



NOMA SPONSORED MED (HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES) PROGRAMME

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

March 2009

INTRODUCTION

The NOMA sponsored MEd (Higher Education Studies) is a collaborative programme involving the University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Oslo, Makerere University and the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).

HEMA AT UWC

The UWC programme, which commenced in January 2008, is research based, i.e. by full dissertation. Through various disciplinary perspectives, the programme provides students with a solid basis for analysing and critically assessing change processes at all relevant levels in higher education. This Master's programme is the first to include a focus on the complex relationship between higher education and development. The programme is linked to a research network on expertise in higher education in Africa (HERANA), giving students access to the latest knowledge in the field.

SUPPORT MODULES

Although the HEMA programme at UWC is by dissertation, three support modules, i.e. non-credit earning modules, were offered. These were: 'Research Methodology and Proposal Development', and 'Higher Education and Development' (January to April 2008). The third module, 'Introduction to Higher Education' (August to September 2008), was taught at the University of Oslo. This module was also taken by students from Makerere University.

STUDENTS

Ten students from six African countries, viz. South Africa, Tanzania, Madagascar, Kenya, Malawi and Cameroon, were enrolled into the programme. It was possible to admit ten students rather than eight for which funding was provided after three South African students offered to share their scholarships making it possible to admit two extra students. The programme currently has nine students after one student decided to discontinue her studies at the beginning of this year.

STAFF

The inter-disciplinary nature of the HEMA programme requires that a broad range of expertise be utilised. Thus, other than the UWC's Faculty of Education staff, the HEMA programme also utilises expertise from other departments at UWC, government, other institutions in South Africa, and from overseas. The table below shows some of the experts who taught on the programme last year.

1	Prof. Pundy Pillay	Economist, Former Policy Coordinator, Office of the President of SA
2	Prof. Chris Tapscott	Dean, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, UWC
3	Prof. Pieter le Roux	Development Studies, UWC
4	Prof. Bob Mattis	Political Studies, UCT
5	Dr Richard Neil	Head, Tertiary Education Council, Botswana
6	Prof. Johan Muller	Deputy Dean, University of Cape Town
7	Prof. Ian Bunting	Head of Planning, Department of Education, SA
8	Dr Fred M. Hayward	Public Policy expert, USA
9	Prof. Nico Cloete	Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET)/ UWC

OSLO

As already mentioned, the third support module, 'Introduction to Higher Education Studies', was taught at the University of Oslo as part of the Erasmus Mundus European Master's in Higher Education Programme. From the students' reports, and as evidenced in the excerpts below, it is clear the students had fruitful experiences in Oslo:

"I enjoyed the content of the course, and I am feeling much more theoretically grounded in the field. In some ways it would have made sense to start the whole HEMA programme by doing this introductory module..."

"The readings were mostly relevant and useful, and having almost everything available on Fronter was such a luxury, after trawling through e-databases back home to try and find stuff without much success. I have explored the physical and electronic resources available in Oslo and there is so much it is overwhelming – I feel like I've only scratched the surface and it's time to leave. I will miss the rich and varied resources and the beautiful physical setting of the library"

"Meeting students from all over the world and hearing their varied experiences has been great fun, as has trying to decipher the more than 33 accents all speaking English!"

RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND DISSERTATION RESEARCH

The remaining nine students have since developed research proposals that have been approved by the Faculty of Education's Higher Degrees Committee (EHD). All the students have already piloted their research tools and are at different stages of the data collection process. The students' research topics are shown below:

	Name	Proposal Title
1	Angolwisye M. Mwollo-ntallima	Higher Education and Social Development: Contributions of Higher Education Student Leadership to Democracy in Tanzania
2	Biko Gwendo	Human Capital Formation in Kenya; the Interconnectedness Between the State, Higher Education Institutions and the Labour Market
3	Samuel N. Fongwa	The Contribution of Higher Education to Regional Socio-economic Development: A Case Study of the University of Buea in the Fako Region, Cameroon.
4	Hanitra Rasoanampoizina	Higher Education Policy changes in Madagascar and the Government's Approach to Steering these Changes During the Last Two Decades (1990-2008)
5	Jennifer Sarah Hugow	The Dynamics of Policy Implementation: How Internal Visions Shape Faculty Responses To Steering In South African higher education
6	Nita Chivwara	Governance of Higher Education Demand And Supply In Malawi
7	Francois van Schalkwyk	Responsiveness as a Lever For Change: Observations at Two South African universities
8	Wanangwe D. Wanjiku	The Provision of Access and Skills Development by Private Universities in Kenya
9	Pam Watson	Contextual and Policy Positioning of Higher Education for Development: a Comparative Study of two Southern African Countries

It is expected that the students will commence data analysis and dissertation writing from April 2009 when they are expected to report back to UWC. The students are expected to complete writing their dissertations by the end of this academic year.

COLLABORATIONS

The partners in the NOMA sponsored Higher Education programme collaborate in a number of areas. These areas include:

- (a) *Teaching.* Colleagues, especially from Oslo University, gave lectures on the 'Higher Education and Development' module. Equally, UWC and Makerere staff gave lectures on the 'Introduction to Higher Education Studies' module offered in Oslo. In May 2009, some UWC HEMA staff will spend two weeks at Makerere University, giving lectures on their programme, and assisting their students with research proposal development.
- (b) *Co-supervision.* It is the policy of the HEMA programme that students be co-supervised by colleagues from the collaborating institutions. Each of the nine UWC students therefore has a co-supervisor either from Oslo University or Makerere University.
- (c) *Development of readers.* The development of 5 readers for the masters curriculum is underway. The readers are being developed jointly with the collaborating partners and should be ready before the end of this year (2009).
- (d) *Research.* Under the auspices of the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA), HEMA staff in the three collaborating institutions are involved in two multi-country research projects on higher education and economic development, and higher education and poverty alleviation in Africa.

The collaborations are important for capacity building and also for the sustainability of the programme once NOMA funding stops.

FUNDING FOR A SECOND COHORT

The NOMA Board has recently (February 2009) approved additional funding for a second cohort of at least four students. It is expected that the second cohort will commence studies in July 2009. Considering the high interest shown in the programme, it is expected that several self-sponsoring students, i.e. non-NOMA funded students will enrol in the second cohort.

CONCLUSION

Other than one drop-out case, the NOMA sponsored MEd (Higher Education Studies) programme preceded smoothly, and significant progress has been made. It is expected that a majority of the students in the 2008 cohort, if not all, will successfully complete their studies during this academic year.