



Southern African Association for Institutional Research

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

24th SAAIR Conference 2017

Rethinking University Engagement in Africa

Hosted by



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Venue: Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia
www.saaireweb.co.za

Important dates:

The submission deadline for outlines and abstracts is **Friday, 26 May 2017**. Those whose proposed contributions have been accepted for presentation at the Conference will be notified by **Friday, 30 June 2017**. In the case of accepted contributions, an electronic copy of the presentation should be submitted to the SAAIR office (admin@saairenet) not later than **Friday, 8 September 2017**.

Please send your abstracts and outlines to the SAAIR Office (Carin Strydom) - admin@saairenet - and Juanita Frans (2017 SAAIR Conference Chair) - saaire@nust.na - by **Friday, 26 May 2017**.

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

The Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR) is holding its 24th annual conference in **Windhoek, Namibia**, from **23 to 26 October 2017**. The conference will be hosted by the **Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)**, on its Windhoek campus.

A pre-conference SAHELA (South African Higher Education Learner Analytics) workshop will be held on Monday, 23 October 2017 at the same venue.

SAAIR annually convenes a community of scholars, academics and higher education practitioners as well as institutional researchers who are dedicated to converting data into useful information. The information is the basis of knowledge for the purpose of decision-making and informing the way institutions function and serve their staff and students, and overall strategic trajectory. SAAIR encourages proposals from, and attendance of, all those interested in institutional research, learning analytics, quality assurance, strategic and academic planning, as well as related areas such as teaching and learning and all the associated sub-disciplines and fields of study.

THEME

Our theme for the 2017 SAAIR Conference is:

“Rethinking University Engagement in Africa”

The theme talks to the core business of all academics, academic advisors, academic and student support officials, teaching-learning scholars and institutional researchers, to name but a few.

Fitzgerald H, *et al* (2010) states that engagement is an umbrella that covers every good practice in teaching and learning, research and service as it achieves the following:

- a. Enriches the learning experience of students.
- b. Improves research by broadening academic thinking and creating results with greater impact and relevance.
- c. Supports a curriculum that improves student development as scholars, researchers, leaders and engaged citizens.
- d. Advances opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching.
- e. Advances opportunities for internationalizing the university through shared research, scholarship and service.
- f. Helps universities demonstrate accountability in an era replete with calls for greater scrutiny and demands for return on investment.
- g. Improves relationships between universities and their communities to test ideas in real-world settings.
- h. Generates unforeseen outcomes that stimulate creativity and innovation.

The African higher education sector is faced with a number of new forces: (a) the Internet of Things – infrastructure of the information society; (b) ubiquitous technology; (c) digital natives; (d) mass

education; (e) rebel education; (f) international mobility; and (g) unprecedented innovation changing the landscape.

As a result, higher education institutions need to rethink their engagement strategies and operating models to achieve the following:

- a. Learn to sense, respond, adapt and predict student and business needs of the moment;
- b. Stay abreast, become flexible, drive change and innovation; and
- c. Work closely with society to reimagine business engagement.

The above requires universities to rethink: business models (business infrastructure, practices, processes etc); education models; disciplines / fields of study; learning and assessment; connectivity; complexity; communication; stakeholder relationships; customer-care; recruitment; employment; funding methods (and income generation); and “One-stop-shop” student services (‘real-time solutions’).

To lead universities in these modern times, sustainable leadership is vital. Leaders are required to have vision, be versatile and flexible and they need to assume singular and collective responsibility and accountability and benchmark and adopt international best practices in order to remain competitive and to produce outcomes and results necessary for prosperity. Academic leaders, therefore, need to make strategic decisions based on verifiable data.

Furthermore, engagement with industries and businesses, becomes important as it can ensure the following: curricula are aligned to the needs of industry, government and business; trans-disciplinary programmes are offered; technology is optimally used to ensure programme outcomes are achieved; graduate attributes are enhanced; research conducted is multi-disciplinary and focusses on solving problems to bridge social inequalities and improve the quality of life in communities, etc.

Universities are expected to create and expand mutually beneficial and responsive partnerships that enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals, organisations and communities. To strengthen the quality of research through engagement, the University-Industry-Government-Civic Society nexus is key to innovation in knowledge-based societies. The quadruple helix includes communities to co-develop and co-create approaches to solving problems and to

create the technology pull. Engagement should form part of universities core business and should ensure outreach rather than philanthropy.

Consequently, universities should be committed to measure the impact of engagement by capturing baseline data and conducting continuous assessments over long periods. Tools to measure impact can be used internally as well as externally.

In the rapid changing higher education environment, the following questions need to be answered:

What is being done within your institution, or your region, to boost engagement to inform teaching and learning, research and services? Are we aware of the impact that engagement can have on higher education institutions? How can we enhance the quality of life within communities? How do we provide programmes, curricula and other opportunities for students to develop civic competencies and habits, including research opportunities, that assist students to create knowledge and do scholarship relevant to and grounded in public problems within rigorous methodological frameworks. Are universities' key institutional priorities aligned to engagement?

As a result of diminishing resources, what new initiatives have leaders implemented with stakeholders to ensure quality and relevance? Initiatives can be strategic or operational. How do leaders embrace sustainable leadership and practices? What is your university's philosophy of sustainable leadership? Are strategic decisions made at universities based on verifiable data? How is sustainable learning created at universities? What interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research activities have universities engaged with communities to improve their living conditions and address social inequalities? Are universities engaged scholarly – the act of engaging (bringing universities and communities together) and the product of engagement (the spread of scholarship-focused, evidence based practices in communities). What are the effects of engagement on: quality assurance, academic planning, teaching-learning and related activities such as access; retention and success; student experience; enrolment planning; curriculum design; teaching; assessment; student attributes; facilities/infrastructure; and access to technology.

How far, for example, has engagement been incorporated into and catered for in your institution? How is engagement integrated into your university's curriculum framework and how do you deal with the competing imperatives such as mastery of the discipline-based knowledge, critical thinking skills, etc? Does your university engage with industry / government when conducting institutional

research? How did the above engagement reshape your methodologies and techniques? How does student-led research, focussing on engagement, enhance graduate attributes at your university?

What is the impact of integrating student community engagement data into university processes? How can student community engagement be measured? Is there evidence of improvement in student retention and throughput rate? Based on the data collected, are there changes rooted in teaching methodologies, lecturer / student relations etc? Does student engagement provide useful indicators of quality in higher education? Should process indicators, such as engagement data, be part of the performance indicators of universities? What have been the results, outputs or outcomes thereof? What has been the impact of that output or outcome?

What do African Higher Education Institutions know about similar research activities or initiatives of their counterparts and peers in other parts of the world, and *vice versa*? What do we know about the trends in institutional research in similar environments elsewhere in the world?

What are the constraints under which institutional researchers and scholars work when providing information to support decision-making? Is anyone listening? How can we encourage our institutions to use and interpret information? Are the decisions informed by the evidence provided by, *inter alia*, IR-, Quality-, Management Information-, Teaching-Learning-, Curriculum experts? Are there examples of best practice?

All the above are questions to which you may already have some answers, and this SAAIR conference offers you the opportunity to share these and related inputs and your expertise with colleagues in the field.

SUB-THEMES

- 1. Enhancing graduate attributes through student-led research.**
- 2. The university – industry – government –civic society nexus: strengthening the quality of research through engagement.**
 - a. Engaging for excellence and impact.**
 - b. Sustainable leadership in relation to data-driven decision making.**
 - c. The impact of integrating engagement data collection into university processes.**
 - d. Reshaping methodologies and techniques for institutional research.**

Important dates:

The submission date for outlines and abstracts is **Friday, 26 May 2017**. Please send your outlines and abstracts to Juanita Frans (Conference Chair 2017, NUST) at saair@nust.na and the SAAIR Office (Carin Strydom) at admin@saair.net.

All proposals will be subjected to a double-blind peer review process.

Contributors whose proposed contributions are accepted for presentation at the Conference will be notified by **Friday, 30 June 2017**.

In the case of accepted contributions, an electronic copy of the comprehensive presentation should be submitted to the SAAIR office (admin@saair.net) not later than **Friday, 08 September 2017**.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Distinguished experts will deliver keynote addresses and or facilitate at the 2017 SAAIR Conference.

GUEST SPEAKER



Dr Jamil Salmi

Dr Jamil Salmi is a global tertiary education expert providing policy advice and consulting services to governments, universities, professional associations, multilateral banks and bilateral cooperation agencies. Until January 2012, he was the World Bank's tertiary education coordinator.

He wrote the first World Bank policy paper on higher education reform in 1994 and was the principal author of the Bank's 2002 Tertiary Education Strategy entitled "*Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*".

In the past twenty years, Dr Salmi has provided advice on tertiary education development, financing reforms and strategic planning to governments and university leaders in about 90 countries all over the world.

Dr Salmi is a member of the international advisory board of several universities in Europe, Asia, Latin America, North America and the Middle East. He is also a member of the International Advisory Network of the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, and the CHEA International Quality

Group Advisory Council. Between 2008 and 2011, he represented the World Bank on the Governing Board of the International Institute for Educational Planning. Dr Salmi is Emeritus Professor of Higher Education at the Diego Portales University in Chile.

Dr Salmi's 2009 book addresses the "*Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities*". His latest book, co-edited with Professor Phil Altbach, entitled "*The Road to Academic Excellence: the Making of World-Class Research Universities*", was published in September 2011.



Dr Tjama Tjivikua

Vice-Chancellor: Namibia University of Science and Technology

Dr Tjama Tjivikua was appointed in 1995 as the Founding Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia – now the Founding Vice-Chancellor of Namibia University of Science and Technology [NUST]. Since its establishment, the institution has grown significantly from a small college with enrolment of just over two thousand to a global University of about thirteen thousand students today.

NUST is internationally recognised through its qualifications and relevance, and its extensive network of partnerships. The institution has won several national and international awards, and has been rated as the best higher education institution in Namibia since 2002.

Prior to joining the University, Dr Tjivikua held the following positions: Assistant Professor in Chemistry at Lincoln University (PA, U.S.A); Visiting Scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MA, U.S.A.); Research Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh (PA, U.S.A); and Research Fellow at the University of Lowell (MA, U.S.A.). He holds a BA (*cum laude*), MS and PhD in Organic Chemistry, and has published several articles in scientific and other journals. He was awarded the DSc (*Honoris Causa*) by Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA) in 2006 and the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (*Honoris Causa*) by Lincoln University (USA) in 2013.

Dr Tjivikua is the recipient of many awards and honours as a student and leader, such as the following: African Leadership Hall of Fame, 2nd African Pioneering Institutions of Excellence, 2016 African Development Forum, Atlanta USA. Congressional Commendation by the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, USA, 2016. Best Contribution in Science and Technology for the year, India, 2015. Best

Contribution in Science and Technology for the Year, India (2015); National Honours: The Most Distinguished Order of Namibia: Second Class (2014); Service Excellence Award: Junior Achievement Namibia (2010); *Education Persona* - Namibia Business Hall of Fame (2010); Bank Windhoek's Business Communicator of the Year (2008); D.Sc. (*Honoris Causa*), Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA) (2006); Life Fellow: Centers for Leadership and Public Values, University of Cape Town/Duke University (2004); International Biographical Centre (IBC), *Who's Who in the 21 Century* (2001); and Outstanding Young Man of America (1985).

He was named by an international magazine *Finweek* (28 September 2006) as one of "12 most prominent and respected members since independence for having set up an excellent institution in Namibia."

TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS

The conference aims to attract institutional research professionals and higher education scholars to share their knowledge and expertise in the field of higher education management, with a specific focus on institutional research, management information, business intelligence, quality assurance and enhancement, and statutory reporting.

The following types of contributions will be considered for presentation at the conference:

Contributed paper (CP)

This is a scholarly paper in which the author or authors share research results. Such a paper may draw from a research report, a case study or the use and application of a particular research methodology, or may address particular theoretical and conceptual issues relevant to the theme of the conference. The proposed paper can be based on original data collection or secondary data analysis and can be based on quantitative, qualitative or mixed methodology. Contributed papers will be scheduled in 40 minute slots of which at least 15 minutes should be dedicated to discussion.

Panel discussion (PD)

This is a collegial discussion of a single topic relevant to the theme of the conference by several discussants. The outline for such a presentation should describe the topic and the central issues that will be explored. It should also describe how the differing perspectives of each participant will

contribute to the development of the topic. The total time allowed for a discussion panel will be 60 minutes.

Conference workshop (CW)

A workshop should be aimed at facilitating active involvement by participants in deliberations around a topic relevant to the theme of the conference. It should generally consist of a brief introduction followed by planned activities/processes of engagement. The outline for a proposed workshop should describe the topic, the participant activities, the audience that will be targeted through the workshop and its intended outcomes. The outline should also specify any special requirements that may be needed for the workshop (e.g., individual laptops for participation, venue specification, etc.). Please note that such specifications will need to fit in with the overall logistical arrangements for the conference. The total time allowed for a conference workshop will be 90 minutes.

Poster presentation (PP)

A poster presentation is a visual presentation for viewing by conference attendees. Posters can depict research or evaluation findings, outline a research process, or describe a program. Specific time will be allocated when the presenter(s) should be available at the poster for discussion.

Demonstration (D)

A demonstration displays materials related to a project having to do with research or practice. These may include a variety of formats, such as computer programs or multimedia presentations of a project.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of proposals is an important activity in the run-up to the annual conference. The SAAIR EXCO remains committed to coordinating the evaluation process in a fair, objective and rigorous manner whilst also considering issues such as the spread of proposals from institutions across Southern Africa and all types of institutions.

In facilitating this, the following should be noted:

- 1) A panel of experts will be constituted to assess proposals against a pre-determined list of quality criteria (see below).
- 2) All evaluations are undertaken through a double-blind review process.

- 3) Where proposals are rated at roughly the same level of quality, the evaluation committee appointed by the EXCO will consider the number of proposals by an individual researcher, and the type of institution to which the individual researcher(s) are affiliated in order to ensure a reasonable spread without neglecting the quality requirements as evaluated by the peer review panel.
- 4) Contributions that seek to make a scholarly contribution to addressing the theme of the conference will be given first priority of acceptance. However, submissions that do not directly address the theme of the conference will also be considered, provided that they have a clear focus on one or more of the objectives of the SAAIR, namely “to benefit, assist and advance institutional research leading to improved understanding, planning and operation of institutions of higher education”.

The following criteria will be used to guide the selection of presentations:

General criteria applicable to all proposals:

- Whether the proposal links to one or more of the SAAIR’s, objectives *namely “to benefit, assist and advance institutional research leading to improved understanding, planning and operation of institutions of higher education”*;
- The degree to which the proposal links to the Conference theme (*Submissions that do not directly address the theme or sub-themes of the conference will also be considered, provided that they have a clear focus on one or more of the objectives of SAAIR*);
- The overall **clarity of the proposal** (e.g., quality of writing, organisation of ideas, clarity of assumptions, logic of arguments; etc.);
- The **importance, significance and relevance of the topic and major issue(s)** addressed for institutional research; and
- The **potential significance** of the contribution.

Specific criteria applicable to contributed papers:

- Appropriateness of theoretical or conceptual framework;
- Soundness of research design;
- Appropriateness of data sources or evidence used;
- Clarity of exposition of ideas, analyses, arguments and conclusions; and
- Evidence that the research is near completion and that the paper will be completed by the time of the conference (e.g., preliminary results)

Specific criteria applicable to panel discussions:

- Overall focus of the panel discussion and major issues/viewpoints addressed;
- How the collective issues/viewpoints fit together to create a coherent whole;
- How the proposed panel will provide a learning experience of value to delegates; and
- Clarity of exposition of ideas, analyses, arguments and conclusions.

Specific criteria applicable to conference workshops:

- Overall focus of the workshop and major issues addressed;
- Soundness of design;
- Appropriateness of data sources or evidence used;
- Clarity of exposition of ideas, analyses, arguments and conclusions to be shared with participants; and

Specific criteria applicable to posters:

- Timeliness and general interest regarding the topic;
- Appropriateness of the theoretical and methodological approaches pursued;
- Clarity of exposition of ideas, analyses, arguments and conclusions;
- Preliminary findings, conclusions and implications; and
- Quality of organisation and format of the proposed content.

Specific criteria applicable to demonstrations:

- Appropriateness of theoretical or conceptual framework;
- Soundness of design;
- Appropriateness of data sources or evidence used;
- Quality of proposed content;
- Quality of organisation and format of the proposed content.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Members of the SAAIR and other interested colleagues are invited to respond to this call for contributions to the 2017 Conference. To assist the organisers in selecting contributions, interested persons are requested to submit the following:

1. A completed **cover page**. The format of the cover page is provided below.

2. An **outline** of their proposed contribution for consideration (see proposal evaluation process above), including an **abstract** for inclusion in the conference programme if the proposal is successful. The format is provided below.

Cover page for proposals:

1. Title of Presentation

2. Sub Theme of Conference linked to Presentation:

- *Enhancing graduate attributes for a knowledge society through student-led research*
- *The University – Industry – Government –Civic Society Nexus: Strengthening the quality of research through engagement*
- *Engaging for excellence and impact*
- *Sustainable Leadership in relation to data driven decision making*
- *The impact of integrating engagement data collection into university processes*
- *Reshaping methodologies and techniques for institutional research*

3. Presentation type:

- *Contributed paper*
- *Panel discussion*
- *Conference workshop*
- *Poster presentation*
- *Demonstration*

4. Presenter(s)/Author(s) – names, institution(s), email addresses, daytime phone number(s) and mobile number(s)

Outlines and abstracts should be submitted in the following formats:

Format for outlines (required for peer evaluation):

1. No identifying information about the author(s) (**this should be provided on the cover page**).
2. English language only.
3. MS Word format.
4. Not exceeding **600 words** in length but providing enough detail to evaluate the proposal.
5. Illustrations, graphs or references may be included if these will assist with the evaluation process.
6. It should be evident from the outline how the proposal will meet the general criteria as well as the specific criteria applicable to the type of contribution.

Format for abstracts (*for inclusion in Conference booklet if accepted*):

1. No identifying information about the author(s) (these should be provided on the cover page).
2. English language only.
3. MS Word format.
4. Not exceeding **150 words** in length.
5. No illustrations, graphs or references should be included.