

## Media Monitoring: Extract of Press News on Higher Education in Africa

### 1. University World News

#### Microcredentials: A new category of education is rising (Global)

At the core of the traditional higher education system is a degree. However, over the past decade, enrolment in four-year degree programmes has steadily declined in the United States and, more recently, this trend has spilled over into emerging markets. Administrators, policymakers and employers began to question if there was a better way to fulfil student and labour market needs. Meanwhile, a new category of structured education was on the rise, offering smaller learning units with the potential of achieving a faster return on investment. As the pandemic took hold, interest in new learning models and digital offerings boomed. A globally accepted definition doesn't exist yet for these smaller learning units but microcredentials – also often referred to as alternative or non-degree credentials – are emerging as a term to describe education that falls between courses and degrees. Microcredentials include certificates, digital badges, licences and apprenticeships, the latter equating to full qualifications in Europe. There are several primary drivers of non-degree credentials. First, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), the gap is widening between the type of education offered in traditional higher education institutions and the skills needed to work in today's digital world. Second, the lack of equal access to education has highlighted a need for solutions that provide the skills that lead to work, particularly for marginalised populations. Read more [here](#).

### 2. Strait Times

#### Competition challenges tertiary students to tackle problems in retail industry (Global)

SINGAPORE - A subscription service for emergency firefighting supplies, a mobile app for gig workers and a reusable grocery delivery crate were the top three projects in a competition to solve issues faced by the local retail industry. The SRA Retail Reimagined Innovation Challenge 2022 was organised by the Singapore Retailers Association (SRA). The winning groups - Team Commerseurs, Team X-3 and Team Biodynamic - were picked from 42 teams comprising 163 members from 11 institutes of higher learning in the preliminary round, which took place in June. They presented their projects in the final round on Tuesday (July 12) to a judging panel comprising representatives from SRA, Enterprise Singapore and retail companies. For the competition, SRA worked with 10 partners from the retail industry to develop challenge statements, including how retailers can leverage e-commerce and digitalisation, and how they can adapt to changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. The partners included supermarket chain FairPrice, emergency products store EmergencyBiz and perfume store Scent by Six. Each team had to submit a solution for one of the 10 prescribed challenges. The finalists were judged according to four criteria: effectiveness, feasibility, viability and the quality of their presentation. Read more [here](#).

### 3. UP

#### Training the next generation of farmers: How UP's Faculty of Veterinary Science is helping small-scale farmers and boosting food security (South Africa)

South Africa has a dual agricultural economy, with an established commercial farming industry and an emerging small-scale farmer sector. Most small-scale farmers are based on communal lands under tribal authority, or the former homeland areas. As owners of a significant number of livestock including cattle, sheep and goats, they play an important role in contributing to food security, employment, and poverty alleviation. However, lack of knowledge on best farming practices is often a hindrance to successful and

profitable livestock production in the small-scale farming community, with herd diseases and animal mortalities often leading to losses and posing a serious risk to rural livelihoods. The Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria (UP) has a long history of providing support to farmers close to its Onderstepoort campus. About 30 years ago, a mobile outreach clinic was set up as an extension of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital to offer basic clinical services to resource-poor individuals in the Hammanskraal and Ratjiepene areas. This was followed by the establishment of the Afrivet Chair in Primary Animal Health Care (PAHC) in 2011, which provides support and training to livestock farmers within an approximately 80km radius of Onderstepoort. Students in their clinical years of study are taught the methodology of PAHC and strategies to formulate and apply an extension strategy for a given community. They then engage in knowledge transfer to farmers during scheduled, supervised visits, with farmers being trained on aspects such as methods for early identification of diseases, record-keeping, optimisation of communal production systems, and prevention of diseases. Read more [here](#).

#### **4. Monitor**

##### **Speaker asks universities to prioritise practical courses (Uganda)**

Ms Among blamed the high unemployment rate in the country on the current education system that emphasises theory, instead of practicals, noting that many graduates lack employable practical skills. The Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among, has urged institutions of higher learning to integrate more practical courses that will equip learners with vocational skills, which will make them self-reliant and proactive. Ms Among blamed the high unemployment rate in the country on the current education system that emphasises theory, instead of practicals, noting that many graduates lack employable practical skills. “They are not practical enough to turn local resources into gainful work. I implore universities and tertiary institutions to incorporate practical courses in their curriculum so that we see more of job creators than job seekers,” Ms Among said. She made the remarks yesterday while meeting Victoria University top officials led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Lawrence Muganga, at her office at Parliament. Prof Muganga and his team proposed to Parliament on ways of improving the country’s education system through introducing technology-driven learning. Read more [here](#).

#### **5. Inside Higher Eds**

##### **Evolving Faculty Views on Teaching, Publishing and Technology (Global)**

Against the backdrop of an evolving public health crisis and altered political landscape in recent years, no one will be surprised that faculty members at American colleges and universities have changed some of their day-to-day tasks and views related to research, teaching and publishing. Many of these views are shared in a report published today by Ithaka S+R that last year took the temperature of 7,615 faculty members at four-year colleges and universities offering bachelor’s degrees or higher. The pandemic put a dent in faculty members’ ability to gather at conferences and workshops but not their enthusiasm for doing so. Two-thirds of faculty members rated such attendance as “highly important” for staying current on scholarly literature. In contrast, only about half of respondents deemed “regularly skimming table of contents alerts of key journals” as “highly important.” The rise of virtual conferences and workshops during the pandemic made conference attendance easier and cheaper. This, the study authors suggest, accounts for the minimal decrease in their perceived value from the 2015 and 2018 surveys. When submitting publication for research, faculty members worried less about journal impact factors in 2021 than in earlier years. Just under three-quarters (73 percent) rated impact factor as “highly important” in

this recent report compared with 79 percent in 2018 and 81 percent in 2015. Impact factors are supposed to indicate the impact or quality of the research that a journal accepts for publication. Read more [here](#).

## 6. IOL

### **Gathering of scientists, stakeholders hedge hopes for Africa on collaboration efforts (Africa)**

Pretoria - Academics, scientists and education stakeholders from across Africa are hedging their hopes for a better tomorrow for the continent on the success of collaborative efforts such as the Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa initiative (SDCfA). The initiative, a brainchild of the Department of Science and Innovation, was launched at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on Friday, bringing together diplomats, academics, scientists young and old, the business community, as well as civil society members, in order to promote scientific collaboration across the continent and beyond. At the same time it spoke of using, leveraging and connecting technology innovation with humanity. Deputy Director-General for International Co-operation and Resources at the Department of Science and Innovation, Daan Du Toit, speaking on behalf of Minister Blade Nzimande, said the minister believed that such a project could make three key contributions to help the continent better harness science as an instrument at the service of society, and to advance the achievement of the global public good, through the Sustainable Development Goals. First, Nzimande said that he believed that the project would ensure that the very best of South African and African scientific input and advice was harnessed to enrich diplomacy's response to the key societal challenges faced, whether it be a pandemic disease, energy security, or climate change. Read more [here](#).

## 7. Capital News

### **President Kenyatta Blasts Kenyatta University VC Over WHO Lab Construction (Kenya)**

President Uhuru Kenyatta has blasted the Kenyatta University Administration for complaining over the World Health Organization hub that is set to be built on the institution's land. Kenyatta University had lamented that the WHO emergency hub had been built without the university's permission and the 200 acres where the hub will sit was already set aside for other development project. During the commission of the WHO emergency hub, President Uhuru Kenyatta sharply criticized those opposing the hub project saying the land belongs to the citizens. "Property whether its statehouse where I stay for the next few weeks or its university or hospital, this is the property of Kenyan people held in trust by the government of Kenya. This why we try and adopt a whole government approach," he stated. "We don't operate in silos so that someone holds on to something as if it's their personal property. He or she doesn't know that his or her day are counted just like mine." President Kenyatta dismissed the claims by Kenyatta University that their land was invaded noting that the higher learning institution was just a mere custodian of a public property. He elaborated that his government has adopted a whole government approach that is inclusive saying that no government entity should work in isolation. Read more [here](#).

## 8. IOL

### **Tertiary students continue to buckle under stress in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic (South Africa)**

Reasearchers and analysts believe that we are only now starting to see the real impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on young people and students. Crowdfunding platform, Feenix, said its data shows that stress and anxiety are at a disturbingly high level, and something needs to be done about it. According to its second annual Insights and Learning Report, 43% of university students surveyed have pointed out that they need mental health services but can't access them. This is an increase from 33% in 2020. Feenix was

launched in June, 2017 as a response to the #FeesMustFall movement that spread across campuses in South Africa in 2015 and 2016. This movement highlighted the extremely high cost of tertiary education, and the impact that financial stress has on a student's success rates. Student advancement manager at Feenix, Cara-Jean Petersen, said apart from a lack of critical resources, the impact of the pandemic, remote learning, student debt, and a variety of other socio-economic pressures are all adding to the stress and anxiety levels of students. "Feenix is committed to the success of university students by monitoring, learning, and responding to their needs. The insights from the report assist the organisation in understanding all the challenges that might affect a young person's ability to achieve upward mobility and financial independence. "It also allows Feenix to share learnings with education stakeholders that could highlight opportunities for collaboration and funding," she said. Based on the findings, one student noted, "I had and still have a lot of breakdowns due to the academic and financial pressure. "Due to the pandemic, being a student felt very isolating. I did not get any support whether emotionally or academically from fellow students," said another respondent of the report. The student said financial assistance alone is not enough. Read more [here](#).

## 9. GMA News

### CHED backs curriculum review to address skills, jobs mismatch (Global)

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is supporting the aspiration of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos to review the whole curriculum to solve the problem of mismatch between skills and jobs, its chairperson Prospero De Vera III said Wednesday. In a press conference, De Vera said the CHED has been constantly conducting reviews on the tertiary education curriculum. "The Commission fully supports the statement and the desire of President Marcos to review the curriculum because we have been reviewing it consistently," he said. Likewise, De Vera said that some degree programs need continuous review considering the significant shifts in related markets and developments in technology. Students would be left behind if curriculums would not match with new demands, he pointed out. Aside from the academe, De Vera said CHED already included representatives from industries and government in technical panels for the review of degree programs. On Tuesday, the Office of the Press Secretary said Marcos has agreed to proposals to review the country's education curriculum to address jobs-skills mismatch. Read more [here](#).

## 10. Government Technology

### 20 Universities Turn to Survey Data to Address Mental Health (Global)

A group of universities has launched the Student Well-being Institutional Support Survey, or SWISS, to gather data and suggestions on students' health needs and inform new support strategies and programs. Noting a decline in students' financial, physical and mental health over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, 20 universities recently adopted a new survey to gauge students' sense of well-being and to create initiatives to address critical needs affecting campus wellness. According to a news release last week, schools including Butler University; California State University, Sacramento; and the University of South Alabama have launched the Student Well-being Institutional Support Survey, or SWISS, to gather students' health insights for new support strategies. It said the survey is housed within a data platform from the tech company Qualtrics, which turns data relating to mental, physical and financial well-being into "actionable data." "Education institutions need dynamic systems that can sense and respond to the needs of students," said Omar Garriott, global head of education at Qualtrics, in a public statement. "This is especially true in this time of rapid change. Schools that rise to the top in the coming years will be those

that not only listen to students, but really understand and improve the experiences they are having on campus with respect to their mental health, basic physical and financial needs and their ongoing sense of belonging.” Read more [here](#).

### **11. University World news**

#### **Budget cuts to deal unexpected blow to DAAD’s activities (Global)**

The German Academic Exchange Service or DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) is set to face severe budget slashes, resulting in programmes being downsized and about 6,000 grants being cancelled. The DAAD’s core funding via the Foreign Office is to drop from €204 million (US\$205 million) in 2021 to about €195 million this year. And, in 2023, according to the federal cabinet, there will be a further cut, with core funding then at the level of €191 million and a total loss of €13 million in just two years. More cuts could be on the way for individual budget items in the ongoing year. “The cuts in core funding which the federal cabinet has decided on for the Foreign Office are having a considerable impact on our finances and, therefore, on the worldwide activities of the DAAD. They will substantially lower our ability to fund universities, students and academics for years,” says the organisation’s president, Joybrato Mukherjee. “In addition, the cuts will harm Germany’s international attractiveness and competitiveness as a higher education and research location, and also the appeal of its institutions. And this is coming at a time when Germany, especially, would be called upon to set an example and play a leading role in international higher education and research relations.” The shock announcement comes just days after the DAAD’s issuing of its policy paper Außenwissenschaftspolitik für eine multipolare Welt (‘Science diplomacy for a multipolar world’), which calls for the development of a science diplomacy based on political realism and focusing on global crises, upheavals and system rivalry. Read more [here](#).

### **12. The Star**

#### **Kenyatta University council refuses to submit varsity title deeds (Kenya)**

Kenya University council members have declined an order that compelled them to hand over the institution’s title deeds. According to a statement by the council and signed by the council chair Migot Adhola, the title deeds will not be submitted to Head of Public Service Joseph Kinyua. “We wish to inform you most respectfully, that we will be unable to accede to the request to the title deeds,” the statement reads. This letter was a response to a previous direction from Kinyua, requesting the varsity to hand over a section of its vast land. According to the letters from Kinyua, 30 acres will go to the WHO emergency hub while some will be donated to squatters. Another 10 acres will be donated to the Africa Centres for Disease Control. Kinyua said 180 acres will go to the neighbouring Kenyatta University Teaching Research and Referral Hospital, which already sits on 100 acres donated by the university ten years ago. Adhola distanced the council from the decision for the state to acquire Kenyatta University’s land. “If the due process of the law as foresaid was followed, the university would have been able to demonstrate that it requires every inch of its current land,” Adhola said. The council further termed the directive as ‘unclear and unconstitutional’ saying they were not involved. Read more [here](#).

### **13. Ghana Today**

#### **Govt commits \$1 billion to TVET (Ghana)**

The government has committed one billion dollars to revamp Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This is intended to make it more attractive and capable of equipping the students with the required skills needed in the industrial sector of the economy. The Upper East Regional Minister, Mr

Stephen Yakubu, disclosed this when he addressed the 10th Congregation of the Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU). He said the government was in the process of establishing the Ghana Skills Development Fund to create room for industries to contribute toward the realization of this educational dream. Mr Yakubu advised the graduands to think outside the box to create jobs for themselves because of the competition in the jobs market. He later commissioned a workshop for the Technical University which is designed to equip Civil, Electronic and Mechanical Engineering students with relevant skills. The BTU was provided with a 200-kilowatt diesel generating unit to solve power supply disruption in the school. Read more [here](#).

#### Note to Editors/PROs:

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