

**COVER PAGE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO FORMAL STRUCTURES
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

SUBMISSION IDENTIFIERS:

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SUBMISSION CONTENT

The third annual university wide Academic Monitoring and Support (AMS) Research Colloquium was hosted by the College of Agriculture, Engineering & Science and the University Teaching and Learning Office on 27 November 2015.

A lack of clarity and consistency regarding identities of AMS personnel, their roles, responsibilities and job descriptions, and inconsistencies in how AMS was being implemented within the Colleges led to the theme and overall aim of the 2014 Colloquium. This further led to a process of re-conceptualising AMS to move it towards being institutionalized within the University.

Coherence of the diverse AMS activities, within and across Colleges, as the central topic of discussion became the focus of the 2015 Colloquium. The planning of the 2015 Colloquium was underpinned by the belief that continued critical reflection on AMS praxis would contribute to the desired coherence of AMS initiatives across the University.

Financial implications

Attachments:

1. AMS Colloquium Report 2015

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INTRODUCTION

The third annual university wide Academic Monitoring and Support (AMS) Research Colloquium was held at the end of 2015 as has become the tradition at UKZN, with the first held on 26 November 2013, the second on 26 November 2014 and the third on 27 November 2015. The University Teaching and Learning Office which funds and supports the colloquium has seen it prudent to have each College within the University get a chance to host the yearly event; hence the College of Health Sciences hosted the first, the College of Law and Management Studies hosted the second and the third was hosted by the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, with the College of Humanities next in line. The 2013 colloquium was the first opportunity to share practices in AMS within the University and identify opportunities for collaboration and generate consensus on AMS at UKZN. A lack of clarity and consistency regarding identities of AMS personnel, their roles, responsibilities and job descriptions, and inconsistencies in how AMS was being implemented within the colleges across the university led to the theme and overall aim of the 2014 colloquium. This further led to a process of re-conceptualising AMS to move it towards being institutionalized within the University.

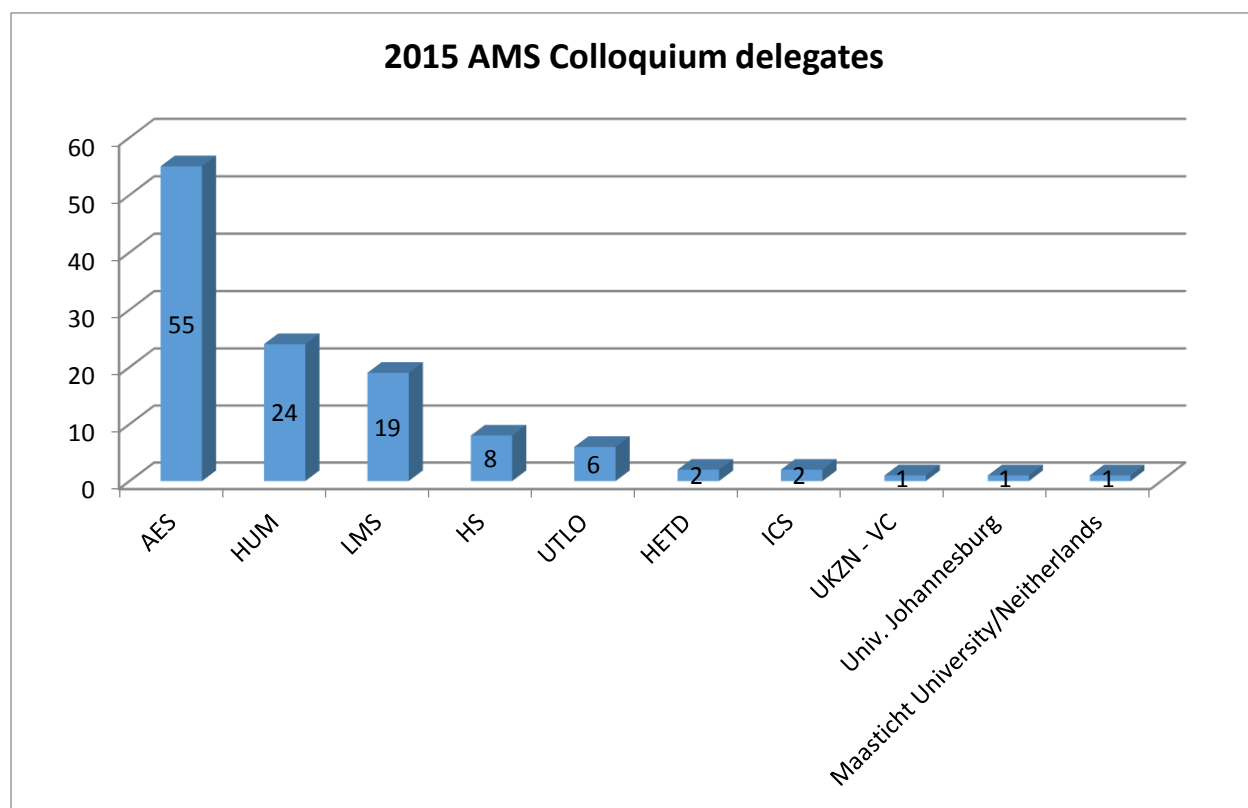
Coherence of the diverse AMS activities, within and across Colleges as the central topic of discussion became the focus of the 2015 colloquium. The planning of the 2015 colloquium was underpinned by the belief that continued critical reflection on AMS praxis would contribute to the desired coherence of AMS initiatives across the university. The Deputy Vice Chancellor and Head of the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, Professor Deo Jaganyi welcomed delegates to the colloquium. And the Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Professor Albert van Jaarsveld, opened the colloquium. The College Dean of Teaching and Learning; Agriculture Engineering and Science, Professor Bala Pillay gave the reflection of the day and way forward, while the University Deputy Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, Professor Renuka Vithal, closed, showing the seriousness of what UKZN hoped to achieve from the Colloquium.

COLLOQUIUM PARTICIPATION

One hundred and nineteen individuals, reflecting a wide spectrum of AMS practitioners, academic staff members, student support services and a few invited students attended the full day colloquium. Representation from the different colleges and invited divisions in the university attended as shown in Figure 1 below. The practice of having a College co-host the colloquium has brought in an interesting aspect to the representation at the yearly colloquia; in 2014 the College of Law and Management hosted the colloquium and had the highest representation of 31 out of the 122 delegates who attended, in 2015 the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science hosted and the highest representation was from that College with 55 out of the total of

119 delegates. The second largest representation in 2015 was College of Humanities with 24 delegates, third being Law and Management Studies with 19 delegates and Health Sciences fourth with eight delegates. The University Teaching and Learning Office being a small office was well represented with six delegates, invited ICS delegates were two, Higher Education Studies had two, while one representative came from Maastricht University in the Netherlands but visiting UKZN School of Public Health. The final two delegates were the invited keynote speaker from the University of Johannesburg and UKZN's Vice Chancellor.

Figure 1: Attendance at the 2015 UKZN Academic Monitoring and Support Research Colloquium by College and invited university divisions



Professor Jaganyi welcomed delegates and started the day by challenging all present that every student who walks through the doors of UKZN must walk away with a degree if we all embraced that each student was an individual with their own unique challenges. He welcomed delegates to reflect and share successes and challenges UKZN face as an institution in terms how to ensure student success. Professor van Jaarsveld pointed out that excellence in teaching and learning was at the heart of the institution and urged delegates to reflect on how we engage with students in the classroom and always recognize that there was room for improvement. He pointed out the importance of such colloquia as an opportunity to reflect upon the way we go about teaching and

learning and get a chance to reflect on some of the successes and failures and share best practices to make sure we learn collectively as a community of scholars. It is not only what we do in the classroom but also how we do it and how the what and how complement each other. The colloquium's programme of the day was therefore reflecting how to harness all possible tools, skills, technologies and support to improve teaching and learning in the university. The many aspects to be discussed were ultimately to increase graduation output and get students to graduate within minimum time by providing a conducive environment for students and the necessary support. He wished everyone well and challenged delegates to take what they were to learn back to the classroom to ensure UKZN becomes the University of Choice for students in the country.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DR ANDRE VAN ZYL: STUDENTS' TRANSITIONS AND THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

The first keynote address started with the challenging issue of students transitioning into university at first year; how can AMS address the high dropout rates experienced across South Africa? Dr. Andre van Zyl of University of Johannesburg's Academic Development Centre gave the keynote address titled 'The First Year Experience Approach to addressing the Articulation Gap'. He had been invited following the exposure the chair of the organizing committee, Mrs. F. Shonhiwa, had had after being funded by the UTLO to attend the first conference on the First Year Experience and Students in Transition earlier in the year and the fact that University of Johannesburg has a more structured and coherent programme around the first year experience and academic monitoring and support. Dr. van Zyl not only heads the Academic Development Centre at UJ but has spearheaded and heads the recently launched South African National Resource Centre for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, hence his broad understanding in this field was solicited to spark debate and lead to a formulation of a way forward for UKZN.

Dr. van Zyl placed his presentation in the context of the challenge 'we get send the wrong students – we are thinking we should teach the students we thought we should have had but we have to teach the students in front of us'.

The challenge for South African universities is that about 50% of students who enroll for studies dropout of university and 33% dropout in the first year.

"There are many dimensions to the kinds of deprivation suffered under Apartheid, but one stands out in this context. Apartheid Education generated and perpetuated cycles of epistemological deprivation, that is, it deprived many learners in our country of a fair opportunity to gain access to the kind of knowledge that is supposed to be distributed in formal schooling."

Morrow 2007

"It is obvious that mere formal access to the institutions that distribute knowledge is different from, and not a sufficient condition for, epistemological access. To register as a student at a university is not yet to have gained access to the knowledge that the university distributes."

Morrow 1994

The First Year Experience Programme (FYE) was implemented at UJ in 2010 (see Annex 2). It has been grown over time and not imposed involving 'hearts and minds' and has top management buy-in. 'FYE at UJ is a holistic initiative which encompasses all aspects of first year student experience in the context of an invitational and equitable institution. It comprises both curricular and extra-curricular initiatives, and is far more than a single event, programme or course. It attempts to establish an ethos and a way of life, through which all first year students will experience the transition into university life by:

- Placement testing
- Orientation
- Extended orientation
- Tracking students
- Tutors
- Co-curricular activities
- Residences and academic excellence

University of Johannesburg has seen an increase in success rate of 10% in the five years the FYE has been implemented (2009 = 75% and 2014 = 85%). Take home messages from the UJ FYE are:

- Know your students
- Know your institution and your course
- Meet your students where they are
- Staff and student responsibility
- Making the implicit explicit

- Developmental time
- Intentionality
- Theoretical grounding and practical usefulness
- Taking staff and students along
- Changing the core and the surface

A CONVERSATION WITH STUDENTS: NARRATIVES OF TRANSITIONING INTO UNIVERSITY

A group of four students had been invited to share their experiences in transitioning into university. The first student speaker talked about the challenges of transitioning from rural area to an urban university – the challenges were both academically and residence life. We learned that most challenging was the language barrier as he had done all his schooling in isiZulu and now was expected to learn and to write up assignments in English. Even during the question and answer session he reflected that it has been easier for him to go to his peers than approach a lecturer as he and others are hesitant to speak in a language which they are not sure they would be understood. Computer competency was another challenge highlighted as he had had no exposure to computers prior to coming to university. Laboratory equipment was another steep learning curve as there had been no laboratories at his rural school, so simple equipment such as beakers, pipettes, spatulas, etc. were new to him. He thanked the university for having had a chance to do a Foundation year where he got a chance to adjust as the learning pace was much slower, having student counselors who he could go to for assistance and the lecturers for tracking their progress through assessments thereby keeping him on track with his studies. Socially he had to adjust to being among a diverse group of students. Adjusting to residence life meant him learning to take responsibility for himself so having residence assistants and the residence supervisors helped in that transition. For him the highest credit went to the Supplemental Instructors. Reminded of Morrow's statements put forward in the keynote address by this student's transitional challenges.

The second student had a different set of challenges; she was coming from a well-equipped education system and had done extremely well at Matric. However, the wrong choice of degree programme for her led to her exclusion from the programme. She was however directed to a student counselor who then helped her to move to a more suitable programme for her in which she has done extremely well and been chosen to become a Supplemental Instruction Leader. She highlighted adjusting to university life as one of the major challenges. In the first instance she did not know where the lecture rooms were and who the lecturers were. She found her lectures in the first degree choice too packed for her to get time to understand the previous lecture. She

found the lecturers neither approachable nor empathetic and tutors unprepared therefore tutorials not helpful. She was isolated as she did not know people in her classes. She fell into depression. Although she is doing very well in her current programme and is looking forward to doing her Masters in this field, she is resentful of the time wasted in the confusion and lack of advice and why aptitude tests are not done at the beginning of one's university journey.

The third student highlighted the importance of the Supplemental Instruction (SI) leader. He saw how these are aligned to the lectures. Him as an SI leader is also able to tutor in isiZulu as he has realized language is a large barrier to the understanding of questions being asked in assignments. The students are not familiar with a lot of technology. The students from Quintile 1 and 2 are not familiar with computers and most laboratory equipment. He sees SI as a way to bridge these gaps and students learn to solve problems as individuals and also in groups under supplemental instruction.

The fourth and last student was a postgraduate doing his Master's degree. He focused on the transition from undergraduate studies to postgraduate studies. His focus was on the social pressures, for example the struggle for resources and the struggle to continue with studies when parents are expecting a breadwinner after the first degree. He pointed out the financial struggle at undergraduate level which is alleviated at postgraduate if one gets tutorship, SI leadership or grants such as NRF. These funds are not only used to support the student but also parents and families back home. As a tutor and SI leader he has seen wrong degree programme choice as the biggest challenge and hopes that there could be a more rigorous career counselling process right at the beginning of any student's university journey. In terms of postgraduate support he felt that postgraduates did not have adequate working spaces and in his instance was not provided with office space to work after hours which at postgraduate level is needed. As a postgraduate he did not feel appreciated within the institution.

The question and answer session highlighted the following:

- Preference for peer support for several reasons such as a more comfortable zone as the feeling is that one is going to someone of the same level. The issues of language again being a hindrance in approaching the lecturers. Student feeling that lecturers will be rather abrupt and not give enough attention to the student whereas peers will take their time to explain
- Possibility of bring in 'intercultural classes' and 'buddy systems' where old students help new students adjust
- Poor career guidance in schools exacerbated by lack of guidance once at varsity. Career guidance should be responsibility of student, parents, community and the university

Summary/reflections?

- Students are ill-prepared for the professions they sometimes choose – widespread problem. Is this new or historical?

- Students not taking up support provided particularly through ADOs till they are in trouble.
- Exposure to available assistance and support not advertised enough – mostly only done at orientation
- What is the role of the academics in AMS? What are the roles of the ADOs/ADCs?
- Are the assessment criteria transparent?
- Is there need to relook the curriculum?
- Basic monitoring – tests, sms, etc. leading to feedback
- QEP
- Is the institution providing adequate postgraduate support
- Coherent/Effective AMS at an institutional level

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DR ANESH MAHARAJ: USING MOODLE TO PROMOTE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MATHEMATICS

Dr. Anesh Maharaj who is a senior lecturer in the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science (SMSCS), UKZN gave the second keynote speech. Dr. Maharaj is a recipient of UKZN's 2014 Distinguished Teacher Awards, and received the National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Awards from the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa (HELTASA) in 2015. He has earned this national recognition for his emphasis on meeting students at their level to ensure their success.

Dr. Maharaj, who has been teaching in various capacities since 1983, has demonstrated his concern for students through his work in mentoring bursary holders, and through his exploration of techniques that could assist students to excel. Dr. Maharaj has also played an important role in the establishment of the Math 130 programme at UKZN that assists under-qualified mathematics educators to qualify with first year university mathematics. He has highlighted the importance of employing clear communication techniques with students to make sure that they understand what is expected of them as soon as they enter the tertiary education system, and that they comprehend the work they are being taught and not simply memorise it. Along with his empathy for students, Dr. Maharaj uses a variety of techniques to purposefully plan his teaching approaches, implement them, and assess the impact of his teaching. He believes that it is of vital importance that teaching be reflected upon so that teaching styles evolve to suit the needs of the students to enable them to receive the best education possible.

USING MOODLE TO PROMOTE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MATHEMATICS

His presentation focused on an online learning project at UKZN which he started working on in 2003 after realizing that the challenges faced in the classroom could be greatly helped by the use of technology. The aim of his work is to make online learning materials and support available to students on a large scale. With his collaborators, they look at the development of an online template for a module offered to large student groups. The first phase of the project focused on the development of basic knowledge and skills for mathematics which we found to be lacking from students, who took first year mathematics modules at the University of KwaZulu- Natal. In 2013 they looked at the development of Pre-calculus Diagnostics to help students detect their strengths and weaknesses before they study university calculus. During 2014 they piloted in-course diagnostics for differential calculus and integral calculus. In 2015 they rolled out Pre-calculus Diagnostics to all the first year mathematics students. Based on this research they made improvements to the Online Diagnostics for Undergraduate Mathematics and are rolling this out to our main stream students across our campuses. The presentation gave an overview of the use of e-learning to promote mathematics teaching and learning to large groups of students during the period 2010 to 2015. So far their research indicates that use of e-learning is making a positive impact on students' throughput rates.

SUMMARY OF COLLOQUIUM PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Twelve papers were presented in three parallel sessions with four papers presented in each strand (Annex 2). The thematic strands were:

1. Monitoring Linguistic Factors and Support Programmes
 - *Effect of English Language on Academic Performance in Economics* by Ruvania Govender, Annah Bengesai and Zahra Bulbulia
 - *The Use of Glossaries in Scaffolding Student Learning in Life Sciences* by Gran Moodley, Deborah Robertson-Andersson and Rosanne O'hara
 - *An Investigation into Support Programmes offered to University Mathematics Students* by Bongiwe Mshengu
 - *A Look into the Adaptation of the Supplemental Instruction Program within the School of Chemistry and Physics* by Shivan Michael Augustine
2. Improving Academic Performance
 - *Is Personalised Support key to improving academic Performance?* By George Kehdinga
 - *The Impact of the Academic Skills Program on Student Success at a South African University's School of Law* by Erica Wille

- *To what Extent does the Implementation of Supplemental Instructions in a Level 2 Chemistry Module Affect the Pass Rate?* By Khethukuthula Nozipho Hadebe
- *The use of rubrics in enhancing student's scientific writing skills in a variety of disciplines in the Life Sciences* by Deborah Vivienne Robertson-Anderson

3. Research and Psychosocial Support

- *Student Support within the context of Research and Service-Learning: Academic enhancement and community development* by Angela James
- *Influencing Factors on Lecture Attendance of Life Sciences Students* by Rosanne O'Hara, Ademola Olaniran and Oliver Zishiri
- *Examining Support Seeking Behaviour of Male Undergraduates at UKZN: A Research Design* by Ronicka Mudaly
- *Democracy and Education* by Fran Saunders

SHARING OF EXEMPLARY PRACTICES – EVIDENCE FROM THE 4 COLLEGES

Dr. Rubby Dunpath, Director of Teaching and Learning at UKZN chaired this session. In his introduction to the panel, made up of Ms. Wulganithi Thaver representing College of Health Sciences, Dr. Vinodhani Paideya from College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, Dr. Annah Bengesai from College of Law and Management Studies and Ms. Angeline Stephens of the College of Humanities, he pointed out that there were pockets of excellence residing in different enclaves, departments, divisions, schools and colleges in our institution. These pockets of excellence remain largely hidden from public view for various reasons, one of them being that we do not believe that they are exemplary because we are accustomed to that kind of practice and we think it is mainstream until someone else hears it for the first time and it is an ahaa moment for them and realize they should be implementing a similar practice in their own workspace. He urged everyone that they continue to be honest in their sharing being mindful that to every successful practice there are obstacles, hazards and potential failings that they need to be candid about. The definition of exemplary therefore is that, which is potentially generative, successful and productive but could also we could also have exemplary practices which provide indicators of what not to do and how not to do it so we can learn from both successes and failures.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES: STUDENT WELLNESS AND ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION (SWAT)

Ms Thaver presented on **the Student Wellness and Academic Transformation (SWAT) programme** which is a year-long innovative proactive approach to enhance student success being implemented in the **College of Health Sciences**. "SWAT is a coordinated undergraduate programme where all School, College and wider University role players have delineated roles, responsibilities and accountability and work in an integrated manner to ensure that equity of access translates to equity of outcome in the minimum time." It is informed by the UKZN AMS Africa audit on student failure at UKZN which recommended holistic support and services for

students to be put in place. It is also informed by literature on student success, retention and throughput. The implementation of the AMS policy necessitated the development and implementation of informed, relevant and meaningful student support programmes to prepare the underprepared students to successfully transition into Higher Education at the same time as the prepared students. There was therefore a critical shift of the support provided to the students from a reactive to a proactive stance leading to the question 'Do we know our Students'? It then became essential to understand who the students were and factors that impacted on their academic success. Hence the development of this structured support which has evolved over the years both in name and in strategies and is currently grounded within a wellness model. The wellness model encompasses; the environmental, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical, cultural, social and occupational realms of a student hence its student centred leading to student wellness and academic transformation. The programme is implemented throughout the year:

January – February training involves compulsory skills development for incoming students and the preparation for online assessment.

March – May is the launch of the assessment, data analyses, student profiling, referrals, interventions, ongoing skills development, personal and career counselling and academic support.

June – July is continuation of data analyses and compiling of reports to school boards, disciplines, Teaching and Learning committees and preparations for the second semester.

August – November sees ongoing interventions and support including tracking and monitoring, evaluation of programme, compilation of report, presentation of patterns and trends to Dean T & L and T & L Committee

December is when the funding report is prepared, SWAT team is recruited and a review of the Wellness assessment is carried out.

Criticisms: Future areas to develop SWAT

- Funding by TDG –sustainability is a concern
- Collaboration buy-in by academic sector for out of classroom strategies
- More active collaboration from Central Student Services
- Uptake does not match the identified needs
- Timetabling constraints –prevent strategies from being embedded within the academic programme (i.e. low uptake and impact implementation)
- Updating SharePoint –not consistent and impacts on tracking of support and intervention
- Inconsistencies in Academic Development Staff KPA's impacts strategies to intervene academic development and support

What's working in SWAT

- 92% 1st years profiled through **timeous and targeted** strategies
- **Structured** support from entry to exit –profile available until **graduation**

- Uptake of services has increased and accountability through tracking, recording, log sheets etc.
- **Increased collaboration** with all stakeholders at all college forums; aligned T&L strategy
- Consistent student feedback used for **review and improvement** of programme
- **Evidence** reflect students at risk and excluded had not accessed support
- Strategies extended to living spaces of students which contribute to the culture of ongoing out of class learning and support

The holistic, strategic, timeous, proactive, structured, measurable and student centred approach is what makes the SWAT strategy work.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE: SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION (SI)

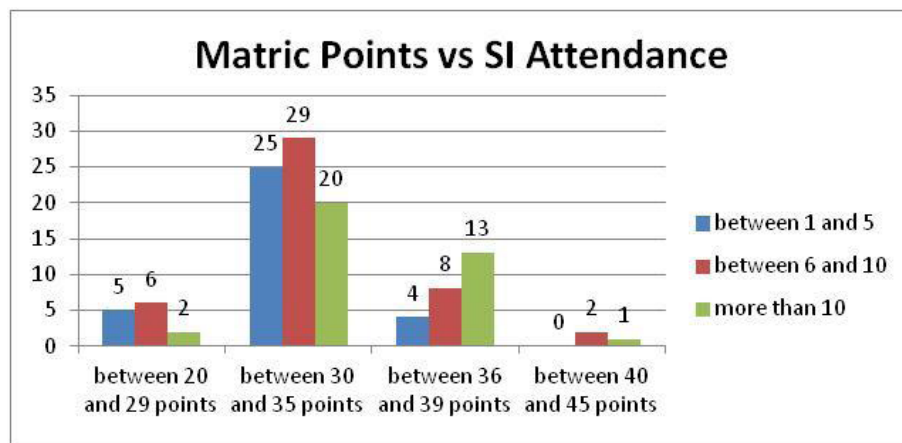
Dr. Vino Paideya presented on the impacts of **Supplemental Instruction (SI) in student academic support** within the **College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science**. She herself a Chemistry academic, has been trained as an SI supervisor and spoke of the SI programme that has been implemented in the School of Chemistry and Physics. SI is a peer mentoring support programme that contributes to student preparedness to engage critically and collaboratively in any work situation globally as well as locally. SI is a voluntary peer mentoring programme for all students in a particular course or module therefore focusing on high risk courses rather than high risk students. SI sessions focus on collaborative learning and hence defer from traditional tutorials in which re-lecturing takes place, and therefore class experience is enhanced through discussion and critical engagement with concepts and is not duplicated. Students are required to be active participants who take responsibility for their own learning – active learning develops students' perception of their peers and their opinions. SI allows for better understanding of course material, allows for more cognitive processing of material as well as exposure to new ideas and new ways of thinking of things and for better identification of students' misconceptions and gaps in understanding of materials, hopefully helping in increasing the self-esteem of the participants. It also allows for student development of critical thinking in that it allows for openness of new ideas, the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a variety of critical and philosophical positions.

SI leaders attend lectures in the module they mentor (e.g. Chemistry and Physics) and they regularly meet with the course lecturer to keep on track with module pace. The SI programme is constantly evaluated and the SI supervisor who is actually the ADO of the School observes the SI sessions and student performance is monitored to ensure a high standard is maintained. So the SI programmes are observed checking on the SI leaders' facilitation skills. SI sessions are based on students coming up to the board to engage with the learning while the SI leaders facilitate the process. While the facilities are not ideal, the School of Chemistry and Physics can show the success of the SI programme from 2011 – 2014 (see table 1 below):

Table 1: Pass rates achieved by students in Chemistry 110 and 120 between 2011 and 2014

COURSE	Overall Pass Rate	SI Pass rate of Regular SI attendees
CHEM 110	2014 – 72% 2013 – 87% 2012 – 83% 2011 – 74.2%	2014 – 86.9% 2013 – 89.6% 2012 – 88.2% 2011- 93.5%
CHEM 120	2014 – 96.1% 2013 – 73.3% 2012 - 79.6% 2011 – 73.5%	2014 – 99% 2013 – 83.2% 2012 – 85.6% 2011- 92.3%

However, if looking at who attends, unfortunately the one with low matric points at entry who are the main targets do not attend as hoped for (see Figure 2 below):



This data is generated from the 700 – 1000 students who enroll in the first year modules. Regular attendees are those who attend 6 or more SI sessions with 13 – 14 SI sessions offered per semester. Overall 45% of the students attend the voluntary SI programme sessions with 10% considered regular attendees.

The SI programme in the School of Chemistry and Physics works based on the following strategy. The ADO is the SI supervisor. The SI leaders are senior students who are recruited for the first and second year modules. SI principles have also been integrated in the first year mainstream Chemistry tutorial sessions so tutors and practical demonstrators have also been trained in SI principles. While SI remains voluntary, it is well marketed by SI leaders through posters and during lecture sessions as SI leaders sit next to the entry level students and encourage them to attend SI sessions. SI is therefore a highly structured, supported, mentored and monitored programme and only works well when there is buy-in by the SI leaders, SI supervisors and the academic staff involved. The programme requires an initial huge amount of investment in terms of time on the

part of the role players as there is need for collaboration. Lecturers in the courses are encouraged to regularly meet with SI leaders to receive feedback on students and check on overall progress of the SI sessions. College support is imperative for inclusion of the SI programme into the mainstream academic programme. SI leaders, if selected appropriately, are generally highly motivated students who add value to the academic programme. Therefore the School advertize for SI leaders and subject them to rigorous interviews for both their social skills and academic performance.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES: INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORT PROJECT

Ms. Angeline Stephens presented on **the College of Humanities' Integrated Student Support Project**. This project is informed by Professor Diane Grayson's keynote address at the 2013 UKZN Teaching & Learning AMS Colloquium where she proposed a model to support student success, framed within the context of the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP). She advocated for a move away from fragmented, ad-hoc approaches in the provision of support services to a more coherent and collaborative approach facilitated through a greater integration and alignment between the academic, administrative and support sectors. This conceptualisation of student life in terms of life-cycle processes approach is useful as it allows for strategic interventions at 'developmental stages' or phases in the student's academic life. It implies that interventions should be considered in relation to student needs at particular stages in their academic career as well as in relation to expected outcomes. The FYE is critical but it also looks at what can be done post first year, as well as the transition from U/G studies to P/G studies.

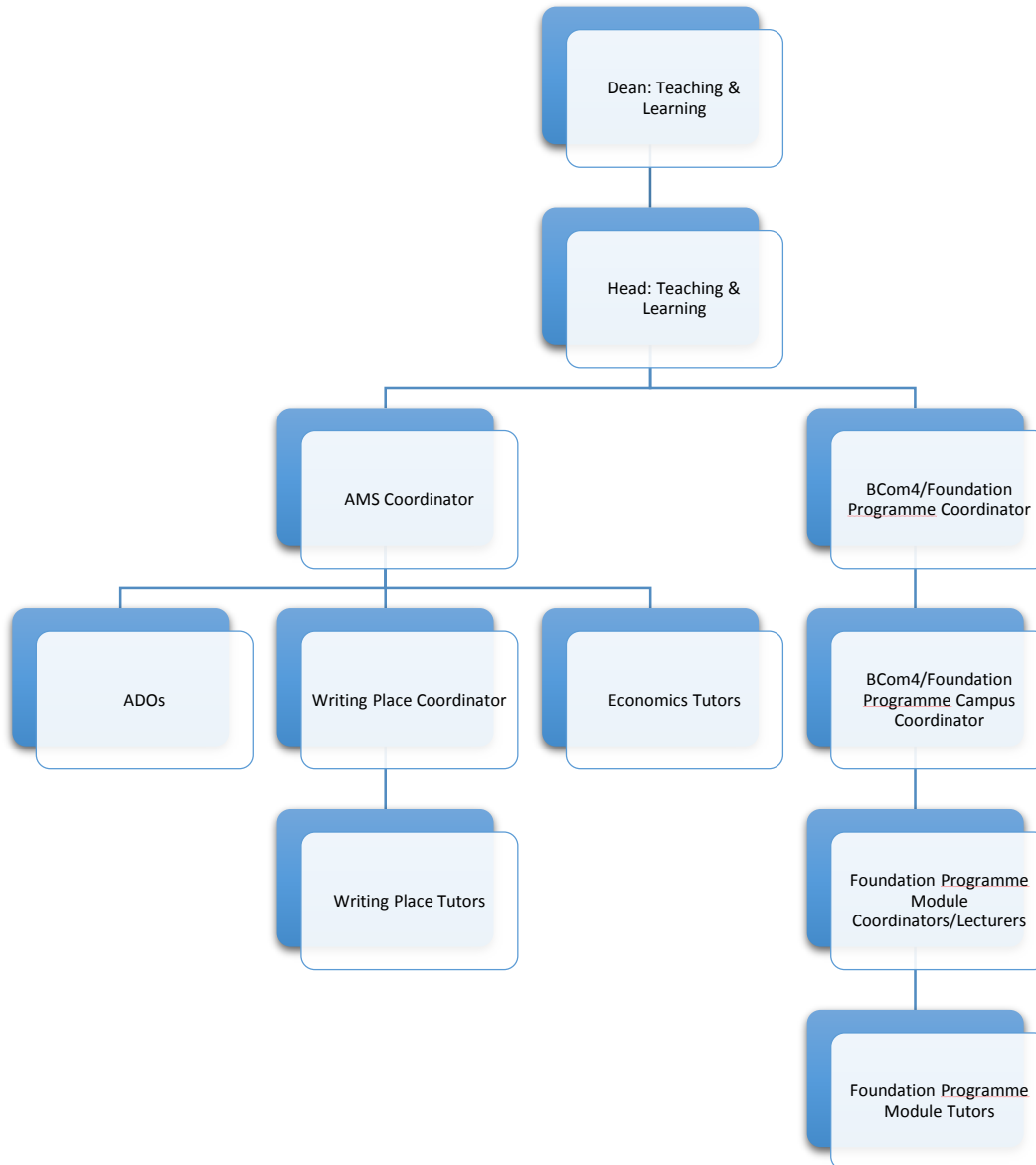
The Integrated Student Support project is funded by a Teaching & Learning Innovation and Quality Enhancement Grant and is guided by the goals of the QEP that speak to improving the quality of educational provision and the number of quality graduates. In particular, it pays attention to the goal of "developing a higher education system that is improving continuously as members of the higher education community collaborate to share good practices and solve shared problems". The overall aim of the current project is develop a coherent and integrated, evidence-based student support programme, grounded in theory which provides effective and timely support to students, and thereby contribute to student success and throughput. An integral component of the project therefore, is ongoing engagement with all stakeholders: students, academic staff, professional staff and central services staff.

Thus far an online student survey, a student focus group, two workshops with staff and a number of individual tasks have been completed that have culminated in the first draft of an Integrated Student Programme. Many of the activities contained in the draft programme already exist in one form or the other, either in the College of Humanities or in other Colleges. These include proactive measures to identify students who may be considered 'high-risk' for academic failure, student profiling and tracking, writing and academic skills support, psycho-social support, peer mentoring, and supplemental instruction for difficult, gateway courses. However, what is significant is that the 'product', that is, the programme, is as important as the processes of engagement. As stakeholders engage collaboratively on the tasks at hand, important conversations around critical issues and national imperatives that impact on how best we support our students, have emerged. This has

included conversations around localised issues such as role clarification and resource allocation, to broader national conversations around student preparedness, access and transformation. The project thus includes a strong critical and reflexive component in asking the questions of what we do, why we do it and how we do it. The impact of the programme will be assessed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This will include student and staff surveys and focus groups, student tracking, monitoring of identified performance indicators, and regular evaluation and assessment of the programme aims, challenges and ways to improve and strengthen the programme based on the evidence. The programme is thus seen as an ongoing, dynamic and evolving process, in which input and critical reflection and evaluation by all stakeholders will inform the quality and form of student support to enable student success as defined as “enhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable”.

COLLEGE OF LAW AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES: STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF THE TEACHING & LEARNING UNIT

Dr. Annah Bengesai presented on **the Structure and Role of the Teaching and Learning Unit in the College of Law and Management**. The role of the Teaching and Learning Unit is to conduct teaching related research amongst staff and students in the College but primarily in the undergraduate schools of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Law, Management, Information Technology and Governance. The Unit is organized into service units although certain services such as recruitment of AMS staff and training of tutors are centralized due to their nature.



In terms of the structure, as in the organogram above: The Dean of Teaching and Learning is responsible for the strategic planning for the unit and the Head of the Unit provides operational planning. Under the Head there is an AMS Coordinator who works with the ADOs, the Writing Place Coordinator and tutors, and Economics tutors. The Head also oversees the BCom4/Foundation Programme Coordinator who has campus coordinators and tutors. The Teaching and Learning Unit provides services not only to 'at risk' students in the mainstream programmes but also to 'at risk' students in the access programmes. The unit offers a comprehensive academic skills programme as well as an extensive mentorship programme. The ADOs double as academic counsellors as well as SI leaders as they are senior students therefore provide peer academic mentoring. The unit also provides reading and writing proficiency development through the English proficiency course and the Writing Place. It also provides research and because it is central its staff also monitors what is happening in the different schools

in the College in terms of AMS and other services they provide. They also manage and coordinate the foundation and provisioning of the BCom4 programme.

Advantages of a central unit in the College:

- Presence of a coordinated T & L unit in the College – allowing for all stakeholders to know of its existence
- Leading to higher visibility of its services e.g. more and more academics walking in to enquire about their students' performance, or ask for training of their tutors and to hold workshops for students
- Having a central unit brings higher interaction between academics and ADOs; although ADOs are trained and employed by the T & L unit, they sit in different schools
- The unit is also able to disseminate information on student support in a more coordinated manner as it amalgamates the reports from all schools into one college report allowing for all to have a holistic picture of what is happening in the College

What is missing?

- Student profiling is not necessarily missing but has not been taken fully advantage of like in the College of Health Sciences
- While Student Academic Support Services provide the LEC the unit could further use this in its approach to student counselling – currently they have one single student counselling session for 'at risk' students at the end of the semester whilst they could incorporate what has been learnt from the LEC results in their academic counselling of students at the beginning of the following semester.

Overall a centralized unit is well placed to actually foster an integrated approach between student services, academic departments and academic support services. And student profiling can also increase referrals between AMS, academics and student support.

PLENARY PANEL DISCUSSION: ENHANCING THE EFFICACY OF ACADEMIC MONITORING & SUPPORT IN CAES

Beside several of the parallel session presentations having come from the work being done in the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science to support students, the College also showcased the postgraduate support, the Mastering the Masters Programme, offered in the college and the Learning Enhancement Checklist (LEC) which aims to identify factors which result in undergraduate students being academically at risk. Professor Theresa Coetzer, the Dean of Research in the College presented on **the Mastering the Masters Programme**. The programme aims to deal with non-technical tools, skills and practices required by postgraduate students that enhance supervisors' work leading to increased throughput and decreased time to completion for Masters and PhD students. Programme is also offered to the postgraduate students and early career academic staff for professional development to develop skills in writing for publication, supervision skills development, etc. This is done through workshops, writing retreats and small-group writing mentoring sessions. The results of the last five years indicate reduced time to completion and shows that students from other Colleges within the University are attending the workshops (see annex 4 for Professor Coetzer's presentation).

Ms. Shelley Barnsley, the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science Student Support Manager, presented the work on LEC as outlined in the abstract below:

Risk Factors for Student Attrition in the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Neeshi Singh-Pillay, Shelley Barnsley, Rossella Meusel and Mike Murray

The purpose of this study is to identify factors which result in students being academically at risk. To address this aim, 445 students in the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science at UKZN were assessed using the Learning Enhancement Checklist (LEC). The LEC is a computerised, diagnostic tool which is a self-screening measure used to identify self-reported problems. An ordinal generalized linear model was fitted using academic standing as a response variable. Our findings are that the following significant factors place students at risk for poor academic performance: campus location (which may in fact relate to the type of degree that is being offered there), a discrepancy between test and examination marks; food insecurity, not being in residence, not having a study group, religious security, positive sense of self, young age, and family pressure regarding career choices. Possible reasons for these findings are discussed, including the unusual construct that self-efficacy and overconfidence impacts on self-regulating behaviour and plays a key role in increasing academic risk. Suggestions are made for student support interventions which will be helpful in addressing the issue of student attrition at University.

The **University ICS Division** had the last presentation before the final session of the day which heralded the Colloquium Closure. The Director of ICS, Mr. Abdullah Shariff after listening to the morning student conversation with the university session had decided to bring in one of his young staff members passionate about making a change for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. She contributed to the day's proceeding by sharing her experiences in watching students struggle with the basics of computer usage in the university LANs. This has led her developing a proposal to work with new students on their computer skills during orientation week and beyond.

COLLOQUIUM CLOSURE: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE DAY'S PROGRAMME

Compiled by Dr. Saras Reddy and delivered by Prof Bala Pillay

We can all agree that we have shared a day of rich and inspiring reflections on AMS at UKZN. My task is to offer some critical reflections on the rich and inspiring papers and panel discussions presented today. This is no easy task – especially is one wants to do justice to the varied contributions. I will attempt to extract and highlight what I think are the most significant things that emerged today to offer some comments and critique that will move this conversation further. The three main themes are: challenges, context, and insourcing of support.

1. CHALLENGES

All the papers and panel discussions focused on the various challenges experienced in offering support to students particularly at first year level. The various support mechanisms that are put into place are to address the alarming fact that only 50% of those who enroll at universities graduate and 30% drop out in their first year, according to our first keynote speaker, Dr. Andre van Zyl.

The three parallel strands of paper presentations at the colloquium today, reflected on how programs within UKZN attempt to first diagnose these challenges, and then deal with them. The remarkable efforts by academics and the professional services staff to address the attrition rate and to support students that were showcased here today is laudable, and the mechanisms ranging from supplemental instruction (as initiated by AES) to glossaries and language competences, as well as psychosocial support – for example understanding the role of gender in support seeking behavior, seem to be yielding good results. Indeed, today was a day for sharing best practices with regard to dealing with the challenges of the high attrition rate, and we can confidently say that one of the objectives of the colloquium to provide the necessary traction to consolidate and improve AMS strategies at UKZN has been achieved. My question though is; IS THIS ENOUGH? Is it enough to respond in this rather generic way to the notion of monitoring and support? The student panel focusing on the unique challenges experienced by our students, gives us a clue that there might be an important dimension that is either missing or needs to be more developed in our endeavours, and this dimension is that of CONTEXT.

2. CONTEXT

All the papers and panel discussions focused on the UKZN and the more general South African context (as in the case of Dr. van Zyl's paper), and yet the context seems to provide only the backdrop, rather than a space for meaningful engagement. The recent #Rhodesmustfall movement and the #OpenStellenbosch movement, referring to student protests at Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, demanding for amongst other things, the decolonizing of higher education in South Africa, points us to the points of recognizing CONTEXT, in the kind of support that we offer. In other words, do we need to consider that instead of trying to fit students into a paradigm that might be foreign to them and then putting in support mechanisms to help them pass when they do not conform to these paradigms? What would happen if we changed the paradigm to one that was more aligned to the contexts from which students emerged? Thulani's experiences of transitioning to a rural high school to an urban university highlights the importance of both the psychosocial elements of living in the university residence as well as the kinds of academic transitioning that were required of him. Drawing Mishika's experience also highlights the importance of taking an asset based approach rather than a liability's based approach to academic monitoring and support (AT RISK and ROBOT SYSTEM). This is what might be referred to "IN-SOURCING rather than OUT-SOURCING" of AMS and it is to this point that I now turn.

3. IN-SOURCING OF SUPPORT

One of the key observations made by Dr. van Zyl in his keynote address was the importance of institutions not taking a panel-beating approach to support students. This panel-beating approach involves the out-sourcing at-risk students to support professionals who will supposedly fix the problem. Dr. van Zyl offers a more lasting solution. He calls for universities to build within the structures of the institution through the first year experience program. In addition to this, I would add, given the voices of the students and ADOs and support practitioners we have heard today, that what may be needed is a more 'developmental perspective' to AMS as advocated by Pratt. Pratt describes this as: within this perspective, it is necessary for teachers to explore learners' current conceptions of content and then challenge those conceptions to help learners move to more sophisticated levels of thinking and reasoning. This is not always easy to achieve. A common tendency for teachers is to fall into the role of "expert" and provide the answers rather than challenging the questions. One of avoiding this is to work with students' prior knowledge. This means recognizing the "assets" which students already possess and working with those to sharpen and develop their thinking. So the questions I am raising are: Who are the people responsible for this cognitive – capacity development? What support is provided by the institution to ensure that the cognitive capacity development occurs and is there coherence in the support that is provided to our students in order to achieve this cognitive capacity development?

We gathered here today, to share and learn exemplary practices across the colleges and as our VC said in his opening address “Let us take these practices to our classrooms to enhance our teaching and learning practices not only to increase success and graduation rates, but also to enhance the environment in which teaching and learning takes place so that UKZN is the University of Choice for staff and students”.

COLLOQUIUM STEERING COMMITTEES

2015 AMS COLLOQUIUM UNIVERSITY WIDE TASK TEAM

Fortune Shonhiwa	College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science (Colloquium Convener)
Bala Pillay	College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science (Dean of Teaching and Learning and host of the colloquium)
Naven Chetty	College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science
Vinodhani Paideya	College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science
Annah Bengesai	College of Law and Management
Kriben Pillay	College of Law and Management (Dean of Teaching and Learning)
Primmithi Naidoo	College of Law and Management
Angela James	College of Humanities
Angeline Stephens	College of Humanities
Thandi Sylvia Magojo	College of Humanities
Frasia Oosthuizen	College of Health Sciences
Reshma Subbaye	University Teaching and Learning Office
Rubby Dhunpath	University Teaching and Learning Office (UTLO Director and co-host of the Colloquium)
Sarasvathie Reddy	Higher Education Development and Training

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE - STEERING COMMITTEE

Fortune Shonhiwa	Colloquium Convener and committee chairperson
Bala Pillay	Dean of Teaching and Learning (Host)
Naven Chetty	Director of Access Programmes
Shelley Barnsley	Student Support Manager

Sally Frost	Public Relations Manager
Vinodhani Paideya	Academic, AMS/SI Supervisor
Aneshkumar Maharaj	Academic
Fran Saunders	ADO
Rosanne O'Hara	ADO
Marc Tshibangu	ADO
Khethukuthula Nozipho Hadebe	ADO
Bongiwe Mshengu	ADO
Ademola Olufolahan Olaniran	ADO
Annah Bengesai	College of Law & Management Studies (advisor)

ANNEXURES:

COLLOQUIUM EVALUATIONS:

Question 1. How did you hear or learn about this colloquium?

University Notice: 10

Personal Invitation: 15

Colleague: 22

Question 2. Please rate the programme:

2.1 Was the programme well organized? Yes: 42 Moderately: 0 No: 0

2.2 Were the topics relevant to you? Yes: 31 Moderately: 7 No: 0

2.3 Did you learn anything new? Yes: 31 Moderately: 4 No: 0

2.4 Suggestions for future topics on AMS to be covered in colloquia:

- Holistic postgraduate support.
- How do we articulate our curricula more seamlessly with what matriculants know – as a way of enhancing FYE at UKZN.
- Integration of academic and “support” programmes to enhance student success and wellbeing.
- Learning and practical lecture for higher learning.
- Curriculum source and delivery.
- Assisting academics to make their lectures more accessible to students.
- More on what students actually require.
- More student discussion/interaction.
- Student experiences from all schools at UKZN.
- Tracking students – how to do this coherently. How to be proactive in intervention before students fail.
- Various institutional efforts at upcoming student success. UJ and the SANRC would love to work closely with UKZN colleagues.
- Insert a slot where students and lecturers/tutors have a discussion. Dr. Mzamo Shezi – the idea came from a discussion with him. He said that he taught the first speaker Thulani.
- Risk factors for student attrition in other colleges other than the CAES.
- Postgraduate society (e.g. WESTCHEM, CHEMBURG) to reflect on what they do. May also include well established UKZN recognized organizations such as Golden Key.
- A comparative study of Supplemental Instruction programme across schools.
- How student leadership can be involved as a vehicle to increase student participants in Student Monitoring and Evaluation.

- In future I hope you will have taken a look at the issues that have arisen in this colloquium like the issue of hot seats.
- Pov from disabled students. Not just blind students (or perhaps have thepresent). How technology can play a role successfully.
- Support for international students.
- The role of isiZulu language in first year modules and during transition process.
- To what extent does sexual orientation get recognized as an important factor in drop out?
- The focus has been mainly on the challenges students face, future AMS may need to unpack those factors by students that limit their effectiveness, e.g. issues of discipline.
- Perhaps more focus on tech for AMS. I think tech can play a role in bringing coherence.
- Teaching and learning enhancement through futuristic technologies.

3. Please rate the speakers:

3.1 Overall, were the speakers informative?	Yes: 38	Moderately: 3	No: 0
3.2 Were the speakers prepared?	Yes: 24	Moderately: 6	No: 0
3.3 Was the information prepared useful?	Yes: 24	Moderately: 7	No: 0
3.4 Were the questions and discussion sessions handled satisfactorily?	Yes: 24	Moderately: 9	No: 0

3.5 Your suggestion on way forward on AMS for UKZN from topics presented:

- Roll out of Mastering the Masters across colleges.
- Offer Mastering the Masters in all colleges.
- To implement Mastering Masters Class Programme at an institutional level.
- Should be SI in all colleges.
- Generalize SI support for ALL students.
- Need more peer support programmes.
- Use LEC in all colleges. Peer learning must be prioritized. Language must be addressed. More academics should attend.
- Curriculum development within our university.
- The conference should cover more areas of teaching and learning.
- Incorporate more research issues.
- Bringing in more students to hear their perspectives.
- Student perspectives from a range of schools (rather than having to wait for a different college to host) to get a different perspective.
- Invite perhaps a student just finished first year to share his/her experience to be updated with say new challenges they have.

- Incorporate a wider panel of student representatives to include international and students with disabilities. Representatives with different demographic characteristics should also be considered.
- Do a Needs Analysis of students who enroll from the very beginning and intervene early.
- Student experiences at UKZN must be captured. Staff need to be more approachable and flexible.
- Institutional resources in reaching students communicating with students. Integrative multi-disciplinary support from lecturers, managers, student support.
- Student profiling, as part of an initiative to improve AMS knowledge tests need to be done by all 1st students so that they can be assigned the help they need from the beginning.
- Making use of suggestions and continuing with this programme will help. Also if ADO's and academics can work together and support each other things will go smoothly.
- AMS and concerned staff to meet together and strategize – we cannot be in competition when we are all concerned with student progress – together more can be achieved.
- Include quality and lecturers.
- Ways to institute university wide/institutional approaches/interventions.
- Workshops for lecturers on changing or upgrading of the methodologies (lecturing).
- All lectures to use moodle themselves to engage with students. Students need to also learn to voice opinions and needs.
- Development on the use of ITS systems and other multimedia resources and pairing multiple instructional methodologies in supporting student learning.
- Papers presented can be collected and shared.

4. Please specify your reasons for attending this colloquium:

It's a free event:	3
For its content:	19
For networking:	12
It's part of my job:	19
For professional development:	32
For personal development:	21

5. Please share any additional feedback that you may have:

- The colloquium emphasized the need for considered approaches around peer-support. Also we need to ensure that students are allowed opportunities to drive their own education and find ways to support this.
- Dr. van Zyl's presentation was fantastic and have needs to be more in this area from a student's perspective as well. More students should be aware of these to get their direct input to engage with the topics at hand.

- Excellent work.
- I hope more conferences of this nature will come up in the nearest future.
- Well structured – good effort Fortune and the College.
- Thank you. V. Good!
- Moodle presentation was not contextualized for T&L audience
- Dr. Van Zyl was a brilliant speaker whose passion radiates through his speaking. The student panel really captured student's issues. I think that more students should be invited for these conferences as these conferences are about and for them. I think having only staff attending these conferences creates an incomplete picture of STUDENT experiences. If we are for the students, we must get to hear their sides. Staff should be made to attend compulsory AMS workshops and then their students should evaluate them (to highlight changes or no change). The student panel should have been made up of first year students or a variety of students rather than only science students and SI leaders. English should be taught to students so they can understand what's being said in lectures. SRC should also be invited.
- Informative.
- Nice variety of topics. Good that all colleges showcased. Openness was present which was great. Nice collegiality Willingness to learn and engage from participants.
- A very informative day with great opportunity to learn from colleagues.
- Time keeping in first session – over timed and not sticking to ICS support of presentations or to ping time presenters during sessions (not reactive).
- Very well organized! Thank you. I have more insight about how to go about as an ADO. Very informative.
- I feel like the student panel discussion should have had also an international and disabled student to hear their struggles and maybe help students in a better way. So far the colloquium was good.
- I am very concerned about student progress and to act more extensively. SI is not the main aspect. I do think that the "support" persons in colleges – creative, innovative and relevant strategies, including lecturer aspects - what needs to be done differently in lectures. Include students with disabilities.
- Include education aspects.
- Thank you very much for inviting me and all the best on all your efforts.
- The workshop is very much empowering especially on the development of student and student support.
- None
- Well organized (e.g. good hospitality), learnt a lot from speakers in teaching perspective. The allowance of discussion is a very good thing.
- Too much focus was on ADO's input - what about other support systems?
- Still fragmented approach among the colleges it is clear that a university strategy be developed. Absence of academics is noted and problematic.

- Getting more students involved, i.e. sessions facilitated and discussed between staff and students.
- Sexual orientation is an important part of diversity and transformation strategy and may need to be looked into.
- Speakers need to prepare adequately so to avoid wasting time and the inability to stick to the time offered.

A LOOK INTO THE ADAPTATION OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM WITHIN THE SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

Shivan Michael Augustine

Supplemental Instruction (SI) was introduced in 2014 to solve the problem of poor student performance within the school of Chemistry and Physics. The program set out to raise student results as well as boost their personal confidence and sensibility. Achieving success in SI could only be possible if all the relevant stakeholders work together and communicate well from all the various academic levels. Namely the academic leader, academic development officer, SI leaders, course coordinators and the administration staff. Initial implementation of SI was not favoured by academic staff as they preferred the systems used in tutorials and felt reluctant to employ SI in its true format. With the employment of an assistant academic development officer (AADO) in August 2014, the SI program as well as student monitoring were of their main concern. To help academic staff realise the benefits of SI, it was necessary to collect and present data to staff to illustrate the success of the program. In 2015, data has been collected for each module which SI was offered in (approximately 45 sessions per module). Student attendance was recorded and with the use of Student Management System (SMS), their results were collected for analyzing. For the first semester in 2015, it was found to be clearly evident that the regular SI attendees performed exceptionally better in comparison to non-attendees. Academic staff were provided with the raw data to examine and were themselves happy to note the increase in student performance through SI. This success has also lead to staff now encouraging students to attend SI sessions. We plan to introduce SI into more modules in the future and extend our reach to higher levels. In this way we can track students throughout their studying career and establish the extent to which SI has helped them.

Keywords: *supplemental instruction, chemistry, student learning*

EFFECT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS

Ruvania Govender, Annah Bengesai, Zahra Bulbulia

Universities in South Africa continue to experience low levels of students' success and throughput rates. One of the primary reasons identified as to why students underperform in higher education is limited language proficiency. In the South African context, the language medium for delivery of courses in higher education is predominantly English. However, there is little research that has investigated the effect of English language on academic performance in content based subjects, especially in the South African context. This study was carried out at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the teaching and learning unit for the College of Law and Management Studies. The students in the sample were bachelor of commerce foundation students. These students are technically pre first year as they need to pass all the foundation modules to get accepted into the mainstream degree. The study investigated the relationship between students' understanding of language as measured by the English Language Development Course (ELDV) at the University of

KwaZulu-Natal and their academic performance in economics. The study was performed by analysing the students test and examination results for the ELDV Course and the Mirco-Economics course. All data generated from the tests and exams were captured into SPSS. The results show that there was a statistically significant relationship between students understanding of language as measured in the ELDV course and their academic performance in Economics.

Keywords: *academic performance, economics, English language proficiency*

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS IN A LEVEL 2 CHEMISTRY MODULE AFFECT THE PASS RATE

Khethukuthula Nozipho Hadebe

Supplemental instructions (SI) programme was first introduced to the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science in 2008 as a method of improving the throughput rates at first year level. The School of Chemistry and Physics (SCP) has been implementing this program for the first year high risk modules for the past eight years. In 2015, SI was introduced in the 2nd year Organic chemistry module at the Westville campuses; this module met all the criteria of a high risk module. A "high risk" module is characterized by a low pass rate, high enrolment number; similarly this module had a pass rate of 57.1% in 2014 and 288 students enrolled in 2015. In this study, the effect of SI on the first cohort of students enrolled for the level 2 organic chemistry was assessed. The impact of this academic support program on this module was evaluated by analysing the performance of regular attendees versus non attendees at the SI sessions. The overall pass rate of the module was compared to the previous year pass rate. The class average of the non-SI attendees was evaluated against that of the SI attendees. The quantitative perspective interest in the module, of the regular SI attendees was collected using a google evaluation form completed by students who attended three and more SI sessions during the semester. An increase in the overall pass rate for this module was observed last semester and the regular SI attendees had a final mark average of 60%. A response was received from 62.5% of regular attendees to the evaluation; one of the queries of the evaluation was to find out if SI equipped them with the study skills they needed to pass the module. The attendees expressed that being part of the sessions increased their interest in the module and gave them the required study skills. From this study one can conclude that supplemental instruction needs to be introduced on all three undergraduate levels, for at least the high risk (modules with poor pass rate) modules.

Keywords: *supplemental instruction, organic chemistry, student-learning*

STUDENT SUPPORT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AND SERVICE-LEARNING: ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Angela James

Engaging students in Research and Service-Learning in a teacher education programme challenges the notion of support, more so the coherence of support that students experience. While the term support is used, the meaning, rationale and implications of its use in the context of a university and a community requires attention. Support for, support of, support with, support

to and, support and, are phrases verbally and textually stated, and graphically represented. The level and extent to which each support form is “provided” for raises questions about the purpose and role of a student at a university, especially if the common understanding of support is hold up or keep up. The Biological Science for Educators are engaged in a module where support is not stated nor given. But, motivate, enhance, develop are the action words. Students are expected to plan for Service-Learning and then conduct research on it. Each of the students is challenged to find an interest area and a placement site that they could work in. They do this in an enabling environment with no support, and they achieve their goals. A socio-constructivist teaching and learning approach is used and students are expected to take responsibility for their A socio-constructivist teaching and learning approach is used and students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning. An interpretive, qualitative research design using a case study was employed to explore the 45 students’ experiences of enhancement during the module. A purposive sampling method was used and students were asked to volunteer to participate. The findings generated from document analysis, group discussions and student presentations indicate that many students surprised themselves in terms of their work ethic that they developed, their confidence to engage in discussion and their professional attributes with learning how to conduct research and engage in Service-Learning. In conclusion, the students were enabled to enhance themselves in the university and authentic community contexts that they experienced.

Keywords: *notions of support, service-learning, Education*

IS PERSONALISED SUPPORT KEY TO IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

George Kehdinga

Monitoring and support is vital for success in academia for post graduate students especially students who have been out of school for some time like the PGCE students. Most of them return to school after spending several years outside the academic environment with no knowledge of the transformation and changes that have taken place in the academic environment. The nature of the courses they take and the number of students in a class makes it worse for students to receive attention in the classroom making monitoring and support vital. But little has been written about the challenges they face and the support provided to them to ensure that they cope with the demands of their program. This paper therefore explores alternative avenues of support for PGCE students in the bid to ensure that they complete the program. The study was conducted as a qualitative case study within the University of KwaZulu-Natal and data was generated through semi structured interviews and document analyses (test, assignment and exam scripts). The findings of the study revealed that online support and support groups are two vital tools which can be used to enhance student performance. The paper concludes that rigorous and personalised support is required if student performance is to increase.

Keywords: *postgraduate support, PGCE, on-line support*

THE USE OF GLOSSARIES IN SCAFFOLDING STUDENT LEARNING IN LIFE SCIENCES

Gran Moodley, Deborah Robertson-Andersson & Rosanne O’Hara

Moodley & Robertson-Andersson (2014), showed that massification in Life Sciences was far greater than other disciplines and could be linked to a 20% decrease in relative pass rates at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Students' poor performance could be linked to cognitive academic language proficiency, which makes it difficult for learners understand concepts in different areas. In this study we investigated the efficacy of glossaries as scaffolding student understanding and facilitation of deeper learning. The objectives were: 1) test the efficacy of glossaries in student comprehension and understanding of terminology 2) determine the effect of glossaries on student performance in practical's with and without glossaries, and 3) clarify what structures/systems need to be in place. Students who were registered for BIOL102 were given a glossary before (Group A) or after (Group B) practical's. These students were given a short MCQ to complete. The MCQ tested the understanding of concepts that were found in the glossary. Results were analysed and practical report marks from the practicals where glossaries were given were compared to those practicals where no glossaries were given. Results indicate that glossaries scaffold student conceptual understanding, resulting in the application of theories taught in lectures to practical.

Keywords: *Glossaries; cognitive academic language proficiency; life sciences; scaffolding; biological vocabulary*

AN INVESTIGATION INTO SUPPORT PROGRAMMES OFFERED TO UNIVERSITY MATHEMATICS STUDENTS

Bongiwe Mshengu

This papers explores the experiences of students with additional support programs [supplemental instructions (SI) and hot seats] offered in the School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Statistics. SI is a peer academic program that targets high risk courses. Hot seats involves one-on-one consultations between the tutor and the students and it is offered for all modules in the school. Both these programs are meant to provide support to students with the aim of improving student retention and throughput. The sample population used in this study constituted of students registered for first year level mathematics modules in 2015 across all campuses. A questionnaire was used to measure student's opinions and perceptions towards SI and hot seats. Qualitative data was collected through focus-group interviews with 24 of the regular attendees. Interviewees indicated that they had higher preference for SI than hot seats as SI created a positive social learning space, thus fostering active learning. The environment in hot seats was reported to be intimidating, however, interviewees believed that this program is required and may be more useful once the students have gained confidence and are familiar with the university. Students also reported that SI had a positive impact on their academic performance and they would highly recommend it to other students. Although the status of regular attendees to these programs was not our focus at this stage, it caught our attention that at risk students were poorly represented in these programs. The findings from this work underscores the importance of providing support programs for undergraduate mathematics modules.

Additionally, there is an indication that support programs should be mandatory for the at risk students.

Keywords: *supplemental instruction, Mathematics, SI hot seats*

EXAMINING SUPPORT SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF MALE UNDERGRADUATES AT UKZN: A RESEARCH DESIGN

Ronika Mudaly

Studies globally reveal that attrition in higher education institutions among men surpasses that of women. In addition, the academic performance of men is generally lower than that of women. A focus on the local context reveals that at UKZN, an average increase in the retention rates of female students occurred from 2005 to 2012, while that of male students remained static. During the same period, the attrition rate for male students was higher than that for female students. One possible reason for this phenomenon could be related to male students' support seeking behaviour, which will be explored in this study. Based on the literature reviewed, we argue that many male students at universities suffer from masculine gender role strain. We assert that compliance with traditional gendered norms disempowers male students and we will use critical theory to raise consciousness about how gendered constructions influence support seeking behaviours and academic performance. This study is a work in progress and the presentation will focus on the research design. A mixed methods approach will be central to the design of this study. Male undergraduates at UKZN will be invited to participate in this study. We will conduct a wide scale online survey and interviews. In addition a novel arts-based method called storyboarding will be used to generate data. Quantitative and to a lesser extent, qualitative data will be generated using online surveys. These will be analysed statistically using SPSS. This analysis will give general insight into gender role conflict and help-seeking behaviour of male students. Forty volunteers from all four colleges at UKZN will be requested to participate in interviews, and the storyboarding process, in order to obtain insights into explore their perceptions about support at UKZN, the social construction of masculinities and other ideologies which influence their support seeking behaviour and their views about the effect of support on their academic performance.

Keywords: *support seeking behaviour, male students, mixed-methods*

INFLUENCING FACTORS ON LECTURE ATTENDANCE OF LIFE SCIENCES STUDENTS

Rosanne O'Hara, Ademola Olaniran & Oliver Zishiri

Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between student performance and lecture attendance. However, during the last few years lecture attendance has decreased in many lectures both internationally and throughout South African universities. This study seeks to understand the factors behind students' reduced attendance in lectures and explore possible ways of increasing lecture attendance by students. By receiving feedback from students regarding reasons for non-attendance as well as what they would like to experience in lectures and what areas could be improved upon to encourage their attendance, the school of Life Science (SLS) hopes to create innovative means of teaching to attract students back into the classroom. One such way is by gaining feedback from students about what would make them increase their attendance at lectures. Approximately 1200 undergraduate students were surveyed during their practical sessions on both the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses. The results obtained from a questionnaire that examined students' attitudes towards lecture attendance, reasons for non-attendance, and factors such as age, sex, mother tongue, and previous educational and social backgrounds are factors that might affect attendance. These then can lead to the implementation of measures by the SLS that could increase student motivation and attendance at lectures in some modules.

Keywords: *Lecture attendance, motivation, student attitudes, retention and throughput*

THE IMPACT OF THE ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAM ON STUDENT SUCCESS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF LAW

Erica Wille

The School of Law at the University of KwaZulu-Natal accepts students from different disciplines into the first-year law program. The contents for both the Introduction to South African Law module for the LLB stream and the Introductory Legal Studies module for the non-LLB stream are identical. An Academic Skills intervention was implemented in 2010 for the LLB students. This intervention is the focus of this study. The Academic Skills program was tailored to meet the "perceived" needs of the LLB students. The paper uses quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the impact of the Academic Skills intervention. Pass rates show that the Academic Skills cohort (2010-2014) attained a higher pass rate, than the period 2005-2009, for Introduction to South African Law. Hence, the Academic Skills intervention can be seen as a factor impacting positively on student success. Premised upon the qualitative approach, this paper reports a compendium of LLB students' perceptions of how the Academic Skills program impacted their academic success. Policy recommendations: Firstly, the Academic Skills program should be retained. Secondly, the program could be expanded to include all first year law students, in which case additional resources would be needed.

Keywords: *Academic skills, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Law students*

THE USE OF RUBRICS IN ENHANCING STUDENT'S SCIENTIFIC WRITING SKILLS IN A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINES IN THE LIFE SCIENCES?

Deborah Vivienne Robertson-Anderson

The use of a detailed prescriptive rubric in evaluating student performance in a second level marine biology module incorporating four life science fields; geological science, marine-biology, chemistry and oceanography is investigated. Subjective marking occurred in 2013 and showed highly significant positive and negative bias. Students expressed difficulty in practical report writing and generally lacked the understanding of scientific paper writing methodologies. Rubrics assess student products and performance but are seldom used in life sciences. Drawing from theories of constructivism a rubric could be seen acting as a scaffold for student learning and task performance. Blooms six category cognitive domain was used in the creation and application of the rubric which was criterion referenced. Rubrics consisted of a set of scoring criteria and point values associated with these criteria, which were grouped into categories so the instructor and the student could discriminate among the categories by level of performance. Analysis of 2014 results showed no marking bias across all 4 disciplines and there was a mean increase from the first report to the last report of 22 % (± 10). Most students benefited and this translated to a 22 % increase in overall pass marks from 2013 to 2014.

Keywords: *Scientific writing, rubrics, life sciences, skills development*

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

Fran Saunders

Democracy and an end to apartheid was hard won by men and women who had one thing in common: they understood that freedom could be achieved through education. In this way they won the respect of the international community, support from other countries, and opportunities to effect change. This paper tracks the profiles of a number of struggle heroes like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Albert Luthuli, Albertina Sisulu, Robert Sobukwe and others and focuses on a cultural heritage of empowerment through education. The paper acknowledges the need for radical change but also questions the current lawlessness and disregard for the very means through which change can be achieved. Finally the paper aims to become a tool for inspiration to first year students (delivered as a talk in the beginning of the year) who have many misconceptions about the role of tertiary institutions and the overall value of education.

Keywords: *democracy, education, role of higher education*

POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT: THE MASTERING-MASTERS EXPERIENCE IN CAES

Slide 1



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
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ACADEMIC MONITORING & SUPPORT
RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM 2015

Postgraduate student support:
The Mastering Masters experience in CAES



INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 2

What is Mastering Masters?

- Programme offered to Masters and PhD students (+ early career academic staff) to:
 - To equip them with advanced non-technical tools, skills and practices
 - Increase completion rates/throughput
 - Decrease time to complete
 - Contribute to professional academic development
- Workshops, writing retreats and small-group writing mentoring sessions

INSPIRING GREATNESS 2

Slide 3

One-day workshops

-  Effective literature searching using UKZN library electronic databases
-  Training on the use of Endnote for referencing and citations
-  Advanced MS Word
-  Advanced MS Excel
-  Effective Reading skills and strategies
-  Presentation skills strategies and Powerpoint

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 4

Three- and Five-day Workshops

- L^AT_EX Training
- Proposal Writing & Dissertation Research and Writing
- Writing Competence for Journal Publication (Retreat)



INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 5

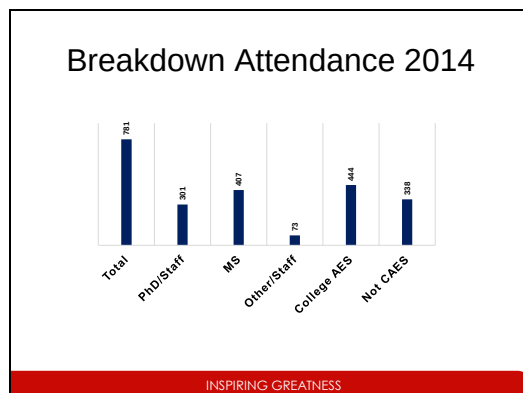
The numbers

- 25 One-day workshops per year
- 4 three-day workshops per year
- 1-2 Writing retreats per year
- On average 33 students per workshop
- About 50% of attendees support >1 workshop per year
- Since 2012 hosted on both PMB & Durban-based campuses



INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 6



Slide 7

Writing Retreat for Publishing

- Improved writing competence for paper publishing
- Training in the skills of self-editing and peer-editing academic articles/dissertations
- Opportunity to do some writing in a quiet and conducive environment
- Generating a self-edited document for publication
- Acquiring skills to write future academic articles with confidence
- Increased number of journal articles published annually within the College

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 8

Outputs from the 2013 retreat

- Participants: 11 early career academics & 25 PhD students
- After 6 months:
 - 18 papers submitted and 4 accepted
- After 12 months
 - 37 papers accepted
 - 3 authors had 4 papers
 - 6 authors had 2 papers
 - 13 authors had 1 paper

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 9

Some feedback....

This session was very helpful to give tips and checklists for writing more accurately. The actual engagements with each other's writing was very useful to be able to see how to improve our writing.

The workshop gave me a positive drive needed as a first time writer of a manuscript.

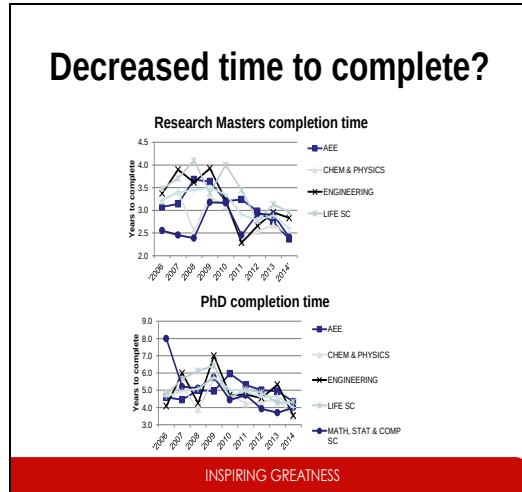
Didn't think it would help at first but after being mentored, I realized just how useful this workshop was.

I thought it was an amazing experience and has developed my way of writing.

Being with colleagues from different schools working on one aspect is more beneficial than working alone. This was an excellent idea which should be repeated.

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Slide 10



Slide 11

Thank you

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