



PRESS RELEASE

PANGeA's new initiative to bolster research capacity in academia

PANGeA-Ed to further strengthen PANGeA's track record of improving academic research capacity in the arts, humanities and social sciences on the African continent

The Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA), a network consisting of eight leading African universities focused on strengthening and advancing doctoral training and scholarship in the arts, humanities and social sciences on the continent, has launched a new training and skills development programme, PANGeA-Ed.

Unlike any other training programme on the continent, PANGeA-Ed will offer high-quality short courses and workshops in research and skills development across the eight partner campuses and at no cost to participants. The announcement was made at the launch held at Makerere University in Uganda on Tuesday, 27 September.

PANGeA was founded in 2010 by the University of Botswana, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Malawi, the University of Nairobi in Kenya and Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Four years later, the University of Ghana and the University of Yaoundé I in Cameroon joined the consortium. The network aims to strengthen the development of higher education in Africa by creating opportunities for collaborative research and exchange among partner institutions, full-time doctoral study and, in the longer term, the establishment of joint doctoral degree programmes specifically in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

Doctoral education and training are critical in a world where knowledge has become a significant commodity. Studies show that PhD holders who have accumulated substantial human capital, not only through education but through the acquisition of transferable skills, are key for the renewal of ageing professoriates, staffing the rapidly expanding higher education arena in Africa, boosting research and generating knowledge-based economic growth.

For the last seven years, various students from across Africa as well as academics based at PANGeA partner universities have been able to pursue full-time doctoral degrees via the PANGeA doctoral scholarship programme housed at the Graduate School of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at SU.

Since the doctoral scholarship programme commenced in 2010, a total of 66 candidates have been nominated by PANGeA partners and enrolled for a PhD at SU. To date, 36 have completed their studies and resumed their academic positions at their home university, 81% of whom graduated in three years or less.

While this is a big feat, the chairman of PANGeA, Prof Edward Kirumira of Makerere University, says a decision was made to investigate other avenues of generating more



human capital and improving the skills and career-readiness of university staff members who fall within the network.

“At the PANGeA Board meeting in June 2015, the secretariat proposed the establishment of a new initiative that would serve as a complimentary programme to the successful doctoral scholarship programme. After a lengthy discussion, the PANGeA Board unanimously adopted the proposed plans to establish a training and skills development programme, which would address the shortage of skills and training within these research and academic environments by focusing on the development of research capacity at each of the PANGeA partner campuses. At the same time, it would also broaden access to the network. Training will be conducted at partner institutions and be based on institutions’ needs,” he says.

The programme will consist of short courses and workshops spanning three days and focus on various soft skills development such as academic writing, guidelines for funding and/or research proposals, and integrity and ethics in research to more specialised research training, including quantitative and qualitative data analysis; (critical) discourse analysis; mixed methods research; social surveys; and ethnographic research, to name a few.

Through financial support from the Robert Bosch and Gerda Henkel foundations, a total of 50 short courses and workshops will be offered through PANGeA-Ed over the next five years.

“The PANGeA network has recognized the need not only to generate doctoral graduates but to address the shortage of skills and make a meaningful investment in human capital within this intellectually diverse network as well. This programme is another means to build and retain African talent and human capital,” says Kirumira.

ISSUED BY:

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