office for International Education) "It's a good learning experience and so far I'm enjoying it." Nonkululeko (Chemistry) "I'm enjoying every second and it's really an honour and a privilege." Sive (Innoventon) "The guys at Innoventon are wonderful! The work experience is good and I'm getting a lot of help, having fun while learning." Zintle (Innoventon) "People at Innoventon are very inspiring and supportive. I believe that they want every person to achieve the best." Abonga (Student Counseling) "Exciting place to gain experience at." Jadey (CAEC) "ETDP-SETA has truly given me an amazing opportunity. I would probably not have been able to do my experiential learning this year. For this, I am extremely grateful."



Ronel Rizzo
Manager, Unit for Co-operation Education

Magnet South African Graduate Survey (SAGS)

Results 2004 vs. 2005 vs. 2006 vs. 2007

Career Goals:

2007	Percent	2006	Percent	2005	Percent	2004	Percent
1. Work internationally	35.35%	1. Work internationally	36.55%	1. Work internationally	36.9%	1. Balance personal life and career	48.91%
2. Balance personal life and career	29.76%	2. Balance personal life and career	33.52%	2. Balance personal life and career	32.1%	2. Build a sound financial base	33.72%
3. Work with increasingly challenging tasks	29.57%	3. Contribute to society	29.47%	3. Reach a managerial level	28.95%	3. Work internationally	27.51%
4. Contribute to society	25.90%	4. Work with increasingly challenging tasks	29.28%	4. Contribute to society	28.35%	4. Pursue further education	24.71%
5. Become a specialist	25.80%	5. Reach a managerial level	26.67%	5. Become a specialist	27.49%	5. Become a specialist	23.31%

'Contribute to society' overall has climbed significantly from 6th place in 2004 to 3rd place in 2006 and 4th position in 2007. From an ethnicity perspective, we find that African / Black respondents appear to be more interested in contributing to society, than their white counterparts. Amongst White respondents, 'Contribute to society' is only ranked in 7th position in 2007.

In Europe, and the US, 'Balance personal life and career' stands out as the No. 1 career goal (as is the case for White South Africans). 'Contribute to society' in South Africa (26%) is similar to the US (28%), but significantly higher than in Europe (20%). White respondents in South Africa (18%) match their European counterparts.

South African graduates within the 'Science & Engineering' area of study, have 'Become a specialist' as one of their top 3 career goals unsurprising. 19% of South African graduates are interested in 'Start(ing) a business', compared to only 7% in the US, & 6% in Europe.

Career Goals by Gender & Ethnicity:

Females are more interested in balancing their personal lives and careers naming it their top career goal (36%). Males, on the other hand, chose 'Work internationally' as their No. 1 career goal (34%), and made the balancing of their personal life and career, only their 4th priority (27%).

White females are significantly more interested in balancing their personal lives and careers (53%) than are African / Black females (28%).

Males showed a greater inclination towards entrepreneurship, with 21% of male respondents citing 'Start(ing) a business' as one of their career goals (vs. 17% of females). Also, Black / African Males (24%) appear to be more interested in starting a business than are White Males (14%). This is also the case with African / Black females (21%) vs. White females (10%).

Black / African Males were significantly more interested in 'Work(ing) with increasingly challenging tasks' (30%), than White Males (19%).

White Males, on the other hand, were far more interested in 'Balanc(ing) personal life and career' (38%) than Black / African Males (23%).

Black / African Males were more interested in contributing to society (24%) than their White counterparts (12%).

33% of White Males vs. only 15% of African / Black Males say that 'Build(ing) a sound financial base' is a priority when it comes to their career goals. This is the case amongst African Females (17%) vs. White Females (33%) also.

Ideal Industries by Gender & Ethnicity:

Ideal Industries 2007 Males	Ideal Industries 2007 Females	Ideal Industries 2006 Males	Ideal Industries 2006 Females
1. Government / public service	1. Government / public service	1. Auditing / accounting / taxation	1. Auditing / accounting / taxation
2. Auditing / accounting / taxation	2. Auditing / accounting / taxation	2. Investment banking	2. Government / public service
3. Commercial Banking	3. Management consulting	3. Government / public service	3. Management consulting
4. Management consulting	4. Commercial banking	4. Management consulting	4. Private/commercial banking
5. Investment Banking	5. Marketing / advertising	5. Engineering / manufacturing	5. Marketing / advertising

Both Males (21%) & Females (23%) cited Government / Public service as their No. 1 ideal industry to work in.

This industry is most popular amongst African / Black respondents (26.65%), whereas White respondents (7.02%) show very little interest in working for Government / public service.

Whilst Academic Research (15.27%), followed closely by Management Consulting (15.16%), is popular amongst both White Males & Females in SA, European graduates view Management Consulting as the most ideal industry to work in.

In 2006, males cited Engineering / manufacturing as one of their top five ideal industries, whilst in 2007, this industry only featured 7th on the list.

Meanwhile, males who said that Investment Banking was their 2nd ideal industry in 2006, now place it in 5th position in 2007.

Females cited Marketing / advertising as one of their top five industries in 2006 and 2007.

The choice of ideal industry often has a direct impact on the ideal employers as voted by the students.

Salary Expectations by Area of Study, Gender & Ethnicity:

Area of Study	Average Salary Expected 2007	Average Salary Expected 2006	Average Salary Expected 2005	Average Salary Expected 2004
Commerce	R 150 662.81	R 146 161.60	R 137 082.30	R 150 771.30
Science & Engineering	R 175 123.10	R 163 002.50	R 159 691.30	R 162 708.30
Law & Humanities	R 158 470.40	R 159 496.10	R 140 073.50	R 135 304.50
Overall	R 160 924.30	R 155 172.90	R 144 327.90	R 151 884.30

* Note: Salary Expectations by Area of Study are indicated in annual terms, before taxes and immediately after graduation.

Gender / Ethnicity

Overall Salary Expected 2007

Male	R 179 775.4
Female	R 153 974.2
African / Black	R 160 165.8
White	R 181 262.4

Overall Stats:

2007 Magnet South African Graduate Survey = 15 066 respondents (vs. 12 283 in 2006)

Approx. 47.67% Male vs. 52.33% Female

African / Black = 74.53%

Coloured = 5.61%

I don't wish to say = 1.92%

Indian / Asian = 4.44%

White = 13.04%

Other = 0.87%

Commerce Respondents = 47.21%

Science & Engineering Respondents = 30.43%

Law & Humanities Respondents = 21.62%

Other = 0.74%

Field Period = August - October 2007

Preparation of Students for the Corporate World



By Sasabona Samuel Manganye
former Vaal University of Technology
SRC President 2004- 2006

Introduction

In the Republic of South Africa most of us young people have grown up believing that education is a key to a better employment which will lead to a better life. This perception has motivated some of us in working hard to complete our matric with

good results so that we can obtain study bursaries to complete our tertiary education.

This perception becomes a reality to some young people who completed their tertiary education qualifications which enabled them to get good jobs which provide them with a better life and reduces the levels of poverty in their families. To some it becomes a dream that is not easy to realise. There are a number of factors which contribute to this dream unrealised in the preparatory stage of these students for the corporate world. These factors are both informed by the challenges generally facing the country and also the way in which these students get to be prepared for the corporate world by the institutions of higher learning.

Stats from Statistics SA suggest that although the rate of unemployed graduates is less in the overall unemployment in the country, the actual unemployment rate of graduates has increased by 50 percent between 1995 and 2005 which is the rapid growing unemployment rate in South Africa. The unemployment rate for graduate increases whereas the country is in-need of what is defined as scarce-skills by the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA).

Surely, we need to acknowledge that somewhere something is not going according to plan especially during the period where the country has a hunger for skills acquisition whereas institutions of higher learning are producing many graduates which are destined to join the pool of unemployment. In my experience as a student leader who participated in the governance of higher education institutions structures in the institutional level (Vaal University of Technology). I have identified a number of aspects that are contributing to this trend of unemployment as follows:

1. Entry Level

Most of the institutions of higher learning still enrol many learners in areas where the majority of unemployed graduates graduated from. An agonizing thing is that some of these students who are in the stream of unemployment are learners who have completed subjects like Mathematics, Science and Accounting with good symbols and points required for them to enrol in areas like Engineering, Science and Technology as the dominating fields of scarce skills. Some of the reasons informing this mismatched of careers are as follows:

Lack of proper career guidance

Lack of adequate career guidance at secondary school level that leaves learners with no knowledge of the right career choices.

Late application

Late application by learners which forces them to enrol into any field of study they can get (any available course) without being aware of the repercussions of their chosen career choice.

Less Investment on Resources for Scarce-Skills Areas

As the government continues to put more funding into education, institutions of higher learning still invest less on infrastructure development on areas of scarce skills especially of Engineering, Science and Technology. These areas accommodate fewer students due to lack of infrastructure to accommodate more students. The perturbing factor is that most of the government funding is invested on paying exorbitant salaries for top managers of the institutions of higher learning.

Poor Quality of Education

The education in our country is of poor quality from primary, secondary

and tertiary educational level. For example, only few matriculants complete their grade 12 with matric exemption. As a result most of them are subjected to choose studies which are not of their choice but dictated by their poor matric results.

2. Curriculum

The CTP Task Team report on Universities of Technology (Pretoria 2001, revised 2003) states that the Universities of Technology in particular are expected to produce graduates to the labour market and therefore should be closely aligned to the business sector to ensure curricula relevance. The curriculum in our education system is designed in the manner in which it prepares students to be more job seekers than job creators. We are taught of how best we can please employers rather than how best we can create jobs.

Although the universities of technology are expected to produce graduates that are ready made for the labour market, the reality is different in the institutions. Most of the Universities of Technology has lecturers that do not have industrial experience and as a result lecturers fail to provide practical experience to enable graduates to meet the challenges of the corporate world. The University of Cape Town, Development research Unit on its research for a labour market paradox (2007) also acknowledges that most of the graduates are not of enough high quality.

Industries prefer to employ graduates that have completed the learnership program. In my view this poses a serious challenge to the credibility of the qualifications produced by institutions of higher learning in South African because every student in possession of an academic qualification is expected to be ready to be consumed by the labour market without spending an additional 12 months or more to be ready for the corporate world.

I have always had a view that if graduates are subjected to a learnership program before they can be ready for the labour market, why can't the learnership program be part of the curricula of higher education?

3. Drop out

As institutions of higher learning prepare learners for the corporate world, some of them do not manage to reach the destination of completing their studies. This is informed by a number of challenges and the most common ones are financial and academic exclusion:

Financial Exclusions

The SA history has contributed negatively in many families and as a result many students fail to further their studies because of financial exclusions despite the government and private sectors efforts of funding for education for students from historically disempowered families.

Academic Exclusion

Being a learner that has experienced a poor quality education from primary to secondary level, it becomes challenging for one to meet the challenges of tertiary education and as a result it leads to exclusion base on the continuation of studies policy as championed by many tertiary institutions.

In most of the tertiary institutions, there are not well designed supporting structures to support learners from entry level to ensure that they are equal to the challenges posed by tertiary education.

4. Participation Activities

Another major challenge which is facing many students is a lack of participation in leadership activities. Participation in leadership activities plays a vital role in contributing to the performance of students in the corporate world.

The labour market needs graduates that can think beyond what they were taught in the lecture room and participation in leadership activities has been proven as one of the factors enabling students to think independently and beyond the lecture room.

continued on page 8

Universities of Technology for Co-operative Education

In the light of the above mentioned factors, it is also imperative to understand that the process of learners' enrolment must be complementary to the output process. This means that the input of learners must also be influenced by the labour market so that our education does not contribute to the pool of unemployment.

It will take a good working relation between the Tertiary Institutions, Trade Unions, Government and Private Sectors in finding an everlasting solution to all challenges facing our country. Until such time that we develop our Universities of Technology to reflect a true model of co-operative education, we will always face these challenges. The private sectors and government departments must partner with Universities of Technology for the following reasons:

- To ensure that the curriculum meets societal needs. This will avoid studying subject content that are irrelevant in developing our society and also in developing our graduates to have a capacity to create employment and to be ready made for labour market;
- To ensure that tertiary institutions enrol learners who on completion of their studies will be able to be consumed by the labour market as they would have acquired relevant skills as required in the society. Academics and researchers have always predicted the need for certain skills in the market and it therefore makes it easy to plan ahead for the skills needed;

This is the model used by number of developed countries and I had an experience with some of the institutions in Germany where most of their learners are guaranteed employment as they study under support from the private sectors. Another advantage of adopting a co-operative education model is to ensure that any graduate produced by higher education in South Africa is ready to be consumed by labour market without being subjected to further learnership or internship programs as they will already have gained some work integrated learning experience as part of the curriculum.

Conclusion

The above mentioned factors are not all but some of those that contribute negatively in the preparation of learners to corporate world. As I conclude, I need to make some recommendations with regard to the following:

- Proper career guidance in secondary educational level which will enable learners to make correct career choices;
- Tertiary institutions should develop effective structures that will ensure that:
- Learners enrol for the right field of study and if not qualifying rather than enrolling in any field of study, recommendations must be made for those learners to improve their symbols either through intro programmes or re-registering those outstanding matric subjects;
- Learners get supporting structures to assist them in meeting challenges of tertiary education to avoid academic exclusions;
- Contribute to the funding of students education to avoid more financial exclusions. The best solution to this is for all students activist to continue championing the dream of free education as it remains a solution which is realistic;
- Make extra mural activities compulsory to all students and this will empower them in performing well in the corporate world;
- Tertiary institutions must involve more industrial experts in developing their curriculum without the domination of academics with more qualifications but not having industrial experience;
- Ensures that tertiary institutions employ well qualified lecturers with industrial experience and this will also need institutions to provide more incentives to attract lecturers with industrial experience;
- Ensures more investment on areas of scarce skills than investing more to the pool of unemployed graduates;

Lastly, the declarations of the Presidential Jobs Summit which shows a collective commitment by the Government, labour and business in a number of areas to address the high levels of unemployment needs to be revisited to ensure a total implementation as they were very much realistic on programs to assist in reducing unemployment rate in our country.

A commitment to transforming our higher education sector from all of us will ensure the proper preparation of learners to the corporate world which will ensure economic growth, less unemployment and also to halve poverty especially in our historically disempowered communities.

Reflections of Long Serving SASCE Executive Member

As I will be stepping down as member of the executive committee at the end of the current term of office, I would like to thank the society and its members for their support and friendship I have received over the past 15 years. Reflecting back on my involvement in the activities of SASCE at national and international level during this period has been a rewarding experience. I have had the opportunity at executive level to work with colleagues and friends who have a passion for the Co-operative Education model.

As an ordinary member of the society and as an executive member, serving in the positions of Vice-President, President and Part-President over the past 10 years, I was afforded wonderful opportunities for professional development, debate and making a contribution at national and international level. During this period I have learnt from, and shared expertise with my colleagues who through SASCE, have become my friends. Attendance of SASCE and WACE International conferences and SASCE Executive and National Forum meetings have been an ongoing highlight of my academic career. The level of debate within SASCE, the quality of papers presented, and increased participation and outputs delivered by Co-operative Education Practitioners, especially over the past 5 years, is a clear indication that the society has matured, raised its game and profile.

The current leadership of the society, I believe, is in the hands of committed individuals who are being well supported by the members of the society. The large number of members attending National Forum meetings and SASCE workshops, is not only evidence of this support, but also an indication of the contribution the society is making in terms of the continuing professional development of Co-operative Education Practitioners at a national level.

SASCE has placed itself as a strategic roleplayer on the South African Higher Education landscape as relates to issues of work integrated learning and national skills development initiatives. The recently approved business plan and decision to establish a permanent office, will further focus the activities, outputs and raise the profile and national debate on the importance of the inclusion of work integrated learning into academic programmes.

I would therefore like to encourage the delegates attending the national conference who are new to the field of Co-operative Education, to join SASCE and support its activities. The rewards of membership, support and participation in the activities of the society in terms of professional development and networking with your peers cannot be over-emphasized. In conclusion, I would like to thank the present and past executive members for their teamwork and camaraderie in working towards the common cause we all believe in and are passionate about.

SASCE Forum meeting: 07 & 08 February 2008 Hosted by Central University of Technology



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The SASCE Secretariat visited SATN on 05 October 2007 to discuss the collaboration between SASCE and SATN.

From left: Mr BCL Mokoma (Coordinator: Co-operative Education), Dr MJG Vinger (Registrar), Ms GM Bohloko (Senior Director: Workforce Development Centre), Mr. Alpheus Maphosa (Director: Co-operative Education at VUT and SASCE Secretariat) and Mr H Jacobs (Director: Co-operative Education)



From left: Mr. Alpheus Maphosa (Director: Co-operative Education at VUT and SASCE Secretariat), Ms GM Bohloko (Senior Director: Workforce Development Centre at CUT) and Prof. CA Jansen van Rensburg (Director: SATN Secretariat)



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I. Concurrent Sessions

- Papers 35 minutes + 10 minutes Q & A.
- Refereed Papers 35 minutes + 10 minutes Q & A.
- Panels 45 minutes + 15 minutes Q & A.
- Workshops 2 Options: 45 minutes + 15 minutes Q & A or 120 minutes = double session.

II. Round Table Sessions Two 1-hour sessions, two different days. Specific topics (i.e. Assessment, Accreditation, Working with Faculty, Industry Partnerships, Service Learning, etc.) will be identified for each Round Table and will be facilitated by one or two individuals.

III. Poster Two 1-hour sessions in large room, two different days. Each Poster Presenter will prepare a poster which describes a program, new initiative, etc. Delegates will walk around the room visiting these stations.

IV. Postcards from British Columbia Short Power Point slide presentation with a maximum of four slides. One slide is a visual presentation, denoting the front of the postcard, and the remaining slide(s) may be in text, outlining and / or describing the presented project and / or program.

Each presentation will run seven minutes, with four presentations grouped (by a common theme) at one time, in a 50 minute slot. Therefore, presentations will run 28-30 minutes, allowing the remaining time to be for Q & A (for all four presentations).

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WACE Asia Pacific Conference

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30 September — 3 October 2008
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Dear WACE Colleague,

We invite you to submit abstracts for the WACE Asia Pacific Conference, hosted by the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN). The conference will be held from 29 September to 3 October 2008 at Manly, Sydney, Australia. Abstracts will be accepted until March 31st 2008.

The theme of the conference is "Work Integrated Learning (WIL): Transforming Futures. Practice, Pedagogy, Partnerships". The focus will be on excellence in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) through:

- creating high quality work integrated learning experiences
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Already we have received abstracts from the UK, China, Brazil, South Africa, China, Australia, Japan, Zimbabwe and the USA. Do make sure you attend this worthwhile conference and please forward this email to any of your colleagues who may be interested.

For more information regarding the submission process and to register your Expression of Interest so that you are kept informed about this conference, visit the conference website <http://www.abcon.biz/acen.html>

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you in Sydney!

Michelle Lennox
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