

Paper proposal for INQAAHE 2013 Conference in Taipei

<i>Paper/Presentation Title</i>	Student engagement and student satisfaction: Two measures auguring for independent review criteria or standards for student support services in national quality assurance schemes.
<i>Topic Covered in this Paper</i>	Subtheme 2. Innovative approaches to external QA in tertiary education: not a single approach towards excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of QA approaches from the point of view of their potential to enhance innovation in tertiary education – ideally with some evaluation results.
<i>Authors</i>	Dr. Fernando F. Padró (Senior Lecturer, Quality) & Dr. Y.C.M.A. Kek (Senior Lecturer, LTS)
<i>Authors' organization</i>	University of Southern Queensland, Learning & Teaching
<i>AV requirements</i>	Laptop and projector to show PowerPoint slides
<i>Abstract</i>	This paper discusses how the increased use of student engagement data in combination with student satisfaction data use as a proxy for unit and instruction quality suggests a rethinking of student support services. While there is a question as to the definition what student engagement encompasses, it nevertheless places focus on student services as it attempts to make students want to become more engaged on campus activities as a means of improving learning. However, most quality assurance frameworks only look at student engagement and student satisfaction from a cognitive outcomes/output perspective. Such identification and use of data emanating from this limited student satisfaction and engagement perspective suggests that those aspects of the university that indirectly and somewhat directly impact student learning and happiness with the university are overlooked. The implication is that QA frameworks should be having performance criteria/standards specific to student support to more fully analyze learning at universities.

Outline (1000 words max, excluding references):

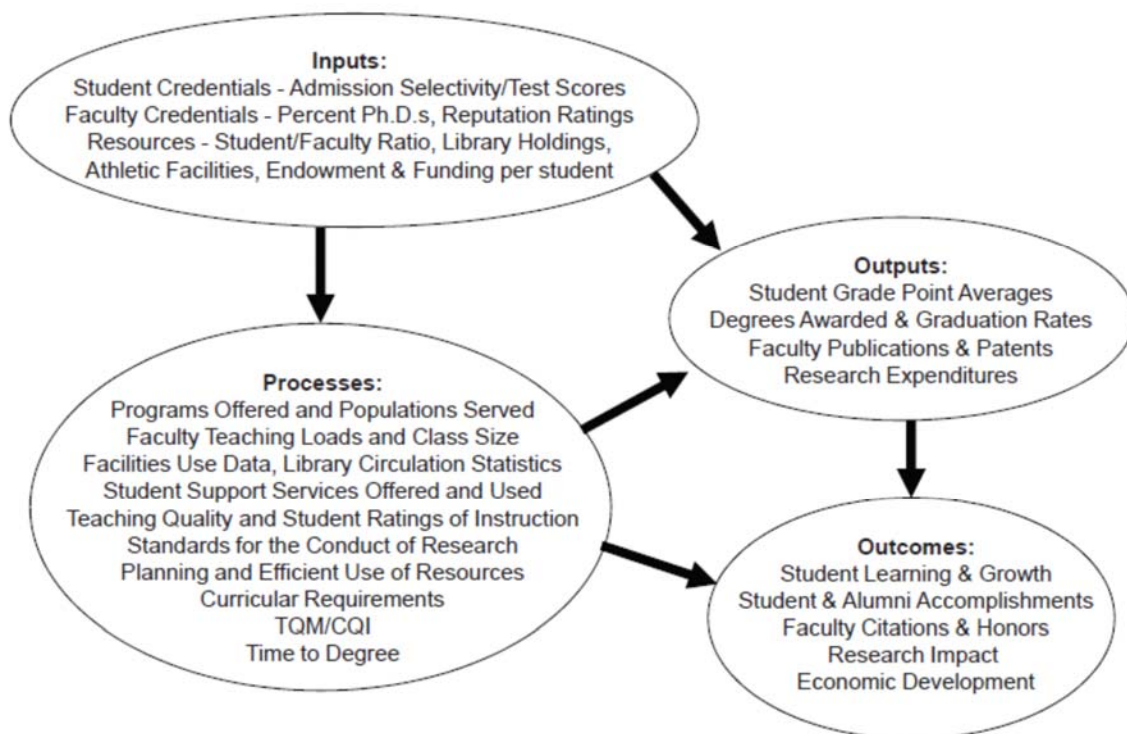
Introduction

Increasingly, student engagement is becoming a proxy measure of institutional performance in different higher education systems. Student engagement identifies the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities on the one hand and how HEIs deploy resources, organize curriculum, other learning opportunities, and student services to get students to participate in activities improving their potential to learn something, persist with their studies, graduate, and enhance their satisfaction in the process (Kuh et al., 2007) on the other. While there may be a question regarding the definition of student

engagement (Hu & Kuh, 2002; Krause & Coates, 2008; Gray & Diamond, 2010), what is also coming to the fore is that student engagement is also getting linked to student satisfaction (Padró & Frederiks, in press), one of the traditional methods of generating institutional performance data in many national quality systems of higher education.

Lack of recognition of student services/support in higher education accountability systems and how they support student engagement and satisfaction

The basic premise behind student engagement is Astin's (1985) I-E-O model based on his theory of involvement: inputs, engagement, outcomes. He views the university environment playing a critical role in offering students a wide array of academic and social opportunities for involvement with new ideas, people, and experiences (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, rather than focusing on experiences as a throughput mechanism within universities, student engagement is viewed as and reported typically within the context of outcomes as reflected in Volkwein's (2011) view of evolving focus for accreditation and accountability (Figure 1). This is how the new threshold standards from Australia's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA, 2011) seems to be treating the information based on what is found, for example, in Provider Registration Standard 6.5, Provider Category Standards 2.7 and 4.4 (Padró & Frederiks, in press). This creates a gap within the standards that is consonant with the lack of emphasis on student services in the accreditation criteria or standards utilized by the different voluntary regional accrediting organizations in the USA. The gap is also consistent with the lack of mention of student engagement *vis a vis* student services and co-curriculum in the 2005 UNESCO-OECD *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*. This represents somewhat of an irony given the prominent recognition given to the role student bodies play in higher education and how student migration to find better educational opportunities across borders is driving the international concern for universal capacity to properly evaluate higher education programs, institutions, and systems. What is lacking is the recognition and the measures to provide evidence of how institutions actually create, support, and enhance the student learning experience.



source: Volkwein, 2011, p. 6.

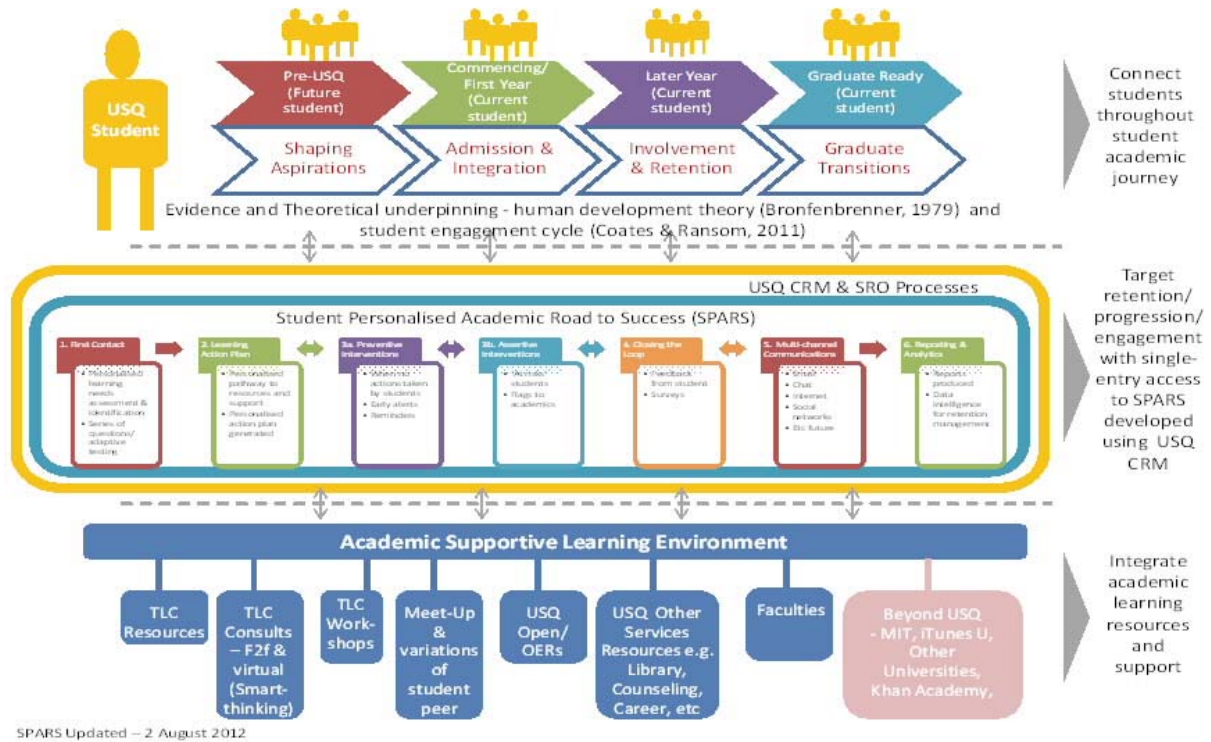
Figure 1. Evolving focus of accreditation and accountability

Suggestion for including student support/services as a separate consideration in national accountability systems

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) propose that university environments produce interconnections that are most likely to produce a more effective learning experience. Accreditation and other forms of review processes for universities only focus on the cognitive aspects of teaching and learning and do not place emphasis on affective activities or responses. This is a shortcoming in these schemes because they ignore the impact that student choice has on learning and views of experience regarding teaching, program effectiveness, and effectiveness of the overall university experience. However, in systems that base their perspective on a customer service model, then this gap presents a problem because as Gray and Diamond (2010) argue, satisfaction is more than the end result of a cognitive process, it is also based on an affective response. There seems to be a connection between engagement and satisfaction, especially when utilizing this philosophical approach toward higher education performance, making it advantageous to measure the impact those elements that form and support engagement do to generate satisfaction results.

One approach toward creating enhanced measurable student engagement in academic study skills development is reflected in the University of Southern Queensland's SPARS program. Figure 2 shows how this program aims to improve student experience and create a better analytics framework by

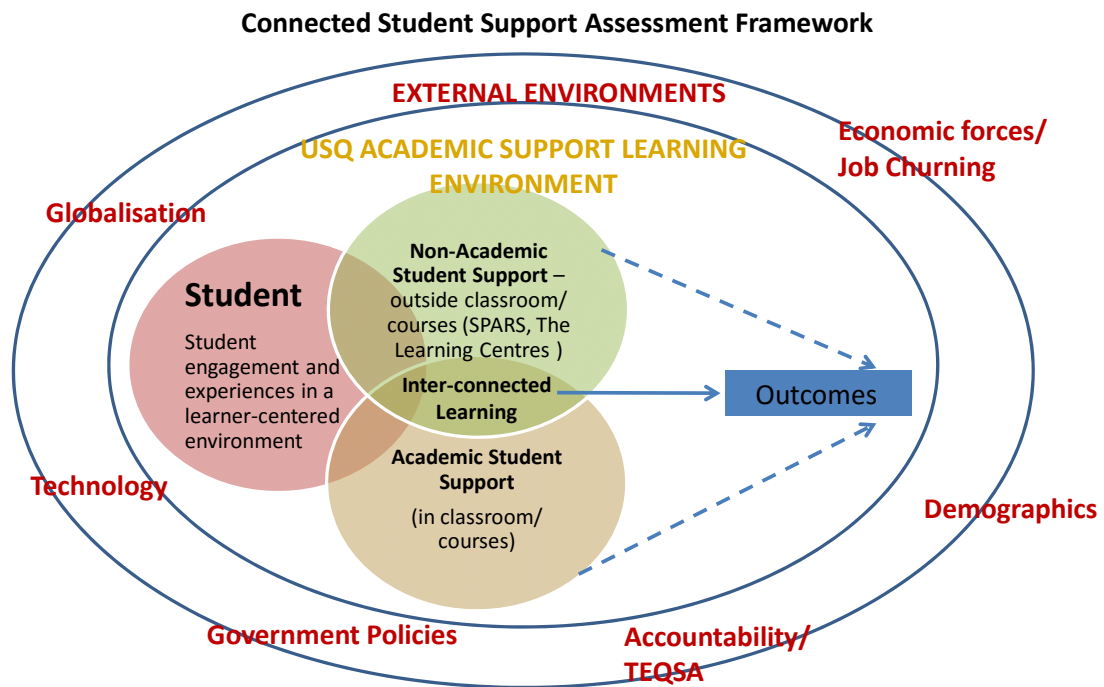
connecting and formalizing heretofore informal academic support, and non-academic support, by providing a one-stop opportunity process (Kek, 2012).



source: Kek, 2012, p. 1

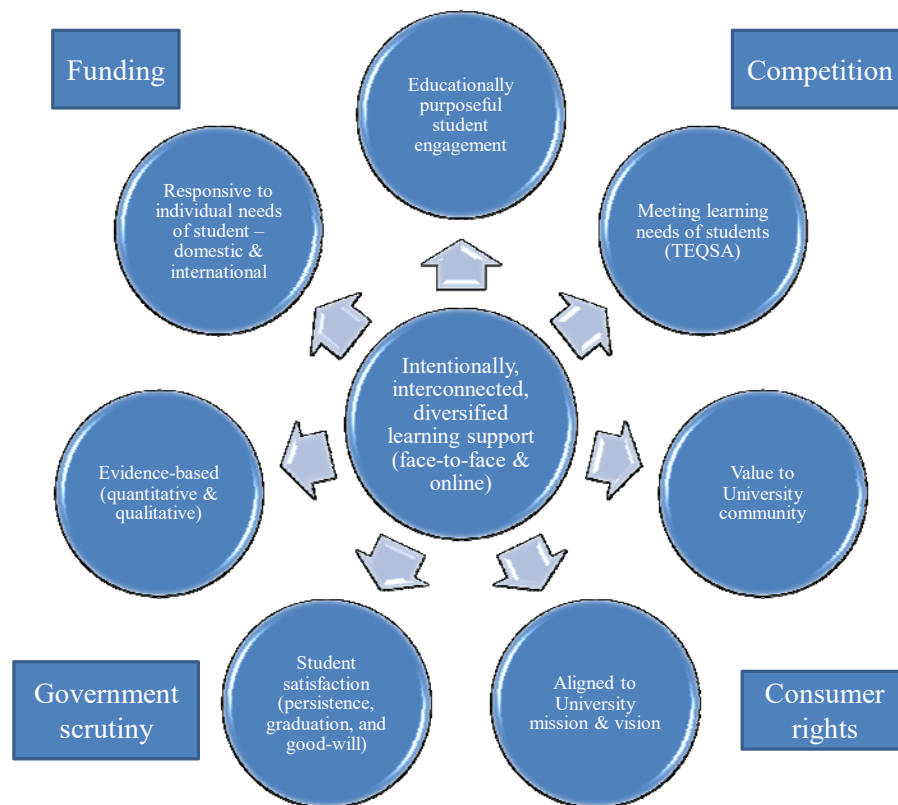
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework for USQ Student Retention

The process framework is described in Figure 3. What is important within this framework is the ability to generate assessment data based on measurable outcomes that take into consideration external and internal priorities for the individual student and the university as a whole. One proposed approach toward evaluating the impact such integrated programs have that focus on student engagement is seen in Figure 4, in which the assessment framework data are additionally placed through different filters in order to create a more complete view of how these engagement opportunities are impacting the institution.



Adapted: Bresciani, M.J. (2006) Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review , Padro, F. (2012) Advancing the STEM Agenda Quality Improvement, and SPARS Framework (Kek, 2012) adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979), Tait (2000), Kuh et al (2007)

Figure 3. Connected Student Support Assessment Framework



source: Padró & Frederiks, in press.

Figure 4. Evaluation Framework for Mature Learning Activity Programs

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