

CHED STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT: 2016-2020

1. PREAMBLE

CHED's Strategic Plan was developed in response to both the UCT Strategic Planning Framework (2016-2020) and to reconsider its strategic direction in the changing institutional and broader higher education context. CHED has reaffirmed its commitment to its mission (see 3 below) to promote equity of access and success. CHED also firmly supports the role of the university as a public good. In addition, the protests of 2015-2016 compelled us to reflect more deeply on our vision (see 2 below) – what we aspire to be -- and our underpinning values (see 4 below). The development of the CHED Strategic Plan has provided us with yet another opportunity to consolidate our existing commitments and to stretch ourselves beyond 'business as usual'. Most significantly our values reflect an aspiration to put students at the centre of all that we do, realised through the foundational principles of transformation and collaboration.

2. VISION

CHED aspires to be a significant contributor to innovative educational development, practice and scholarship in teaching and learning, in order to champion and advance social justice and transformation within CHED, UCT, the higher education sector and the broader society.

3. MISSION

CHED's mission is to promote equity of access, effectiveness of teaching and learning, and the enhancement of curriculum, with the aim of improving student success and developing UCT graduates who are locally relevant, socially responsive, globally competitive and representative of South Africa's diverse population.

4. CHED'S VALUES

- CHED's work is underpinned by a commitment to social justice and transformation.
- CHED believes that UCT's richly diverse students are one of its greatest assets and we therefore adopt a student-centred approach to CHED's work.
- CHED values UCT students as influential agents of change, both at UCT and in the communities that they will work in upon graduation.
- CHED's educational development work is informed by research based on ethical principles.
- CHED believes in positive engagements with our colleagues in faculties and beyond to facilitate appropriate teaching and learning experiences that meet every students' individual needs and aspirations.
- CHED believes in equitable treatment of all staff and values the contribution of each staff in achieving its goals.

Goal 1: To forge a new inclusive identity that reflects demographically more representative student and staff profiles and the cultures, values, heritage and epistemologies of the diversity of UCT's staff and students

We are committed to developing an inclusive teaching, learning and research environment in CHED and to promoting an inclusive identity that embraces diversity within the institution through:

- Contributing to institutional transformation, structural and cultural diversity and achieving equity goals of access for all students by enabling alternative access routes and placement systems;
- Supporting and enhancing flexible curriculum programmes that facilitate holistic support for students through programmes such as the Academic Development Programmes (ADP);
- Contributing to the current discourse on curriculum transformation and efforts to decolonize the curricula within CHED and across the university by providing its expertise and knowledge on curriculum development;
- Improving strategies to change CHED's staff demographics to meet the targets set in our Employment Equity Plan (2015-2020), improve representation on CHED and departmental committees and increase support for contract staff from designated groups to become permanent;
- Providing developmental and professional educational opportunities to grow the pipeline of black, women and disabled academics, managers and postgraduate students;
- Making strategic use of the CHED Research Block Grant to support the research of black South Africans and black researchers from elsewhere in Africa;
- Providing research capacity development opportunities for all CHED staff for whom research is part of the job description: both academic and PASS staff, and those in permanent positions and on contract;
- Providing funding for strategically selected collaborative research projects that respond to the transformation goals of CHED and the institution;
- Promoting an inclusive environment in CHED and in the institution through the Multilingualism Education Project programmes such as the isiXhosa Communication skills courses, the Multilingual Signage project, naming of building and translation of relevant documents; and through short courses;
- Supporting the diverse contributions of all CHED staff; and
- Recognizing staff contribution to transformation work in CHED and in the institution for promotion and merit awards.

Goal 2: To promote UCT as a vibrant and supportive intellectual environment that attracts and connects people from all over the world and advances the status and distinctiveness of scholarship in Africa

We will strive to promote CHED as the vibrant and supportive intellectual environment that connects people from the continent and all over the world by:

- Promoting international partnerships across the globe, across the African continent and in emerging economies that support the development of research, staff and students exchanges and other strategic goals such as advocacy, access to funding, developing networks and expertise building reputation. These would be both research collaboration and developmental in nature. Examples include MasterCard African Scholars, D-School, Mellon Mays University Fellows, ROER4D Research;
- Enhancing global visibility for UCT's scholars through open scholarship to disseminate knowledge and build expertise within the institution, through for example developing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), supporting the creation of open educational resources and promoting open access;
- Conducting research that draws on forms of knowledge and transformative methodologies that are appropriate for answering questions about educational development at UCT, nationally, and on the continent, and also contributes to knowledge building globally;
- Recognizing and valuing all kinds of capital and resources which students from the continent and across the globe bring to UCT;
- Promoting international and African partnerships that attract diverse international students for study abroad programmes, e.g. London School of Economics (LSE)-UCT July School.

Goal 3: To advance UCT as a research-intensive university that makes a distinctive contribution to knowledge, locally and globally

We will continue to conduct research on the dynamic concerns of higher education development at UCT (refer to Goal 4 priorities), nationally, on the continent and beyond.

We will encourage research on these concerns that is interdisciplinary in the sense that it draws on the range of research histories (empirical, theoretical and methodological) of CHED researchers; collaborative across CHED departments, UCT faculties, nationally, on the continent and beyond; and innovative with respect to knowledges and methodologies that are responsive to the changing research context.

We will encourage such research through the following activities:

- CHED research forums (ranging from incubator ideas, work in progress, to final outputs);
- Writing spaces (e.g. writing circles and writing retreats);
- Processes to encourage innovative and creative ways of thinking about research concerns, for example, through the d-school;
- Providing funding for strategically selected collaborative research projects that respond to the dynamic educational development concerns of the institution;
- Conducting evaluation research on educational development interventions that meet institutional teaching and learning goals;
- Conducting teaching and research on formal and informal programmes in Higher Education Studies and Educational Technology fields.

We will continue to build capacity of researchers in CHED by:

- Providing research writing support and promoting local peer review through writing circles, writing workshops and writing retreats;
- Providing funding for the employment of Senior Scholars to mentor Associate-Professor-level and post-PhD researchers in CHED and to build mentoring capacity amongst these researchers;
- Providing support for research grant writing and highlighting research funding opportunities;
- Providing support for research teams running collaborative research projects;
- Supporting the development of communities of CHED researchers around particular roles, for example, staff pursuing Masters and PhD studies, postgraduate supervisors, project principal investigators;
- Strengthening administrative support for research;
- Strengthening HoD / Unit Head / Line Manager contribution to research planning of all CHED staff with research obligations;
- Highlighting capacity development opportunities and research resources beyond the faculty;
- Providing support for CHED researchers to develop an online research presence;
- Ensuring that all research conducted by CHED staff complies with the CHED Ethics Committee requirements.

We will continue to facilitate the dissemination of CHED research through participation in research-led teaching and learning interventions, institutional decision making and planning processes, higher education policy work, communities beyond UCT, and through publication and participation at conferences, by:

- Profiling CHED research using different outlets and technologies, for example, CHED research seminars, the UCT and CHED websites, *The Conversation*, Extra-Mural Studies public programmes, etc.;

- Encouraging research intensive educational development collaborations across CHED departments and between CHED and faculties, and other educational institutions e.g. schools and museums;
- Communicating relevant research findings to inform the contributions of CHED representatives on institutional committees;
- Supporting CHED researchers to publish findings from 'institutional research', as appropriate, in peer-reviewed publications;
- Contributing to CHED and UCT's vision of what constitutes research and research output in the form of research-informed policy, strategy, curriculum documentation, artefacts, etc.;
- Providing opportunities for UCT lecturers to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning and to discuss and present their findings, for example, at CHED seminars and the UCT Teaching and Learning Conference.

We will contribute to the building of the next generation of researchers by:

- Providing opportunities for undergraduate students to undertake research during their degrees;
- Providing postgraduate students with development opportunities that expose them to research activities.

Goal 4: To renew and innovate in teaching and learning - improving student success rates, broadening academic perspectives, stimulating social consciousness and cultivating critical citizens

We are committed to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in CHED, the institution and nationally by:

- Providing support to assist staff with curriculum and pedagogy development, particularly in courses that impede student success;
- Encouraging and supporting academics in the use of reflective teaching practices, innovation and multiple forms of technology to enhance student learning;
- Enabling the appropriate integration of online resources and opportunities in teaching and learning;
- Offering formal and informal professional development opportunities to all staff to develop in their roles as educators;
- Advancing the status of teaching in the ad hominem promotion process;
- Recognising excellence in teaching and learning;
- Contributing to institutional, regional and national practices and policies which promote and value teaching and learning;
- Contributing to monitoring and evaluating systems for teaching and learning.

We play a pivotal role in creating multilingual awareness for staff and students in CHED and across the university by:

- Expanding opportunities for and encouraging staff and students to acquire communicative competence in a South African indigenous language;
- Promoting the inclusion of isiXhosa courses as credit bearing courses in faculties, where appropriate and non-credit bearing classes at Summer School, student residences and during meridian.

We are committed to improving access and student success rates and minimising disparities between black and white students by:

- Developing assessments that enable flexible pathways and appropriate placement in collaboration with ADP and faculty admission structures;
- Developing and promoting educational models and structures that:
 - facilitate students' formal and epistemological access to higher education,
 - offer flexible pathways through curricula that are rooted in a decolonial view of the world and are supportive of students' wellbeing and academic success,
 - provide integrated and holistic developmental opportunities to all students according to their diverse needs by running introductory, augmented, extended and career development courses in curricula, offering workshops and short courses in areas of need, running tutorial and mentoring programmes;
- Extending holistic and supportive developmental activities to UCT's complex of student residences;
- Promoting a culture of evidence-based educational support and development by scrutinising quantitative and qualitative educational data and disseminating findings to the wider institution;
- Promoting multilingual teaching and learning across faculties by:
 - Developing multilingual glossaries and tutorials for students on high risk courses,
 - Building capacity of staff and tutors to use multilingualism as a resource for teaching multilingual students;
- Designing a range of literacy pathways in writing and numeracy to build capacity and promote critical epistemological access.

We play a leading role in supporting student success through quality provision of online delivery (on and off campus) and developing students' digital literacy by:

- Increasing capacity to support online provision in the areas of project management, learning design, media production, etc.;
- Expanding online platforms and capacity to support students and staff use of online platforms;

- Strengthening support in the residences by monitoring groups of students for early advising;
- Supporting the development of online/blended courses and other digital learning material in partnerships with course convenors;
- Supporting faculties to embed the teaching of digital literacies as part of their mainstream provision.

We will contribute to the building of the next generation of academics by designing flexible pathways for postgraduate students:

- Assisting in improving the completion rate of postgraduate students through equity projects that identify and support students committed to addressing racial inequality in the academy;
- Creating pathways from senior undergraduate to postgraduate through supporting equity programmes at the Honours level;
- Offering postgraduate short courses, academic and research literacy workshops, blended learning postgraduate writing courses;
- Developing postgraduate self-assessment tools and processes to improve access and throughput of doctoral and masters students.

We support students through key transitions of their undergraduate and postgraduate experience, as well as transitions between the university and the workplace by:

- Having established the First-Year Experience (FYE) project to focus on and support students through the key transitions;
- Promoting opportunities for a variety of careers, providing training, facilitating internships, and supporting post-university transition into the workplace;
- Recognising extra-curricular activities of students;
- Expanding opportunities for entrepreneurial development for students across faculties;
- Designing blended writing courses for students starting out as researchers.

We enhance the process of curriculum change and engage with current discourses and incorporate scholarship from Africa and the global south by:

- Promoting curriculum change and epistemic diversity alongside professional staff development;
- Promoting the understanding of decoloniality and critically investigating knowledge production;
- Fostering partnerships with faculties, taking the lead in developing open approaches to working with academics and students;
- Exposing students to ways of thinking beyond their own disciplinary specialisations by making available a variety of lectures and courses;

- Encouraging the development of appropriately structured and enriched curricula that promote key graduate attributes;
- Providing forums for discussion and engagement.

Goal 5: To enhance the scope, quality and impact of engaged scholarship¹ with an emphasis on addressing development and social justice.

We plan to enhance the scope, quality and impact of our engaged scholarship by:

- Developing and supporting initiatives that widen access and participation to the knowledge resources of CHED and the university community at a local, national, regional and international level. Examples of these initiatives are the EMS Summer School and the LSE- UCT July School;
- Expanding the provision of continuing education courses and lectures through lecture recording and creating online streaming facilities;
- Engaging with universities in the region, nationally and internationally around social justice priorities and research through lectures and courses;
- Strengthening and redefining the role of the university and its relationship to communities through social responsiveness initiatives, such as public programmes.

We plan to promote and expand ways to create more opportunities for local and international students to engage with community based education that facilitate critical and global citizenship of graduates through:

- Signing agreements with faculties to incorporate Global Citizenship programmes within their curricula or as extra-curricular options.

¹ Engaged scholarship is defined as the utilisation of an academic's scholarly and/or professional expertise, with an intentional public purpose or benefit (which) demonstrates engagement with external (non-academic) constituencies. It can help to generate new knowledge, promote knowledge integration, the application of knowledge, or the dissemination of knowledge.