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## Seeking Impact and Visibility

Trotter, Henry, Kell, Catherine

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# Chapter 7

## Challenges, contradictions and opportunities

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A key element of SCAP's research was to identify the main challenges, contradictions and opportunities in the scholarly communication ecosystems of our four research sites, especially as they pertain to the dissemination of digital research outputs (articles, conference papers, reports, etc.). By working with the different units, departments and faculties at the Universities of Botswana, Cape Town, Mauritius and Namibia, we were able to assess elements of these ecosystems as they pertain to unit, departmental, faculty and institutional concerns. In this chapter we analyse this multi-level ecosystem that not only reflects Southern African scholars' reality, but offers critical and constructive insights for moving the discussion about the promotion of optimal scholarly communication at the region's universities forwards.

By "optimal" scholarly communication, we mean the dissemination of digital outputs which are open access (free to the user); visible (quickly findable on the internet); profiled and curated (typically on an institutional repository); understandable to audiences that would most benefit from the knowledge contained within them; aligned with the mission and values of the university and the country; ambitious and original; adequately funded (by the university or another funding body); recognised by the author's colleagues and university as valuable; and of a high quality. This is an admittedly particular understanding of what constitutes optimal scholarly communication – and will hopefully add to the debate on such – but for the sake of the following discussion, this is what we mean by it.

### Challenges

The challenges impacting our four Southern African scholarly communication ecosystems most are: institutional culture; research culture; funding; time; e-infrastructure; skills and capacity; and continental marginalisation.

In this discussion, a "challenge" is defined as a crucial factor in the scholarly communication ecosystem that inhibits the optimal production and dissemination of research. A challenge can be a durable feature of that system (such as funding constraints) or an ephemeral one produced during a transitional phase (such as a nascent research

culture), but each stands as an obstacle to optimal scholarly communication and is not easily remedied through the actions of any one agent (management, scholars, government personnel). Challenges are often the inadvertent by-product of a broader social, political, educational or financial concern, such as the recent global economic recession or the rapidly changing requirements of the ICT landscape. Typically, there is little that an institution itself can do in the short term to overcome these challenges, but through long-term strategic planning and implementation, it can certainly ameliorate them and, in some cases, turn them into opportunities.

### **Institutional culture**

Each university that we engaged had its own character, history, values and traditions – their own “institutional culture”. This term may slightly reify what in fact were dynamic contexts, but it helps to stabilise our perception of an environment for the purposes of analysing it. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) identify six institutional culture types for academia, of which the collegial, developmental and managerial were the most relevant in our circumstances. For instance, as we discuss later, UCT is best understood as having a collegial culture, where power is located in the faculties, and which values rationality, shared governance and decision-making and academic engagement. Meanwhile, UNAM has a developmental culture in which the institution prioritises the personal and professional growth of both students and faculty members. These are suitable cultures for these institutions, given their histories and desires for the future.

However, this is not the case at UB and UoM, both of which have centralised administrative structures that create certain challenges regarding the development of scholarly research and communication activity.

### **UB managerialism**

Unlike the other universities we profiled, the institutional culture at UB is best described as “managerial” (Berquist & Pawlak 2008). This is true not only in the sense that the administration holds significant sway over the direction of university strategy and policies, but in the legitimacy that academics accord it as a strong, centralised authority structure.<sup>146</sup> But that legitimacy has been questioned in recent years by scholars who feel that the management has gone too far in catering for its own interests rather than those of the academic staff. They feel that the “top-heavy”, “bloated” administrative structure has lost sight of the true mission of the university (UB Academic Staff 2012: 3).

Scholars feel that the expanding management structure costs too much to support financially, and that the job descriptions for these high-level managers “are logistical (clerical) in nature and not strategic and can therefore be performed by lower ranking employees” (UB Academic Staff 2012: 17). All of this has combined to create a negative working

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146 These power relations resemble that of paternalism, where a management stratum asks for, and is given, a great deal of authority (to create policy, dictate norms, etc.), with the understanding that it must fulfil certain critical moral obligations towards the governed strata (pay decent wages, be flexible with the application of rules when issues of personal dignity and public reputation are at stake, etc.). This authority structure is well known in the history of Botswana, and in fact is seen by many analysts as describing the national government’s relationship with its citizens (Holm 1987).

environment which “has seen a number of disturbing academic staff turnover in recent years and it has been struggling to recruit and retain staff” (UB Academic Staff 2012: 1).

While most academics at UB are fine with a strong and centralised administrative authority, they believe that it should operate within certain guidelines – a “moral economy” – that also remain cognizant of scholars’ interests. At the moment, they believe that the management has breached the terms of the unspoken contract between it and the academics, a fact which jeopardises a number of critical academic functions, including the research imperative.

The primary challenge for enhancing research through a managerial system is assuring that research production is sustainable. Since it was only in 2008 that the university Senate ratified comprehensive policies which would turn UB into a “research university”, it is too early to tell whether these extrinsic mechanisms – such as the performance management system (PMS) – will lead to sustainable productivity. Evidence suggests that the top-down mandate has successfully raised the level of research production in the short term, but some suggest that it is already breeding resistance and demoralisation amongst the staff (Marobela & Andrae-Marobela 2013). Thus a number of questions remain:

- Will these extrinsic mechanisms be enough to sustain a high level of productivity?
- Will they lead to quantity at the expense of quality?
- Will they be as efficient as a system in which intrinsic motivation – personal joy, desire to contribute to the field – drives research outputs?
- Will they foreclose the development of a more peer-regulated research culture in which productivity is inspired by organic collegial expectations rather than expensive accountability and enforcement mechanisms?

These remain open questions, but based on the qualities that now characterise the academic–management relationship – where the academics are organising and demanding that their interests be recognised – it would appear that such management-driven research mandates will be effective within certain limits because they fail to tap into the social and personal factors that are also important for motivating sustainable research activity.

### **UoM bureaucratism**

In contrast to UB’s strong, centralised authority structure (“managerialism”), the UoM institutional culture is also highly centralised, but weak (Manraj 2013). That is, on one hand, the administration employs a variety of bureaucratic processes which ensure that even the smallest decisions made by academics are referred back to it for official approval (“red tape”), thereby centralising authority at the institution (“bureaucratism”). But on the other hand, the administration has largely vacated the strategic role that it is supposed to play in shaping the policies that drive research and dissemination activity, leaving scholars on their own to decide how much research they would like to produce and how they would like to communicate it.

Part of this can be explained by the institutional instability that has beset UoM over the past few years caused by the unforeseen resignation of a popular vice chancellor in early

2012, followed by the dismissal of his replacement less than a year later for unknown reasons.<sup>147</sup> This has had an unsettling effect on the administration, which has essentially frozen the implementation of a number of research strategies that were developed under the former VC. But this type of paralysis can happen in a centralised yet weak administrative structure that is rendered leaderless. Since authority radiates from the top in such organisations, they do not perform well without a credible figure placed there (in this case, too many figures have been put there: UoM had five VCs in the four years between 2009 and 2013). The middle and lower management strata, which could otherwise have stepped in to make sure that the university's research strategies are still being implemented, were not been empowered to take such initiative. The result has been that the chaos of the VC's office has been replicated in the maintenance of the research strategy.

Another reason why the university has a centralised but weak institutional culture is its historical development. One scholar shared that “they put in all the administrative structure first and then said, ‘well, then we need professors.’ So from the beginning itself, it was very centralised.” This has led to what some complain is a skewed ratio between academic and administrative staff: “At the university there are about 1,000 people employed. Only 250 are academics. The rest is mainly bureaucracy.”

There are benefits, however, to this centralised but weak administrative arrangement. Even though academics often need to seek managerial permission to make even mundane decisions, they are nonetheless relatively autonomous in how they carry out their work, construct their careers and approach research and dissemination. Many scholars appreciate the latitude that this affords.

But when it comes to the changing imperatives surrounding scholarly communication in the digital, open era, the administration's lack of a strategic vision makes it difficult for the university to operate according to an integrated research and communication plan that leverages open communication practices. Moreover, with the government and the university's desire to turn Mauritius into an “innovation hub” for the region, it may be difficult for the university to act as a powerful engine of innovation when its own internal structure is designed to limit personal innovation and risk-taking.

## Research culture

Most African universities have only recently embraced a research mission, thus they are in the process of trying to build up strong research cultures that could sustain a solid level of research outputs. A research culture is shaped by multiple elements – policies, levels of motivation, financial resources, disciplinary norms, scholarly traditions and collegial expectations – which determine how weak, strong, efficient or effective it is. While a research culture is always in transition to a certain extent, we can get an idea of the current state of our four Southern African universities' research cultures and how they impact scholarly communication activities. Essentially, due to a number of factors

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147 Guillaume Gouges (17 August 2013), Controversy as university fires vice-chancellor, *University World News*, available at: [www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130816180045660](http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130816180045660)

discussed below, the research cultures at UB, UoM and UNAM can be characterised as “nascent”, while UCT’s stronger research culture is impacted by its decentralised, “siloed” structure.

### **Nascent research cultures at UB, UoM and UNAM**

UB managers and scholars are keen to develop a robust research culture, one that is intellectually vibrant, productive and nurturing for younger people. At the moment, this is still to be achieved. A number of challenges emerge in this regard. First, sharing between scholars is not as optimal as it could be, due to both fears of intellectual theft and the heavy teaching loads that occupy most of the academics’ time.

Second, according to one scholar, the academic staff are essentially treated like glorified civil servants in that they are expected to spend their work hours in their offices rather than, say, out in the field conducting research (even during the summer break). As is often the case in managerial contexts, the office serves not only as a workspace for scholars but a site of passive administrative surveillance: for as long as scholars are in their offices, they can be assumed to be “doing their jobs”.

Third, in such a cautious and rule-sensitive environment, scholars say that it is difficult to get funding for researching “risky topics”. Only “safe” research proposals get support, so academics find it difficult to “push the envelope,” as one scholar complained.

Fourth, this comparatively conservative approach to research appears to shape classroom teaching practices as well, as many scholars use materials sourced from literature reviews to teach rather than their own research.

Of course, it is important to put all of this in context: UB only recently committed itself to becoming a research university, something it hopes to achieve by 2021, so this description of the institution’s research culture is not the last word on what it is or will be. However, these challenges will remain unless scholars and the administration address the values underpinning their reproduction.

UoM’s research culture is also relatively nascent, individuated and uneven across departments and faculties, for three reasons. First, the demographic realities of this small institution – in which scholars are essentially the lone experts in their particular fields – impact the ability of FoS scholars to collaborate with each other. Most of the scholars who engage with the topics in which UoM academics have a research interest work at overseas universities. This diminishes the quantity and quality of scholarly communication between faculty members at UoM, reducing the development of a robust and dynamic on-campus research culture.

Second, because the administration provides weak guidance concerning research and communication matters, scholars are largely free to choose whether they want to embark on intensive research careers or more teaching-oriented ones. Thus, research production relies heavily on the personal volition of the scholars themselves, a highly fluctuating and inconsistent variable in the development of a stable research culture.

Third, not only is there very little administrative pressure to produce research, there is also very little peer pressure from their own colleagues to do so. With research activity so individualised, FoS scholars lack the inclination to share their research with each other and thereby miss opportunities to support and push their peers.

At UNAM, the institution's research culture can be described as nascent for historical, demographic and structural reasons. First, as a young university (just over 20 years old), the systems and traditions required to create and sustain a dynamic, strong research culture are still in the process of being established. Second, UNAM has been and remains a teaching-oriented university. Producing graduates is still the most powerful contribution that the university can make to the nation, a fact that strengthens the importance of the teaching mission. Third, UNAM recently merged with a number of teacher training colleges, absorbing staff whose academic identities are based on teaching, not researching. While many of these scholars are open to adding research to their job responsibilities, others are less enthusiastic. And all of them require time to develop their research skills.

Fourth, there is little peer pressure (collegial expectation) to produce research at UNAM. The promotion system creates an incentive for some academics, and many senior scholars encourage junior scholars to produce research, but the teaching and administrative obligations are such that most FHSS members feel the greatest pressure to meet those requirements before attending to research. Fifth, FHSS scholars feel that there are not enough opportunities to share their research with colleagues, such as through seminars and colloquia.

However, this is not to say that efforts are not being made to build up a robust research culture. For instance, according to one scholar, "The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is leading in this respect as far as our new journal is concerned. In our case, we're disseminating our research via the journal. That's why we created it. But most other faculties don't have a similar platform." Thus, as one manager summed up the situation, "There is some elemental collaboration and scholarly communication in terms of public lectures and we have our annual lecture series, we've got our journal, but I'd say it's still at a formative stage."

#### **UCT's research silos**

UCT's "collegial" institutional culture (Bergquist & Pawlak 2008) is both its greatest strength and its greatest weakness when it comes to scholarly communication. On one hand, it provides a sustainable and enriching environment for a highly productive research academic staff. Scholars hold substantial power at UCT, enjoying a degree of autonomy from the central administration. This is empowering for the academics, allowing them a good deal of latitude when it comes to picking projects and doing research. On the other hand, such collegiality makes it difficult for the institution to adapt quickly to new imperatives – such as embracing open scholarly communication strategies – because power is too decentralised for broad imposition or enforcement. Change rarely happens at the university based on administrative fiat, but occurs after a long process of engagement and debate across all of the faculties, which individually decide how to proceed in line with their own traditions, missions and values.

As a university with multiple campus locations across the city, the difficulties involved in pushing for institution-wide change are significant, because most of the faculties operate in geographically and intellectually isolated “silos”. As one manager explained:

*UCT is the biggest prairie with the largest number of silos I've ever seen. I mean, this is more siloed than any university I've worked in. And it has something to do with its age and the particular structure of faculties. They're very autonomous, they're spatially dispersed and they're very competitive. So funding comes down through the silo, which means that promoting inter-disciplinary work is very difficult. So you tend to have scholarly communication within silos, in quite a rich way. I mean, there are a lot of venues virtual and literal – or geographical or spatial – for seminars and things to happen, [hence] this is a very communication-rich environment, but the arrows are sometimes quite uni-directional and it's difficult to change the vector.*

In the rapidly changing world of scholarly communication, this can be a problem, creating a situation in which some departments or faculties have embraced a modern, open scholarly communication paradigm while others have yet to start a conversation about it. UCT's central administration, which is currently engaged in thinking about this issue, does not have the authority – nor the inclination – simply to require that all faculties abide by any new strategies that it embraces. Any institution-wide changes in this siloed environment take a long time, involve significant political sensitivity and ultimately include the buy-in of the individual faculty members.

Sharing many of the qualities defining a democracy – participative, deliberative, egalitarian, messy – UCT's collegial culture requires lengthy periods of time for it to change. Usually this is good, in that when change occurs, it has been thoroughly debated and legitimised. But sometimes when there is urgency in the change required, the process can be frustratingly slow.

## Funding

At most universities in Africa that are trying to ramp up research production, funding remains a perpetual challenge. Amongst our four Southern African universities, funding was not as challenging an issue as it appears to be elsewhere, but UB and UoM – two universities with strong research ambitions – find it difficult to reach their objectives given the current resources devoted to research.

At UB, funding is a challenge for conducting and disseminating research, not only for the direct financing of various projects, but for providing the ancillary materials necessary for carrying them out. It is important to stress that the government does provide money to the university for research, and that this has grown with the commitment by the institution to become a research university. However, the question here is whether the funding is enough to achieve the goal of creating a dynamic research culture which consistently produces high-quality scholarly outputs. At the moment, scholars and managers agree that more funding would be required to reach that ideal, hence the relatively low levels of funding create a series of challenges that impede the research imperative.



First, with limited money to disburse,<sup>148</sup> the Office of Research and Development (ORD) is keen to fund as many projects as possible to spread research opportunities amongst the staff and to make sure everyone gets a fair chance at pursuing research. But that often reduces the amount available for any single project, inducing many scholars to conceptualise research projects that are small-scale, localised and inexpensive. (One manager lamented, “There is no funding that can help academics carry out their work. The most we can get, if your proposal gets chosen, is P25,000 [USD2,525][which is not enough].”) Proposing small-scale projects increases scholars’ chances of getting funding, but it also limits their ambitions, encouraging them to see research as something done in discrete little pockets, not as part of a long-term career-developing contribution to scholarship.

One scholar summed up the results of this approach, stating, “We have a situation where we really don’t have a path that leads to publications, a path that makes somebody an expert in a particular field ... People just do the smallest of things so that they can be counted amongst those that have done research or are doing research.”

Second, the small amount of research funding also means that many people have to conduct it without any financial support. In the humanities, certainly some research can be carried out without extra money (such as a literary analysis of a novel), but most others involve some level of transportation (to field sites), equipment (digital recorders) and support services (transcription) the costs of which, if unfunded, have to come out of the scholars’ pocket. This is indeed the case for many scholars who set aside their own money for their small projects. They admit that this is not ideal, leading to very narrow research foci.

Third, lack of funding also limits the level of interaction that scholars can have with their peers elsewhere, particularly at conferences. UB academics are keen to go to regional and international conferences to present their work, get critical feedback, network with their peers and consider collaborative opportunities with people outside UB. But as the travel fund is limited, most scholars are only able to go to local conferences, or perhaps one in a neighbouring country occasionally. Ironically, as one academic relayed, “Scholars are told to research and present their findings, but we’re given too little money to actually go to conferences.”

Lastly, the lack of funding essentially confines all UB research activity to Botswana. As one scholar pointed out, this has the effect of making UB research inward-looking and provincial because scholars lack the means to cast their analytical gaze beyond their borders. For many scholars, this is fine because they desire mainly to contribute to the development and understanding of Botswana itself. But it also inadvertently reinforces a global power dynamic in which scholars in Botswana can only study themselves, whereas “Westerners” are able to study not just themselves but Botswana and other Africans too. What would be preferable, this scholar suggests, is if UB scholars were free to do both, and had the financial capacity to do so.

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148 In 2009, academics applied for P 7.5 million in research funding, but only P 2.6 million was available to disperse.

Echoing UB's funding challenges, UoM FoS scholars also complain that there is a relative lack of funding which impacts the types of research they can pursue and the types of resources they can access. For instance, according to one scholar, "The MRC has got only 10 million rupees [USD322,581] per year to fund research," an amount that has to be doled out to multiple competing project proposals. The university itself also has a limited research budget, which shapes how ambitious a scholar can be in conceptualising a project.

This is compounded by the limited funds for activities such as conference travel. According to one scholar, the conference travel fund is usually exhausted within six months, thus it is impossible to go to conferences that come up after that, until the next funding tranche comes in. This reduces the networking opportunities that FoS scholars desire with overseas colleagues. As one scholar noted, "If we had the funding to travel, I don't think that geographical barriers would be an issue."

Lastly, it is challenging to access certain intellectual resources due to the small library budget. As one librarian shared, "A major obstacle is the funding. Our budget doesn't allow us to buy as many books as we would like to or even subscribe to journals. Sometimes we get a request for a journal, but we don't have the funds." Scholars try to overcome this challenge themselves by leveraging their personal connections, but "if you do not have a contact [at a well-resourced overseas university], it's impossible to get the right research papers."

## Time

One of the greatest deterrents to the production of research at most African universities is the lack of time that faculty have for conducting research. Burdened by heavy teaching and administrative loads, they claim that they do not have enough time to meet the growing demands for research outputs put on them by the administration. This is not a new finding, as most other literature on African higher education makes the same point (DHET 2012a; Lindow 2011; Mamdani 2007, 2008; Mlambo 2007; Mouton *et al.* 2008; Sall 2003; Sawyerr 2004; Zeleza 2002), but SCAP's research does suggest that, if Southern African universities are going to reach their goals of becoming "research universities" in the future, they will have to attend to the fact that their scholars are still overwhelmingly preoccupied with non-research activities (as we saw in Chapter 5). The teaching-oriented legacy of these universities remains powerful, as do the current teaching demands that structure academic labour.

At UB, this challenge is acknowledged by everyone, not just the scholars. As one manager explained:

*Another reason why research is thin ... is the staff allocation workload. Here we've got very big classes. You know, the teacher/student ratio is terrible. Officially, it is one to sixteen. But in reality, it will be one to 200, because I know of people who teach 400 students in one semester ... So teaching is very heavy and that compromises the space left for research. That is one reason why*

*people end up doing easier parts of research and not the kind of research that they would normally wish to do.*

This is compounded by the burden of administrative tasks that take scholars away from their core academic functions. As another manager reported:

*We find that academics often have to do clerical duties like registering students. You sit the whole week in an office or some conference room registering students manually. And this means that you don't even move an inch until the registration is done. That's not all. The production of transcripts and grades and the invigilation of exams are all done by the academics. So they spend maybe a third of their time doing clerical duties like those.*

Though this temporal challenge is mentioned frequently in discussions of African scholarly communication – and was a constant refrain at UB, UoM and UNAM – its commonplaceness as an explanation for reduced research capacity cannot be trivialised.<sup>149</sup> It also stands as one of the more difficult challenges to overcome unless the university can hire more academics or re-assign certain administrative tasks to graduate students or clerical staff, either of which would require significant money and capacity.

### **e-Infrastructure**

Despite the various financial constraints that our Southern African universities face, they are nonetheless relatively well-resourced compared to many other African universities. However, when compared to an “ideal” research and communication environment, scholars were able to point to various e-infrastructure challenges that they hope will be improved.

At UB, for instance, when asked what technological challenges the university faced in its research endeavours, the only one that was brought up with any consistency was the slow internet speed (low bandwidth) of the university broadband system. This is, of course, a relative concept, but the SCAP team saw first-hand how lengthy download times led to websites timing out (not rendering pages because it took too long) and how it slowed down research work that would be achieved much more quickly with a higher-speed connection. This slowness was also recognised by the administration, which has embargoed certain high-traffic sites, such as Facebook, between 8am and 5pm. This serves another purpose as well, to keep students focused on academic rather than social activities, but it is primarily meant to preserve the limited bandwidth for educational work.

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149 The CHET/HERANA reports on universities and economic development in Africa assess teaching loads at eight African universities according to official student:staff ratios. At UB, the authors indicate that in 2001, the student-staff ratio was 1:14, but by 2007, it was 1:27, almost doubling in just six years (Cloete, Bailey & Maassen 2011: 27). They conclude that this was “manageable” (2011: xix) for teaching purposes, and that the numbers do “not support the stereotype of ‘mass overcrowding’ in African higher education, certainly not at flagship universities” (2011: xix). While it may be true that the teaching loads are “manageable”, our ethnographic and interview data suggest that UB teaching loads (at least for Humanities staff) are substantial enough to hinder research production significantly. We find the student:staff ratio too blunt an indicator to reveal how teaching and teaching-related duties impact scholars’ temporal regimes.

Low bandwidth is a problem elsewhere in Africa, but it is often accompanied by a general lack of technological facilities. This is not the case at UB, which is relatively well provisioned, boasting an institutional repository (IR), staff and student computers, a state-of-the-art archival scanner, high-powered research management software, etc. Thus, for the most part, the university has the technology it needs, but the challenge it faces is in developing an e-infrastructure strategy that utilises not only this technology, but leverages the university's human capital to maximise the production and dissemination of research.

At UoM, FoS scholars have access to a certain level of e-infrastructure – such as the basic requirements for computers and broadband internet – but when it comes to the technologies necessary for enhancing scholarly communication, that access is either lacking or achieved without any corresponding strategy.

For instance, UoM does not have an IR, one of the standard technologies that universities can utilise to curate, profile and disseminate their scholars' research. The establishment of such a dissemination platform, however, requires significant human capacity as well as a clearly articulated strategy, a locus for that technology and a workflow process. In this case, the lack of a communications strategy explains the absence of the IR and means that, if the university hopes to enhance scholarly communication without it, UoM must seek alternative options that either leverage national or regional capabilities or incentivise individual scholars to make their own work more visible.

The university also does not employ the open source Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform for publishing its *University of Mauritius Research Journal*. This means that, even though the journal allows some of its articles to be downloaded for free in an open access fashion, it lacks many of the features that would make the journal more attractive, visible and easy to use.

Some scholars and librarians also suggest that “the lack of adequate affordable bandwidth” hinders scholars' research efforts, though this appears to have been improved recently.

In some ways it is premature to identify e-infrastructure gaps in the absence of a communication strategy against which to assess them, but it is clear that these gaps will remain a challenge until they are addressed.

### **Skills and capacity**

As Southern African universities start to engage with new scholarly communication technologies, it becomes clearer what skills and capacity are necessary for embracing the technologies. Sometimes this capacity is taken for granted, especially by funders who provide various technologies to institutions on the assumption that a given category of employee (such as librarians) can operate and maintain them. That is not always the case, as our research showed.

For instance, UB personnel recognise that they have some skills gaps that, if bridged, would improve their research and communication. When asked if they would benefit from training in certain research and dissemination activities, 61% of FoH survey respondents said that they would for “publishing in journals,” 61% for “publishing books or monographs,” 95% for “using open access platforms” and 78% for “engaging in Web 2.0 activities.” While most have some familiarity with these processes, they believe that some directed instruction to streamline their efforts would be useful.

This is also true for librarians who understand that, as scholarly communication evolves, their skills set to meet the new demands must also evolve. This requires occasional, yet consistent, training for keeping up with trends and offering the best service to academics. As one librarian intimated, this also means helping to train professors in how to use the resources that the library has. As the library becomes more of a digital research hub, scholars need to know how to use its powerful search tools.

This is also true for UNAM FHSS staff members, who say that they would benefit from training in certain research and dissemination processes: 85% said that they would for “publishing in journals,” 87% for “publishing books or monographs,” 91% for “using open access platforms” and 80% for “engaging in Web 2.0 activities.” While many have some familiarity with these practices, most believe that some directed instruction to streamline their efforts would be useful.

UNAM librarians agree, hoping that their work can become more “professionalised” through greater training and responsibility. As one said, “the majority of librarians in the country and beyond have not been trained in aspects of management” but “I would like us to become more than just traditional librarians. I would like librarians to become information managers.”

During SCAP’s visits to both UB and UNAM over the course of two years, it hired a consultant to carry out a number of training sessions with librarians at both institutions regarding the use of DSpace (a metadata language for profiling and curating digital objects on IRs). Her experiences with these librarians revealed the extent to which both universities are reliant on the library staff to help to promote new forms of scholarly communication, and also how unprepared many are for that role, as they were originally educated to be “traditional” librarians, dealing with paper materials and rigid classification procedures. The move to digital has upended all of the certainties of their field, requiring a new strategy and set of skills for leveraging human capacity at the university.

### **African marginalisation**

Finally, all Southern African scholars must contend with Africa’s marginality politically (Mkandawire 2011); geographically, in that it is located comparatively far away from the major population centres of Eurasia and North America (Olukoshi 2009: 17); and intellectually, in that it is a small player in the competitive world of academic knowledge production (Abrahams, Burke & Mouton 2010; ASSAF 2006; Gray 2006; Limb 2007;

Tijssen 2007). While this condition shapes many aspects of African higher education, Africa's political, economic and geographic marginality are not issues that most Southern African scholars get overly concerned about, simply because none of these situations are easily changed. However, the relative invisibility of African scholarship globally does discourage and upset them, especially since they believe that this is unnecessary.

At UB, for instance, one professor explained, "We really want to draw attention that there's a lot of good material, a lot of research that has been generated within Africa with some really good results, comparable to whatever is being done elsewhere. But nobody seems to know about it." This sentiment animates the response that many UB scholars have had to the potential of open access scholarly communication, seeing various Web 2.0 tools as opportunities for raising the visibility of their work.

This coincides with another concern about the marginalised status of African language research (both *on* and *in* African languages) which, for the most part, remains unrecognised on the continent and beyond. As one scholar lamented:

*We have colleagues who are experts in African languages, and they write their publications and most of their research is on African languages and they publish African books in African languages. But when they get out there, they're not considered as experts, because all they've been writing is about either Zulu, Tswana, Ndebele ... and they are experts in their own right. Their works are really worth thousands and thousands of pulas, or dollars, but because they are writing using their local languages, or their main interest is in writing using the local language, they are not considered as experts out there. So I don't know how we can really address some of those concerns.*

This is a situation that African scholars have some ability to respond to and change, if at least on the continent, though the impetus to challenge the dominance of European languages in African higher education appears to have subsided since the early years of the independence era.

For UCT Comm scholars, the real problem is that they lack face-to-face contact with the masses of scholars in their fields who are located primarily in the North. They do their best to attend international conferences and invite overseas scholars to the university to share their research, but they can never achieve the density of engagements – and the broadness of exposure – that typify intellectual exchange at well-resourced Northern institutions. Thus, according to one SALDRU member:

*Another big challenge is just access to a lot of quality research. So if you go sit for a year through the development seminar at Michigan or Princeton or Chicago, in terms of what you're going to be exposed to, [it] stimulates and generates new ideas. [But] you're in a sleepy hollow here [at UCT], so ... this is just a very small pond. We all know each other, whereas in the bigger US market – and within their actual institutions – it's close for people to come and visit and so they get exposed to a whole lot of stuff.*

This geographic distance and the relatively low number of academics in the region also make it difficult for UCT scholars to set the agendas in their respective fields. As one university manager stated, “The challenge is to kind of make our issues *the* issue.” For instance:

*The EU will have this wonderful funding available, but ultimately it's their agenda. And you've got to fit in with that agenda. And how do you do it in such a way that you manage to research the issues you want to research, get the money you want and somehow play their game? It's not easy, because always it seems to be that the agenda comes from up North and then we get tacked on.*

A number of scholars reiterated this concern, at both the funding and disciplinary levels. They find it difficult to set the intellectual agenda in their field, as the power structures that shape what are considered “important” debates – especially through journal editorial decisions – are located in the global North. This reduces the type of visibility that scholars would be able to achieve if they were able to set the terms of a debate globally.

For UoM FoS scholars, by virtue of their relative isolation on an island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, as well as their political affiliation with Africa, they remain not only distant from the major population and education centres of Eurasia and North America, but lack the density of numbers necessary to shape the agendas of their disciplines. This is not something that they spend much time worrying about, but they do understand that it causes certain difficulties in collaborating with international scholars, in researching topics beyond their island, and in enhancing the visibility of their publications.

Lastly, for UNAM's FHSS scholars, the relative invisibility of African scholarship globally is upsetting, especially since many believe that this leads to their work being discounted. As one professor explained, “Africa is marginalised both in terms of funding and possibilities for dissemination and as academics from the humanities and social sciences, the knowledge they are contributing is not always seen as valid.” This sentiment animates the response that many UNAM scholars have to their marginalisation by the North because, “What is important is that the North accepts us as Africans and African researchers as equal partners. This is important, that they discuss and look at our theories and our research as such with the same interest as we do.”

UNAM scholars, more than any others that we interviewed, felt a sense of injustice when they considered the question of their marginality. Unlike scholars from other universities we profiled, where such North–South power dynamics have shaped their research activities for years, UNAM scholars are experiencing this in a fresh way for two reasons: first, they emerged from an intense liberation process only two decades ago and remain emotionally committed to challenging inequitable social dynamics that they face, whether politically or academically; second, now that they are starting to engage more with the globally competitive world of scholarly research and dissemination, they feel insistent that they should be considered equal partners with their Northern peers in these endeavours. They have not become habituated to this state of affairs.

However, as the institution ages and scholars continue to experience this marginality, it will be interesting to see whether they accommodate themselves to this stubbornly persistent reality or whether they continue to agitate for greater recognition from their Northern colleagues. As a practical measure, the fact that they are investing in local communication channels, such as their own journal and IR, suggests that they do not plan to challenge their marginality in verbal terms alone, but through meaningful action as well, by creating communication channels that promote their own perspectives.

## Contradictions

In addition to the challenges listed above, the scholarly communication ecosystems at these universities and faculties are also beset by a number of contradictions, those elements within the system that hinder it from operating optimally, usually in a directly oppositional manner. Unlike challenges, which are typically obstacles that emanate from broader social, political or financial contexts, contradictions emerge from within the activity system and can be remedied from within it.

The primary mechanism by which we identified contradictions in our research sites' scholarly communication ecosystems was by assessing them through the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) triangles that we employed during our change lab workshops. This was an intensive process (discussed in Chapter 2) that allowed SCAP and the academics to explore every node of their activity systems, evaluating whether there were any misalignments (contradictions) in them that could be addressed.

Some of the contradictions we identified were likely temporary by-products of some of the universities' transitions from teaching universities to research universities. In this period of flux, new tensions and stresses have been placed on the scholarly communication ecosystem, placing a number of processes in opposition with each other. But these contradictions could become more permanent if they are not dealt with soon. Ideally, these contradictions would stop forming obstacles in the activity system and rather perform as "productive tensions" that lead to higher levels of research productivity, innovation and dissemination (a concept we will explore below).

In this section, we analyse five key contradictions currently impacting these various scholarly communication ecosystems: articulation vs implementation; open vs closed communication; teaching vs research vs administration vs practice; quantity vs quality; prestige vs relevance; and scholar-to-scholar vs scholar-to-community/government communication.

### Articulation vs implementation

The two universities that possessed "centralised" institutional cultures (strong at UB, weak at UoM) have both produced useful research strategies and policies for rewarding and incentivising research (and, to a lesser extent, dissemination), but in many ways, these were not translated into meaningful action in the scholarly communication ecosystem.



For instance, one of the reasons why SCAP was keen to work with UB was its impressive level of policy development regarding research production and open access dissemination. For instance, after producing a short policy document in 2002 signalling its desire to become a more research-intensive university, it produced a bevy of policy documents in 2008 detailing how it planned to become a fully fledged research university by 2021. This coincided with the roll-out of policies for its open access IR. The collection of associated policy documents is thorough, imaginative and far-sighted, anticipating issues that will emerge over time as the institution grows into a research role.

Yet these well-articulated policies have not delivered their intended outcomes for two key reasons. First, they are the product of managerial processes that failed to secure sufficient academic staff buy-in. Because of this, many scholars have actively resisted such policies which they claim are meant to enhance the prestige of the administration. This belongs to the discussion above concerning the managerial institutional culture, but these specific instances show the unexpected ways in which that debate takes place. Even useful policies which would genuinely enhance scholarly communication are targeted for resistance by scholars who feel disempowered and alienated with each new managerial dictate.

Second, these policies lack effective enforcement mechanisms, making them feel more like optional guidelines for the academic staff. This is compounded by the fact that the administration has burdened itself with a number of obligations that it needs to fulfil before scholars can even start to comply with the policies. Thus, for instance, the UBRISA policy calls for academics to self-deposit their work onto the IR, but only after they receive training. Yet according to the scholars we interviewed, this had not occurred.<sup>150</sup>

Moreover, because there are no positive incentives (such as money or PMS points) to induce scholars to submit their materials to the IR, nor are there any penalties (such as docked PMS points) for failing to comply with the IR submission policy, the IR does not achieve what it was meant to. In fact, in this instance, the administration has left the process to the librarians who have started to populate the IR by “harvesting” UB scholars’ outputs from journal publishers’ websites. When strategic goals such as open access dissemination are achieved in this way, it does not lead to a self-sustaining open communication culture.

At the University of Mauritius, while the administration has not yet written a communications strategy for the research its scholars produce, it has developed useful strategic plans covering a number of related areas, including research production, innovation and development. The two primary documents are the UoM Strategic Plan 2006–2015 and the UoM Strategic Research and Innovation Framework (SRIF) 2009–2015 (discussed in Chapter 4). Both of these documents align university strategy with that of the national government, which wants to see local research feed into industry and innovation. Thus, the core mission of the university is “the creation and dissemination of knowledge and

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150 According to an academic who attended the one and, at the time of writing, only UBRISA training meeting, scholars never received the training they were supposed to because it turned into a debate about whether scholars should get paid for this extra work of depositing. This outcome also meant that they scholars never learned the skills that they needed to train other members of their departments.

understanding for the citizens of Mauritius” which it plans to achieve through fostering “research to sustain economic development and growth” (UoM 2009).

Unfortunately, while many of the guidelines provided in these strategy documents are desirable, and would contribute to achieving the university’s goals, they are not yet implemented. For example, from the SRIF:

- Research prizes in recognition of outstanding accomplishments in research.

From the UoM Strategic Plan:

- Encourage staff by providing performance-related incentives/rewards scheme.
- Create alternate paths for promotion.
- Give credit for projects involving community development.
- Partner with community sector organisations to further socially desirable goals.

These are notable proposals and would go a long way in helping the university to realise its research and innovation goals. But the fact that they are not implemented begs the question whether the university has the capacity or political will to do so. As we have mentioned before, the university has recently gone through a difficult leadership transition which unsettled any consistency that might have developed in implementing these strategies in the past. Indeed, most scholars felt that these strategies are now in doubt until a new VC chooses whether to adopt them as his/her own, or whether to establish new ones.

The problem going forwards will be trying to develop a coherent, integrated dissemination policy to complement the various research and innovation strategies while at the same time assuring that, once written, they are implemented consistently.

### Open vs closed communication

One of the starker contradictions in UB’s scholarly communication ecosystem concerns the misalignment between the university’s IR (UBRISA) and the official UB website. On the IR, UB scholarship is showcased to the world in an OA manner; on the website, UB scholars and their work are rendered essentially invisible in favour of official mission statements, managerial organograms and secretarial contact details. One platform is open, the other essentially closed.

As the UB Academic Staff (2012: 6) report on the state of the university reveals:

*The University of Botswana website fails academic staff members as it does not allow them to place their (full) profiles online as is the case with other universities (even those from poorer countries than our own). As a result, our visibility on the net is next to non-existent. Universities are ranked on the basis of good university websites where staff members periodically update and showcase their new research and teaching activities online. As a result, UB is invisible online and therefore receives poor ratings.*

Visitors to the site do not get a sense of the kind of intellectual power that a department has nor of its research strengths. More worryingly, this approach fails to leverage the kinds of benefits that come from public profiling: students can seek out professors with similar interests, staff can highlight their contributions to a field and scholars outside UB can see who they might want to collaborate with on a research project at the university.

Many academics feel this level of administrative rigidity is unnecessary. As one scholar said, “The UB Public Relations department controls websites, so scholars cannot change their web pages without great effort – they feel infantilised by this level of control, which they don’t see at other international universities.” Another scholar complained, “We don’t have individual websites, we don’t have faculty websites, we don’t have departmental websites. We have only one university website which does not have anything to do with us [scholars]. It has everything to do with governance: who is in power, who is the director, how many sub-directors do they have, whatever.”

But the management’s tight control of the site has also made academics sceptical of the administration’s motives for creating the IR, something that, in theory, would enhance individual scholars’ reputations. Yet even though the IR profiles their work, they felt it to be a mechanism for promoting the university administration, not themselves.

This cynical view offers a way of making sense of the apparent contradiction between the “closed” website and the “open” IR: while the former shares institutional and departmental mission statements and the latter shares academics’ outputs, neither offers any detailed information about the staff who fulfil those missions or the faculty who produce those outputs. Their individual personalities are submerged under a broader (monolithic) collective “UB” identity.<sup>151</sup> In a managerial institutional culture, this approach makes sense, as it accords the administration the primary role in determining the configuration of that institutional identity.

However, while this communication strategy is consistent with the aim of reproducing managerial power, it contradicts the administration’s own stated desires of basing its scholarly communication policies on openness, collaboration and innovation.

In some ways, this contradiction mimics the differences between the Web 1.0 approach to internet communication (static, owner-controlled websites “delivering” information to passive consumers) and the Web 2.0 approach (dynamic, user-influenced websites “cross-sharing” information between active co-constructors). UB’s official website is a classic Web 1.0 artefact, well-suited to its managerial sensibilities. But the new technologies that it hopes to employ to raise its prestige (such as the IR) call for a more open, dynamic, and responsive approach to both content producers (UB staff members) and users (students and global visitors). The fact that the management has utilised the same techniques for managing the UB website as UBRISA has made scholars disinterested in submitting their content to it.

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151 Even on the IR, where a faculty member’s name is attached to his or her paper, there is no corresponding personal profile to which one could link to find out more about the author.

This contradiction will not end soon, as it belongs to a broader debate taking place at the university concerning the virtue and viability of the managerial system (UB Academic Staff 2012). Thus while the university continues to invest in impressive technologies to enhance its scholarly communication potential, the challenges surrounding the questions of power and strategy will likely continue to impact the effectiveness of these technologies.

### Teaching vs research vs administration vs practice

As part of their job obligations, Southern African scholars are typically supposed to teach, conduct research and provide service to the community (institutional, academic and local/national). However, in periods of transition for a university – such as between a teaching and research mission – which obligations should be accorded greater importance can become unclear. At UCT, research clearly trumps teaching and service; however, because the Comm faculty is made up of both traditional academics and professional practitioners (in industry), some feel pulled in too many directions at once, which impacts their work. At UoM and UNAM, scholars feel that their “real” obligation is still to teach, but that their “official” obligation (by which they are assessed) is to publish research. This makes for an awkward balancing act as they also feel pulled in two directions, a fact that compromises their work in both respects.

At UCT, the administration is highly responsive to changes in the global university ranking system. However, ranking systems tend to play up the aspects of scholarly activity that can be easily measured and compared – such as levels of published research output in WoS-rated journals – rather than those that are more difficult to quantify, such as the quality of teaching or the level of engagement with society or industry. For the UCT Comm faculty, which has long had a strong tradition of teaching, research and practice (with industry), the pressure to focus more on research has proved to be a challenge for those in professional fields where teaching, training and industrial engagement are more important for their students than their research outputs.

Many Comm students will use their skills in a practical, applied manner in the future (as, say, accountants), thus a good portion of the Comm faculty’s efforts must be to train practitioners of a specialised craft. This means that teaching has a central place for the staff, especially for members in professionally oriented departments such as Accounting. It is through their students who go on to become employed practitioners that many Comm faculty leave their most lasting mark in higher education. Indeed, because of this, the College of Accounting is judged by a different set of criteria than the rest of the Commerce faculty.

Second, in other departments, such as Economics, faculty members are primarily assessed by their published research contributions to the field. They teach and engage with the broader discipline of economics, of course, but research holds pride of place in such a department, and it is becoming increasingly important in every other department.

Lastly, there are faculty members in both Economics and Accounting who hold industry positions as well, who teach and research at the university while also working for, or

consulting with, operational business firms. These are practitioners who bring their experience to the classroom, but for whom the academic identity is a partial one.

These contrasting pressures and motivations play a dynamic, and usually positive, role in driving academic activity in the faculty, but many scholars (especially in Accounting) believe that they are being forced to take on a greater research role which will negatively impact their ability to teach or engage with industry. One of the key reasons this is important is because, as one academic noted, “For us, new knowledge actually happens in the business world, and as accountants we react to that. Because we say, ‘well, this is a new type of financial product or new type of transaction, how would we do the accounting for it?’ A lot of the guidelines are developed outside by institutions and best practices and professional bodies.”

Moreover, research outputs do not provide the same financial incentive that industry engagements do. As one scholar explained, “We’ve got this conflict: if you do more teaching, you get paid; if you write a textbook, you get paid; if you get consultancy, you get paid; if you do research, you get nothing. Why would you then do research?” She continued, “There’s a big conflict between working here, having to research, having to do these outputs vs working in commerce and industry, not having to do research and earning double or three times the salary.”

Thus the Comm faculty, which includes both academic and professional departments, incorporates a variety of norms, traditions and values regarding what a scholar’s optimal contribution should be. The challenge is to preserve the strength of those differences while responding to the pressures for greater research production and the need for a more open dissemination plan.

The UoM has been a teaching-oriented university for most of its history, but over the last decade it has tried to ramp up its research production so that it helps transition the country to a “knowledge economy” where Mauritius acts as an “innovation hub” for the region. The FoS has been central to that transition, producing about 80% of research outputs at the university. However, while the university has identified strategies for enhancing research production, it has not reduced its commitment to the teaching enterprise. This has led to a challenging situation for many academics who feel that they are still expected to be full-time teaching staff while at the same time dealing with new research demands. Because teaching remains the core service that academics provide to the university, they feel torn between these two duties.

For many scholars, the teaching load means that there is simply not enough time in the day for research. As one shared, “When you do 270 hours of lectures and other hidden time spent on teaching activities, there is not much time left for writing papers.” For others, the mental and emotional toll of teaching renders them unfit for productive research activities:

*We have 270 hours annually [to teach]. And the tutorial and practical, the number of hours are divided by two. So if you do ten hours of practical, it would be counted as five hours. So it means that sometimes you can be doing something*

*like 325 hours annually, so when you have done three, four, five hours a day, you're burnt out, you don't want to write something.*

In sum, “Teaching requirements impact on research massively. We have far too much teaching to do ... We don't have teaching assistants as well to help us.”

However, teaching is not the only burden. The amount of time FoS scholars say that is taken up by administrative work also hinders their research opportunities. We heard multiple respondents say that “red tape” was reducing their research effectiveness. As one scholar stated, “You have to go through too much paperwork [to do research and accomplish normal academic tasks].” He then offered a real example of how these bureaucratic requirements impact daily activities:

*My technician wants a document spiral bound, but he has to write a letter – going through the Head of Physics, going through the Dean of Faculty, going up to the Registrar and then coming back – for him or her to do the spiral binding. It's absurd. You take this document, you go outside to the shop which is next to the university and pay 25 rupees, but to do that in the university, you have to go through this.*

Part of the reason for this situation is simply the accumulation of bureaucratic processes that centralise power while at the same time decreasing efficiency. But another part of the reason is that, despite the large administrative staff numbers at the university, they are not located in positions that help academics with their own administrative needs. “We have to do everything ourselves. It's very heavy administration, which is a problem.”

Of course, teaching and administration form a key part of an academic's obligations, but it appears that UoM is structured in such a way as to maximise these obligations over research – which it claims it is trying to encourage. However, this contradiction between teaching and administration vs research need not last forever, though to change it will require a massive restructuring effort within the university.

At the moment, this state of affairs constitutes a contradiction, but in the future, if the administration is able to align its activities with scholars, then the obligations of teaching, administration and research will simply exist in a productive tension with each other, as they do in many other universities globally.

Lastly, like most African universities, UNAM has focused on teaching undergraduate students during most of its history. (This is also true of UB, which experiences this contradiction, but our discussion of UNAM will suffice to make the point about this tension in the various activity systems). In Namibia, that focus is now changing – or at least expanding – to include the training of graduate students at UNAM and a greater emphasis on the production of research outputs by the staff. It is still early days in this process; however, many staff see this transition as a fraught experience with teaching and research existing in competition with and isolation from each other. They do not yet feel that both teaching and researching are equally important components of their work, but

that the new research requirements have been simply piled on top of their heavy teaching schedules, placing teaching and researching at odds with each other, not in tandem.

A number of academics suggested that there was an imbalance between these enterprises, with teaching remaining prioritised in reality. As one scholar noted, “The move from a teaching-focused university to a research-focused university is also part of the problem – some lecturers see themselves as glorified high school teachers. Moreover, being the only university, there is a strong national imperative to teach.”

This reality is compounded by the simple fact that there are not enough staff members to handle the teaching loads: “This [reallocation of teaching time] is not happening. The major problem is that we are short-staffed. We have got this formula, teaching some 60%, research [30% and service 10%]. We are not keeping that. I think teaching is 80%, research is 20%. Something like that.”

This notion of being completely defined by their teaching loads was echoed by others as well: “I agree that there’s still really a big problem here. The university is trying to do something about it so that they can reduce the teaching load, but just because of the shortage of teaching staff, you just end up teaching a lot. We are looked down upon by other academics from other universities. Every time they ask me, ‘how many hours a week do you teach?’ I tell them and they say, ‘What?! It’s like you are in a secondary school. This is not a university.’”

Indeed, the general consensus was that their core responsibility was to teach a full load each semester while research had to be considered in light of this primary obligation. The fact that there were often staff shortages meant that this obligation would not shift soon. Yet “most of us lecturers really feel that the teaching load is just too much. It doesn’t leave us enough time really to do research. Most lecturers are overloaded.”

Moreover, others suggest that administrative obligations are also weighty, hindering research efforts. Indeed, UNAM was the only university we engaged where scholars self-reported spending a greater percentage of time on administrative work than research. “I think there is not only teaching here. Some of them have to do administration work, which is even more now.” Indeed, “there’s a lot of administration that needs to be done. Most academics serve on several committees within the department.”

UNAM’s management is aware of this problem, with one administrator explaining that “we might not have that luxury of having a university which we can say, per se, this is a research university. We have a mixture of both [teaching and research].”

But some suggest that, for the truly ambitious, there are ways around this contradiction. “You find that even people with a high teaching load, they still publish. You know, you come here weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, you find the same type of cars out there [in the parking lot, of the staff doing research work] ... It requires a lot of dedication ... There’s a teaching load, yes, but also maybe with a little bit of determination and commitment, it’s still doable.” This is an important sentiment, that if scholars made other certain types of sacrifices, that they could achieve their research

goals as well. But the key question is whether a strong research culture could ever be built on such a massive sacrifice (of family time, weekends, holidays and so forth). It is likely unsustainable and thus only partaken of by the most committed individuals.

This suggests that UNAM scholars currently experience the teaching and research missions as contradictory, not complementary. They understand the value of research to the teaching process and enjoy bringing their new knowledge to the classroom, but they also understand that, while the management may want to become more research-oriented in the future, the institution is still largely structured according to its long-held teaching obligations.

This dichotomy between teaching and research is not a timeless or static contradiction, but rather a temporary challenge that is the product of the institution's transition from a teaching-focused to a more research-focused university. At some point in the future, UNAM scholars will hopefully experience these dual imperatives as part of an integrated whole, not as compartmentalised features of their work lives. But in the meantime, university scholars and managers must continue to negotiate the difficult terrain of this transition period.

### Quantity vs quality

In an ideal situation, scholars would continuously produce a large number of high-quality outputs. In reality, there is often a trade-off between the speed or volume at which scholarly outputs are produced and the quality they can achieve.

At UB, everyone would prefer to have both, but FoH scholars agree that they are currently being incentivised to focus on quantity over quality. Many suggest that the annual performance assessments create an incentive just to produce anything to “get the box ticked” at evaluation time. This can, understandably, lead academics who are pressed for time and resources to focus more on just getting it done than on ensuring that it reaches a certain standard of quality. This notion is reinforced by another scholar who said, “PMS leads to low-quality outputs because there is constant pressure for regular outputs – also, big efforts like books are not weighted much more than journal articles.”

This focus on quantity may be due to the fact that the research mission is relatively new to the university, thus the management may feel that it is more important to get scholars in the habit of producing outputs, regardless of quality at this point. In any event, the PMS does offer greater points for outputs published in “high-impact” outlets such as WoS-rated journals, but for most scholars, they do not have the time to aim for those highly selective publications. To satisfy the minimum demands of the PMS, they are incentivised to produce quick, short pieces for publications that have high acceptance rates.

Because of this, many UB FoH scholars do not factor in quality considerations when choosing the journals or publishers that they engage. For instance, in our interviews, not a single FoH member mentioned Impact Factor as something that they considered when choosing which journal to submit their work to, a consideration that one would have expected to hear mentioned (even if as a low priority) by at least a few scholars if they



were concerned about “quality”. This is reinforced by the fact that a number of scholars reported authoring or editing books that were published by so-called predatory publishers (i.e. publishers that claim to provide academic support services – such as peer review, editing and proofreading – while in reality offering only some, or none, of them, yet then requiring the scholars to pay for the outputs to be “published”.)<sup>152</sup> The UB FoH scholars themselves did not see these publishers as “predatory” and were largely unaware of the debates surrounding them. This suggests that, when pressed by the institutional demand to produce publications, many scholars will seek the path of least resistance and go for publishers that are distinguished not by quality, but simply by accessibility.

While this tension between quantity and quality exists at every university, and is experienced by every scholar personally, it is often a productive tension, one that pushes scholars to find a balance between their research efforts and their values. At UB, scholars describe this tension not as a creative one, but as a contradictory one, where they have to choose between one or the other. As mentioned above, this may simply be a temporary feature of the university’s transition to a research mission, but it may also become the foundations of the type of research culture that UB builds over the next decades (one that rewards quantity over quality). Whatever the case, both the management and the staff must remain keenly aware of the type of research environment they are creating with their policies and actions.

### **Prestige vs relevance**

With the move to a research mission for many Southern African universities, the prospects of increasing their relative prestige regionally or internationally have become a real possibility. As our discussion of rewards and incentives showed in Chapter 5, most of our universities were keen to incentivise scholars to produce high-Impact Factor research that would raise the prestige of the institution. They were to do this while at the same time remaining committed to producing research that was socially and developmentally relevant to their countries. While some institutions, such as UB, have managed to strike a balance between these two desires – for both prestige and relevance – others have struggled to find equilibrium.

For instance, by almost any measure, UCT is the most prestigious, highest-ranking university in Africa. It has earned this reputation through the sustained production of high-quality research and the employment of world-renowned scholars, scientists and doctors (including the highest number of NRF- and A-rated scholars in the country currently).<sup>153</sup> A number of further factors contribute to this reputation, but perhaps key among them is that UCT has, both during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras, sought

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152 Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado Denver, keeps a list of what he regards as “predatory publishers” on his *Scholarly Open Access* blog. Despite criticisms of certain aspects of his methodology for determining what counts as a predatory publisher, his list is regarded as the most authoritative at the time of writing. It was clear from our discussions with UB staff that few were aware of this list, nor of the implications of dealing with publishers on this list. See: <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>

153 UCT has the highest number of NRF-rated researchers and A-rated researchers of any university. It currently has 416 (of 2,471 total) NRF-rated researchers, including 33 A-rated scientists. The University of Witwatersrand comes second with 16 A-rated scientists and about 250 NRF-rated scholars. See DIRCO (20 September 2013) SA home to Africa’s top two universities, available at: [www.dirco.gov.za/dircoenewsletter/newsflash76-20-09-2013.html](http://www.dirco.gov.za/dircoenewsletter/newsflash76-20-09-2013.html); and Kemantha Govender (9 April 2013) UCT records highest number of NRF-rated researchers in SA, *Research SA*, available at: <http://researchsa.co.za/news.php?id=1453>

to conform itself to the standards and values (autonomy, liberalism, etc.) of the globally dispersed but Northern-dominant Anglophone academic community which plays a normative role in adjudicating “excellence”, “quality” and “prestige” in higher education.

Indeed, for universities in Africa, prestige is largely gained through the successful compartment to Northern-derived norms and standards about what should define a tertiary institution. As the Times Higher Education rankings methodology suggests, this includes measures such as the number of WoS-rated journal articles produced by the university’s academic staff, the number of citations those outputs supposedly obtain (their Impact Factors), the university’s industry income and its level of “internationalisation”. It does not necessarily include more abstract metrics such as the institution’s developmental impact on the local community.<sup>154</sup>

At UCT, this achievement has encouraged the administration to strive for even greater international recognition. This is a largely beneficial goal, as one manager explained, because “it means that you can attract top quality academics and top quality international students, the more highly ranked you are.” In many ways, the quest for and achievement of prestige and recognition has a snowball effect, leading to yet more prestige, recognition and opportunities for the university.

But the administration’s quest for prestige can appear to be an unproductive preoccupation at times. For instance, when UCT dropped 10 places – from 103rd to 113th – in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings in October 2012, a top director quickly sent out an email to the university community explaining that the management was both “delighted” and “disappointed” by the results. He stated that he was “enormously proud” of the university for its “achievements” and that “this kind of fluctuation is not a worry.” But this sentiment was later undercut that day when he sent a second communiqué which suggested that, if one looked at the scores of the various categories making up the total final score, the THE figures showed that UCT had actually improved.<sup>155</sup> The result of this impression management effort was that it revealed that the university believed that the THE rankings were extremely important, that they were worth dissecting in detail (reinforcing the ranking’s credibility) and that the administration was indeed worried about the university’s drop in them.

This episode shows the difficult position that administrators are placed in when trying to justify their institutions’ “performance” based on arbitrary standards set elsewhere. Such rankings – while influencing to some degree how the public perceives universities’ value and prestige – are based on criteria that may or may not have anything to do with what a particular university believes is the best way to achieve its own mission or to assess its

154 See the Times Higher Education World University Ranking’s Methodology, available at: [www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2012-13/world-ranking/methodology](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2012-13/world-ranking/methodology)

155 As the statement read, “In fact, UCT’s scores rose over the year in all but one of the system’s measurement categories.” It was only in one category – “industry income” – where UCT’s score fell from 97.5 points to 87.3 points (weighted at 2.5% of the total score), thus negatively impacting UCT’s ranking more than was perhaps necessary. Thus, when seen in this light, UCT’s retreat in the rankings was not to overshadow the key point that “our ranking remains a measure of consistently high international standing and reputation.”

own performance. In this case, the administration does believe in key elements of what the rankings purport to rate, that of research excellence and productivity (prestige).

But the administration also knows that other key elements that it treasures – such as an Afropolitan identity or the production of research that is socially relevant and applicable in the local context – is absent from the rankings' criteria. Thus the university's sensitive response to its fluctuating fortunes in the rankings inadvertently reifies the rankings, a questionable outcome. As one manager stated, "The issue remains to what extent should the universities be pushing in that way if the criteria for a ranking are not conducive to contributing to the country in an appropriate way."

The contradiction between prestige and relevance at UCT goes much deeper than the preoccupation with public rankings, however. Through their internal reward and incentive structures, most UCT faculties continue to encourage the production of scholarly outputs in high-ranking journals, not because they are likely to have an increased social impact, but because they will then earn a high Impact Factor (which also influences many university ranking systems).

Of course, the desire for prestige need not conflict with the desire for relevance, but there is a danger when it starts to become the "real" measure of the university's value in its own eyes. What should simply be a productive tension between two values can end up becoming a distracting contradiction pushing the administration to set goals according to externally defined criteria rather than locally meaningful ones.

### **Scholar-to-scholar vs scholar-to-community/government communication**

As an extension of the discussion above, one of the key factors in the prestige vs relevance debate is how scholars communicate their research. In general, they are incentivised to communicate with other scholars through peer-reviewed publication channels, such as journals, books and conference proceedings. This scholarly exchange is crucial for the development of knowledge and the adjudication of ideas, but it is characterised by a long feedback loop in terms of when those ideas contribute to broader social, industrial or governmental discourses. Even when research could benefit community or national development, research outputs often remain trapped in the scholar-to-scholar communication nexus because they are inaccessible to non-academics who lack journal subscription access and who may be excluded by the discourse. Only after a long period of peer engagement do the key ideas emerge from that debate to shape other sectors of society.

For many debates, this is unproblematic. The long feedback loop assures that only the highest-quality ideas – which are eventually accepted as "knowledge" – emerge from the academy for public consumption (at least in theory). But in many cases, a shorter feedback loop would be more beneficial for communities, industries and governments, who seek fresh ideas to enhance development and promote innovation. If scholars were incentivised not only to produce outputs that are read by their peers, but outputs that are read (and "readable") by non-academic constituents who can use that knowledge in their own activities, they would increase the reach and impact of their research.

For instance, UCT scholars are primarily rewarded for producing articles, books and book chapters in high-ranking publications. They are not, however, incentivised to publish those outputs in OA journals (which would allow non-academics to read their research), nor are they encouraged to “translate” their work into accessible formats, such as briefing documents for government or civil society bodies. They receive minimal recognition for these efforts, thus if they do happen to produce such “alternative” outputs, it is often because they were asked to do so by a fee-paying consultancy or a funding agency, not because it forms part of a consistent, strategic approach to dissemination.

Hence, many scholars do have some experience in writing for a broader audience than just academics. Through consultancy work for industry or government, they take their rigorous academic research and write it in a way that their partners can understand and utilise. But these are thought of as “once-offs”, not part of a typical scholarly communication approach.

Many UCT Comm scholars also admit that they feel less confident writing for non-academic audiences, in part because they were never trained to do so. For them to be interested in producing more alternative outputs, they would require training or, better yet, assistance.

Despite these challenges, the potential for UCT academics to communicate with the broader public – especially civil society groups, industry and government – has never been greater because of the open platforms that they can utilise to share their research. Rather than just aiming to reach other scholars, they can now increase the number of constituents that respond to their work. This is not without its hazards, especially since much academic work is so specialised; however, it would be a mistake to think that no one outside the academy could understand or leverage that work. Only through open communication can the “law of unintended consequences” serve to increase the potential utility of an output as different audiences respond to it in light of their own needs.

At UoM, the strategies that have been developed by the administration – based on national policy guidelines – seek to encourage research that is developmentally relevant, industrially and commercially viable and politically useful (for policy purposes). This ambition takes research far beyond the confines of the academy and reaches out to new audiences in the community, in industry and in government. However, it is one thing for scholars to produce research that would be relevant for different audiences, but quite another to communicate that research with them. It is much easier to want scholarly work to speak to broader community, industry or governmental needs than it is to develop the incentives, structures and opportunities for that to occur.

At the moment, the university’s promotion guidelines favour the production of scholar-to-scholar outputs through books, journals and conference proceedings. While policy briefs, reports and op-eds – the types of outputs that are most likely to be read by non-academics – are given mild recognition in the promotion policy, this recognition is not at the level that would change the traditional scholar-to-scholar focus of research outputs.

Moreover, aside from senior scholars who have developed a reputation for expertise in their fields, many FoS scholars do not know how they would begin to share their specialised knowledge with non-academics, even if that knowledge was useful to them. They often have no training in how to write accessible briefs, reports or op-eds. Nor do they know how to get in touch with the relevant governmental or community liaisons who would be interested in their work. Essentially, platforms for connection between scholars and these other audiences would need to be established, especially between scholars and community leaders and also government leaders (as the university already has a formal office for connecting scholars with industry partners).

The challenge for the university will be to accept the value of this type of communication beyond the academy. After all, it is scholar-to-scholar communication that determines the prestige and success of UoM in the eyes of international peers. But it would be useful for the university to try to shorten the traditional feedback loop where possible by encouraging scholars to communicate their work beyond the academy to a broader set of audiences. Such a shortened feedback loop would help Mauritius to become a hub of innovation as it desires.

## Opportunities

With the above challenges and contradictions in mind, it is now important to consider which aspects of these Southern African universities' scholarly communication ecosystems are working well. The CHAT methodology allows us to do this because it not only shines a light on an ecosystem's contradictions, but illuminates areas of alignment (thereby allowing site members to leverage them and improve the functioning of the system as a whole). This is not only strategically sensible, but also allows us to move beyond any sense of Afro-pessimism that can start to creep into a discussion about African universities' "challenges" and "contradictions". In fact, these universities are already making crucial strides in the field of scholarly communication.

In this section, we identify promising alignments that arise from an analysis of the four university faculties' activity systems. We will do so by looking at the opportunities afforded by their institutional cultures, research infrastructures, reward and incentive structures, open access commitments, gateway statuses, virtuous funding cycles, e-infrastructure tools, innovation-focused intermediaries and quality assurance (QA) processes.

### Institutional culture

Institutional cultures tend to cut both ways, presenting both challenges for an optimal scholarly communication ecosystem and opportunities for enhancing it. Here we can nuance our understanding of the image of the institutional cultures discussed above.

For instance, despite the challenges that a managerial institutional culture portends for an academic community that desires some degree of autonomy and independence, most UB academics are familiar with and accepting of their top-down leadership structure. Indeed, many Batswana would say that they have benefited greatly from a similar form of "pater-

nalistic” national leadership (Holm 1987) that was able to steer them from severe poverty and illiteracy at independence to relative prosperity and opportunity today (Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe 2012). Thus, though UB academics have a number of concerns with the university management, they also understand how a strong, centralised structure offers opportunities that a decentralised authority would not.

First, one of the benefits of a strong administration is that, if the leadership embarks on a wise course of action, its decision can have a broad, positive impact on the entire institution. Take the university’s decision to embrace an open access ethic in its UBRISA operation guidelines in 2008. This would have been much more difficult to achieve if power were distributed across the institution and located in, say, the faculties. Moreover, a strong progressive leadership can overcome the objections of “conservative” faculty blocks that reject new research imperatives and the trend towards open scholarly communication.

Second, because the management is connected with the national government through politically appointed staff (such as the vice chancellor), the administration can play a powerful role in encouraging the production of research that benefits the broader Batswana community. Rather than allowing scholars to chase “prestige” at the expense of “relevance”, the management can play a role in supporting efforts by scholars to produce and disseminate research that will make a difference locally.

Third, though academics often feel that the administration is a bloated entity placed on top of them, a strong administration could play a much more robust role in arguing for a greater role of the university in driving national innovation and research. Rather than just managing academics, the administration could seek to turn its gaze outwards, pushing for a greater role in development with the government. It could act as a booster of the intellectual talent at the university, promoting its virtues and leveraging academics’ abilities. For the moment, the administration appears to be corralling academics so that they abide by the terms of their job descriptions rather than seeking to connect them with government ministers, NGOs and community leaders. This is an opportunity that a strong administration could take, however, to represent and promote actively the interests, insights and innovations that the UB staff have to offer.

At UCT, as was noted earlier, two elements characterise its institutional culture: power is decentralised, existing mostly at the faculty and individual levels of the hierarchy; and peer expectation is the most important factor driving research production. With a relatively autonomous and empowered academic staff operating in an environment of constant peer pressure to produce research outputs, it is not the desires of the administration that define this institution but rather the collective ambitions of the scholars as expressed through their faculties.

But the institution’s “collegial” culture does not mean that it is not also highly competitive and comparative. Indeed, as discussed earlier, UCT scholars and administrators are constantly comparing themselves to their international colleagues (often through rankings), competing for attention in a global knowledge exchange. This is good news for two reasons.

First, this is a highly efficient ecosystem for producing research, requiring far less bureaucratic energy than other ecosystems defined by either managerialism or absolute autonomy. Peers regulate each other's behaviour in a collegial environment, goading and encouraging each other to produce yet further research, in comparison to other systems where such inducements must come from a strong centralised administration or from scholars' own fluctuating sense of motivation. But when research production relies too much on external (managerial) or intrinsic (individual) motivators, resistance (to an overbearing central administration) or disinterest (as a result of flagging personal desire) in the research enterprise can ensue. While UCT scholars face the same kinds of personal motivation issues as scholars elsewhere, their buy-in and participation in a peer-regulated research-driven environment gives it a sustainability and consistency that is difficult to match in other types of institutional environments.

Second, the competitive nature of this environment means that, even though many UCT Comm scholars appear locked in a "traditional" way of disseminating research, they nevertheless remain aware of the activities of their peers who might be experimenting with new open communication approaches. Though most scholars at UCT have not been "early adopters" of open communication methods, they are certain to embrace them if open access becomes the globally dominant norm. Indeed, the administration is already in discussions about how to engage with open access going forwards. Hence, a competitive environment is a responsive environment, a key element that will shape the future of scholarly communication at UCT.

Finally, regarding young UNAM, its developmental mission remains strong. Scholars and managers are animated by the contribution that they feel they can make to the nation through their education work at the institution. The university administration, as well as many scholars, hold a close association with the government, keeping their developmental mission in line with national strategies and policies. As one manager noted, "not all research is determined by these ideas, but we try to align our research agendas to the National Development Programme to put the goals in the country ... so in a given situation, there is a possibility that they can contribute to social development."

This alignment with the government's purposes coincides with university leaders' desires to enhance the quality of the institution according to global academic norms, resulting in a practical responsiveness to both local and international standards. As a manager explained:

*There's a very strong feeling in the university – in the strategic objectives the university has set for itself – to serve society and to be there as part of the development of the nation, and to use academic learning, research and teaching towards the development of the society as a whole. So that's a dimension that I think universities in the First World don't have, in the North, in the same way. And as the university has developed over the past 20 years, the introduction of new faculties has really been based on what the country needs [such as law, medicine and agriculture]. So it's quite a close link between the university and the broader development needs of the country. A lot of the research is quite solution-driven. That may be different from other contexts.*

Thus while the university is gaining greater awareness of its comparative place regionally and globally (through rankings, etc.), it still assesses itself primarily by how it is contributing to national development, a very local standard of measurement.

Another key element of UNAM's institutional culture concerns the way in which senior scholars act as mentors and models of exemplary research behaviour so as to build a research culture. In a context where the research imperative is relatively new, the role of "elders" in building that culture is crucial. Many senior scholars who have active research and publication profiles in the FHSS have taken on this role quite self-consciously while younger ones (or newly arrived ones from the teacher training colleges) have sought to emulate such mentors. Often, senior scholars will try to create collaborative research opportunities with younger scholars and postgraduate students so as to provide guidance during an actual project.

What's important to note about this developmental institutional culture (Bergquist & Pawlak 2008) is that power in this arrangement is not transferred in a top-down fashion (as is the case in a managerial institutional culture), nor is it lateral or side-to-side (as in an collegial culture), but it is best described as front-back, meaning that a small cohort of colleagues (who are nominally equal, but distinguished by their experience) leads a broader cohort of "followers" by example. It is these senior academics – more than administrators or peers – who are helping to build the research capacity that the university desires. This fact helps to explain why more FHSS scholars feel a sense of belonging to research networks at the university itself rather than outside of it (in comparison to the other universities we profiled, where this mentoring dynamic is not so profound).

In practical ways, this leadership is demonstrated concretely not only in these senior academics' running of committees at the departmental and faculty level, but their editorial work on the faculty journal and their participation in the SCAP implementation initiative. Indeed, to get other scholars to submit their alternative outputs for profiling on the new IR, the dean of the FHSS not only offered up all of his own work to the initiative, but personally secured the participation of many other senior scholars whom he believed would inspire younger scholars to follow suit. He understood the natural authority they possessed in this context where research efforts were still tentative.

This type of "developmental" culture – one that is responsive to the needs of the nation and built on mentoring relationships – has great potential to enhance scholarly communication within it. With all of the policy development that is now occurring at UNAM in response to both SCAP's engagement and its own desires to leverage its capacity, the university is on its way to doing just that.

### **Research infrastructure**

One of the primary factors contributing to the growth and maintenance of a strong research culture at a university is whether it is supported by a diverse, robust and well-resourced national research infrastructure. This infrastructure consists of various national research bodies and funds which create a dynamic research environment where university



scholars can seek out multiple funding opportunities from multiple agencies, all of which are coordinated to create a strong research network. This is an important feature of the South African context and one of the reasons for UCT's solid research performance.

While Botswana and Namibia have both made tentative steps towards building up their research capacity, Mauritius provides an example of a small country with a small number of researchers that has nonetheless created an impressively diverse and comparatively well-resourced research infrastructure. For instance, at the top, it is comprised of the national-level Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (MTESRT), the Mauritius Research Council (MRC) and the Tertiary Education Council (TEC). These bodies provide multiple interfaces and funding mechanisms for FoS scholars to access for the sake of pursuing research projects. Their functions and policies are described in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, but here it is sufficient to note that they provide Mauritian scholars with a major advantage over scholars in countries that lack these diversified research support entities. It allows them to take a more ambitious approach to their research since they are not limited to seeking funds from the stretched university research budget. For a small country, with a population the size of a medium-sized municipality in most other contexts, the scope of the government's commitment to research and innovation is expansive.

These three bodies – along with the university – have developed mutually reinforcing research policies and strategies that aim to transform Mauritius into a knowledge economy by 2025. Their impressive level of internal policy alignment amplifies their collective capacity, but it also means that their non-engagement with OA principles has essentially closed off the entire island from these global trends. While the TEC acknowledges the growing importance of open educational resources (OER) worldwide, it stops short of adopting any OER or open access principles for itself (TEC 2013: 16).

Considering the collective leverage that these bodies bring to the policies they embrace, they should reconsider whether research knowledge is best leveraged for development through the (“closed”) industry-oriented patenting and commercialisation approach that it now favours, or whether research knowledge is best leveraged for development in an “open” approach (able to reach government, industry and community agents) that would help to bring about the “knowledge economy” more quickly, precisely because it involves all Mauritians in the process rather than just industry.

### **Rewards and incentives**

While each university's reward and incentive structures offer opportunities for enhancing its scholarly communication ecosystems, UB has done more than the rest to spell out how that structure should motivate research (based on the 113-page Performance Management System manual) (UB 2008a). Though the research imperative was only recently articulated at UB, the institution has already laid out some useful strategies for rewarding research. This is done through the annual PMS assessments, the promotion review, official research awards and other discretionary arrangements. While many scholars say that they approve of these incentives in theory, they have either not yet been fully implemented or they are too narrowly focused.

One of the innovative elements of the PMS is that it allows scholars to set their own research goals (within certain limits). The UB Research Strategy states that the PMS enables “the structuring of one’s professional role in terms of the proportion of time allocated to research” (UB 2008c: 10). This means that, while academics are obligated to perform their three functions – teaching, researching and service (to the university, profession and community) – they have some discretion in how they allocate the proportion of time for each. The ranges are:

- Teaching: 55–75%
- Research: 20–40%
- Service: 5–20%

Unfortunately, many academics feel that this policy is not being implemented because, while they may state that they would like to spend a greater proportion of their time on research, their teaching loads do not change (which is usually the key determinant of whether they have time for research). The percentages that they list are just notions, not an indication of their reality. Despite this, the proposal has great merit if it could be implemented in a way that is truly reflected in the scholars’ work regimes. If more academics enjoyed the full 40% of research time allowed, the university would benefit in terms of greater research production.

However, the Research Strategy does spell out the opportunity for decreased teaching in one particular instance: “the obtaining of external research grants and contracts provides opportunities for release time from teaching” (UB 2008c: 10). This is given in recognition of the money that a scholar has brought into the university and for the new work that s/he will have to take on to complete the work. This is excellent, except that staff find it quite difficult to get the types of grants and contracts that would warrant their release from teaching duties, at least in the eyes of the management.

Another useful proposal that the Research Strategy calls for is the performance-related pay system where “successful research accomplishment will be recognised” through better pay (UB 2008c: 10). Considering that UB’s research culture is still nascent, and that many academics see themselves primarily as teachers, the direct payment system for quality research offers an expedient stimulus for kick-starting research production. It is also a factor to which scholars themselves say that they would respond. When asked if they receive indirect or direct financial incentives for producing or disseminating research, more than 80% of our FoH survey respondents said “no”. But when asked about the potential importance of such incentives, over 80% said that indirect financial rewards would be important while close to 60% said that direct financial rewards would also be important. Thus the university’s exploration of different financial rewards and incentives appears suitable to pursue at this time.<sup>156</sup>

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156 The Best Researchers Award, involving a prize of P10,000 [USD1,010], has been in existence for five years but apparently “most professors don’t apply, there is a lot of documentation involved just for P10,000 so mostly professor level people don’t bother.” The layer of bureaucracy (an application process) to this positive incentive ends up disincentivising it to the point of triviality.

Lastly, one of the more far-sighted elements of the PMS scoring system is the relatively high marks given to scholars who publish in “Listed National Journals which have special significance” (UB 2008a: 29). These comprise a small set of locally produced journals rated by the ORD as meeting certain standards of quality, consistency and importance. Though publication in them rates slightly lower than publishing in international journals with high Impact Factors, the university’s support of them through the generous scores offered to scholars for publishing in them is crucial for the development of a strong, stable research culture. Though all admit that they would like to raise the standard, profile and level of production of the journals, they are proud of the contribution they make and are keen to continue publishing in them.

But truly to leverage the opportunity that these locally produced journals offer, the university should use its rewards system to incentivise the improvement of the journals by offering high points (and perhaps even financial bonuses) for editors who are able to produce titles on a regular basis in an OA format. Currently, even the best journals come out sporadically and are not always open access. If UB scholars are motivated not only to submit and edit articles for their local journals, but to ensure that they are published consistently and at a high quality, the confidence and level of peer expectation concerning research at the institution would rise.

### Open access

All of our partner universities’ administrators and scholars, except those at UCT, have expressed positive sentiments about open access dissemination, either at a policy level or a personal level. For those that have incorporated such positive sentiments into their policies, their challenge has been to make them operational. For those that simply hold positive open access sentiments personally, this can be leveraged at a practical and policy level to enhance scholarly communication (at least at the departmental or faculty level).

At UB, the ORD has written open access principles into the Digital Repository Policy (UB 2009b) with the recognition that it would take some time before it would become operational. This remained the case at the time of writing. The open access communication system had yet to be fully implemented, but UB has a massive opportunity to be a leader in the open access scholarly communication field on the continent due to its official commitment to it, its strong central administration which could enforce it and its scholars’ mildly positive feelings towards it.

One scholar explained the complicated situation concerning OA at the institution and the way forwards to promote it:

*Open access is clearly on the institutional agenda, with the development of an institutional repository and the potential for converting university journals to open access. However, more information is required in order to educate academics and practitioners on the benefits of this approach, and on the various legal considerations which need to be engaged with. Academics at UB proved reluctant to consider a mandate for the deposit of journal articles in the repository and there is a need to encourage greater levels of participation in the repository.*

Despite some academics' hesitance about the IR, the administration is supporting open access communication in other ways which are much more popular, especially through its provision of funding for the payment of article processing charges (APCs) that some open access journals charge for publication. The ORD offers varying levels of financial assistance to UB academics based on their position at the institution. As one scholar explained, "If you are a lecturer, you pay 25% [of the APC] and ORD pays 75%. If you are a senior lecturer, it's 50/50. If you are an associate professor, you pay 75%, ORD pays 25%. If you are a full professor you pay for it yourself."

UB has already taken useful steps to promote open access scholarly communication at the university, but now is the time to make sure that OA policies are implemented through incentives that create an OA sensibility amongst UB scholars.

In Mauritius, though neither the government or the university has embraced open access policies, FoS scholars are largely positive about OA's merits. They not only see the benefits it provides them when they seek other scholars' research outputs online, but they also see how it increases the download and citation rates of their own work. And while their perspective is largely shaped by their own disciplinary norms (which incorporate OA mechanisms to a certain extent), the university could leverage FoS scholars' positive disposition towards open access as it considers new research and communication strategies.

It could start by placing the *University of Mauritius Research Journal* under an OA mandate so that it would become a more attractive dissemination vehicle for scholars, raising the visibility of its own outputs. At the moment, the journal acts as a publisher of last resort for many FoS scholars, even though it could be a very powerful publication channel on the island. Part of the problem is, because not all of the journal's papers can be downloaded, it is not clear whether the journal operates according to an open access policy. It is also not curated and profiled optimally, making it less visible than it should be. And because it follows a traditional print journal format (with volumes and issues), it is failing to use internet technology in a way that would free the journal from the limitations associated with print-based production cycles. The journal could embrace open access and publish a host of different output types so that it would not only reach a scholarly audience, but all of the other audiences on the island that crave useful knowledge.

Thus, while there are serious e-infrastructure challenges to making open access communication a reality at UoM, it possesses both a positive attitude to open access (at least within FoS) and an in-house publication channel that could reach out to broader communities.

UNAM FHSS scholars are also quite positive about the merits of open access dissemination. They see the value that OA would have not only in allowing them to gain access to more materials, but in allowing more people to access theirs. They also understand its value for non-academics who seek developmentally relevant research for their own purposes, especially civil society, industry and government personnel. This is a sentiment that the university is now leveraging as it promotes new research and innovation strategies (especially in the new Scholarly Communications Policy).

UNAM leadership could also leverage this positive sentiment in how it moves forwards with the future issues of all UNAM-affiliated journals, especially the FHSS journal. At the moment, the journal is not open access. It is a popular publication channel for many FHSS scholars, but because it is not online or open access, it lacks the ability truly to impact the national community.

Thus, while there are certain e-infrastructure challenges to making OA communication a reality at UNAM, it possesses both a positive attitude to open access and in-house publication channels that could start reaching out to the communities that it has identified for targeting through its own practices. The journals could produce different genres, not just articles, enhancing their appeal to multiple audiences. But they must go OA first.

### Gateway status

Most Southern African universities that seek to ramp up their research production and prestige look at boosting their number of international connections and collaborations. For instance, UB lists 62 institutions in 19 countries with which it has some sort of official collaborative relationship.<sup>157</sup> In UNAM's current Strategic Plan, the university hopes to raise the number of existing and operational international cooperations from a baseline of 30 to 80 by 2015, and the number of active collaboration agreements from a baseline of 14 to 80 in 2015 (UNAM 2011d: 23) These kinds of ambitions reveal how useful it is for African universities to be considered "gateways" to the continent, as international scholars, agencies and funders seek to partner with local institutions.

For instance, at UCT, one of the key benefits it receives as the highest-ranking university in Africa is that it attracts a number of collaborative opportunities with overseas academics, universities and research funding agencies. This enhances the capacity of UCT scholars not only to conduct their own original research, but to participate in international collaborations that can result in highly impactful outcomes. This is due to UCT's existing capacity to host or participate in research partnerships, and also the wide range of expertise that it possesses in certain fields.

As one manager explained, "there's lots of collaborative research [at UCT]. An American or European partner can source a grant from their richer providers and, if they're interested in Africa, they get the UCT collaborator to get access to African subjects and African data and African infrastructure. That's a very common pattern."

This presents a crucial opportunity for Southern perspectives to be incorporated into Northern-dominant research outputs and discourses. But as the "developing world" partner in these research collaborations, it remains important that UCT scholars use such opportunities not only to push the boundaries of research, but to push the dissemination of that research into the hands of communities that can benefit from it locally.

This opportunity exists as well at UoM. Some of the features that make the country marginal also make it interesting for international collaborative partners. Its remote island

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157 UB University/Industry Partners, available at: [www.ub.bw/content/id/1911/pid/1751/ac/1/fac/8/University/Industry-Partners/](http://www.ub.bw/content/id/1911/pid/1751/ac/1/fac/8/University/Industry-Partners/)

status, its affiliation with Africa, its unique demography and its status as a middle-income country make Mauritius an attractive site for various projects and multi-site research activities. The university is central to this attractiveness because of its solid reputation and the quality of its scholars (many of whom graduated from overseas institutions).

Many FoS academics discussed with us the international collaborations in which they have been involved. Some of them were the result of prior research connections, but many were initiated due to a foreign research project's desire to work with a UoM scholar who could do a portion of research locally that would feed into a comparative international study. Thus UoM enjoys something of a gateway status for overseas scholars seeking to collaborate with academics in either tropical island locales or Africa.

The administration is well aware of this fact and has brokered innovative partnerships with French and Indian universities regarding research and training collaborations. Ambitious researchers in FoS have also taken advantage of the opportunities this affords. With the government's desire to turn Mauritius into an "innovation hub", it appears that the university's desires are in alignment with those of the nation.

### **The virtuous funding cycle**

When we discussed funding challenges at UB, UoM and UNAM, many scholars said that they believed that their countries should adopt the South African system in which the government rewards public universities with funding for every accredited research output that its scholars produce. We call this a "virtuous funding cycle" because it not only rewards scholars for past outputs, but incentivises the production of further ones.

Indeed, UCT certainly enjoys the benefits of this generous funding system. Unlike many other African universities which suffered through the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and 1990s, South African universities were buoyed up financially by the apartheid government (to retain an independent intellectual resource base during the years of international isolation) and have continued to be supported by the post-apartheid government (to broaden the access that previously disadvantaged citizens have to education). Thus higher education remains relatively robust.

Two reasons why South African universities can continue to grow and innovate is because of the block grant funding system and the South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) subsidy system. Essentially, block grant funding comprises a percentage of the total funds given to a university by the government, with which it can do as it pleases. That is, while other funds are earmarked for particular programmes or line items, block grant funds can be used in line with the university's particular strategies. This gives a crucial degree of autonomy to these universities, allowing them to express the desires of their staff and students, not just those of the Minister of Higher Education and Training.

The second reason, which has already been discussed, is the SAPSE subsidy which is paid by the government to universities as a reward for research produced and as an incentive for the production of further research. It forms part of the block grant, thus each university has its own approach for dealing with the funds that come in through

the subsidy. For instance, some universities pay a portion of the subsidy directly into the relevant scholar's personal research budget, rewarding him/her for producing an output listed on the SAPSE list, and incentivising him/her to produce more. At other universities, such as UCT, a portion of those funds goes to a faculty-level research fund which acts as a pooled source of resources for which faculty scholars can compete. It does not go directly to the scholar who produced the output, but typically to his/her faculty research fund (though a portion may also go to the central administration for other purposes). This creates a virtuous research cycle, encouraging further research with every output produced.

Numerous scholars at UCT credit the subsidy for enhancing the conditions for pursuing research, not only through the provision of actual funds, but through the fact that scholars themselves have an impact on how much is given by the government to the university.

Moreover, because the SAPSE list of approved publications includes a number of South Africa-based journals, it has helped to solidify a strong and relatively independent publishing core in the country.<sup>158</sup> This forms part of the research infrastructure that SCAP has identified as being so important in productive research environments.

But while the SAPSE system has been crucial for both the production of research and the support of a locally strong research infrastructure, its potential to enhance scholarly communication in the open access era has yet to be realised. If the subsidies were tied to open dissemination practices, or if they were used to support open approaches, South Africa could become a leader in fostering a more accessible, equitable and developmental type of communication.

### **Innovation-focused intermediaries**

Another advantage that UCT enjoys over many other southern African universities is the presence of numerous innovation-focused intermediaries that not only teach and/or conduct research on campus, but search for ways to improve both activities across the institution. These are not traditional departments, but (often soft-funded) "mode 2" units or projects that enhance the research, teaching and dissemination capability of the university.

These innovation-focused intermediaries – including a project such as SCAP – leverage the strengths of the institution while also attending to gaps between traditional disciplines. These are often creative spaces where unorthodox questions can be asked, where new ideas can be experimented with, where interdisciplinary collaboration can take place and where academics and non-academics can meet to pursue shared goals. All of these efforts feed into the lifeblood of the university, strengthening the intellectual ethos and contributing to a vibrant research culture.

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158 One manager explained the situation, but from a slightly cynical perspective: "UCT makes its money out of publications in a SAPSE-approved journal. And the amount of money that they earn is exactly the same, whether it's *Studies in Economics and Econometrics*, which is a little journal published in Stellenbosch, or the *American Economic Review*. It is exactly the same amount of cash. So, from the UCT financial perspective, [the best thing to do is publish] lots and lots of articles in easy to get into South African journals, which happen to be SAPSE-approved."

These intermediaries are able to take on certain tasks which may not yet be standard for the institution (such as running an OER platform), either because it does not have the skills or capacity to do so or because it is still deciding on their viability. Such intermediaries are becoming increasingly important in the new open access scholarly communication paradigm, providing translation, curation and profiling services.

For instance, as our implementation initiative with SALDRU revealed, the unit did not have the capacity to develop certain types of “accessible” outputs concerning its socially relevant research findings, thus other intermediaries at UCT who had experience with producing easy-to-read policy briefs – members of the Children’s Institute – were called in to help produce a briefing paper on teenage pregnancy that could be circulated to stakeholders at the governmental and community levels.

Until the production of such “translated” work becomes standard for academics, they will need intermediaries to help them to broaden the reach of their research. At the moment, these intermediaries operate in an ad hoc manner concerning scholarly communication at UCT, but if they were incorporated into an institution-wide strategic plan, they would be able to have a more profound impact on getting UCT’s research into the hands of those who most want or need it and simultaneously improve the institution’s brand and profile.

### **e-Infrastructure**

Though SCAP has learned that technology is not always the answer to solving an institutional challenge (even if appears to be a technological problem), certain technologies can have an expansive effect on an institution’s ability to enhance its scholarly communication ecosystem. As our discussion of the various implementation initiatives in Chapter 6 showed, technologies such as IRs can help universities to curate, profile and broadcast their research outputs. At UCT, this was done through SALDRU’s unit-level content repository.

However, with UB’s investment in an IR, the university has radically enhanced its potential to disseminate its scholars’ research to a broader audience. This is a tool that truly has the potential to optimise UB’s scholarly communication ecosystem, helping scholars to achieve their goal of disseminating a broad range of scholarly objects for the sake of national development.

At its best, an IR should profile, curate and make accessible every scholarly output produced by a university’s academics. Even if certain objects are bound by intellectual property constraints (i.e. under copyright of a commercial journal publisher), the IR can profile the object through metadata descriptions and link to it if it is available elsewhere. In this way, the IR can act as a “shopfront window” for the university’s research production, giving a sense of the institution’s intellectual contribution to the nation and the world. This has become increasingly important as governments demand that universities, as recipients of public funds, justify their actions and their value. Beyond the numbers of graduates that they produce, universities are increasingly forced to offer their research outputs as an indicator of their productivity and importance.



For the university management, UBRISA offers the platform for promoting an OA ethic. As one librarian said, the installation of the IR “was a way of enhancing access to information.”

However, as UB has learned, an IR is not a politically neutral technology, nor does it run itself. To this day, many academics suspect that UBRISA is just a “prestige project to boost the image of the university management,” not something for promoting the work of the individual scholars. Thus academic interest in it has been strikingly low. Yet most librarians remain positive, especially about the idea of winning the academics over to an open access principle: “there’s still a need for more advocacy for them to understand the concept of open access but I think it’s starting with UBRISA.”

Moreover, the technological and administrative skills necessary to populate and maintain an IR are substantial, a fact which has stretched library staff beyond their capacity. Because of this, the IR has not yet lived up to its potential, but has been a relatively static and shallow receptacle for academic outputs. Nonetheless, UBRISA represents a real opportunity for UB to take some control of showcasing and disseminating its own research, especially to those outside the academy (policymakers, NGOs, community activists) who might be able to leverage this research for developmental purposes.

The other key tool that the university possesses which could enhance not only its production of local research but its open access dissemination potential is OJS software. This tool aids publishers, scholars and managers with the production of journals. To date, this system has not been utilised to its full potential, leaving many UB-affiliated journals struggling to keep up with the demands of a new digital scholarly communication paradigm. But broader knowledge and use of OJS at UB could allow for the creation of more publishing platforms that produce outputs on a more consistent basis.

An even broader ambition would be to monitor all of this research and dissemination through the university’s Current Research Information System (CRIS). The CRIS has the potential to give the administration a greater understanding of the research work being done by its scholars – and also then to create an awareness of strategies to improve it – but at the time of writing, it was being used in a more limited way, mainly to track the financial pay-outs of various research grants to researchers. Yet the CRIS could do so much more in terms of rendering the university’s research activity legible to the management and the government, providing them with a precise means of accounting for the public funds that the university is spending on research for development.

A similar trajectory is taking place at UNAM where, over the past two years, the university has taken great strides in securing the e-infrastructure necessary to enhance scholarly communication. First, it has redesigned the institutional website, making it more functional, dynamic and attractive. This is an important signal to the staff that the administration is serious about upgrading its presence and visibility on the internet.

Second, it has embraced a scholarly e-portfolio initiative in which scholars will have their own personal web pages where they can profile their research interests, publications, educational background and any other information that they feel is necessary for their

students or the world at large. This activity began prior to SCAP's engagement with UNAM, but because of its obvious value to the work that we were promoting, we made sure to integrate our proposals with those being developed by the scholarly profiling team as well. This has enhanced the potential of our work at UNAM and the sustainability of any visibility-raising measures that the university takes up.

Third, the administration – through our pilot initiative with the FHSS – has established an IR that will curate, profile and disseminate research produced by UNAM scholars. This does not just pertain to journal articles that scholars produce, but to all research outputs, including “alternative” outputs that are meant for non-academic audiences. What is so encouraging about this initiative is that it is based on lessons learned during a previous IR failure. A few years ago, an IR installation was established by an external agency, then run by a person in the library who had the good intention of profiling UNAM scholarship. Unfortunately, because the IR was not embedded in institutional policy and lacked certain crucial technical support (redundancy mechanisms, power surge protection, etc.), it was rendered inoperable over time, resulting in the loss of all of the materials stored on it. Once the librarian moved on to another position, the IR failed because it was not integrated into broader networks of responsibility.

This was a painful episode, but one that the administration decided to leverage rather than deny. Thus, when SCAP engaged with the university, the leadership was ready for the complex and difficult conversations that needed to happen before the IR could be re-established. At the time of writing, the IR had been embedded in institutional policy and various safety protocols ensured its longevity. The pilot process that the FHSS embarked on with us has produced numerous scholarly outputs for profiling on the IR, acting as a model for the other faculties at the university.

What is most encouraging about the establishment of these new e-infrastructure technologies is that the university is not simply purchasing and installing them. It is taking the time to prepare the institution for them, to ensconce them in policy provisions, to train personnel to administer them, and to promote them to the academic community so that its members will use them. This process should be replicated with all future e-infrastructure initiatives.

### Quality assurance

While the installation of an IR increases the technical capacity of a university to disseminate its own work, many Southern African universities are concerned about the quality of the materials that are put up on it. They do not want to place every scholarly output on their repositories, but only those that meet certain quality standards. Ascertaining which materials meet the appropriate standards requires a workflow process, but it can also help to develop the university's research culture, as our experience with UB showed.

As part of SCAP's implementation initiative at UB, we developed a quality assurance (QA) workflow process that the Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS) used to put their research outputs through prior to submitting them for uploading on UBRISA. This process had been envisaged and sketched in earlier UBRISA policy

documents, but had never been operationalised because the library (which hosts UBRISA) was still more focused on profiling journal articles that had already been peer-reviewed (and thus quality assured) rather than the many non-traditional outputs that UB scholars have also produced (such as conference papers and reports) that are not necessarily peer-reviewed. Though the management wanted that all UB outputs to be profiled on the IR eventually, it only wanted to do so if the outputs had met certain standards of quality. The process of determining that would have to fall to the UB academics themselves.

As discussed in Chapter 6, DLIS piloted our proposed QA process – which was quite similar to the one envisaged by the ORD in its UBRISA policy documents – and was able to shepherd 15 outputs through it successfully. It entailed a single-blind review process by members of the DLIS Departmental Research and Publications Committee (DRPC) who gave useful and, at times, extensive feedback to authors who were asked to make either small or major corrections before sending them to the UBRISA team.

The virtue of this exercise was that we were able to determine that a QA process could work at the departmental level (as ORD hoped) and that quality could be determined through this bespoke peer review-process (or what we called “peer-review lite”). Since all of these outputs had already been delivered to their primary audiences (at conferences, etc.), the point of this process was not to peer-review the outputs for future publication, but simply to assess whether they were worth profiling on the IR after the fact.

Due to the feedback that the authors received, those who only had to make light corrections decided to make them so that their outputs would be profiled on the IR. But those who were asked to make extensive revisions decided not to because they did not feel the outcome justified the time it would take, so those materials were not sent on for profiling.

Thus, while the process did what it was supposed to do – ensure quality by only sending those outputs which reached a certain high standard whilst blocking those that did not – it taught us and the UB staff two important things for going forwards. First, because there is no reward or incentive listed in the PMS regarding submitting one’s outputs to the IR, scholars will likely only be willing to make light revisions to their work to bring it up to standard; they will not make extensive revisions. Second, this is a model that could be utilised by other departments at the university. This is the scenario that the ORD had imagined all along, but had never implemented. This pilot process shows that UB scholars could, given the right structure and incentives, raise the level of their own scholarship at the same time as embracing open scholarly dissemination through the IR.

This experience is also relevant for other Southern African universities that want to profile more of their academics’ work online, but only after they have gone through an internal QA process. As time-consuming or difficult as that process can be, it can often serve to create positive mentoring relationships and stronger collegial bonds and expectations amongst the faculty members.

## Conclusion

Our discussion of the challenges, contradictions and opportunities characterising the UB FoH scholarly communication ecosystem reveals an institution that is in transition. This is similar to the situation at UNAM's FHSS, as well UoM's FoS (though this last one has some unique issues due its disciplinary distinctiveness). All of them are slowly trying to ramp up their research production and make their universities centres of research excellence. This process is not without its difficulties, as we have seen. There are not only the usual teething problems that come with a change from a teaching-oriented mission to a research-oriented one, but also larger administrative debates impacting every element of the activity system. While it is often healthy for an institution to go through bouts of self-questioning – as UB is – this debate about the role and limits of the university administration is symptomatic of what appears to be a deep unhappiness amongst many academic staff members (UB Academic Staff 2012). This contrasts with UoM which would, at this point, simply be happy to have a vice chancellor stay in office for more than one year. Under these conditions, it will be difficult for the university to establish the kind of robust, collaborative and self-sustaining research culture it desires. UNAM, on the other hand, has worked well to move from discussion to action regarding scholarly communication policies. Yet, as we have shown, for all three of these universities, there are real opportunities for growth and development that scholars and managers can leverage.

Meanwhile, UCT enjoys many advantages compared to other African universities, but its ascendant position cannot be taken for granted. One of the dangers it faces concerns the legacy of its historical achievements: that is, the institution's past success may hinder managers and scholars from embracing new innovations in scholarly communication because they believe that they can continue to succeed based on the old standards that they have previously employed. Success can ironically impede development and innovation in a time of rapid change.

Another danger that UCT faces is thinking that its elite position within the country is secure. Far from it: the pronounced differences between the quality of some universities like UCT vs other universities in the country is a major cause of alarm for some scholars and politicians who believe that UCT is being unfairly advantaged, or at least unreformed racially.<sup>159</sup> Such inequalities, if they become politicised in a particular way, could lead to structural and policy changes at the top, negatively impacting UCT's plans.

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159 For instance, see this (factually incorrect) statement made by the ANC Western Cape Chairman and Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Marius Fransman (12 April 2012) UCT backsliding on racial transformation, *Politicsweb*, available at: [www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=292427&sn=Detail&pid=71654](http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=292427&sn=Detail&pid=71654); for UCT's response to this, and a fuller picture of the debate that ensued, see Rebecca Davis (20 April 2012) UCT students get stuck into race debate, *Daily Maverick*, available at: [www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-04-20-uct-students-get-stuck-into-race-debate/](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-04-20-uct-students-get-stuck-into-race-debate/). One of the key points to take away from this discussion is that many people still ask, "Is UCT racist?" – a question that compromises UCT's ability to broadcast its own image of itself and enjoy unquestioned credibility. When such questions surround an institution, it can represent an opening for politicians to "meddle" in the otherwise "autonomous" institution, as the Fransman episode highlights. But it also opens up the university to scrutiny from all quarters: even the South African Communist Party (which forms part of the ANC-led ruling Tripartite Alliance) has suggested that UCT's VC Max Price is unduly under the influence of the Democratic Alliance (DA) – which governs the Western Cape and acts as the official opposition party to the ANC at the national level – because he is acquainted with some of its leaders. See Rebecca Davis (18 October 2013) The battle at UCT: Race-based admissions policy issue flares up again, *Daily Maverick*, available at: [www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-10-18-the-battle-at-uct-race-based-admissions-policy-issue-flares-up-again/](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-10-18-the-battle-at-uct-race-based-admissions-policy-issue-flares-up-again/)

Moreover, as one manager shared, UCT's prestige is derived, in part, from the fact it has the luxury of choosing the best students because other universities pick up UCT's slack, a situation that may not last forever:

*When the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was making it possible for people to come into a university who would never have had a chance of getting into one, UCT was getting its A-rated research status. We were looking inwards, we were patting ourselves on the back and we were kind of working with the best students and so on. So I really do think that UCT is often blind to the extent to which other universities are making it possible for it to continue to do what it's doing by allowing it to take just the cream of the crop of the students, while the others deal with the students who are really struggling.... So we should be very mindful of the fact that they are playing a role that supports us to do what we do. And that's changing, because they're not going to do that forever. They don't want that and I think there's a strong pressure to even the load. And then, against that is strong pressure to maintain differentiation so that some universities can continue to be very high-flying research active universities. It's a debate that will go on and on.*

Thus it is important that UCT demonstrates that it is contributing to locally relevant and meaningful development outcomes, not just achieving great prestige through publications and rankings. The university exists in a national political context where accountability, equality and local responsiveness matter. This is where open scholarly communication strategies can serve UCT well, taking research that would otherwise circulate only in an "ivory tower" setting and having it reach the many civil society, industrial and governmental constituencies that could leverage that research for developmental purposes.