

The EAN 20th anniversary conference, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands
20th – 22nd June 2011

“Student Diversity in Higher Education: Conflicting Realities”
(Tensions affecting policy and action to widen access and participation)

PARALLEL PAPER SESSIONS

Parallel Paper Sessions 1

Monday 20 June

16:55 – 17:55 (1hr)

Paper 1.1 Research 1

“Contextualised approaches to mainstreaming widening participation – a comparative case study of two UK universities”

Dr John Butcher et al, University of Northampton, UK

This paper reports on institutional research at two contrasting UK universities with different foci in outreach and support for learners, in order to increase understanding of institutional approaches to WP. The research took the form of case-studies which drew evidence from stakeholder interviews with senior executives and a critical review of current policies, structures and processes. Data was collected as UK universities were debating the future of WP in the context of a marketised fee regime and a cap on numbers. Both universities intend to apply the learning derived from this research to shape their new WP policies and have made generic recommendations about diversifying the student body.

Paper 1.2 Practice 2 (This paper has been withdrawn)

“Putting students and academics in ‘thinking’ mode to improve student experience and success”

Pierre Chenard & Louise Béliveau, Université de Montréal, Canada

This paper tackles the challenges of putting ideas into action especially for a large, selective institution with as complex a structure as Université de Montréal, Canada, and the difficulties in engaging academics and faculties. The presenters will demonstrate the success of Contact-Etudes from an ad hoc programme in 2000 to receiving sustainable funding in 2011 to drive institutional policy and action. They will share insights on how to develop effective integrated strategy to mobilise staff to support diversity and student success and provide conclusive results to show that a genuine culture of success has been embraced by participating faculties within the institution.

Paper 1.3 Research 1 & 2

“The nexus of diversity and quality: the international utility of the US community college within a “transfer-going culture”

Stephen Handel, National Office of Community College Initiatives, The College Board, US
Alfred Herrera, University of California, Los Angeles, US

This session describes the role of the US community college in providing access to higher education for underrepresented students and the “transfer-going” model. Data will be presented to reveal how quality and access have been enhanced by applying the transfer-going model in two- and four-year institutions, including highly-selective colleges and universities. The implications of this work will be discussed with special relevance for its impact in other contexts and cultures.

Paper 1.4 Policy & Practice 1

“A digital tool to sensitize adolescents and their teachers to the expectations of higher education” Joke Vrijders & Lobke Dedrie, Artevelde University College Ghent, Belgium

The Artevelde University College Ghent’s goal of “Better education for more students” has led to an increase in diversity, but this has not led to more study success. It also found that for more than 50% of the entrants the transition from secondary to higher education does not turn out as they expected. The focus of this session is on web-based intervention providing support for school students and teachers which has an underpinning philosophy not shaped by a deficit model. The presenters will give a short demo of the website, so the participants become familiar with the concept of the digital tool, and show how the website fits into the diversity policy at the College and how it contributes to accessibility and participation by narrowing the gap between secondary and higher education.

Paper 1.5 Research 1

“Diverse needs of diverse students? Interim results from project OPULL (Open Universities for Lifelong Learning)” Jochen Uwe Schwarz, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany

This paper reports on the first results from the OPULL project analyzing mechanisms and their success in enabling LLL for seven different non-traditional target groups. The presenter will disseminate the results from the quantitative survey conducted during the first half of 2011 (phase 2), discuss how non-traditional students differ and which factors foster or hinder their study success. The survey investigates issues such as non-traditional students’ learning behaviour, their work-life-learn-balance, needs and experience of support from the universities. These findings will provide a deeper understanding of system-immanent differences found through national mapping. The ultimate project goal is to develop a vision of an open university for Europe.

Paper 1.6 Practice 1

“When formal equality meets unequal reality – challenges of immigrants’ access to higher education” Kati Isoaho & Milla Laasonen, Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
Riitta Metänen, HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland

This paper focuses on preparatory courses at HAMK and Metropolia designed to empower immigrants and prepare them for Finnish society. It deals with the challenges encountered: What are the main challenges to overcome when approaching higher education access? What kind of information is required? How to define “immigrant” in the context of student selection? What is the role of the national legislation and EU directives? Who are locally the most important co-operators? What is – at the end of it all – higher education equality today in a developed country as Finland? Paulo Freire’s core concept of pedagogy will be explored in this endeavour.

Paper 2.1 Project dissemination

“Higher education in urban areas: promoting access, participation and attainment”

Diana Wickham, Education Consultant & Fran Ferrier, Research Consultant, EAN

People living in urban areas face a range of unique challenges affecting their opportunities to access higher education, their ongoing participation in higher education and ultimately their academic achievement. This session will disseminate the initial findings of a study comparing higher education participation and attainment in four cities: Liverpool/Merseyside (UK) Chicago (US) Randsdat (The Netherlands) and Toronto (Canada). The presentation will identify the factors that influence access and success within the historical, economic, social and cultural, educational, policy and political contexts of the cities that impact on disadvantaged groups.

Paper 2.2 Practice 1

“Inclusion of student diversity in South African higher education: a Hobson’s choice”

Wandisile Mdepa, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

This paper challenges the simplistic view of diversity as a source of richness and variety without the complexities of diverse societies, and explores the South African experience compared with other developing countries, given the diverse groups that live in South Africa and speak 11 different official languages. This calls for an understanding of identity development processes of these different groups of students, in order to harness diversity in the context of access, participation and social cohesion. The paper will share two strategies, one that can be applied at a national level, and a second strategy that focuses on communities where first generation students are drawn from.

Paper 2.3 Research 1

“Mutual adaptation – identifying study-related diversity and dealing with it”

Hannah Leichsenring, CHE Consult, Germany

The paper presents the main results of the project “Diversity as an Opportunity” CHE-QUEST survey of more than 8,500 students from eight partner universities. The project analyses eight student types in adapting to university, and provides several striking insights into differences in adaptation for women, for students with disabilities and other health problems, as well as a new perspective on the effects of certain study models. The paper describes the function of identifying those student types and how to use this data to improve the ability to deal with diversity situation at a given university. It offers examples from the project and presents one systematic approach to the challenge of dealing with diversity in higher education.

Paper 2.4 Research/policy/practice 2

“A case study: a commitment to excellence and diversity in higher education”

Dr Charles Alexander et al, University of California, Los Angeles & VU Amsterdam University

Both UCLA and VU Amsterdam believe that diversity is not distinct from educational excellence but essential and necessary to achieve it. Given the emphasis both universities put on diversity, they have joined forces to bring this about through research, institutional policies and practices and faculty and student exchange. This workshop will showcase the gains from international collaboration in the field of diversity and social cohesion. It shows how academic research can be explicitly designed and then harnessed to help shape institutional policy discourse and practices, and to directly influence student and staff experiences.

Paper 2.5 Practice 2

“Maximizing diversity’s potential: internationally trained professionals as co-creators of curriculum”

Kathy Bell, Douglas College, Canada

This workshop will work with participants on how to adapt programming, curriculum and teaching methodologies to integrate and validate the strengths of internationally-trained immigrant students. The Tri-Cities Intercultural Workplace Project at Douglas College in Coquitlam, Canada, focuses on training immigrants from human service backgrounds (eg. Counsellors, teachers, social workers) The workshop will give a more detailed overview of the project, the students and the courses. It will allow participants to work in groups to discuss their own programs/courses and identify ways that their internationally-trained professional students can be more involved as participants in curriculum design, i.e. by co-creating and integrating their strengths in ways that instructors could not do alone.

Paper 2.6 Policy 1

“Create an Open Impact Network for lifelong learning to widen student access and participation” Frederik De Decker, Ghent University Association, Belgium

This paper calls for cooperation not competition, arguing that all too often attracting students from groups less represented in higher education is situated too much in a competitive model between different providers of education and training, usually with the providers’ interests in mind. This paper offers a collaborative alternative, the Open Impact Network that puts the potential learner in the focal point rather than the providers. During the session the idea of an Open Impact Network will be further developed and applied to the specific case of Ghent University Association focusing on how the concept can be translated into concrete actions. The aim is to trigger discussion with participants: can this strategy work to widen access and participation, how can it be translated to your own context?

Paper 2.7 Research 1

“Dual sector universities: part of the solution or part of the problem?”

Gordon Lee, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Canada

The paper ponders the efficacy or otherwise of institutions that offer dual provision combining further education and higher education and asks: Are dual sector institutions more successful than others at widening access and enhancing student progression? It will report on empirical research undertaken in British Columbia, Canada where 5 dual sector universities were established between 2003 and 2008. It will also compare the performance of these dual sector universities with those of more traditional institutional configurations – community colleges and research universities. The paper looks specifically at “the internal and external tensions that hinder greater student diversity” at these dual sector universities and “the strategies to overcome them”. Finally, the paper compares the British Columbia experience with dual sector university experience in other jurisdictions.

Paper 3.1 Project dissemination

“ExchangeAbility: fostering mobility of students with disabilities”

Eva Reina, UNICA – Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe

Prof. Krisztina Kovacs, ELTE University, Budapest, Hungary

Mei Lan, ExchangeAbility Ambassador

According to the EU 2020 Strategy, at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study or training period abroad by 2020. Although there has been an increase in the number of students with disabilities participating in mobility programme compared to previous years, the number is still exceptionally low (0.17% in 2008-2009). ‘ExchangeAbility’ is a project made by students for students and by disabled people for disabled people. An eye-catching video recorded by students during the site visits and summarizing the whole project will be screened during the session. It is expected to provide information on the accessibility of universities and on the obstacles disabled students may encounter while living and studying in a particular city. The project also will present some testimonies of ‘ExchangeAbility Ambassadors’. The main objective will be to exchange best practices and to raise awareness on both opportunities and challenges in the mobility of students with disabilities in order to create grounds for improvement and to increase the number of disabled students participating in mobility schemes.

Papers 3.2(a) & (b)

These two longstanding programmes are proofs that successful interventions can improve student diversity without compromising quality as well enhancing employment outcomes of graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.2(a) Research 2

“From a localised Ballymun initiative to a national service – the Access Service in DCU, 21 years on”

Cathy McLoughlin & Colette Keogh, Dublin City University, Ireland

This study reviews 21 years of an Access Service and offers European and International educational institutions an opportunity to look at how a local pilot scheme set out to improve access for students from a neighbouring deprived area was transformed in a national scheme. Today the scheme operates at a national level with applications processed through the Central Applications Office. The presenters will share data from a comprehensive research exercise from the initial entrants to the present day looking at the outcomes; completion, retention, level of degree, further study and employment rates. The methods used to achieve these may be adaptable for local use.

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3.2(b) Research 2

“The successes of graduates from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds in the labour market” Olive Byrne, University College Cork, Ireland

This paper examines the success of the UCC PLUS⁺ programme in supporting young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds and granting them access to the graduate workforce in Ireland. The career pathways and destinations of graduates from 2001-2008 are explored. The statistics presented in this paper show that retention rate of these students matches that of the mainstream student cohort and academically these students are excelling. More than three quarters of the students who sought employment straight after their Degree, successfully entered the graduate labour force and those who did not seek employment straight away continued their education at postgraduate level, pursuing Diplomas, Masters Degrees and Doctoral Degrees.

Papers 3.3(a) & (b)

These two papers champion the importance of postgraduate and research opportunities to increase diversity and effect long term institutional change.

3.3(a) Practice 1 & 3

“Accessing the global knowledge economy: the long-term role of African partnerships like PANGeA”

Prof Johann Groenewald, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

This paper argues that simply viewing access and participation in higher education in narrowly domestic terms may do nothing to disturb the reproduction of skewed global power relations. The presenter believes that in the context of global cultural and economic relationships, access to and participation in higher education may be conceived of as something that affects whole continents such as Africa; and in such circumstances effective access to and participation in higher education may require first the reconstruction of higher education itself, and that has to start at the most advanced level. The presenter will describe the work of the Partnership for Africa’s Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA) and explain its strategy as an integrated effort to build and sustain world class doctoral programmes on and about the African continent, with African institutions as the lead agents.

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3.3(b) Policy & Practice 3

“Open up! Creating opportunity for undergraduates to prepare for graduate school and research career”

Drs Eveline Weenink, Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Ethnic minority student numbers in the Netherlands are increasing but this group is still under-represented in the academic staff in research universities. The project *Programma Studentassistenten Onderzoek (PSO)* seeks to widen access and increase diversity by making students aware of the possibility of an academic career and staff aware of the available talent still untapped. The presenter will describe the different stages of initiation, programme design, realisation of goals (recruitment & selection), and evaluation of this project, share the key factors of success, the problems solved, the dilemma’s faced, the lessons learned and the future plans. Participants will be invited to express their thoughts and experiences on how their institutions cope with the same challenges and how they ensure open or equal access to graduate school and PhD.

Papers 3.4(a) & (b)

These two papers tackle the complexity of diversity and explore teaching methods and support interventions mechanisms that adapt to student diversity.

3.4(a) Practice 1 & 2

“Tensions in higher education: widening participation, student diversity and the challenge of academic language/literacy”

Dr Chris Klinger, University of South Australia, Australia

This paper deals with the tensions that come with diversity, one of which concerns language and literacy skills. The presenter asserts that support traditionally given to students from non-English speaking backgrounds should also be targeted at native speaker students who lack the academic literacy skills to succeed. It considers possible assessment mechanisms for identifying those non-traditional students most at risk due to weaknesses in language and academic literacy, while also addressing associated, but broader, aspects of professional development for academic staff. Such development acknowledges the need to ensure that academic staff are better equipped to both understand, and be empathetic towards, the distinctive needs of this cohort and have the capacity and resources to distinguish language/literacy related problems from other issues that these students may face, and to intervene appropriately, where necessary.

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3.4(b) Practice 3

“Teaching civilization based on serendipity for increasing quality in diversity in higher education in Romania”

Prof Dr Sanda-Marina Badulescu, University of Pitesti, Romania

As Romania universities experience greater diversity this paper advocates an approach that encourages academics working with minorities and foreign students in non-homogenous classes to use diversity to add value to drive up quality. The paper promotes ‘serendipity’ as an important principle of creative teaching to facilitate inter-communication among students of different nationalities and cultures, as well as the learner-centred ITC instruction, for defining cultural contexts and solve the problem of a new model of students. Using case studies developed over a period of five years the presenter will share strategies used: by teaching civilization in non-specific programs: creative and positive use of diversity, allow diversity manifest, explain and promote differences between individuals, highlight the common ground of various participants, create synergies based on differences, increase understanding and adaptation in diversity and finally use diversity to add value.

Papers 3.5(a) & (b)

These two papers open up an important debate in terms of the similarities and differences of approaches to access and student diversity between apparently very different types of institution.

3.5(a) Practice 1

“Achieving diversity in American higher education: the experiences of a community college and a research institution”

Renée Hampton, Columbus State Community College, USA

Dr Beth Olivares, University of Rochester, USA

Although two and four year colleges in the American education system have different missions and constituents, they often employ the same strategies for achieving greater diversity, and sometimes encountered the same obstacles. This session will introduce some of the means that Columbus State Community College and the University of Rochester have utilized to achieve greater diversity, including community outreach and engagement, special programs, international initiatives and admissions strategies. The presenters will share with participants the similarities and differences in their approaches and progress, the development and implementation of strategies to overcome tensions and obstacles.

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3.5(b) Research 1

“Vocational training and academic studies: friends, foes or strangers?”

Prof Matthias Klumpp, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany

This paper deals with the sometimes neglected issue of student transition from vocational to academic higher education and the impact of this on the curriculum and institutional culture. It describes vocationally trained persons on their way into academic education and the tensions that arise from entry qualifications to academic integration. The paper will outline the latest ‘Berufswertigkeit’ survey results from 2009 stating the basic comparable value of further vocational training graduates with academic graduates for Germany. The measurement concept of Berufswertigkeit enables institutions and persons to establish comparable personal qualifications without relying mainly on academic curricula and criteria but the employability perspective from business practice. This also supports the outcome-oriented European Qualifications Framework and the Berufswertigkeit concept can easily be transferred to other countries.

Papers 3.6(a) & (b)

These two papers focus on a suite of programmes, tailored support mechanisms and creating an environment that facilitate transition, retention and success.

3.6(a) Practice 1

“Overcoming challenges to diversity in the Academy: key factors that promote successful inclusive academic experiences”

Joseph Michael Green, Marquette University & Koren A. Bedeau, University of Miami, USA

This paper will examine the State of Wisconsin and the City of Milwaukee’s five decade struggle to diversify the Academy, discuss and expose internal and external tensions which challenge diversity in higher education. It will focus on the transition to college or university dynamic as well as share best practices for creating an inclusive campus environment, discuss the major factors to consider when developing programmes that foster learning among diverse settings. It will stress the importance of utilizing the collegial networks and connections across disciplines.

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3.6(b) Practice 2

“Infinite possibilities: exploring opportunities for non-traditional students to become ‘global’ citizens”

Laura Burge, La Trobe University, Australia

This paper focuses not simply on the role student support policies and practices play in delivering student diversity strategy but does so by presenting it within the context of a discourse about student development. It shows how services outside academic structures can and do play a proactive role in this field, and then will show how this work reflects back in changes to student academic profiles. The presenter will share with participants the success of the La Trobe Residential Services in retaining and developing core graduate attributes and academic success among non-traditional students, and discuss the elements that can be transferred to a wider university setting, in any country.

Paper 4.1 Policy 1

“Dissecting the commitment of higher education diversity”

Dr George Lowery, Roosevelt University, US

This paper discusses the transparency of policies, practices and strategies that support diversity in higher education and focuses on identifying ways institutions embrace diversity by developing activities within their mission and values. An analysis will be made to determine if there is a culture of achievement for students from diverse backgrounds. The areas of analysis include elements of the Lumina Foundation Productivity Strategies related to structure, planning, resources, sustainability and goals of higher education. Particular attention will be given various institutions commitment, effectiveness and success. The rationale for such critical analysis is to determine if higher education is implementing appropriate strategies to support the higher education achievement of diverse groups.

Paper 4.2 Practice 1 & 2

“ArbeiterKind.de – from a webpage to the biggest German network of first generation university students”

Katja Urbatsch, ArbeiterKind, Germany

In this workshop the presenter will share the extraordinary development and work of ArbeiterKind.de (“working class kid”), as an example of how more high school students can be encouraged to become First Generation University Students and how a mentoring programme helps them to be successful. ArbeiterKind.de which was chosen as one of the best 25 initiatives in “Start Social 2008”, a competition under the auspices of German chancellor Angela Merkel has received several awards in Germany and is currently also expanding to Austria. The presenter will explain the practical strategies of the organisation and talk about the obstacles and experiences of the last three years. She will invite participants to explore how the basic strategies can be transferred to the wider European and international context.

Paper 4.3 Practice 4

“Widening participation in England: success, death and resurgence”

Dr Graeme Atherton & Dr Ian Tunbridge, AimHigher, UK

This paper will examine the changing policy landscape for access to Higher Education outreach work in England, and in so doing place access in the context of the global financial crisis and the shift in the government’s funding approaches. The paper will outline ‘AccessHE’ created to take forward the work of Aimhigher which is ending in July 2011. The paper will argue that the ‘AccessHE’ model presents profound questions regarding who is responsible for social inclusion and educational equity in society and what the role of the university should be in the early 21st century. However at the same time, it also opens up a new and potentially exciting agenda for outreach work in England and also internationally as countries across the world grapple with how to ensure equity whilst funding mass HE systems at a time of global financial austerity.

Paper 4.4 Research & Practice 1

“Meeting the 2015 diversity target at a South African university: using enrolment trends to inform strategy”

Dr Celeste Nel & Beverley Fanella, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

The ‘Pedagogy of Hope’ committed Stellenbosch University, a historically white Afrikaans university, to increase the percentage of undergraduate students of colour from 24% in 2008 to 34% in 2015. To reach this target, the Centre for Prospective Students undertook an investigation to examine and provide a much-needed profile of trends in access and enrolment at the University. The aim of the study was to use enrolment trends over the past six years to inform a strategy that would facilitate access with success for students of colour. In this presentation quantitative and qualitative findings will be elaborated upon and important recommendations made for use of research to inform and plan strategy and policy on a practical level.

Paper 4.5 Practice & Policy 1 & 2

“Academic accessibility: the challenges of diversity and excellence”

Noel Burke, Concordia University, Canada

The creation of an autonomous School of Extended Learning at Concordia University to address the expectations and implications of accessibility and diversity – while enabling Faculties to focus efforts and resources on their primary mission of excellence in teaching and research – might seem controversial, especially when many institutions are moving toward a more integrated approach. This session will explore the expected benefits and innovative practices that have arisen from the establishment of the School and look at the significant challenges that the School has encountered in its first four years of operation. The benefits of autonomous bodies within a University setting, and the pitfalls to avoid in their implementation will be discussed with a view to sharing these with participants who have similar experiences or ambitions.

Paper 4.6 Research 1

“University selection: can it be equitable and excellent?”

Margaret Heagney, Adjunct Research Fellow, Monash University, Australia

This paper will explore the tensions inherent in the concepts of equitable access to university on one hand and academic excellence on the other, as they play out in selection processes currently employed in higher education. These issues will be examined in the context of the recent Review of Australian Higher Education which recommended *inter alia* that by 2020, 20% of students coming into Australian universities should come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Drawing on recent Australian studies of the ways in which universities select their students, the role of academic achievement as measured by final year of school examinations will be considered. The presenter will draw on Australian and international examples, and a number of approaches to selection will be examined to see what they might contribute to the goal of achieving a more diverse and academically able student population.

Papers 5.1(a) & (b)

These two papers deal with disability and use research to provide essential evidence to inform academic policy and inclusive practice for institutional cultural change.

5.1(a) Theory, Research & Policy 1 & 2

“We have been talking about these issues for years – (re)producing normalcy in higher education”

Dr Manuel Madriaga, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

This paper attempts to scrutinise normalcy in the context of higher education from a sociological perspective. Normalcy, as understood here, is (re)produced, 'unwittingly', in the lives of both disabled and nondisabled people. It offers evidence of the difficulty of unhinging normalcy within higher education where it is taken-for-granted and unmarked in notions of meritocracy. The presenter contends that aiming to be more inclusive, UK higher education institutions may have been regressive in their measures to achieve 'disability justice'. This paper will offer evidence to inform policy and practice in supporting disabled students; and show how pervasive normalcy is embedded within the realm of higher education.

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5.1(b) Research 1

“Accommodation in inter-ability communication: physically challenged students’ perceptions and preferences of communication about functional problems”

Inge Blockmans, Student, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Even though society is increasingly open for diversity and the lives of physically challenged people are gradually facilitated, 'the disabled' may still face attitudinal and communicative barriers placed on them by the dominant 'nondisabled majority'. This study aims at identifying the pitfalls and challenges of inter-ability communication as experienced by five disabled students at the University of Antwerp. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be examined within the framework of Communication Accommodation Theory. These insights into inter-ability communication at university may help academic staff to be truly open to diversity. Furthermore, the CARE-principles for effective inter-ability communication may prove useful to establish and maintain open relationships with people who are diverse at other levels than (dis)ability.

Papers 5.2(a) & (b)

This session investigates gender under-representation in faculty, the lack of role models for minority women in science and engineering disciplines, and believes that promoting the career development of minority women in faculty will ultimately improve student diversity.

5.2(a) Practice 1

“Utilizing the intersection of race and gender to promote minority student success in higher education 1: preparing critical faculty for the future”

Dr Orlando Taylor & Dr Alma Pederson, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, USA

For more than a decade, the US has been preparing doctoral students for college and university faculty but little emphasis has been placed on the significant role of women faculty, whose presence in the academy is positively correlated with underrepresented students' success, yet who are themselves underrepresented. The paper describes the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) project and its strategies for preparing minority women faculty to be academic leaders *and* effective purveyors of teaching, learning and research, and argues that higher education will likely retain a greater diversity of students as a consequence of the project's success.

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5.2(b) Practice 1

“Utilizing the intersection of race and gender to promote minority student success in higher education 1: strategies for federal funding agencies”

Dr Kelly Mack & Dr Claudia Rankins, National Science Foundation, USA

Statistics from the US National Science Foundation showed that the rate at which women earn doctoral degrees in science and engineering exceeds that of men, but the representation of women faculty and minority women faculty, in particular, are far too low to provide women students with access to same-gender role models. Consequently, the National Science Foundation, a US federal funding agency, has focused on a comprehensive and multi-pronged strategy toward empowering minority women faculty in the science and engineering disciplines and raising the international level of consciousness about their unique experience in the academy. The presenters will describe this strategy which has resulted in a prescribed set of objectives that can be adapted by other funding agencies.

Papers 5.3(a) & (b)

These two papers deal with non-traditional students' study experiences and employment potentials.

5.3(a) Research & Policy 2

“Realities re-focused – access to higher education and beyond”

Dr Lisa Keane & Ms Sarah Grimson, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

The experiences of non-traditional students in accessing and participating in higher education are complex and manifold. This paper is based on key research and a first of its kind longitudinal study in the widening participation field in Ireland and will consider the critical junctures in the educational biographies of these students and the unique challenges faced by this group. The presentation will explore the supports necessary for real integration and affirm the need for, as well as the successes of widening participation programmes. Concomitantly, the employment and further study experiences of non-traditional graduates, from Trinity College Dublin will be presented vis-à-vis those of traditional college graduates and the impact of their specific experiences explored. The graduates' experience post-graduation will also be examined with consideration given to the employability discourse.

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5.3(b) Policy & Practice 1 & 3

“Between access and unemployment: migrant women in higher education”

Dr Silvia Lange & Dr Vathsala Aithal, University of Hildesheim, Germany

The project “ProCareer-Mentoring: Career Development for Students and Graduates with or without Migration Background” initiated by the Gender Equality Officer of the University of Hildesheim, aims to empower women who have already gained access to higher education to either pursue an academic career or to enable them to enter the labour market on equal terms with non migrant women or men. The paper will discuss student diversity in higher education with special focus on women with migration background; highlight tensions between international students, students with migration background and those without migration background and show – by the example of ProCareer-Mentoring – how the gap between higher education and the labour market can be bridged.

Papers 5.4(a) & (b)

These two papers show how to balance selectivity while keeping diversity and quality.

5.4(a) Research & Policy 2

“Monash: a high quality access university that aims to marry excellence and equity”

Prof Sue Willis, Monash University, Australia

This paper discusses how Monash University is addressing the challenges in ensuring that it admits the most academically capable students and not the most socially advantaged; in identifying and supporting these students and assuring that the academic rigour and reputation of the degree they earn remains intact. It will present evidence that, thus far, students admitted with special consideration of disadvantaged circumstances are achieving as well as other students and that students admitted through alternative pathways also achieve very well. Participants will learn the approaches in Australia to selecting and admitting students and how systematic adjustments can take into account disadvantaged circumstances and their impact monitored.

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5.4(b) Practice 2

“Enhancing diversity at the State University of New York: the Buffalo State College Case”

Dr Hal D. Payne, Buffalo State College, USA

This session will provide an overview of Buffalo State College’s effort to focus on strengthening the academic profile of incoming students while maintaining the College’s forty year commitment to access. Participants will learn how the College has moved past the rhetoric of diversity and inclusion into established institutional policy, and have an understanding of specific programmes developed to meet the needs, aspirations and expectations of learners from diverse backgrounds. The presenter will share data intended to show that these programmes produce quality education with equality in learning outcomes, while leading participants through case-study examples that will demonstrate how to produce similar results at their respective institutions. They will also learn how to balance the tension of managing increased selectivity while keeping the “diversity” in access.

Papers 5.5(a) & (b)

These two papers are about the benefits of inter-cultural learning and global student diversity.

5.5(a) Practice 3

“The flowers of global citizenship amidst the thorns of restrictive regulations”

Dr J.O. Kroesen, Technical University Delft, the Netherlands

This paper believes that student diversity adds to the curriculum the quality of global citizenship, with examples from the faculty of Technology, Policy and Management in Delft. Its Engineering and Policy Analysis master program has students from all over the world cooperate in analyzing and solving a diversity of policy issues. The paper argues that this type of cooperation in student curricula promotes mutual learning and exchange of cultural values, policy perspectives, etc, framing a new form of global responsibility with the heritage of a plurality of cultures as its common stock. However, the presenter perceives that this type of students exchange is under threat as institutions wrestle with internal and external constraints. The presenter will cite examples and plea to overcome such restrictive policies in view of the greater benefits and even indispensability of diversity and intercultural exchange in higher education institutions.

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5.5(b) Practice 3

“Student diversity and cultural assimilation: a case study of the Croatian-USA student exchange project”

Dr Violeta Vadicek-Hains & Prof Blazenka Divjak, FOI, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Michael Aldarondo Jeffries, University of Central Florida, USA

Internationalization, global learning and global competences in higher education are keenly debated within the context of underrepresented groups of students. Study abroad programmes are becoming very important in preparing students to graduate with an intercultural awareness and global competencies. However there is a disparity between middle or upper class students and low-income students with regards to their participation in study abroad programmes. This paper is a case study of an exchange programme between the University of Zagreb, (Croatia) and the University of Central Florida (USA). The main goal is to acquire new intercultural competencies through international experience by students. The specific goal is to encourage student research in an international environment. The presentation will disseminate the project results.

Paper 5.6 Theory, Research & Practice 1, 2 & 3

“The role of YMCAs in closing the achievement gap within higher education attainment”

Rosalind Hamby & Marcia Weston, Y-USA

Jeanna Keller Berdel, Lumina Foundation for Education, USA

This is a very interesting workshop on the role YMCA in creating programmes to close the higher education achievement gap through several points of intentional interventions that include expanded engagement with the educational community, greater coordination of youth-serving organizations, conveying an understanding of the importance of higher education to the community's and nation's economic future, awareness of higher education policy, and use of research and outcome data. The Y-USA as the largest youth-serving organization in world has been engaged by the Lumina Foundation for Education, the largest national foundation in the United States that focuses on higher education, to help realise Lumina's "Goal 2025" that will increase the nation's level of college degree attainment to 60 per cent by 2025. Using the Dynamics of Civil Society diagram, delegates will work together and will understand the theory, effective practices and role that YMCAs can play in addressing the higher education achievement gap among underserved populations.

Papers 6.1(a) & b

These two papers are on curriculum design and inclusive approach to education and mutual transformation.

6.1(a) Research & Practice 1

“Considering diversity, change and intervention: how the HE curriculum looked in on itself”

Dr Kate Hatton, University of the Arts, London, UK

This paper demonstrates how interventions might work within existing curriculum to broaden learning processes and practices for all students within the parameters of HE, and how staff pedagogic research and reflection might assist in this process. It discusses examples of pedagogic research, and practical interventions within the HE art and design curriculum, aimed at widening access for Black and Minority Ethnic students. It considers two models of practice: one a curriculum based intervention, designed as a cross-college unit of study; the other, a staff pedagogic research project aimed at addressing the need to focus on at ‘grass roots’ level activity, in order that real change in diversifying the curriculum can place. These two models are from art and design backgrounds, but reflect issues in teaching and learning comparable with other HE discipline fields. The aim is to generate discussion over the implementation over new curriculum strategies and how to ‘lose the fear’ over making change.

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6.1(b) Research 2

“Students without boundaries – a good practice of an inclusive approach to education at VU University Amsterdam”

Gusta Tavecchio, Prof Jos Beishuizen & Dr Hester Radstake, VU University Amsterdam

This a pilot study of a VU-UCLA summer course aimed at academic integration, social integration and reflection on life stories of participants. The curriculum design of the course, constructed from a hermeneutic perspective, and various didactic methods were derived from a narrative approach including personal life stories to realize identification with oneself and the other. The pedagogy of excellence forms the starting point of this particular approach. This qualitative pilot study proved to be successful from the identity achievement perspective of reflection on mutual transformation and identification. The long term effects and effectiveness of this type of interventions are not immediately clear, and this will be accompanied by tensions affecting policy and action to widen access and participation in a country where diversity recently has suffered a negative connotation from the national right-wing government.

Papers 6.2(a) & (b)

These two papers provide examples of how non-traditional research students can be empowered and equipped to pursue academic careers and contribute to the intellectual and social culture of the university and the wider community.

6.2(a) Practice 2

“Widening access and success for higher degree by research students: a case study from Australia” Prof Ron Adams, Victoria University, Australia

Student diversity at Victoria University has been achieved and the challenge now is to devise successful methods for engaging with and ensuring successful outcomes for these ‘non-traditional’ – this time higher degree – students. The paper will outline institutional and programme initiatives to increase and support this new generation of postgraduate students. These range from the newly created Institute for Diversity, Educational Access and Success (IDEAS), designed to build a strong research community of practice and increase research capacity to improve education for people from diverse and under-represented backgrounds, to *Demystifying the Thesis*. Such initiatives challenge the myth of ‘diversity ≠ quality’, empowering students from low socio-economic status and under-represented backgrounds as independent researchers and motivating them to contribute to a vibrant intellectual and social culture within the university and the broader community.

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6.2(b) Practice 1 & 2

“Achieving post-baccalaureate diversity with success: the Ronald E. McNair program at the University of South Carolina”

Dr Paul L. Beasley & Dr Jerry Wallulis, University of South Carolina, USA

The extent of higher education’s impact and its importance to the democratic process substantiate the need for ethnic and socio-economic diversity within faculty ranks. However, economically poor and minority students seldom pursue academic careers. This paper describes the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program at the University of South Carolina which encourages ethnic minorities and students from poor and working-class families to pursue academic careers in college faculty. The presenter will describe the rationale and structure of the programme and share successful strategies that can be transferred to other countries.

Papers 6.3(a) & (b)

These two papers are about mature students/adult learners: that they are not a homogenous group and that their higher education experiences, especially those who have no prior experience of higher education, are distinct from others.

6.3(a) Research 1

“Mature students in the UK: early analysis of the relationship between learning and family”

Baljit Gill, Aston University, UK

This research paper focuses on the distinct experiences of those older learners and how they manage the tensions evident in their identities both within, and outside, university life. It will explore how mature student learning can impact upon, or be impacted by, the family structure and the subsequent management of the underlying tensions in this area by the student, their family and the institution. It is anticipated that this research will contribute to theory and increase understanding of the experiences faced by this group. This will enable the development of appropriate support, and influence both institutional and governmental policy.

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6.3(b) Practice 1

“The role and potential of access and civic engagement in diversifying higher education”

Dr Bairbre Fleming & Dr Rhonda Wynne, University College Dublin, Ireland

This paper explores the appropriateness in equity terms of a national policy of treating all mature students as one homogenous target group, notwithstanding their social background and resources, as this policy driver creates internal and external tensions that frustrate attempts by some mature students to access and progress through Irish higher education. This paper will outline some of the alternative strategies of the University College Dublin (UCD) Adult Education Centre and suggest some alternative policies and approaches that aim to challenge the dominant discourse and practice.

Papers 6.4(a) & (b)

This session deals with the impact of the financial crisis on diversity in higher education.

6.4(a) Policy & Practice 1

“Conflicting realities – systems, struggles and students”

Ann O’Brien, NUI Maynooth & Brian Power, Department of Education and Skills, Ireland

In Ireland there is a recognised interdependence between the social and economic objectives of promoting student diversity which, to date, has facilitated a greater convergence policy objectives across institutions and government. This paper will examine the different tensions arising between government, sectoral and institutional interests in the current economic and fiscal climate. It will identify a number of collaborative actions over recent years and examine how the tensions of developing a transparent and fit-for-purpose system, of meeting the needs and priorities of many stakeholders and of establishing effective governance structures were managed and implemented from each perspective.

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6.4(b) Policy 4

“Fiscal austerity and educational opportunity: the experience of the United States since 1980”

Tom Mortenson, The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in HE, USA

This paper covers both the ‘Progressive’ and ‘Regressive’ policy eras in the United States and the legacy of policy shift in funding higher education since the 1980s. As a result, most leading colleges and universities have abandoned social interest in favour of institutional interests geared to maximize revenue and prestige. The consequences of regressive social policy are predictable, measureable and consequential, and will be presented in this session. The presenter cautions what not to do when countries facing fiscal austerity constraints that wish to preserve or expand initiatives to broaden educational opportunity.

Papers 6.5(a) & (b)

This session explores the critical success factors for diversity and excellence and how institutions can use research to inform diversity and educational policy in a coherent way to widen access.

6.5(a) Policy & Practice 1&2

“Exceed expectations: from access to excellence at Rotterdam University”

Johan A. Sevenhuijsen, Rotterdam University of Applied Science, the Netherlands

This paper will provide participants with inspiration for an educational framework in which widening access, enhanced study success and opportunities for developing excellence are linked. Rotterdam University’s motto: “Exceed expectations” is translated into a coherent policy and practice in curriculum design and student coaching. The presenter will outline the University policy and cite examples of practice to fulfil its ‘diversity with excellence’ ambition. Discussion will then focus on the factors underlying the successful implementation of this policy, among which dedicated leadership and staff, long term planning, coherent policy and decision making across the board (education, research, staffing etc.) and a strong bond between university and environment.

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6.5(b) Research 1

“Ethnic minority students at Ghent University: survival of the fittest?”

Katrien De Bruyn, University of Ghent, Belgium

Over the past decades the number of first-year students at Ghent University has increased steadily, while student diversity has remained limited. Ethnic minority students are underrepresented and their chances of attaining academic success are significantly lower than those of the average student. This results in a policy predicament. Indeed, how can Ghent University control the influx of students without discouraging ethnic minority students or putting them at a disadvantage? This paper presents the results of a 2010 qualitative study concerning minority students' experiences within an academic learning environment. By formulating research-based policy suggestions, this study has contributed to the debate on educational quality at Ghent University. Furthermore, it relates how research can be used to influence diversity policy and offer opportunities to change institutional educational culture.

Papers 6.6(a) & (b)

These two papers deal with the tensions and relationships between family and study faced by non-traditional students, students with children, and institutional response and programme to resolve these issues.

6.6(a) Research 1

“Study success: a family affair?”

Marieke Meeuwisse & Sara Rezai, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, the Netherlands

In this paper the presenters will disseminate the results of two studies on family support and study success among non-Western ethnic minority students and ethnic majority students. Are there any differences between traditional and non-traditional students (for example ethnic majority versus ethnic minority students) in the relationship between family support and study success? What makes students with modest or even a lack of family support still successful? Are there differences in parental support, how parental support influences study choice and study success, and how students who lack parental support compensate for this? Using a quantitative study of 342 non-Western ethnic minority students and 1,314 ethnic majority students, and a qualitative study of 28 students of different ethnic background and parental education, the combined findings of the two studies shed more light on the question to what extent study success is a family affair

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6.6(b) Practice 1 & 3

“The Life Impact Program: building college success among at-risk students”

Jane Hojan-Clark & Natalie Reinbold, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

Students with children, a growing population across many campuses in the US, are often low-income, first generation, minority students. While this group of students struggles with complicated barriers that impact not just them, but also their children, many universities provide limited resources for this group and fail to integrate these students into campus life. The Life Impact Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is designed to break the cycle of poverty among low-income UWM students with children. The Program also hopes to influence policy makers to improve the overall academic, economic and social success of low-income students with children. The presenters will explain the Program's multi-faceted approach, share extensive data collected by an evaluation team, and participants will learn about components, techniques and strategies that they can use to build their own programme or expand services for at-risk college-goers at their own institutions.