



Central University of
Technology, Free State

May 2015

Issue 9

Community Engagement **NEWSLETTER**

Where are we?

The response to this question fills me with admiration for the contributions made by our colleagues at CUT. Over the years, Community Engagement (CE) has achieved much and has triumphed over many hurdles. This is certainly a milestone to be proud of!

The info graphic illustrates the many milestones that make community engagement at CUT visible. Simultaneously, without diminishing the level of achievements, one needs to acknowledge that we still have a long way to go. However, with the fortitude and perseverance we possess, I have no doubt we will become fairly competitive. We are known to and affiliated with both national and international bodies such as the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF) and the Talloires Network (TN).

These affiliations allow us to keep up to date with current CE philosophy, practices, opportunities and trends. Furthermore, it also provides CE practitioners with a platform to come together as a collective to share resources, concerns and challenges. This exposure is invaluable in terms of developing CE at CUT. For the past three years, we have participated in the MacJannet Awards competition. In 2014, the ITS CE project

headed by Ms Marisa Venter was one of 59 projects in the semi- final round. This is a major feat for a small university such as ours.

A community engagement philosophy, strategy and plan was put in place. The next phases in the process include navigation around the implementation of the CE Plan and the compilation of an Engagement Strategy. Engagement is a broader concept that offers the opportunity of interconnectivity and interlinking. I will elaborate on this concept towards the latter part of the year.

Community Engagement has gone electronic. We have an electronic database of our CE projects. This database is comprehensive and multi-functional. However, the database is still in the pilot phase and more information will be provided soon. Until then, my sincere thanks to everyone for their contributions. Enjoy this newsletter!

Warm wishes

Jeeva

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



SERVICE LEARNING AND WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Projects are conducted via the curriculum Service Learning and Work Integrated Learning are major drivers in reaching the objectives of CE.

CE INSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

This committee was formed in 2009. Meets 4 times a year and reports to the University Engagement Committee.

CE PHILOSOPHY, STRATEGY AND PLAN

After much consultation with the CE committee and Faculties, the CE Philosophy, Strategy and Plan was finalised.

CE NEWSLETTERS

The CE Newsletters are digitally printed four times a year. These newsletters provide the current events taking place in the CE projects.

ELECTRONIC DATABASE

All CE project leaders can access their projects electronically. This allows for evaluation and the necessary inputs to be made. Additionally reports can be generated.

MARKETING OF CE

The CE Brochures are digitally printed twice a year. These brochures provide an overview of all CE projects in the respective faculties as well as incubation and technology projects.

TALLOIRES NETWORK

CUT is affiliated to the Talloires Network which is a global organisation.

CE MODEL

CE is based on the following:

- There are two Foci Areas; Development and Education.
- CE foci have four activities: eradication of poverty, promoting human dignity and health, increasing social capital and sustainable development.
- CE has five modes of delivery: teaching, training, research, skills development and professional engagement.
- CE spin-out / spin-in from entrepreneurship / innovation / incubation via quadruple relationship.
- End-users: social communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CE REPRESENTATIVES

There are four CE representatives- one per faculty. The responsibility of the representatives is to act as the liaison person between faculties and the CE Manager. Regular meetings are held with the CE Manager and the representatives.

VC EXCELLENCE AWARDS POLICY

The VC Excellence Awards Policy was revised in 2013.

VC EXCELLENCE AWARDS IN RESPECT OF CE

The VC Excellence Awards are held once a year. Each Faculty is expected to submit a nomination.

Nominees present their projects before a CE Committee and thereafter the final recommendations are made by the Engagement Committee.

The Prize is in the form of money which the project leader can use for equipment or further research.

MACJANNET PRIZE

This organisation runs the MacJannet Award Competition which CUT has participated in for the past three years.

One of the ITS projects by Mrs Marissa Venter was the semi-finalist project in 2014

CE INFORMATION BROCHURE

The CE information Brochure provides the vital information on CE such as the CE representatives, the Dean, the Manager and the Philosophy and Strategy of CE.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM 2014 (WORLD CAFÉSTYLE)

“As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world, as in being able to remake ourselves.” – Mahatma Gandhi

On 26 November 2014, CUT had the opportunity to host a symposium on *“Best Practices of Community Engagement at CUT”*. This symposium used the World Café as a means of engaging in interactive, fruitful and vibrant discussions. Participants included:

- # Project leaders and staff members of CUT (Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses);
- # Postgraduate students of the Young Scientists Summer Programme of the University of the Free State (UFS);
- # A postgraduate student supervisor;
- # Community Engagement staff members from UFS; and
- # A visiting staff member of the Polytechnic University in Namibia.

The World Café is a creative process for facilitating collaborative dialogue with the purpose of sharing knowledge and ideas. A café ambiance was created with colourful tablecloths and vases of flowers, which were picked from our own garden at the Science Park. Participants discussed questions and issues in small groups of nine around the café tables. Participants moved to a new table at regular intervals. Hosting the tables were:

- # Table 1 – Ms Marisa Venter;
- # Table 2 – Mr Parks Makhoahle;
- # Table 3 – Mr Giel de Villiers; and
- # Table 4 – Mr Christo Hurter.

The event concluded with a session during which the key ideas and conclusions were established.

Our table hosts:



Ms Marisa Venter



Mr Parks Makhoahle



Mr Giel de Villiers



Mr Christo Hurter

Comments that were made during the discussions included:

- # "Good initiatives aimed at education of learners to improve lifestyles, enhance health, and create better learning of Mathematics and Science;
- # It was realised that CE provides a good platform to learning, and it is linked to the Community Engagement Strategy. It is curriculum-based;
- # Skills such as social, communication, cognitive and presentation skills are learnt;
- # The Schools Advancement Academy (SAA) is aligned with the National Development Plan 2030;
- # The focus is address challenges
- # Partnerships with various communities to render a service to the community; and
- # Contribution by university academics via research, which leads to better problem solving and knowledge creation, and contributes to the knowledge economy."

Challenges confronting integrated CE are:

- # Project leaders should consider participatory research in these projects;
- # Better collaboration with other CUT schools and faculties is required;
- # The approach that is used in these projects appears to be a one-way approach – from CUT to the communities. Therefore, it is questionable what students learn from the communities;
- # Project leaders should take cognisance of the National Development Plan 2030 and the educator development need to be synergised. Sustainability cannot be achieved by focusing on students only; hence, its crucial to develop educators as well;
- # More schools from rural areas should be involved; and
- # There is no follow-up with learners that form part of these projects (i.e. the Saturday School, Winter School, etc.).

The following recommendations were made:

- # Better interaction with all faculties;
- # Student involvement as part of the graduate attributes; and
- # An integrated approach to CE – more involvement in CE research.

Written by Ms Zethu Sintiya (Student Assistant: Community Engagement)

PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATING EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE



Prof. LOK Lategan
(Dean: Research and Innovation)
welcoming the guests.



Ms J Munsamy
(Community Engagement Manager)
Facilitator of the World Cafe : Concluding the session.

Registration desk



Attendees engaging in a discussion.



Mr Parks Makhoahle presenting.



Mr Giel de Villiers presenting.



Ms Marisa Venter presenting.





Central University of
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GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Research and Innovation: Community Engagement

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