

ISSN 0976-6634

JOURNAL OF

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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J Sociology Soc Anth, 5(2): 179-186 (2014)

DOI: 10.31901/24566764.2014/05.02.08

Academic Advising in Universities: Concept Paper

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KEYWORDS Advisors. Curriculum. Practitioners. Development. Higher Education. Teaching

ABSTRACT The need for sustained academic advising and support for students and lecturers in universities in South Africa is on the rise. The initiative draws from the sad reality that the South African higher education system is characterised with low success, retention and throughput rates. It is within this context that this concept paper interrogates what strategic advisory roles academic/educational/curriculum practitioners/specialists could execute towards ameliorating the situation. This paper draws from academic development literature, institutional self-evaluation, Higher Education Quality Committee audit reports and reflections from experience gathered from lecturing and academic advising. It emerged that academic development advisors need be properly qualified, experienced for them to strategically be visible, design and offer as well as popularise discourse on curriculum design and review, teaching, learning and assessment services among others. Educational practitioners need to execute different agential roles meant to ensure that requisite enabling teaching and learning policies are in place and well popularized. This calls for the nurturing of an institutional culture that foregrounds discourses on academic support, academic excellence and mindset change for the enhancement of the university teaching and learning agenda.