



UNIVERSITY OF TM
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
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Solid Academic Administration over Decades of Change

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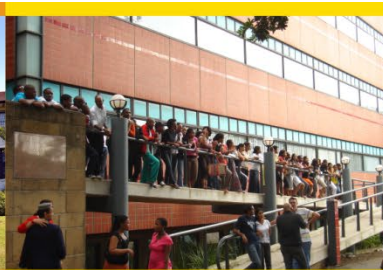
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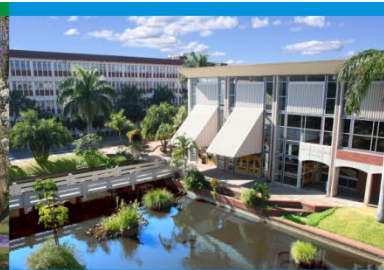
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Framework for this Presentation:

- Why?
- History of Universities
- History of Academic Administration
- Staffing in Academic Administration
- What does Academic Administration entails
- Skills of an Academic Administrator
- Sharing Anecdotal views, based on experience

History of Universities:

- In the early days of human development Universities were embedded in the community, serving the community and resolving challenges within the community.
- Universities evolved gradually over centuries, starting with individuals or small groups of scholars who were interested in subjects beyond daily work - gathering around a 'scholar' or 'wise person'. (Apprentice)
- In 4th century BC, Centers of higher learning existed alongside human civilization:
 - Takshashila University in ancient India
 - Platonic Academy in Greece

Origin of Universities:

Scholars gathered to both teach and do research:

- Gathering of scholars around wise men
 - eventually developing into structured institution with a corporate structure
- From Informal Gatherings to Formal Education
- Evolution of Structure and Purpose
- Over time, these gatherings moved from homes to temples, libraries, civic buildings, campuses
 - developing regular schedules and methods for selecting students
 - origin of academic administration.

Origin of Universities:

Scholars gathered to both teach and do research:

- Gathering of scholars around wise men
- First Universities:

Al-Karaouine University in Fez, Morocco (859)

Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt (970)

University of Bologna, Italy (1088)

University of Oxford, England (1096)

University of Salamanca, Spain (1134)

University of Paris (1150)

University of Cambridge, England (1209)

University of Padua, Italy (1222)

University of Naples, Italy (1224)

University of Toulouse, France (1229)

South African Universities:

1. University of Cape Town (1829)
2. Rhodes University (1904)
3. University of the Free State, Bloemfontein (1904)
4. University of Pretoria (1908)
5. University of Natal (1910)
6. University of Fort Hare, Alice (1916)
7. Universiteit Stellenbosch (1918)
8. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (1922)
9. Potchefstroom University for CHE (1919)
10. Other followed from 1959

Origin of Universities:

- Early Foundations – Expert and Apprentice
- The Rise of Structured Institutions
- The concept of Universities - emerged in Europe
 - University of Bologna (1088)
 - University of Paris (1150)
 - University of Oxford (1167)
- Royalty and religious leaders played a significant role in supporting and promoting the early institutions of higher learning
- Often seeking to train their children or pursue higher truths/education themselves.

Academic Administration:

- **Strategic Planning:**
 - Developing and implementing long-term plans for the institution's academic programs.
- **Resource Allocation:**
 - Managing budgets and resources to support academic activities.
- **Curriculum Development:**
 - Overseeing the design and implementation of academic programs and courses.
- **Faculty Development:**
 - Supporting the professional growth and development of faculty members.

Academic Administration:

- Student Affairs:
 - Managing student records, advising, and other student-related services.
- Accreditation:
 - Ensuring that the institution meets accreditation standards.
- Governance:
 - Participating in the governance and decision-making processes of the institution.

Key Role-Players in Academic Administration:

- **DVCs/Provosts:**
 - Serve as the chief academic officer, responsible for overall academic policy and operations.
- **Deans:**
 - Oversee academic departments or schools.
- **Directors:**
 - Manage specific academic programs or units.
- **Managers:**
 - Oversee specific academic activities or projects.
- **Administrators:**
 - Dealing with academic processes and student records.

Skills for Academic Administration:

- **Critical Analysis and Problem-Solving:**
 - Analyzing complex issues and developing effective solutions.
- **Communication:**
 - Effectively communicating with faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders.
- **Project Management:**
 - Planning, organizing, and executing projects effectively.
- **Leadership and Management:**
 - Motivating and leading teams to achieve goals.
- **Analytical Thinking:**
 - Using data and information to make informed decisions
- **Time management:**
 - Multitasking and managing time effectively is crucial when handling diverse and complex administrative tasks efficiently.

Key Administrative Responsibilities:

- Selections and Admissions
- Supervision of academic affairs - hiring, promotion, tenure, evaluation (with faculty input where appropriate)
- Maintenance of official records (typically supervised by a Registrar) (Selection to Graduation)
- Maintenance and audit of financial flows and records
- Maintenance and construction of campus buildings and grounds (the physical plant)
- Safety and security of people and property on the campus (often organized as an office of public safety or campus police)

Key Administrative Responsibilities:

- Supervision and support of campus computers and network (information technology)
- Fundraising from private individuals and foundations ("development" or "advancement")
- Research administration (including grants and contract administration, and institutional compliance with federal and state regulations)
- Public affairs (including relations with the media, the community, and local, state, and federal governments)
- Student services such as disability services, career counselling and library staff

Academic Administration Communication:

- Like other professional areas, academic administration follows a specialized and often highly abstract terminology. This terminology often depends on that used in Strategic Planning and Business Management
- Digital era brings a communication overload and intense stresses of the job are threatening administrators mental or physical health.
- Administrators are operating in an era of multiple continuing crises, unreliable supply chains, a changing world order, etc.
- Challenges on what is the best way to distribute information, especially in a governance culture, so people can be aware of it and act upon it without being overwhelmed?

Full Time Academic Administrators:

- Academic Administration took shape in the early Universities and administration functions were fulfilled by academic staff.
- Later on as student numbers grow staff were appointed to deal with academic functions and administrative functions – secretaries.
- Various Universities follows different models and structure and whilst full time Academic administrators may have been appointed in some for many years in some universities full time Academic Administrators only emerged from the mid-1970 to 1980s.

Qualities of Excellent Academic Administrators:

- Academics make excellent administrators:
 - They understand the intricacies of an academic environment, their experience in curriculum development, faculty management and student affairs equip them with the skills they need to navigate the complexities of academic administration.
- Academic administrators often showcase a strong commitment to the larger mission of education which is key to steering universities towards success.
- Academic Administration requires adaptability, an understanding of organisational dynamics and the ability to build collaborative relationships and offers academics a more comprehensive view of the institution's financial and operational aspects.

Differences between Academics and Academic Administrators:

- Academia focuses on specialised research and teaching within specific fields, influencing policy and creating impact beyond the classroom or research lab - *Administration oversees broader institutional objectives, requiring collaborative leadership and strategic planning skills across departments and general resource allocation.*
- Academia values publications and student outcomes - *Administration emphasises institutional growth and programme efficacy.*
- Academia often offers more structural flexibility - *Administration operates within hierarchical frameworks, focusing on operational and policy innovations for institutional progress.*

My Student Experience with Academic Administration:

- UG BSc student who needed one Chemistry II module to graduate
 - I've learned that proper engaging and sharing your predicament in a mature and respectful manner can open doors.
 - A clear understanding and commitments from my side ended in a success story.
- Lesson learned:
 - From my side: There is always a solution to challenges, maybe not always what you want, but at least accommodating.
 - My perception of AA: Wow they are also people with a heart and also want students to succeed if it is at all possible.
 - Started a sense for efficient administration.

My Student Experience with Academic Administration:

- Masters student who challenges the set norm:
 - Wanted to submit dissertation as publications at a time when the universities administration was not geared to accept the format.
 - I was forced to go the traditional way and eventually felt I learned a lot more because of the then limitation.
 - With careful planning and hard work I published all the proposed manuscripts within one year after completing the MSc.
- PhD student who wanted the traditional norm:
 - PhD through publication was now the new norm.
 - I didn't want to go that way because of time limitations.
 - Obtained PhD and continue to publish.
- Lesson learned:
 - There is scope to accommodate student needs within academic rules.
 - Academic Administrators are very accommodating and want the best solution for the student and the institution.

My Experience with Academic Administration:

- Know the University Rules:
 - Make sure you know the Handbook and other regulations for the programmes or modules
- Act with Honesty and Integrity:
 - Don't ever consider bribes and benefits offered
- Know the level of Delegation and Authority
 - To streamline the process
- Always respect your Client:
 - When a student request something, always listen carefully and advise according to the rules and regulations – do not ever talk down to the student, make rude comments or make them feel uncomfortable or out of line

My Experience with Academic Administration:

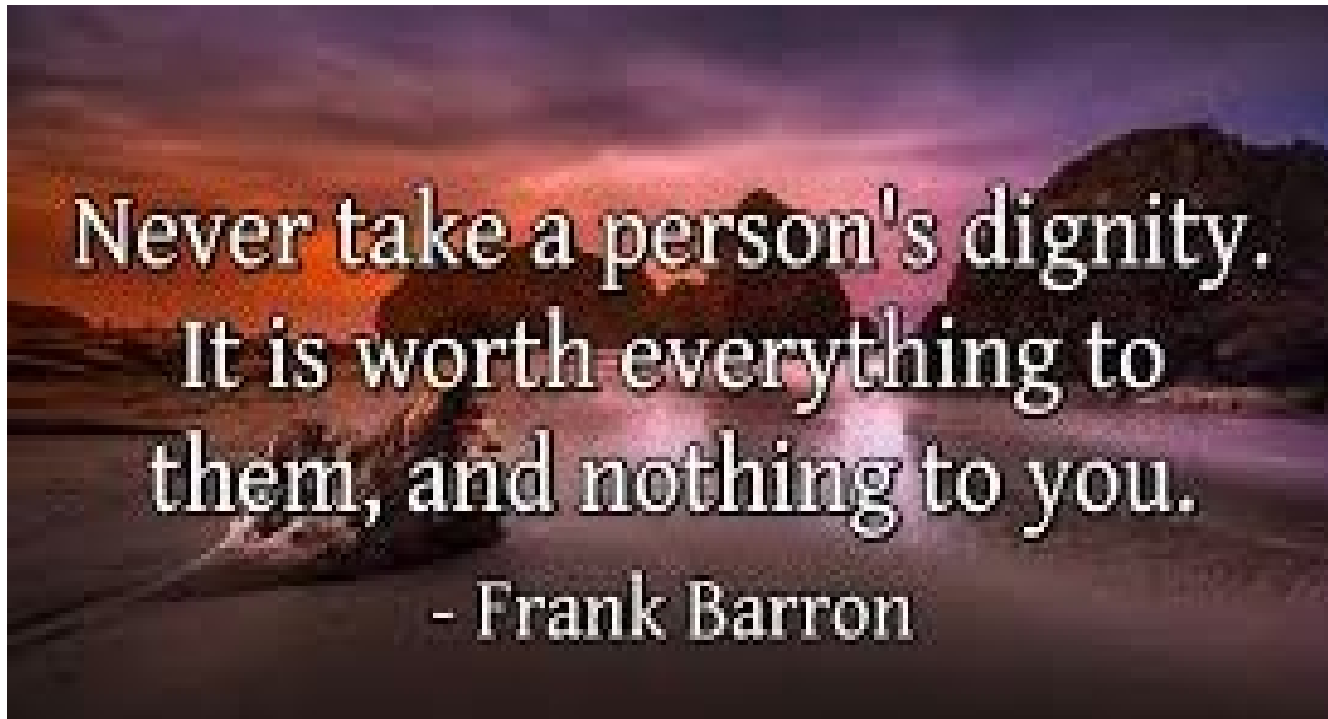
- Take time to listen and understand the request:
 - Remember the student may have a challenge and ask for help to resolve or address it. It is our duty to help within the academic rules and regulations.
- You are the face of the Institution:
 - Be professional, friendly and polite but also firm and decisive.
- Keep Record of all Actions:
 - Meticulous record keeping is of utmost importance as student records can become important legal and life changing documents.

My Experience with Academic Administration:

- Work according to a set procedure:
 - Always have an agreed process plan and ensure you follow it. Small deviations are the breeding place for larger challenges. Also, within the administration team it is much easier for someone else to deal with a challenge if they know the procedures were followed.
- Draft SLAs and SOPs:
 - SLAs and SOPs ensure everyone follows the same process in much more detail as it does not allow for deviations from normal agreed processes.

Advice for successful Academic Administration:

- Be the face of the Institution:
 - Friendly, neat, listener, accommodating, advising with the client in mind – never take their dignity away.



Advise for successful Academic Administration:

- Create a professional thriving workplace:
 - Each and every worker has a role in this.



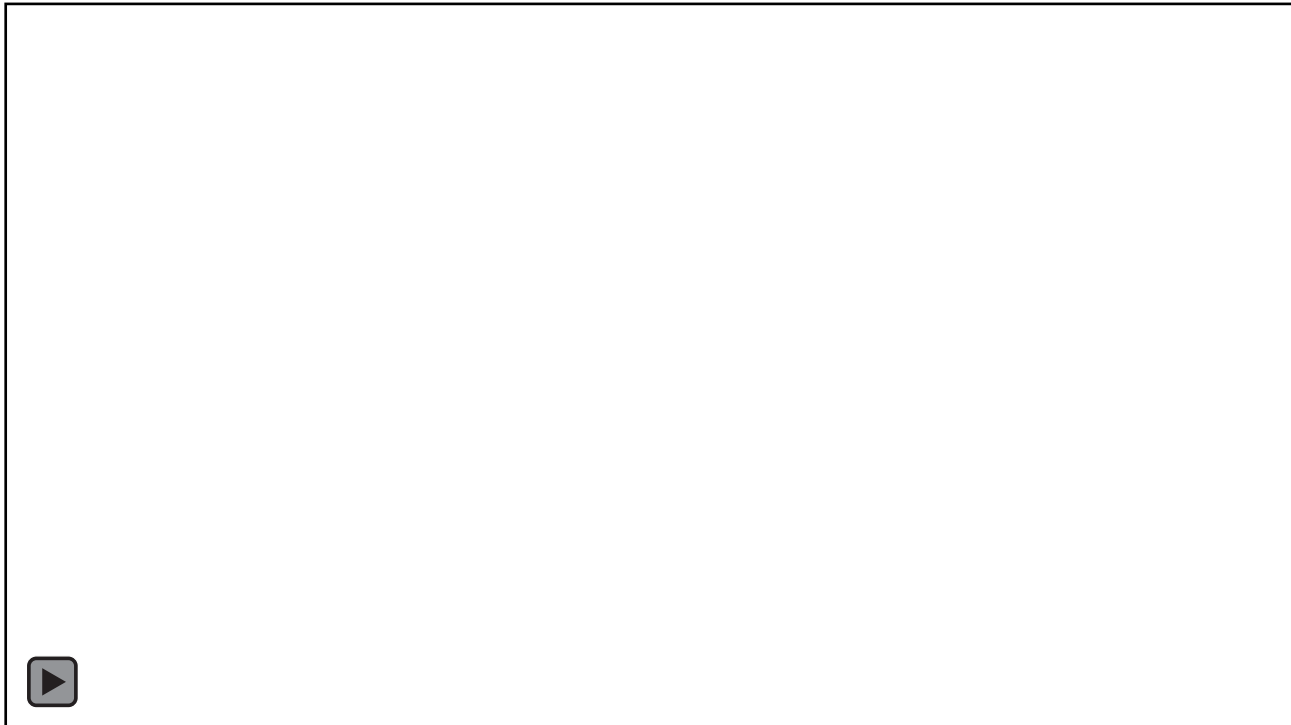
Advise for successful Academic Administration:

- Learn as much as possible about AI:
 - AI is here to stay and will change the way we work, but if you are always one step or a few steps ahead, you do not need to fear the so-called disruptive innovation.



Advice for successful Academic Administration:

- Be cautious for habits:
 - Sometimes it can cripple you for no reason



Advise for successful Academic Administration:

Enjoy your career:

- Be happy in what you do.

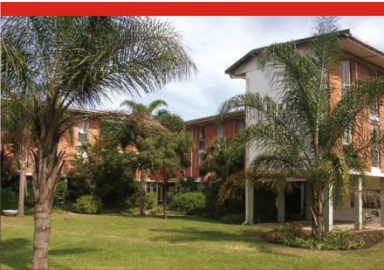




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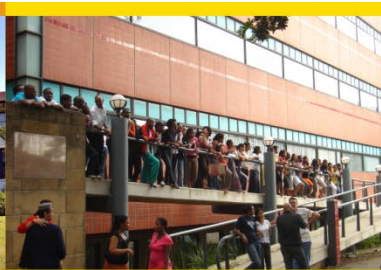
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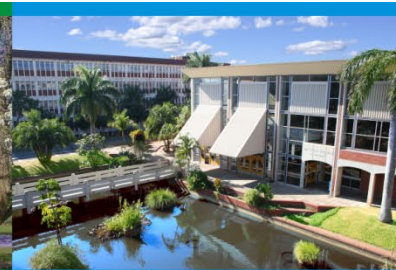
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