Inculcating openness at UCT: The OpenUCT Initiative

Creative Commons Africa Summit

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The OpenUCT Initiative
Some premises

- OERs overlap with Open access and Elearning

- OER part of a broader open movement

- Innovation usually starts with soft funding (external & internal)
Institutional cultural types

- Policy definition: Loose
- Control of implementation: Loose
- Policy definition: Tight
- Control of implementation: Tight

Institutional cultural types

- Policy definition: Loose
- Control of implementation: Loose
- Bureaucracy
- Corporation
- Policy definition: Tight
- Control of implementation: Tight

Types:
- Collegium
- Enterprise
- Corporation
The collegium type

- Characterised by
  - loose institutional policy definition
  - informal networks and decision arenas
  - and innovation at the level of the individual or department. (McNay 1995)

- The organisational response
  - ‘laissez faire’, few targeted policies or processes (Rossiter, 2007).

Core value of collegium is freedom
University of Cape Town

- Oldest South African university
  - Top ranked African university
  - QS World University Rankings
  - The Times Higher Education World University Rankings
  - Academic Ranking of World Universities

- Medium sized
  - +/- 25 000 students
  - 982 permanent academics (of 5 442 total staff)
Prestigious research university

- 5 Nobel Laureates
- Booker Prize winner
- Numerous internationally recognised research initiatives
  - Africa Earth Observatory Network (AEON)
  - The Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics is an international centre for research in the fields of cosmology and topology.

The Department of Physics is home to the UCT-CERN research centre.
Teaching at UCT

- Residential
- Face to face
- Almost no distance ed
- Not set up for “non-traditional” courses
- Funding subsidy for headcount & throughput (not curriculum or content)
- Centre for Higher Educational Development active, strong academic development
Open agenda at UCT: projects

- Opening Scholarship
- Scholar Community
- OER UCT
- Health OER Project
- The OpenUCT Initiative

Years:
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
The UCT OpenContent directory is the web portal for accessing open teaching and learning content from the University of Cape Town. Read More
Our approach to the openness agenda in the light of UCT’s culture
Strategic approaches

- Individual agency/ control
- Maximum flexibility
- Network / community building
- Enabling (not requiring)
- Champions at different levels

Collegium culture:
loose institutional policy definition
informal networks and decision arenas
and innovation at the level of the individual or department. (McNay 1995)
Historically

- Opportunities for open agenda in the eLearning space (CHED) (rather than OA)
  - Contributed to change strategy

- No institutional repository
Multiplicity

- **Multiple** strategies
- Many small sites of innovation and activity, aiming for **agglomeration** across the institution, to achieve critical mass
- Change at **all levels** of the university
- Develop networks and build **community**
Champions

At senior level

- DVC signs Cape Town Declaration (2008)
- VC signs Berlin Declaration (2011)
Champions

• Senior & middle level

• OER Health Sciences - Dean
Champions

- Bringing the work of “early adopters” above the radar
Champions & change

• In our experience of our cultural context
  - Senior level support symbolic
  - Vertical relationships do not cause change *per se*, only when actual projects in place (eg HS)
  - Champions work best in horizontal networked relationships, building communities of practice

• New roles and reconfigurations
  - The rise of the non-specialist “expert,” (or
Incentives: small grants

- 9 small grants in 2011
- £ 800 each
- Health Science, Engineering, Law, CHED, Science
- To create and/or adapt OER
- From course level to smaller resources
Incentives: small grants

The OPENUCT Initiative is offering grants of up to R10 000 for staff AND STUDENTS to develop or adapt teaching materials for sharing as Open Educational Resources in the OpenContent directory

Deadline: 20 April 2012 For more details go to: http://openuct.uct.ac.za/openuct-grants
Academic agency

• Decentralised uploading
  - Individual academics upload and maintain their resources directly

• Pride of authorship
  - Quality assurance with the individual
  - Quality assurance part of broader teaching and learning systems, not separate

• Minimal moderation

Copyright compliance
Flexibility

• Granularisation of resources important
• Whole courses
• Single resources
  - Ebooks
  - Presentations
  - Podcasts
  - Lecture notes
  - Animations
Institutional Community

- IP Law Unit
- Knowledge Co-op
- Citizen Science projects in COL
- Enterprise Content Management Project
- Eresearch
- Library
- Communications Office
- Faculties
New IP policy

• Work enabled by new UCT IP Policy
  - Specifically addresses issues relating to the creation of OER resources and the licensing processes to be followed
  - Expressly states the support for publication of materials under Creative Commons licenses
How we are doing in terms of institutional participation
Growth to date

0

2

4

6

8

10

12
Faculty contributions
Types of resources
Concluding comments

• A steady upswell rather than mainstream
• Integration of resourcing requirements into existing structures
• Acceptance of non-linear organic process
• Slow approach more likely to be sustainable & effective
• A research-based approach to inform strategy

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OpenContent Directory: http://opencontent.uct.ac.za
Companion site on Vula: https://vula.uct.ac.za/portal/site/openuct
OER UCT project blog: http://blogs.uct.ac.za/blog/oer-uct
OpenUCT Initiative: http://openuct.uct.ac.za/
OpeningScholarship : http://openingscholarship.uct.ac.za/

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