Lecturer 4 interview.

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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

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All right, thank you so much for meeting me. So so we'll just go straight into it. When it comes to the issue of addressing gender disparities in the uptake of science related degree programmes, I'll just be asking you questions around the policies and gender development. That's WUA has, as well as issues of academic planning and design. So just to start us off, what do you think are the barriers that inhibit gender inclusion in the science programmes here at WUA

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It’s not about WUA as such, but it is a national approach. Sciences, normally uptake of science, you may understand that I am a teacher by profession trained to teach the sciences, physics and chemistry. So during my time at high school, I was teaching the hard sciences, physics and chemistry. And the uptake of those subjects we call them the hard sciences. The uptake of those sciences by female students is low. And so when these students graduate from high school, to tertiary education, those that excel normally would want to degrees like medicine, engineering and the like. So, they then ..our institution doesn't offer the engineering degrees. We offer computer science, we offer agricultural science, horticulture, agri- business management. Now, as a requirements, we also need to have a candidate with mathematics. There is a general phobia for mathematics in high school and so, when they come here many of them may not be having that requirement. They pass O-level mathematics. To think to have a pass mathematics at A- level. Many of them that enroll here, may not have done the sciences at A-level. So we’ll consider them with their performance at O-level. And if they did not have mathematics then we’ve got a bridging mathematics offered under the Faculty of Management, we’ve got a lecturer in charge of that. So they go through that programme prior to the commencement of the semester, they've got a period which they do the bridging course in mathematics, if they pass then they enroll. Those that leave that may have mathematics at O-level, then may have done other subjects at A-level and passed, and then enroll for programmes in the faculty of agricultural sciences. So really the barrier is on the requirement for the sciences prior to joining the University, or the requirement for mathematics prior to joining the University, which we feel is a barrier, but it's been addressed by issue of bridging mathematics.

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And do you have takers for that course?

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We do. We do. Now, what happens is that enrollment is centralized in Harare. They apply at admissions office, and then if admission office see that they are difficient with regards to those subjects they are advised to enroll, it is not us. They are advised at admissions and then they enroll at admissions. After they pass the bridging course, then they are directed to the faculties.

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And yes they do pay for this bridging course?

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Yes, the operational costs are covered by the students.

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And yes, is there a gender policy here at WUA? That also touches the enrollment issues?

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Yes, I think there is. Of the cuff I think there is about 75% women and the balance, the men. Gicen that the numbers are low, they do not fill up the 75% although its there on paper, it might not be 75% when on actual enrollment.

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Because if we say we need 10 students, or we need 50 students. And then those that apply are only 5.

Although the policy says 75%.

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but how are they how, even though it's not necessarily 75% to, or the percentage might not be, even though it's day for the general enrollment, how is it been? In terms of how many are they generally from your general assessment in terms of percentages, the women versus men in the programmes that you teach in particular?

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It’s more of men than women? Okay, yeah.

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All right. So

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over the years, that is a trend. Then the other one I left out is because the university looks at the disadvantaged woman. So, it's not like the normal intake like in other institutions who will have those straight from A-levels but here we say those that are forty years without the necessary A-levels they enter into what we call mature entry, the mature entry becomes now the normal target group for Women's University in Africa and not the graduates from High School. If you go to UZ, their normal entry is A-levels. Then Us, our normal, on paper, is the mature woman.

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but have you been getting some of the entries from those a level student, but the majority have been the mature entry ones?

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Yeah, because being a private institution, many of them are handicapped on fees, so many of our candidates are already employed so they come here to further their education.

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and is there anything that the university is doing to also promote the uptake of the sciences amongst the female students. Yeah.

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Yea. Of hand, we’ve got awards that target good performance in the sciences when candidates graduate, we’ve got awards. There is the shield for the best of graduating students in agriculture every year. We also have the Vice Chancellor's Award for the Best graduating students in the intake across faculties. Who is then given the scholarship to do a master’s degree.

From the founder, Vice Chancellor was Hope Sadza there is a scholarships for students who may excel in agriculture. That candidate will be given a scholarship within the duration their study here. I’ve got a candidate who I know, who was doing horticulture and was assisted from year 1 to the final year.

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But is there anything else that you think the institution could also do to promote the sciences? Amongst the ones that are lower in terms of the numbers like the female students?

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Yeah, there could be. If let me take the case of Africa University, they got funders who throw in money to give scholarships to those that study the program's agriculture. Africa University is church-related. And the funders have been coming from the church. Ours being private private, meaning to say, we do not have a church backing to take up responsibility toward the costs and finances. That being the case, it means all the programmes must be self-sustaining financially. So, it becomes really a challenge, to say the university’s interests might be keen, the faculties are also keen to have that gap being filled . To receive resources to support. But our money comes from the fees. So, it becomes problematic to levy other candidates so that we have the selected ones benefiting from other candidates. So that becomes a handicap, on paper and in thinking that would be the way to go, but it is difficult, like what I'm saying because that money will be coming from students.

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Okay. So on to the issue of academic programme planning and designing, is there a requirement for gender to be, you know, to be part of the science programmes that you do?

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In fact gender studies are mainstreamed across faculties, you will find courses on gender. Because that’s our area as a university.

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so, but do you have like a gender needs assessment tool that you use, you know, as you in your science programmes as you plan and design your science programme?

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Yeah, what we do is at faculty level, say its horticulture or agrisciences, us the technocrats will forward the courses that we think are idea for the programme. Then we have these mainstream courses like gender it’s offered under the faculty of the social sciences. So, it means in terms of teaching in terms of administration, in terms of everything it’s done there. So, the issue that you are raising of the instrument and the tools is managed from the faculty of social sciences. Yeah. It’s not done under the faculty of agriculture. Let’s say it is serviced under the faculty of social sciences.

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but when it comes to like lesson planning and design, you know, there's this term called gender responsive pedagogy, right, which is basically looking at the needs and backgrounds of both males and students when it comes to their backgrounds and their needs, so that their participation is fully is fully maximised.

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From a teaching perspective. Like I'm a lecturer and I am teaching on crop production principles, I touch on those areas in the sense that if you look at world agriculture. 70% of world agriculture is driven by women. So when I'm talking about mechanization, I'm talking about the requirements and talking about whatever is put in place in the production system. Obviously, I’ve got to target in my planning, lesson planning in my delivery, I've got to include those areas. To cater for the 70% for the women that drive agriculture. It means 70% of agriculture in Zimbabwe, at operational level, you find women there, so we take charge of that.

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All right. So that's like your way of maybe including or ensuring gender sensitivity in your in your programming.

Yes, yes. All right.

Is there a gender awareness training that you go through a stuff though?

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Well, let me say. Fortunately for me, I don't know in terms of others, but for me, when I did my masters with NUST. I did one of my masters in Business and Administration with NUST. One of the courses was gender. It was done by a gender expert. At African University there was another gender expert there, I did my masters in Crop Production there. And we were taught, like I'm saying gender is a mainstreamed, a cross cutting course across the programmes in here, women's University in Africa. And in other institutions, it’s also included across. Because from the universities that offer higher degrees, that's where we have our staff being trained. And then when they get here they can go into induction by the faculty of social sciences. On the day-to-day requirements, expectations of lecturers on delivery.

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Alright, and when it comes to like, let's say the students that you have, you did mention, I'll just go back to the one that you mentioned about how there's been more men than women over the years. But when it comes to like, let's say, the retention of students, or those who complete the programme, so there are people who can start the programme. But when it comes to completion, is it still the same? Like, let's say it's like 60% males, 40% females. Will it still be the same by the time that they graduate?

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Well, like I said, earlier, we’ve got the mature woman, we've got the adult candidates here. So when an adult makes a decision to come to school, they've made that decision and they want to complete. So, the percentage drop out during the course of training is very negligible. Extremely negligible. I've been here since 2009. I've seen very negligible... If such cases happen, maybe it's due to illness. Yeah. Yeah, natural causes. Normally they complete.

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Okay. And in your assessment, as well over the years, performance wise, do you think female students tend to do better or males students tend to do better?

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At one stage I was the head of Agricultural Sciences and we’ve had candidates who were excelling across the university, the best candidates being candidates from agricultural sciences, being women. So they do very well.

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Okay so, I think we've exhausted most of the critical questions that I had for this time. Um, I don't know if you have any other maybe it can be just comment or any other, you know, what you think might be beneficial to this study, as I do it, any information that you might think might be beneficial, that you might want to give me before we end the interview?

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Through the Dean and you get information about recruitment, in horticulture, animal science. Just this morning, I was sending out an invitation of internships by companies. So, we sent it out to candidates and at one stage I think, during my tenure here, I had two candidates that benefitted from two companies. Companies when they see candidates who excel particularly women, they are interested in supporting.

So, well, it could be one of the areas is you do your face to face discussions, you get to know if among them, because we may not know how they are being financed. But you may include to see how many within the sample are being assisted to internship, through affirmative action of promoting women in the job uptake and in the funding programmes. We see how Yeah, the industry is responding to this issue of gender, on training and update as well. Because from our perspective, we teach, right, we train and then they graduate. It is the requirement of industry to take up those candidates. And so, what then happens in industry, the challenges they made or something like that, with regards to affirmative action towards gender, this issue, you can get it directly from the from the candidates.

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All right. Thank you so much for that. Thank you so much for your time. We appreciate you taking your time out just to meet us so that we can have this discussion