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Faculty-Student Interaction - The Informal Revolution

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Abstract content (Max 300 words) **Formatting & Special chars**

Informal faculty-student interaction has been shown to positively influence students' retention, academic achievement, educational aspirations, intellectual and personal development, and personal attitude toward their host institution (i.e. university). Such informal interactions frequently exist between the students and academic staff with whom they work, either as a lecturer or research supervisor. As a number of universities within South Africa now host science centres, which specialize in informal science education, is it possible for science centres to positively contribute to the informal faculty-student interaction? The presentation will examine the interactions that are currently conducted by science centres in engaging university students. The nature and potential benefit, as reported by the various science centres, will form part of the presentation. The presentation will also include results from a pilot study conducted by the Unizulu Science Centre. The pilot study examined current faculty-student interactions between the science faculty and first year physics students from the University of Zululand. Interviews will be conducted to clarify expectations and challenges held by both students and faculty toward informal faculty-students interactions. It will further aim to begin to quantify the potential impact a science centre can have on the faculty-student interactions and how such interactions could become a valuable tool for universities.

Apply to be considered for a student award (Yes / No)?

No

Level for award (Hons, MSc, PhD, N/A)?

N/A

Main supervisor (name and email) and his / her institution

N/A

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Primary author: Mr SCHWARTZ, Marthnis Johannes (University of Zululand)

Presenter: Mr SCHWARTZ, Marthnis Johannes (University of Zululand)

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