



RESEARCH UPTAKE PROCESSES

Dr Marilet Sienaert
Executive Director: Research, UCT

ACUDRUSSA, Cape Town, March 2014

MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEME

- Processes whereby universities communicate and prepare research results in forms that can be readily understood by external stakeholders.
- Processes to deal with the impact and assessment of communication of research results.
- University staff attitudes towards research uptake activities.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the indicators of change?
- How do we know that change is happening / has happened?
- What is amenable to change; and what is not?
- What changes are ‘falling back’ to old patterns?
- What are the changes that are sticking?

SOME INDICATORS OF CHANGE

- RU strategy (and SOP) in place
- Policies and funds in place to implement strategy
- Structural change (RU Office; institutional repository; Open Access policy; reports)
- Attitude / Raised awareness ('training of academics'; RU included in grant writing)
- Mechanisms for close collaboration between service departments (RO; ICTS; DAD; IAPO; Libraries)
- Mechanisms to communicate findings to stakeholders
- Mechanisms to assess impact of findings / obtain feedback
- Level of collaborative research with external partners

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT CHANGE IS HAPPENING / HAS HAPPENED?

- RU strategy (and SOP) in place?
- Policies and funds in place to implement strategy?
- Structural change (RU 'Office'; institutional repository; RIMS)?
- Attitude / Raised awareness (e.g. RU included in grant writing)
 - Buy-in to the San Francisco declaration?
 - Focusing the mind on RU when planning research?
 - Enabling researchers to engage with stakeholders?
 - Training researchers to communicate their science effectively?
 - Enabling strategic partnerships?
- Mechanisms to collaborate between service departments?
 - Regular 'bridging' meetings; PIC's
 - Evidence of structures and policies that demonstrate collaboration (e.g. OA policy; OA repositories; collaborative workshops)

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT CHANGE IS HAPPENING / HAS HAPPENED? *Cont.*

- Mechanisms to communicate findings to stakeholders
 - Open days, workshops, seminars, innovation forums, Uptake reports; websites, popular press, membership on research boards; open access repositories; formal engagement with policy makers?
- Mechanisms to assess impact / obtain feedback
 - Same as above, if used iteratively
 - Monitoring 'classic' measurement of research output (number of outputs, citations, income generated through grants and contracts)?
 - Monitoring level of collaboration and strategic partnerships?

WHAT IS AMENABLE TO CHANGE; AND WHAT IS NOT?

- **Amenable:**
 - Strategy; Policies; Structural adjustments; Mechanisms to communicate to stakeholders; Mechanisms to obtain feedback; Mechanisms to monitor level of collaboration and strategic partnerships
- **Less amenable:**
 - Attitude; raised awareness; collaboration between service departments

WHAT CHANGES ARE 'FALLING BACK' TO OLD PATTERNS?

- 'Easier' to stick to measurable bibliometrics; intangibles more difficult to measure
- Competing priorities for institutional funds, less resources to implement communication and impact assessment mechanisms
- Level of collaboration and strategic partnerships require sustained effort, not always pursued with sufficient energy
- Where incentives are less obvious / beneficial

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES THAT ARE STICKING?

- All?
- Formal policy and structural changes
- Slow, incremental process
- Small number of pilot research groups
- Publicize success stories
- “Portraits of practice”

THANK YOU! Questions & Comments

