

Exploring Opportunities for Research Cooperation between Nordic and Southern African University Institutions: A Perspective from the University of Pretoria

By Thula Simpson

The absence of full-time postgraduate students is a loss being felt by all South African universities, and these institutions will continue to be unable to achieve their objective of hosting world-class research intensive departments unless they can develop a strong graduate component. South African universities also face the challenge of making the knowledge they develop and disseminate more relevant to their country's long-term developmental needs in the economic, social and cultural spheres. In light of these priorities, the call made by the convenors of this workshop for partnerships to be established between Nordic and Southern African universities to further research collaboration at doctoral and postdoctoral level, on issues related to the history of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, is most welcome and encouraging. This paper will outline the existing forms of cooperation that the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria has with faculties at institutions in other countries in Africa and beyond, as well as the types of projects being undertaken by, and the academic interests of, members of staff in the department. In this way it will be possible to outline what the department can contribute to collaborative initiatives (such as joint research, training of researchers for Masters and PhD degrees, and developing new graduate programmes) related to the history of southern Africa's liberation struggles.