

## BOOK REVIEW

### **‘Towards professionalization of student affairs across the globe’ special issue edited by L. Bardill Moscaritolo & B. Schreiber (2023). *New Directions for Student Services*.**

Reviewed by Jia Zheng<sup>1</sup>

The COVID-19 global pandemic and exacerbated social inequities across the globe have called upon many Student Affairs and Services (SAS) practitioners and professionals to rethink the purpose and goals of SAS. Positioned in what Perozzi and Shea (2023), as well as Schreiber and colleagues (2023), named a ‘third space,’ SAS – as an inter-, trans- and multi-disciplinary field – is developing as a global profession that integrates cultural relevance and global competence across the globe. The special issue, ‘Towards professionalization of student affairs across the globe,’ published in the *New Directions for Student Services*, Volume 2023, Issue 183, did an extraordinary job in introducing how SAS is professionalized in different regions and how to move forward in advancing the professionalization of SAS across the globe. Particularly, this special issue serves as an impetus for dialogues and conversations around professionalizing SAS among key stakeholders in global higher education, including staff, practitioners, professionals, faculty, student leaders, and policymakers.

The special issue comprises three parts. Part one provided an overview of the professionalization of SAS across the globe, relevant SAS competencies and standards, and key trends in higher education that shape the function and delivery of SAS. Part two is a monograph that highlighted perspectives from various regions across the globe and illuminated the role of professional associations and organizations in supporting professional development and capacity building in their regions, as well as underscored the critical role that the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) has been playing in facilitating the professionalization of SAS globally. Part three concluded the special issue by highlighting how the Global South significantly shaped SAS as a profession and directions for the future in advancing the professionalization of SAS nationally, regionally, and globally.

As a former student affairs practitioner working in a joint-venture institution in China and a faculty member mentoring the next generation of SAS practitioners in the United States, I found this special issue particularly helpful and timely! There are many things that I appreciate about this special issue. I appreciate the plethora of perspectives from different regions, including those from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, North America, and the Caribbean, Oceania, and South America, and the diverse representation of national, regional, and international associations and organizations in these regions as

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well as their role in shaping and advancing the profession within their own regions and across regions. These global perspectives are not only contextualised within different higher education systems in various regions, but also have global implications for SAS and students' access to services across the globe. The monograph also reflects a diverse range of models and frameworks that can be applied in different regions and can be transferrable/translatable to other regions based on different contexts and higher education systems. A shared theme that I found from reading all the monographs is the concerted commitment to supporting students and their development and those who support students as SAS professionals.

Additionally, this special issue has extended the knowledge on the professionalization of SAS globally as well as contributed to the overall conversations on pushing for socially just agendas through the practice of SAS across the globe. The diversity of global SAS perspectives, voices, and ways of knowing centred in this special issue disrupts the traditionally privileged way of understanding SAS praxis that is rooted in Western ideology and North American values and thinking. To professionalize SAS that is rooted in non-Western and non-North American values and knowledge bases, this special issue is a pertinent example of creating and highlighting knowledge from various global perspectives that disrupts this dominant narrative in the field.

Among all the articles, my favourite is Schreiber et al.'s (2023) piece on 'Looking back and looking forward'. The two key questions posed by Schreiber et al., including "For what purpose?" and "To whose benefit?" are critical questions that key stakeholders in higher education should ask when they consider the professionalization of SAS in a local and global context. The question "To whose benefit?" especially strikes the chord of power imbalances and cultural differences between the Global North and Global South and it is particularly important to consider when we work towards the overarching goal of SAS – advancing social justice for all. I also really appreciate Schreiber and colleagues' (2023) argument on the importance of context, care, inclusivity, respect, mutuality, reciprocity, and impact on local students and communities in the Global South as SAS professionals consider importing knowledge from the Global North to the Global South within the context of professionalizing SAS.

Given the richness of the models and frameworks, representation of associations and organizations, as well as the multitude of authors and perspectives from diverse regions and contexts, this special issue is a must-read for any administrators, staff, faculty, and student leaders whose work includes supporting student learning and development in higher education institutions, as well as policymakers whose work directly influences the function and services of SAS in higher education institutions across the globe. This special issue is not only a valuable resource for those who work in SAS in their own regions, but also for those who work in international sectors especially, given the internationalization of post-secondary education over the past decades. Given the nuanced voices and perspectives from authors from the Global South, this special issue is also a great teaching and learning material in SAS undergraduate and graduate programmes, and a great material to be utilised for professional development and capacity development in different regions across the globe.

## References

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