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Africa for Research in Comparative Education (AFRICE) Conference Abstract

Title: Harmonization, tuning and integration of African higher education: Learning from faculty motivation for community-engaged scholarship using a case of Malawi

Abstract. The paper addresses the following research question: Amidst the push to adopt more universal, homogenizing and collaborations or tuning, how are these processes impacting faculty practice and performance of community-engaged scholarship that is relevant to the local communities in African countries such as Malawi? While harmonization has technically focused on development of curriculum, quality control and outcome based learning, how does this impact the national higher education systems in providing faculty incentives and rewards? Across the African continent higher education demand is on the rise. Consequently, the number of new institutions both private and public has been increasing (Altbach, 1999). The critical issues however, besides the numbers has been the contestations about the distinction and relevance of the higher education being provided across nations and academic disciplines in African (Gibbons, 1998, Modani, 2008; Matthews, 2010, Kamola, 2012; Nhamo, 2012 Muriisa, 2014, Berhanu, 2014). Recently, the African Higher Education Summit has called for a continued radical expansion of higher education to achieve an enrolment ratio of 50% within 50 years. A draft declaration and action plan also urges greater investment in higher education and research, improved graduate employability and enhanced diversification, differentiation and harmonization at all levels by countries. The summit further called, among many other things, for support for emerging research universities, all academics to have PhDs by 2063, and gross expenditure in research of 1% within five years and 5% by 2063. An African Higher Education Research Fund should be created with an initial US\$5 billion to support collaborative research. The Draft Declaration and Action Plan of the 1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future confirmed commitment to creating a continental multi-stakeholders' platform to identify strategies for transforming the sector (MacGregor, 2015). The paper contributes to critical analysis of harmonization in Africa.