



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES WORK:

A comparison of perspectives from Canada, the
United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand

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THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

- How are student affairs and services (SAS) practiced around the world?
- International grassroots conversation and focus on sharing and learning in community led to **10 Questions blog project**



IASAS

International Association of
Student Affairs and Services

METHODOLOGY

- We examined individual practitioners' perspectives of engaging in student affairs and services work
- Qualitative methodology w/ non-probabilistic sample responding to open-ended & demographic questions

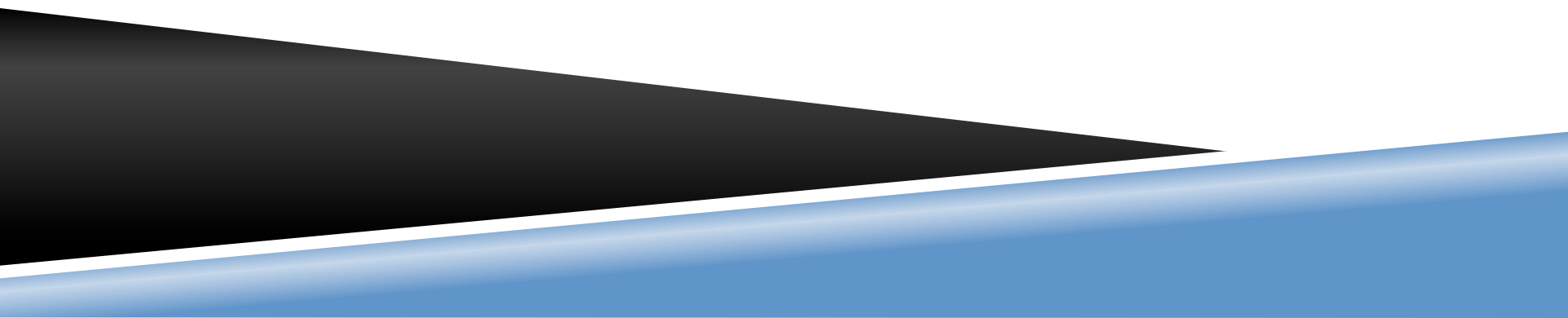


RESEARCH QUESTIONS & RESPONDENTS

- What were the issues and challenges faced by student affairs and services staff members?
- Among the issues and challenges identified, what were the similarities and differences between the countries' contexts?

Country	Number of Participants
Australia	61
New Zealand	13
Canada	289
United Kingdom	45

OVERLAPPING THEMES

- ▶ Doing more with less
 - ▶ Raising awareness and valuing the work
 - ▶ Bridging the divide
 - ▶ Connecting with a more diverse student body
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Doing more with less

- Cited by 35% of UK respondents, 30% Canadians, 25% Australians & New Zealanders

'The lack of appropriate resources to deliver high-quality services' – UK Director

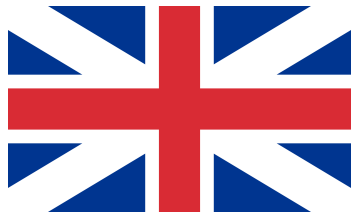
'Competition for resources' has seemed to be the natural result of *'increasingly limited resources.'* – Dean of Students from Canada

Fewer resources → Claims on time → Lower morale

Raising awareness and valuing the work



Lack of faculty awareness –
'faculty snobbery'




Value of work is not recognised.
Student services seen as a 'cost'



Students have low levels of uptake
and engage in a 'just in time' basis

Bridging the divide

- Ill-informed public policy and unintended consequences
 - Organizational silos perpetuate ‘the academic/support divide’
 - Lack of clarity and redundancy of roles – students are shuffled between offices
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Connecting with a more diverse student body


▶ Increased access

'As access to universities is widened there are increasing numbers of students with limited intellectual capacity and or severe mental illnesses that are admitted who then suffer the humiliation of failure. Assisting these people so as to maintain their dignity and gain something from the uni experience can be challenging.'

– Counsellor from Australia

▶ User-pay system; students as consumers → entitlement?

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Identify synergy and share resources resource around staff training, development, and leadership activities.
 - ▶ Learn how others support a diverse student body
 - ▶ Leverage marketing efforts and value and impact statements s to academic staff and policy makers
 - ▶ Exposure to divergent interpretations of the same theme, allows leaders to challenge core assumptions that frame and inform decisions
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www.iasasonline.org/research



Student Affairs & Services in Global Perspective?
A Preliminary Exploration of Practitioners' Background, Roles and Professional Development

by Tricia Seifert, Brett Perozzi, Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif, Wincy Li, & Katherine Wildman

January 2014