

## EDITORIAL

# Tutoring and Mentoring for Student Development

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This guest-edited issue of *JSAA* focuses on tutoring and mentoring and draws in parts on papers that were presented at the 2016 joint conference of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) and the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA). Well-planned and implemented tutoring and mentoring programmes provide an effective means to support students to successfully navigate their academic, co- and extra-curricular lives. In the higher education context, tutoring can be defined as curricular and supplemental assistance provided to students by more senior students, academic development practitioners and other learning facilitators, to gain proficiency in basic and more advanced academic skills as well as learning support in relation to specific discipline-related learning materials and learning and assessment tasks. It typically involves breaking up large classes into smaller groups, which enhances the potential of effective participation of students, closer peer relations and staff-student relations, deep learning and student engagement.

Mentoring, in turn, traditionally involves a one-to-one relationship, but it may also take place within a group context, or within cohort mentoring situations, between a more senior mentor and a younger student mentee, whereby the role of the mentor is to provide individualised guidance and support, even if this occurs within a group or cohort setting. Scholarly literature on tutoring and mentoring indicates the various cognitive and affective benefits that tutoring and mentoring have particularly for students from academically disadvantaged backgrounds (Powell, 1997). Thus, the methodologies of tutoring and mentoring are not only important programmatic interventions into students' academic, personal and social development; they also provide successful models for student development even in the core functions of Student Affairs.

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Mentoring programmes are part of core functions of Student Affairs and the diversity of models and variety of programmes are linked to the kind of outcomes and goals set for the context. Mentoring is a staple and core function of Student Affairs, and has recently been used in a more non-traditional way, for instance as a framework for cohort supervision, for student leadership support as well as for advancing excellence, thus expanding notions of mentoring.

Tutoring and mentoring literature and research has not yet adequately explored some of the concerns around tutoring and mentoring approaches being premised on the maintenance and reproduction of culture and status quo. When seniors induct juniors into a context, explicitly or implicitly held assumptions, attitudes and practices are reproduced, often without critique or examination. These are some of the areas that require further exploration and deeper research and some of the articles in this guest-edited issue explore these critical issues – either by presenting original research into tutoring and mentoring, or by way of critically reflecting on their practice thereof.

In addition to the guest-edited articles on tutoring and mentoring, this issue of *JSAA* includes an article by Henry Mason that discusses results from a qualitative study on stress and coping. His study reveals surprising results on students' understanding of stress and it shows that students consider stress as part of their "journey to and through higher education". Furthermore, we publish Elisa Brewis' review of the book *Fairness in Access to Higher Education in a Global Perspective: Reconciling Excellence, Efficiency, and Justice* (2013, edited by Meyer, St. John, Chankseliani and Uribe). The book presents a unique collection of chapters that discuss access to higher education in a range of contexts and higher education systems. Collectively, the chapters propose an alternative approach to higher education access; an approach that offers sustainable and enabling pathways to HE.

For 2018, we are planning that volume 6 of the journal will focus on three main themes: student communities and residence life; the first-year student experience; and the politics of space, language and identity in African higher education. In addition, there is a proposal for a guest-edited issue on diversity and polarisation on campuses, which is highly topical in our context as well as globally. Notwithstanding this thematic orientation, open submissions on any topic are always well received, and will be vetted, reviewed and if possible accepted and published as soon as they are ready, even if they do not fall within the theme of a specific issue. In this respect, it is also important to note that in the course of 2016/17 we have received an increasing number of manuscripts, including manuscripts that do not strictly fall within the scope of the journal. We have therefore decided to focus more on 'student affairs proper'. We also plead with authors to adhere to the basic author guidelines for manuscript submission, and understand that a journal that is only published twice a year will have a lead time from submission to publication of up to six months, of which at least three months are typically taken up by 'quality control processes' such as vetting, peer reviews, and resubmission, and another three to four months by the publishing process per se, involving professional proof-reading, layout and type-setting, and eventually uploading and indexing on our various e-platforms and printing.

Finally, we would like to thank an outstanding scholar and higher education leader, Prof. Akilagba Sawyerr, for his service to the journal. Prof. Sawyerr has served for almost

two years on the *JSAA* Editorial Executive and has recently tendered his resignation from the Executive. His expertise is, however, not entirely lost to the journal. Prof. Sawyerr will continue on the *JSAA* International Advisory Board to provide advice on the general direction and development of the journal, and as peer reviewer for articles that fall within his area of expertise.

### *Reference*

Powell, M.A. (1997). *Academic Tutoring and Mentoring: A Literature Review*. Sacramento, C.A.: California Research Bureau.

### *How to cite:*

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