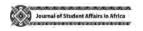Book review

Roberts, Dennis C. & Komives, Susan R. (Eds.) (2016). *Enhancing Student Learning and Development in Cross-Border Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Reviewed by Munita Dunn-Coetzee★

Enhancing Student Learning and Development in Cross-Border Higher Education, edited by Dennis C. Roberts and Susan R. Komives, is a book that resulted from a short-term study–abroad experience between the Universities of Maryland and San Diego with the Qatar Foundation's Education City in Doha in 2010. This partnership challenged the way in which higher education internalisation was viewed – in such a way that the visit was replicated in 2012 and this book was authored. The book aims to address the opportunities and challenges in developing programmes and strategies for student learning and development that are culturally appropriate – specifically from a student affairs, student development and student services perspective. However, although the majority of the book focuses on western higher education, the book aims to highlight the merit of learning from other international constituencies to enhance the student experience. In essence, how can we benefit our own practices by learning from others within the global realm?

The book's chapters are organised into three sections. Part One, consisting of two chapters, elaborates on the consideration of cross-border applications. Chapter One provides an overview of the expansion and internationalisation of higher education, as well as providing strategies and frameworks for optimising the student experience and student success. The chapter highlights that institutions make four choices when applying best practices across borders and contexts – relating to transferring of best practices, programme adaption, the hedging of an initiative and the possible avoidance of the partnership. The importance of the integration of students' experience in both the classroom and beyond is emphasised and key principles for internationalising student affairs and student services conclude the chapter. Chapter Two builds on Chapter One by exploring the underlying motivations that institutions use in their specific international context by applying a lens of five diffusion models – learning, imitation, competition, normative and coercion. This chapter aims to guide understanding of the rationale institutions and practitioners use to decide on practices for internationalisation. The chapter emphasises that although shared practices can be motivated, the diversity in terms of offerings – on institutional and cultural levels – must be carefully considered to ensure the best choices are made.

*   Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee is the Director of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, Division of Student Affairs, at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Email: mdunn@sun.ac.za

Part Two, consisting of four chapters, portrays a more practical approach to internationalisation – providing examples from South Africa, China, the United Kingdom and Mexico. Chapter Three shares a perspective on first-year adjustment within the South African region. A model, known as the First-Year-Village, has been piloted and the aim of the model is to provide support to first-years in a communal environment – this might be understood as the South African example of establishing living communities. The context of student support as well as the fact that the goal of all student support is student success, form the two basic principles of the chapter. Chapter Four explains how one private university in China promoted resilience for students coming from single-child families. A series of workshops were embedded in the orientation calendar focusing on independent self-management. In order to integrate curricular and co-curricular learning, the university also adopted a curricular approach to 'Whole Person Education', experiential learning by nature. More studies on the outcome of the success of these interventions are recommended.

Chapter Five brings a perspective from the United Kingdom to the fore – exploring what is necessary to foster retention and success for students who were at great risk, specifically in this context, care leavers – youth receiving care outside or beyond the family. Since 2007, the University of Sheffield set out its intentions to support looked-after children and care leavers within the higher education realm. This programme has since expanded vastly and further initiatives to create a holistic support system for these students' journey have been developed. Chapter Six, the last chapter in this section, elaborates on the challenging situations Mexico faces and how opportunities for change are provided for students by leadership and citizenship education to strengthen democracy. A leadership development model focusing on four pillars is explained by the Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM). This holistic model is yielding successful results. This section helps the reader to reflect on how internationalisation can be practically positioned within institutions.

The last section of the book – Part Three – consists of five chapters and discusses foundations and strategies that are broadly applicable across all educational, cultural and national contexts. Chapter Seven provides a social justice perspective on research and student development theories – emphasising that development and learning are complex processes across a holistic spectrum. The important message of the integration between learning and development within context is elaborated upon in the chapter and raises awareness about a variety of factors that advance student learning and development in ways that promote social justice. Students interacting in their environments, with the influence of culture in student learning and development, is discussed in Chapter Eight. Bronfenbrenner's Social-Ecological Model is used as contextual framework within the chapter and a practical example of an educational system in Singapore illustrates this ecological systems view – providing the opportunity to pose questions regarding curricular and co-curricular design.

Chapter Nine aims to highlight international best practices and resources used in adopting assessment, evaluation and educational research. The history of the assessment movement, specifically in the United States and other countries, indicates that higher

education institutions still tend to be more reactive – rather than pro-active – regarding assessment and evaluation practices. This chapter challenges practitioners to take initiative and to advance these practices in a pro-active manner. Chapter Ten explains the findings of a study on the engagement of educators in student affairs on an international level – looking at the state of student affairs and services in terms of educational pathways and professional development. It is emphasised that the building of capacity needs to be prioritised – identifying what internationalisation means for the specific institution, what it consists of as well as appropriate training for staff, specifically looking at attaining cultural competence. The last chapter of this section, Chapter Eleven, aims to summarise the journey in terms of internationalisation embarked on in this book by exploring the value of partnerships in international higher education. It is advocated that authentic partnerships ensuring mutual benefit will enhance the impact and effectiveness of these endeavors. The readers are encouraged to start the conversation at their own institutions.

Enhancing Student Learning and Development in Cross-Border Higher Education elaborates on a very important discourse regarding internationalisation within higher education, particularly for academic and Student Affairs staff, as well as staff working with internationalisation at institutions. Overall, this is a very interesting book that not only significantly contributes to the dialogue on internationalisation in higher education, but also aims to turn questions into action.