

The Need for a Student Affairs Practitioner's Society in Zimbabwe's Institutions of Higher Learning: Themes and Perspectives

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Abstract: *Student affairs department in institutions of higher learning are still locked in the peripheral role of “parents in loco” and has not taken centre stage as is the case in developed countries, where its role is taken seriously. Indeed, institutions of higher learning have deans of students, but it appears that its role is relegated to the provision of food and accommodation. When it comes to issues of academic matters, admissions, student records and issues of student retention, the student's affairs department is rarely recognized, and yet these are key roles of the students' affairs department. The absence of a clear cut professional qualification for student affairs practitioners, speaks volumes of how it is regarded by these institutions of higher learning. If the student affairs department is relegated to the lower echelons of the college, then can anybody dream of professionalizing this profession? This paper would like to explore the importance attached to the student affairs department institutions of higher learning. At the helm of this paper, recommendations of how student affairs department could be professionalized will be proffered.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Professional associations provide guidance to a profession, behavioural expectations, and individual learning opportunities. Student affairs practitioners should belong to a professional association for variety of reasons, including professional growth, to benefit from the programs and services offered by the professional body as well as to test professional competencies. The other reasons for belonging to a professional body are to influence the future of the institutions of higher learning and the student affairs profession and also to advance the status of student affairs. Professionalism involves an individual being an expert in the field which one is practicing, excellent practical and literary skills in relation to profession, high quality in work, high standard of ethics, reasonable work morale and motivation, appropriate treatment of relationships with colleagues, and commitment to the field. Demonstrating professionalism is important at all levels in an organisation. Professionalism can benefit the organisation's reputation, morale and success. All people should demonstrate the skill of professionalism to be considered for job advancement, recognition and to show colleagues their supportive and team-player side. Professionalism will go a long way in student affairs career success, as well as the success of the organisation one is working for. It will also be valued when looking at those up for possible promotions. Professionalism is not required for clients only. Professionalism must be displayed at all times and to all groups of people. Professionalism to each group shows your true self, your commitment to the field and your high standards in work and ethics. It is important to know your professionalism is not just displayed to others, but through your work as well. To be successful you need to show a quality work product that you take pride in. This assignment will explore the reasons why student affairs need to have their own professional body in Zimbabwe. Given the student affairs practice and more or less peripheral structure of student affairs on many campuses, it is not surprising that consensus among practitioners on the efficacy of the “student Personnel Point of view” did not accrue over night. The post World War II period has been characterised by active disagreements among the authorities in the student affairs literature. Many authors engaged in breast beating and moaning about the state of student affairs. Wrenn (1949) analysed student affairs administration from a sociological perspective and concluded that it did not meet the criteria for being a profession. Shoben (1967) chided the field for being essentially content less and urged it to stay out of areas belonging to other fields such as counselling, Koile (1966) was disappointed that the student

affairs had neither a clear body of knowledge, skills, and ethics, nor a central place in American higher education. Penney (1969) pointed out that student affairs has had time to prove itself as a profession and had not done so. He was concerned with the housekeeping emphasis apparent in much of the student affairs literature and the failure of the literature to promote areas exclusive practice for the field. For some of these authors there appears to have been an apologetic or attitude concerning the very existence of student affairs. Student's affair can meet criteria for being a field which bases its practice and interventions on a systematic body of knowledge that is student affairs practice can and should be based upon applied social and behavioural sciences. Given recent cooperative work among professional associations on standards for accreditation and codes of ethics, all of these criteria except for licensure of individuals are characteristics of student affairs. Fortunately, other authors challenged these negative viewpoints. William (1958) left little doubt that he considered student affairs administration to be an identifiable field with its own preparation and professional characteristics. Miller (1967) called for an increased awareness of the student affairs practitioner as an educator, implying the professionalization of the field. He further proposed that practitioners should function as scholar administrators with the creation of total learning environments as one of their primary task. Penny (1974) assumed he was writing to a professional field in calling for more collegial control of preparation programmes. Boland (1974) suggest that the personal development of student should be viewed as major point of unity for the field. Trueblood (1966) made a case for the exclusivity of student affairs preparation and practice, and Nygreen (1968) noted that student affairs had many aspects of a profession and should be so amended in the future. A growing acceptance of human development theory as a foundation for practice (Miller and Prince, 1976), increasing emphasis upon profession preparation programmes (Knock, 1977), and concern with the nomenclature of the field (Crookstone, 1976) are more recently examples in the literature of powerful, positive influences towards greater professionalism. During this time of professional controversy the 1960s and early 1970s, the entire higher education establishment was in ferment. While initially being criticised for not controlling student dissent, student affairs practitioners often came to the field as the only persons on campus truly able to deal with student disaffection. As the liaison between student and administration, student affairs professional often gain much respect. Further, the educational reforms that resulted from student's demonstrations and the humanising of the college environment necessitated by the student demands were often carried out by the student affairs staff. This brief historical review has traced the development of student affairs administration from a series of parental oriented chores to a complex set of educational responsibilities involving difficult academic, psychological, and legal issues. Student affairs professionals increasingly are filling the role of valued partners with the faculty in an evolving educational mission of intentional student development. Professionalism, then, is an essential ingredient of both preparation and practice in the field of student affairs. He paper will look at issues of licensing, certification, accreditation, protection, ethics, and standards of training expected and professional growth brought about by a professional body.

2. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

2.1. Student Affairs Practitioner

Bullet (1981) submitted that a student affair is the department or division of services and support for students at institutions of higher education to enhance student growth and development. People who work in this field are known as student affairs practitioners or student affairs professionals. These student affairs practitioners work to provide services and support for students at institutions of higher learning. A student affair is a critical aspect of the higher education experience. The work done by student affairs professionals helps students begin a lifetime journey of growth and self-exploration.

3. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

The term institution of higher learning according to Adams (1994) means an educational institution in any State that:

- Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; and provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, or awards a degree that is acceptable for admission to a graduate or professional degree program, subject to review and approval by the Secretary;
- Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that

has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Following are some criteria common to many definitions of a professional field (Larson, 1977)

- A profession bases its practice and interventions on a systematic body of knowledge.
- Profession has authority over the interventions it uses, and standards of minimum competence exist for the services and practices offered.
- A profession has standards for accrediting professional preparation programs and for licensing or certifying personnel, and it has the means to implement both accreditation and certification processes.
- A profession has a regular code of ethics to control abusive use of knowledge, interventions, or standards.
- A profession has a culture of shared values, norms and symbols which are learned through a common socialization processes.

4. HISTORY OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSION IN ZIMBABWE'S INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

The history of student affairs in Zimbabwe's institutions of higher learning is rather short. Colleges in Zimbabwe used to appoint someone to look after the needs of the students if he or she shows an interest to work with students and if he or she has a qualification in education. The major role of student affairs practitioners was by then mainly concerned with the parentis in loco function. It was not directly linked with the provision of academic and social integration so as to prevent dropout as propounded by Vincent Tinto in 1975. Professor Kamba's reign as the vice chancellor at the University of Zimbabwe ushered a new era in student affairs in Zimbabwe as student unrest due to shortage of accommodation, food, and other amenities led the University authorities to realise the critical role played by the student affairs department in bridging the gap between the administrators and the students and in maintaining harmony on campus. Other universities and colleges which took a leaf out of the activities at the University of Zimbabwe also began to take student affairs seriously but what is still evident in most institutions is that student affairs is not recognised as a stand-alone profession in Zimbabwe, and there is every reason to make it a profession and to have a professional body which looks into its operations.

5. RATIONALE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE AND PREPARATION

Roberts (2003), in her doctoral thesis pointed out those professional bodies are important for the following reasons:

- Professional bodies have an ethical obligation to ensure and advance the quality of professional practice and professional preparation programs.
- Professional associations ensure quality assurance.
- Professional bodies offer accreditations.
- Professional bodies provide credentializing processes
- Professional bodies provide skills and competencies required for one to practice.
- Professional bodies assist its members to develop professionally.
- Professional bodies recognise those who improve their professional qualifications.

Carpenter, Miller and Winston (1980) proposed that it is also important to realise that student affairs in Zimbabwe also need the services and professional guidance that were articulated by Roberts in her doctoral thesis. Only recently the importance of standards has been realised by student affairs practitioners. As a result, the increase or decrease in student affairs services and programs has depended largely on institutional values, priorities, finances, and felt need. Further, professional

preparation programs according to Rodgers, (1977) have often focused on three levels of training which are counselling student and organisational development, and administrative knowledge and skills. These programs, according to many practitioners, are too far removed from the actual practice of student affairs and consequently fail to influence the quality of student life as an educational priority. Young, (1988) stated that student affairs professional associations exist for a number of good reasons, among which is the responsibility for providing creative, courageous, and assertive leadership that constantly challenges accepted assumptions, sets professional standards and goals, ventures into uncharted waters, elevates the thinking and operational levels of preparation and professional practice, and demands outstanding performance of its members. Unfortunately, the profession has not educated itself or acted responsibly through professional associations in establishing the educational quality and integrity of student affairs programs. Professional standards for student affairs practice must be established for three reasons. First, professional standards provide uniform reference points for student affairs practitioners and institutional leaders in evaluating the quality of student services programs, staff members, and giving direction for creating new and better programs of intentional development. Standards represent the criteria that are used to assure quality of both program and staff. Second, a direct relationship exists between the process and procedures utilised by student affairs practitioners and the quality of students' out of class educational experience (Astin, 1977); Feldman and Newcomb, 1969). Concisely defined professional standards for student affairs assure higher quality staff and programs, they also assure higher quality experiences for students involved. Finally, written standards provide consistent criteria for institutional and academic accreditation in student services and student developmental areas.

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Wanzek and Canon, (1975) pointed out that a professional body for student affairs staff development which is essential for the student affairs professionals for instance in Zimbabwe may include:

- Facilitating interaction with colleagues and associates: exchange of Ideas: team building and staff interdependence: giving and receiving Feedback: promoting positive attitudes and sensitivity towards Others: sharing information about the Organisation: enhancing internal staff communication.
- Developing functional skills and specific competences :evaluation and analysis :organisational, administrative and management skills :communication and consultation
- Promoting self understanding and self actualisation: helping individuals increases their levels of awareness, autonomy, and self reliance and refine personal value systems.
- Exposure to innovative programmes : encouraging proactive service and programme development and active responses to student issues
- Providing opportunities for professional renewal: developing a professional Style: Enhancing commitment, accountability and self-esteem: preventing burn out: offering new challenges as well as chances for reflection and reassessment.
- Conveying theoretical and philosophical knowledge: enhancing understanding of total student affairs programmes through examination of developmental research and literature and discussion of issues in post secondary education and society.

Carpenter, Miller and Winston (1980) provided a list of common staff developmental activities and methods which can be used by a professional body to enhance the knowledge base of the student affairs professional which are:

- Academic course work
- National , regional and state convention attendance
- Off compass workshops, seminars and institutes
- On compass programmes utilising either internal or external consultants
- Staff social functions
- Organisational newsletters and written communications
- Organisational staff meetings ,committee and taskforce participation and
- Ongoing supervision performance evaluation general relationships with colleagues and administrative fellowships and internships.

Miller and Carpenter, (1980) asserted that becoming an accredited professional body is more than a process, it is a journey. The assessment an organization experiences every three years is a milestone that measures their progress on the journey to professionalism. As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another. Whether the event is a mock assessment or an on-site, this proverb has proven true for the personnel in the student affairs department. Exposure to other student affairs personnel and the way they accomplish their tasks generates new ideas for the individuals who help them achieve that status. In this regard, accreditation is more about relationships and professionalizing an occupation than anything else. It improves not only the student affairs as a whole; it has also improved the skills and perspective of the individuals that are the core of what it achieves. Accreditation holds the agency and its leadership team accountable to the citizens, as well as the men and women with their boots on the ground, carrying out their duties at high risk within the community. It ensures that student affairs professionals hold themselves accountable for measuring up to a set of internationally accepted standards of performance. It requires that the entire leadership team values professionalism, officer safety, and proper respect for the personnel and those who reside in the community they serve. Accreditation assures the community that their student affairs department is committed to excellence, and that its leadership team recognizes their responsibility to the process of perpetual improvement.”

Adams (1994) pointed out that the specific application of principles of human development as articulated requires knowledge of both the culture and community within which the individual lives and works. Human development theory, of course, has value in analysing the comprehensive psychological, cognitive, and psychomotor development of individuals. However, it also can be applied to modular portions of total development, if such modules are defined by community. Developmental principles, for example, may be applied specifically to the content and process of career development. This component of total development may be examined in light of its unique developmental tasks and stages that can be identified, verified and discussed as separate units as is the case with student affairs profession. Similarly an even smaller area of human growth, development as a professional, can be profitably analysed if a community can be defined within which such development occurs. Student affairs administration, like any profession, represents such a community (Carpenter, Miller and Winston, 1980).

A professional community may be largely defined by three main sets of commonalities. First, a group of professionals must share goals and objectives. For student affairs professionals, the most common goal is the structuring of a campus environment in which students may maximise their growth in all possible ways. Ways to influence this environment or developmental milieu range from the most mundane services such as food and shelter to the most esoteric sensitivity training, but all are means to the common end. Student affairs staffs and programs exist to promote student development.

Barr, Keating and Associate (1985) argued that a second attribute of professional community is the existence of formal and informal sanctions. That is, certain practices are rewarded and others are punished. For example, consider resumes. While resumes vary in style and content, most are expected to conform to relatively narrow norms. Generally, they should be neat, succinct, and honest. Deviations are punished by the simple expedient of not being or not being interviewed. On the sides, persons who publish their work in books or professional journals are rewarded with respect, consulting jobs, and sometimes increased chances for better jobs or promotions, especially in professional preparation programs. Willingness to participate in and contribute to professional association activities is usually rewarded by the opportunity to assume more responsibility and leadership.

Young (1988) is of the opinion that any community must attend to socialisation and regeneration, the third set of processes considered. Socialisation has both formal and informal forms. Informally, the lore of student affairs is communicated by more experienced professionals to new and less experienced ones. Proper ways to work with students, to communicate appropriately orally and in writing, to behave at conventions, to obtain or change positions, and many other things are taught by example, dialogue, and experience. Many of these same professional traits or activities are dealt with more formally in professional preparation programs, professional literature, and periodic job performance evaluations. An example of such formal codification of the field is Packwood's (1977) descriptive book that examines the basics of the profession. Adams (1994) pointed out that regeneration is related closely to socialisation in that certain of the processes are quite similar. However, focus is more upon the actual bringing of the individuals into the field. In order to continue

to be vital, the profession must have new blood and the new blood should share the values, goals and skill of field after a brief orientation or preparation period. Therefore this preparation period needs to be a relatively common or similar experience for all the new recruits. Winston and Creamer (1997) asserted that assurance of this communality of training is the responsibility of practitioners and educators and educators alike and is accomplished alike and is accomplished informally through communication and formally through accreditation, research and professional association guidelines for training. The most promising recent development in this area is the formation of the council for the advancement of standards for student service or development programmes (CAS). CAS is composed of representatives of the major student affairs generalist associations as well as a host of more specialty oriented organisations. The standards produced by CAS are intended to gain wide spread use by higher education accrediting agencies, thus further defining student affairs work as a profession (Miller,1980).

7. MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Accepting that the student affairs profession is a community with shared goals, sanctions, and socialisation or regeneration criteria and believing that principles of human development have direct application to professional development, Miller and Carpenter, (1980) suggested five propositions for consideration.

- Professional development is continuous and cumulative in nature, moves from simpler to more complex behaviour, and can be described via levels or stages held in common.
- Optimal professional development is a direct result interaction between the total person striving for positive professional growth and the environment.
- Optimal professional preparation combines mastery of a body of knowledge and cluster of skills and competences within the context of personal development.
- Professional credibility and excellence of practice are directly dependent upon the quality of professional preparation.
- Professional preparation is a lifelong learning process.

These propositions have many implications for the student affairs practitioners since they also need to continuously need to develop professionally. These four stages provide the basis for the postulation of the developmental of tasks of student affairs professionals (Carpenter 1979). The tasks were formulated on the basis of Pavalkos (1971) profession occupation continuity.

- Knowledge of theory and levels of skill
- Clarification of motivation and relevance to society
- Decision regarding preparation and carrier
- Autonomy of professional behaviour
- Developing a sense of professional community (professional association activity.)
- Activities related to professional publications
- Developing a sense of ethical practise.

8. STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The practice of student affairs can be traced back the earliest days of higher education in America (Leonard, 1956; Rudolph, 1962). Yet both those concerned about and those responsible for personal aspects of student life have had no early defined criteria to judge the quality of their efforts and activities. This lack of minimum standards for both the practice and the preparation of its member practitioners have limited seriously the establishment of student affairs as a recognised profession (Larson, 1977).Although a number of authorities have focused attention upon the importance of standards for preparation program accreditation, little attention has been given to standards for practice (Penn, 1974). As Penny (1969, 1972) strongly implied, the field of student affairs has lacked congruence and consistency of practice essential to the existence of a profession. Thus, even though the lack of professional standards has caused concern, relatively little activity has been designed to establish standards of practice or preparation for the field. Concern terms and concepts are basic to understanding and communicating professional standards in student affairs. Although some terms

occasionally are used interchangeably, the professional practitioner must be able to distinguish their varied meanings and nuances.

9. ACCREDITATION

Adams (1994) pointed out that accreditation represents both a concept and a process used throughout post secondary education in the United States. The concept of accreditation is defined as the formation of voluntary groups of institutions or their specialised subunits such as colleges, schools, departments or programs in evaluating and improving their educational endeavours. These groups publish the names of institutions or programs that meet or exceed acceptable standards of educational quality. The process of accreditation is defined as a periodic evaluation of educational activities of an institutions or subunits and is therefore an independent judgement of peers, specialists, or other professionals that determine whether or not the institution has achieved its stated educational mission. This process typically involves a concise statement of educational objectives, self study to examine the extent to which those objectives have been met, an onsite peer view, and a judgement by the accrediting body. Accreditation is applied to institutions and their educational programs, not to individuals. Accreditation functions for the benefits of the public as a check on the quality of services rendered to the public. Accreditation of student affairs will:

Foster excellence in postsecondary education through the development of uniform national criteria and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness:

- Encourage improvement through continuous self study and review.
- Assure the educational community, the general public and other agencies or organisations that an institutions or program has clearly defined and appropriate objectives, maintains conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears in fact to be accomplishing them substantially, and can be expected to continue to do so ; and
- Provide counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions and programs; and endeavour to protect institutions against encroachments which might jeopardise their educational effectiveness or academic freedom.
- Professionalizing the student affairs will ensure that accreditation standards and guidelines are upheld. Standards reflect criteria established by an accrediting body to articulate its expectations of an institution or specialised program. Standards provide a frame of reference or context within which the accreditation process can be implemented. Other terms such as criteria requirements or essentials are sometimes used in lieu of the term standards by some accrediting bodies. Guidelines are used to explain and amplify standards and frequently provide examples of flexible interpretations that are acceptable to the accrediting body. Presently at least two of the six regional accrediting associations have published standards or guidelines related to the practice of student affairs on their member campuses. The Commission on colleges (1977) of the southern Association of Schools and colleges has issued Standard Seven, Student Development Services; the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges has prepared guidelines for evaluation committee members. In addition, the Association of independent Colleges and Schools recognises student services in its standards.

Credentialing is part of the professional body's duties to its members. When the specified number and type of credits are earned, a diploma or degree is granted as evidence of successful mastery of required knowledge and skills. These requirements are based upon professional standards for preparation and ethical practice and represent the minimum criteria established for entrance into a particular field or endeavour. Resulting credentials awarded by institutions gain 'legitimacy' for third parties through their value in the market place and through accreditation by governmental institutional and specialised accrediting agencies" (Miller and Boswell, 1979). Not worthy in relationship to these factors in fact that where is accreditation is applied to institutions and programs credentialing is applied to individuals. In addition to institutional endorsements by diplomas and degrees, at least three other major forms of endorsements are common to many professions: certification, licensure, and registry. At these alternative endorsements usually do not directly influence employment practices in institutions of higher learning.

Adams (1994) asserted that certification means the individual has gained enough skills and knowledge of the profession since it normally involves the passing of tests and examinations. This type of

endorsement can take several forms but basically involves a process by which an authorising agency or organisation officially certifies that an individual voluntarily seeking such recognition has met predetermined qualifications specified by that authorising board. In addition to formal academic preparation requirements and supervised practice, satisfactory performance on examination also may be required. Certification is usually monitored on a regular basis by the authorising board. State certification of elementary and secondary school teacher's counsellors and administrators are familiar examples of this procedure, although not all certifying agencies are governmentally sponsored or limited to a localised area. Two examples of non-governmental agencies that grant certification on the national level are the Commission on Rehabilitation Counsellors' Certification and the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counsellors.

10. LICENSURE

Governments legally define and regulate the practice of a variety of professions. Licensure legislation sets standards of training and practice to protect the public from unqualified practitioners and better assures practitioner protection under the law in the application of skills. Licensure is also the duty of the professional body. This licence is only issued to the individuals who meet the set criterion (Young 1988).

11. REGISTRY

Barr, Keating and Associate (1985) proposed that through a national register of professional practitioners individual practitioners are endorsed as being especially competent to render professional service to members of the public at large. A national registry establishes standards not unlike those in state licensure legislation, although its existence needs not to legislate as such. Being listed on a national register is especially beneficial to those living and working in states that currently do not have profession licensure in their areas of expertise. Similar to other forms of certification, registry may involve some form of examination and it is necessary to have such a facility in Zimbabwe's student affairs professionals.

12. PEER ENDORSEMENT

Young (1988) submitted that in student affairs practice formal endorsement such as certification licensure or registry are emphasised much less than endorsement and sponsorship by peers. Publications, presentation, consultation and professional leadership activities are key elements in establishing a professional reputation. The recognition by peers of quality performance, dependability, productivity and the resulting endorsement or lack thereof is as much a part of one's credentials as are the more formal certifying processes and procedures. In Zimbabwe, a professional student affairs body is necessary so that student affairs can have their own workshops and conferences for their professional growth.

13. ACCREDITING STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTISE

Winston and Creamer (1997) pointed out that accreditation is important to professional student affairs practitioners as it concerns both professional student affairs practitioners' practice within institutions of higher education and formal academic preparation of practitioners. However, only two of regional accrediting associations and one of the specialised institutional accrediting bodies have specifically addressed student affairs, student services, or student development in their published accreditation standards. The student affairs profession will ensure that no inconsistency exists in the criteria used to judge the effectiveness and quality of student affairs programs offered in our institutions of higher learning. Lack of uniform standards for practice hinders the professional growth and recognition of student affairs programs throughout the country.

14. ACCREDITING PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Without a professional body for student affairs problems may exist in the area of student affairs preparation. Although an initial set of standards for professional preparation has been adopted by the American College Personnel Association (1979), currently no accreditation body seeks to accredit the full range of student affairs preparation programs including those housed in academic departments of administration, departments of counsellor education and others. Recently the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and related Educational Programs (CACREP) was established under the sponsorship of the American Personnel and Guidance Association. Although this agency potentially

could evaluate and accredit programs of student affairs preparation that are housed in departments of counsellor education, those whose academic homes are elsewhere may be left in non creditable situations. Likewise, although the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has the capacity to evaluate accredit programs of school counsellor preparation, it is neither organised nor qualified to accredit preparation programs designed to educate those who will practise in postsecondary education institutions, including student affairs practitioners. As a result, currently no procedures are available or are agencies qualified to accredit preparation programs for student affairs in higher education. This creates a major void in the professional qualifications in the field of student affairs, a void that needs immediate and increased attention. These problems also adversely affect the operations of student affairs departments in Zimbabwe.

15. CONCLUSION

A professional body has its primary activity of protecting the public as well as protecting the individual. It is established on the basis of legal mandate. Professional bodies exercise a regulatory function, that is: imposing requirements, restrictions and conditions, setting standards in relation to any activity, and securing compliance, or enforcement. They cover matters of registration and certification. Student affairs professional body's purpose is to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the students by ensuring proper standards in the practice of student affairs issues. Not all professions are regulated. Some professions are self-regulating in that the same body both represents and regulates the profession, for example the Lawyers Association of Zimbabwe. However, within these professional bodies there is a clear separation between the two functions. For those that are regulated there is a restriction on your right to practice based on evidence of your qualification, physiotherapists; social workers and patent attorneys are all examples of regulated professions. With unregulated professions there is no restriction on your right to practice – these include economists and archaeologists. This does not mean you are not qualified, just that you do not need to be registered with a regulatory body in order to do your job. Additionally some professional titles are regulated even where the profession itself is not. Examples of these are Chartered Engineer and Chartered Marketer. These are awarded by professional bodies. Individuals practicing a regulated profession need to be able to show evidence of registration with the appropriate regulatory body. Those in unregulated professions demonstrate their competence through evidence of experience or regulated education and training. Recognition is also given to those holding a 'protected title' in an unregulated profession; you need to demonstrate the right to use such a title.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Qualifications for the profession of student affairs profession should be clearly set, for instance having a first degree on student affairs.
- A professional body which govern student affairs practices should be set up

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