DECENTRALISED SYSTEMISING OF SCHOLARSHIP OF ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION TOWARDS SOCIETAL IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

In this article, a case study is presented for the development of a Scholarship of Engagement (SoE) engagement database, to map the engagement footprint of the university, and develop a Knowledge Management System (KMS) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), in order to facilitate the process of knowledge sharing. The aim of this article is to discuss a process of creating baseline data, to explore and profile the institution's SoE landscape, and facilitate a decentralised system of the SoE, based on an integrated approach to the institutionalisation of the SoE. The sharing of exemplars are important; consequently, in this article the context and role of the Community Engagement Unit (CEU), as well as the motivation for embarking on the project are explained. Additionally, the process from conceptualization, through implementation, to reflections on lessons learnt, and the future path of decentralisation, are plotted and documented. All partners pilot an integrative approach to implementation, to facilitate acceptance and uptake, while enablers that facilitate the process are identified, and decentralisation for the protection of academic freedom is highlighted. This case study is relevant to other universities, especially those on the African continent, as we attend to the broader decolonialisation agenda, which presents an exemplar for the duplication, adaptation, and creation of a SoE database, for universities to profile and present their anchoring in communities, following the principles of engagement that are aligned to transformation and social justice.

Keywords: Scholarship of Engagement, Societal Impact, Database development, decentralisation, institutionalisation, Knowledge Management System.

INTRODUCTION

Community Engagement (CE), as a "Scholarship", is globally recognised for its role and contribution to the meaningful transformation of civil society that is Societal or Broader Impact (SI/BI). The Carnegie Foundation definition of CE emphasises aspects such as "collaboration", "mutual beneficial exchange", and "partnerships", towards addressing inequalities and facilitating Societal Impact (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2015, 1). CE has many definitions, which alludes to its many iterations, based on different contexts. In the same vein, there are 29 definitions of the types of Service-Learning implemented globally (IGI Global 2022).

CE relates to a range of engagement that universities perform, in partnership with various "communities", namely, scholarly-, student-, business/industry-, and civil society communities. Engagement must transpire in all three core functions of the university, namely teaching and learning, research, and "service", for it to be recognised as "scholarly", and has to integrate these core functions in a manner that evidences SI. The Scholarship of Engagement (SoE) must not be a separate activity, but rather an infused approach by universities, as it is both an act of engagement (with partners), as well as a product of engagement (discipline-generated and evidence-based practice) that is reciprocal, and mutually beneficial in its planning, implementation, and outcomes with, and by, the partners.

The Community Engagement Unit (CEU) at UWC acts as a hub for the SoE within, across, and beyond the university. The unit functions as a living lab, where innovative ideas and approaches could be conceptualized, incubated, and tested (piloted) for successful full-scale implementation. The process of conceptualising, developing, and implementing the SoE database was one such project by the CEU.

In 1957, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first prime minister and president, highlighted the importance of Africa-centred knowledge, resulting in his post-colonial knowledge production initiatives. In the 1980s, Claude Ake, a Nigerian political scientist, hailed as one of Africa's leading political philosophers, advocated for endogenous knowledge production on Africa (Crawford, Mai-Bornu, and Landström 2021, 21). Knowledge production and knowledge sharing, founded and presented by African Scholars and their HEIs, therefore, started eight decades ago. However, we are still in a process of developing and assessing different methods of best practice, to produce and share knowledge. The aim of this article is to present a case study, as one of the methods that the UWC has deployed, to present its SoE profile through knowledge creation and sharing. We discuss a process of creating baseline data, to explore and profile the institution's SoE landscape, and facilitate a decentralised, but integrated approach to

SoE institutionalisation, founded on the principles of CE, as well as its related transformation and social justice purpose.

This necessitated a need for the development of a systemised approach, which is especially important in an academic context, given the historical background of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), where social justice, academic freedom, innovation, and social accountability, are key values and principles that underpin the mission and vision of being an "Engaged Institution", anchored in the community, to facilitate sustainability. One of the anchoring factors for the profiling of the SoE landscape, is through databases.

Context and role of the CEU

"The Community Engagement Unit (CEU) facilitates CE opportunities that enhances and promotes the SoE through equitable partnership and citizenry to promote sustainable communities" (CEU 2022, 1). The SoE embraces a critical attitude towards shared knowledge that acknowledges different cultural contexts, as well as diversity, and incorporates these aspects into CE teaching, theory into practice, integration, and research. This critical attitude is especially important for universities on the African continent that are also attending to the decolonisation agenda of higher education.

Boyer (1996) argues that United States (US) universities should return to searching for answers to the most pressing problems of a social, civic, economic, and moral nature. Boyer's SoE model, not only desires an equitable relationship between university and community, but also a larger role in guiding the nation, and providing a refuge for those who had been impacted negatively by wars, or racism. Boyer's writings are seminal in the engagement arena, and his Scholarship of Engagement model is the founding text, from which scholars developed additional and/or derivatives of the SoE. Boyer emphasises the following scholarships: scholarship of discovery (pushing back the frontiers of human knowledge); the scholarship of integration that focuses on producing interdisciplinary knowledge; followed by the scholarship of sharing knowledge, as widely as possible. Finally, the last of these interlocking scholarships is the scholarship of integration, which implies a scholarship of application from theory to practice.

CE could assume many different forms, in the context of higher education, such as: socially responsive research; partnerships with civil society organisations; formal learning; programmes that engage students in community work, as a formal part of their academic programmes; and many other formal, and informal aspects of academic work (Hall 2010, 3). The nine contact points that a community could have with the university are: teaching and learning; research; CE; service learning; work-integrated learning; community service; field

education; internship; and volunteerism. These nine contact points are used to determine whether an article should be included in the Scholarship of Engagement Publication Database, or not. The motto of the CEU at UWC is "Shared Knowledge builds equity and partnership", which confirms its intention to facilitate the removal of barriers to access information that could facilitate the successful institutionalisation of the SoE. The development and implementation of the SoE database, as well as the process of decentralisation, will enhance and facilitate knowledge-sharing between partners in a trust relationship. This process and outcomes of the SoE database further represents some aspects of the decolonisation agenda, specifically that information should be open, transparent, generated by "local" researchers, in equal partnership with communities, responding to the needs highlighted by the community.

Scholarship of Engagement process

The implicit benefit of the operationalisation process of the SoE is that all parties are grounded in the consciousness of the SoE, which is central to all engagement processes. It is imperative that the principle of integration, namely the application and commitment to the Scholarship of Integration (SoI), is part of the integration approach, as all parties need to buy-in to the process.

The following framework elements, developed by the Council on Higher Education (CHE 2016, 263), are crucial to the benchmarking of CE: the extent to which institutional strategic plans, budgets, reporting, and performance management systems address CE; and institutions have developed policies that help to create an enabling environment for engaged scholarship. The indicators for this benchmarking are rewards and recognition, namely: opportunities for staff to develop their capacity to build partnerships with community partners; senate committees for enhancing and expanding CE; opportunities for ongoing dialogue and reflection of the universities' developmental role (i.e., social transformation role); and visible mechanisms for communities to access the intellectual resources of the university (CHE 2016, 263).

These are similar to the benchmarking indicators based on the theory of change, proposed by the Advancing University Engagement: University engagement and global league tables system (Douglas, Grant, and Wells 2020), to rank universities' societal engagement globally. It focusses on leadership buy-in, where communities and universities value each other's contributions, regarding resource allocation decisions and commitment, rewards and recognition, as well as engagement, embedded in the core business of curriculum and research. This highlights the importance and viability of embarking on knowledge-sharing and knowledge-management systems, which, in the context of a decolonisation, incorporates access to the information by the community and university partners.

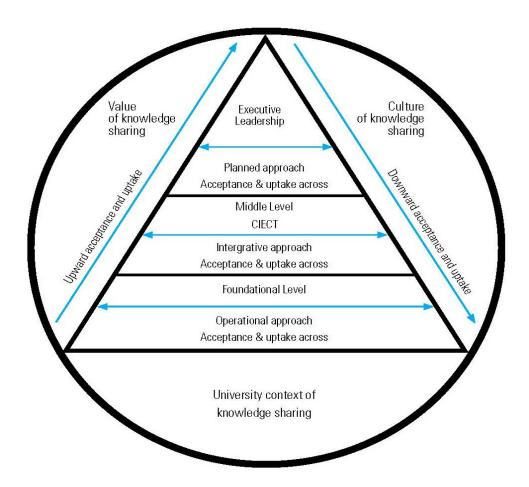## The institutionalised approach to the Knowledge Management System (KMS)

Figure 1: The institutionalised approach to the Knowledge Management System

The two basic systems of sharing knowledge, in use between persons, which academics and partners have used primarily, and provide control and security, are a closed network of sharing and an open network of sharing, conducted through a centrally located open source repository that could be accessed by all partners. The literature identifies the leadership, organizational culture, and values, as very important enablers that facilitate the implementation and institutionalisation of a Knowledge Management System (KMS), as well as an information sharing culture and system. For this reason, the institutionalised approach was used to develop and implement the UWC SoE database, as it considers management values and organizational culture, as well as processes and structure, to encourage sharing (Cheng, Sze-Yin Ho, and Lau 2009, 315).

The planned approach was used when the CEU entered into discussions with the executive and leadership of the university, to ensure buy-in and commitment for the project. There was a need for a planned approach to implementation, as a top-down implementation approach does not always lead to sustainability, institutionalisation, and an infused uptake of the SoE process.

A top-down approach, represents the colonial construct of power and elitism. Executive support provides the motivation, as well as financial support for the institutionalisation of SoE.

It was important to develop an implementation approach, which would transpire at all three levels of the university, simultaneously. The top level of the executive leadership is required to drive and support the process from the top, down; however, not as a top-down exclusive decision, but as a response to the requirements at the other two levels. The academics and support staff beginning their career paths, as well as mid-career and established academics, would become involved and passionate about the SoE, and adopt it as a means of integrating teaching, learning, and research, by operationalizing engagement within the SoE context, through the integration of theory and practice from the bottom, up.

The CEU is located in the middle level, in partnership with deans, heads of departments, and directors, together with the Centre for Innovative Education and Communication Technologies [CIECT] that hosts the SoE database. This level collectively presents and facilitates partnerships with all stakeholders, on and off campus, and is thus responsible for driving the SoE process across the institution. The process is implemented by contacting all parties of the middle level, to ensure that all the stakeholders in this level accepted the documentation process, simultaneously. This transpired through continuous communication, follow up, and using various strategies of connecting. It was important for all parties to buy-in and become part of the integrative approach to the institutionalisation process, while the implicit benefit of this process was a heightened SoE consciousness that contributed to the transformation and social justice agenda of UWC. Additionally, acceptance and uptake had to occur simultaneously at all levels, with a diffusion top-down, bottom-up, and across the institution, within a supportive university context of knowledge-sharing.

This institutionalised approach of implementation facilitated the acceptance and uptake of the KMS, and created a platform for the sustainable adoption of a KMS at UWC, through the database, to institutionalize the SoE.

OVERVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE-SHARING LITERATURE

Knowledge-sharing

Knowledge-sharing is fundamental for societal progress, development (Njiraine 2019, 82), and essential in gaining the competitive edge (Al-Kurdi, El-Haddadeh, and Eldabi 2018, 226). Therefore, many organisations are adopting integrated approaches (Njiraine 2019, 86) to manage, store, and disseminate knowledge (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 227). Contextualising work place knowledge-sharing involves the exchange of one employee's work-related knowledge or

experiences, with another employee's, which ensures the alignment of the organisation's goals, with regards to knowledge (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 228).

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) could ensure a beneficial transition to KMSs, by facilitating a culture of enhancing knowledge-sharing, within and outside universities (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 232). Additionally, this culture further contributes to the principles of CE, as well as the decolonisation agenda of equity, inclusion, social justice, and transformation. An effective knowledge-sharing system requires that the institution understands the needs of the users, as well as the complexities of managing knowledge and knowledge sources (Njiraine 2019, 86). Social capital is strengthened in a collaborative, knowledge-sharing environment, which also ensures effective knowledge management, proper documentation, dissemination, and application of innovation in new contexts (Njiraine 2019, 86).

It is imperative that the executive management of HEIs promote sharing among employees, through leading by example, as their support crucially influences the level of knowledge-sharing among academics at HEIs (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 233).

Contextualising knowledge management in Higher Education

When knowledge management is adequately implemented, it increases innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth of the institution's global positioning through partnerships, networking, visibility, and stakeholders' engagement (Njiraine 2019, 87). The key to knowledge management is that the appropriate knowledge should be collected and made accessible when needed at an appropriate time, in the appropriate format (Njiraine 2019, 83). Implementing a KMS, such as a database, requires the institution to brainstorm the various types of knowledge that they would want to manage (Agarwal and Marouf 2014, 80).

"HEIs are knowledge organizations with tacit and explicit knowledge inserted in people and processes" (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 238). One of the main focuses of knowledge management is the retention of tacit knowledge, which is possible through the transfer of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, as once tacit knowledge is documented, it can be replaced; however, tacit knowledge in people is irreplaceable (Agarwal and Marouf 2014, 72). These two types of knowledge are distinguishable; firstly, tacit knowledge inhabits the minds of faculty members, staff, and students, whereas explicit knowledge emerges when tacit knowledge is articulated/captured in documents and books, or audio/video recorded (Agarwal and Marouf 2014, 72). For example, at UWC, CE projects often ended due to the completion of a funding cycle, or when staff leave the institution (Daniels and September-Brown 2021, 3). Therefore, when the detail of a CE project is not recorded, the information simply resides, and leaves with the staff member. However, when it is recorded, it remains available at the institution.

Determinants of knowledge sharing

Universities are revered as places where ideas and insights are shared (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 233), and the sharing of knowledge should be considered beneficial, in terms of enhancing reputation and influence (Njiraine 2019, 85). The reluctance to share knowledge could be attributed to the lack of systems and policies to protect intellectual assets, as well as the competitive nature of academia (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 234), which is mostly related to the coloniality inheritance of HEIs' structures and processes. Individual barriers that might discourage academics from sharing their hard-earned knowledge are trust, personal attitude, motivation, personal expectation (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 237), time and effort, as well as loss of expert power (Njiraine 2019, 86). Sharing knowledge is perceived as a costly exercise by many (Njiraine 2019, 85), consequently, knowledge-hoarding is a common practice among academics (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 234). In these situations, the establishment of personal relationships and networks is the basis for trust, which is one of the requirements for knowledge-sharing and innovation (Njiraine 2019, 86). Other factors that impact knowledge-sharing includes unrealistic expectations of technology, a lack of training on the system, as well as the poor usability and design of the system (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 229).

Ultimately, the implementation of KMSs are intended to encourage sharing, as well as establish a collaborative sharing environment among academics with a common interest (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 227). Therefore, senior management should aim to consistently encourage a free environment of knowledge-sharing, as it is vital to the success of the institution (Al-Kurdi et al. 2018, 227). Occasionally, it is necessary to implement a mechanism that would "strengthen management linked to knowledge so that information are shared through interactions with team members and leadership, which brings benefits to higher-level Institutions" (Gallo, Sánchez Espejo, and Flores 2021, 501). Therefore, institutions that endeavour to ensure successful knowledge-sharing, would require a holistic approach, which should include networking, peer-to-peer assistance, mutual learning, and improved interactions (Njiraine 2019, 86) within the institution.

UWC SoE DATABASE AS A CASE STUDY

Contextualizing knowledge management at UWC

Since its humble beginnings, the UWC has grown into a vibrant and competitive university, hosting seven faculties, with several schools, departments, centres, and support units. However, it had grown to such an extent that often, entities within faculties were unaware of other entities'

CEs, their locations, or key objectives. While an abundance of CE knowledge and a wide range of engagement projects were existent at UWC, an urgent need to share such knowledge, as well as coordinate and align these projects was crucial, for their optimal use as resources. Therefore, a knowledge management and sharing system for CE was a necessity at the institution.

To ensure that the knowledge management framework was adequately executed, the CEU had to select suitable leaders and champions for the project. Therefore, the first step of the process was identifying the people, who would take on the responsibility of assisting in constructing and implementing the knowledge management strategy. The director of the CEU employed a researcher, on a full time basis, to research and co-ordinate a knowledge management strategy. The purpose of this position was to facilitate, coordinate, and maintain the SoE database. In addition, another responsibility of the researcher would be coordinating the development of future publications, in accordance with the guidelines provided by the CEU, related to the database. Secondly, the CEU identified the Centre for Innovative Education & Communication Technologies (CIECT 2022), as part of the collaborative nature of the project, particularly in engaging the services of Information and Communication Services ICS to establish the platform that hosts the open source database.

Subsequently, the CEU was tasked with identifying key advocates, such as senior management within the institution, as well as within faculties. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic of the university was identified as a key advocate to promote the KMS to the Deans of the faculties.

What knowledge were UWC seeking to manage?

In this process, the CEU had to determine the nature of CE knowledge that was relevant for inclusion in the SoE database. The first part of this process was exploring the literature regarding CE databases in HEIs in South Africa, as well as globally, especially the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom. This provided the CEU with a better understanding of the local and global CE database landscape, in relation to collected and shared knowledge. The next step was a brain storming session with relevant staff members and champions, to discuss the CE knowledge that was relevant for the institution.

Ultimately, it was decided to include CE knowledge in the following four categories: project details; project partner information; project outcomes; and funding information. For example, coordinators or project managers were asked to record their CE initiatives (tacit knowledge) on a questionnaire template, designed by the CEU, to capture all the relevant information related to their CE activity (explicit knowledge).
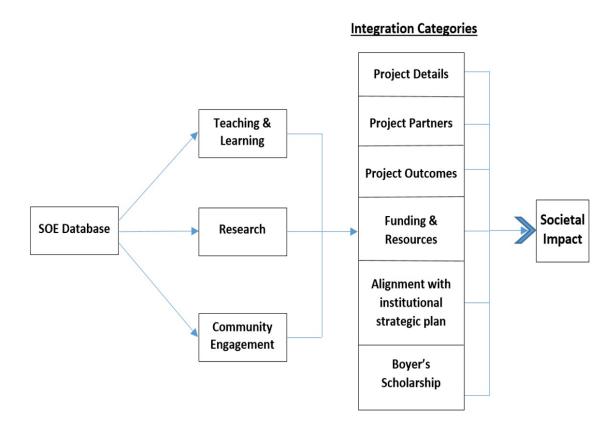
SoE database framework

Figure 2: SoE Database Framework

The SoE database framework is focused on providing baseline engagement data, based on the three main pillars, namely, teaching and learning, research, and CE, which universities have to deliver on to meet their mandate. These three are captured under the six integration categories, which are project details, project partners, project outcomes, funding and resources, alignment with institutional strategic plan and UWCs amended Boyer's SoE model. The data from the first four integration categories are applied to align the project with the institutional strategic plan, as well as the relevant scholarships practised, according the UWCs amended model of Boyers. The aim of the SoE database is to facilitate engagement that would contribute to SI.

METHODOLOGY

Initial design

The data collection was conducted in the form of a web-based survey questionnaire, as well as follow-up interviews, to verify that all the information was captured correctly. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data, related to CE projects, from various faculties and entities at the UWC. The questionnaire was piloted on five previously identified CE

projects, to ensure that the questions were clear and comprehensive. The semi-structured questionnaire comprised open-ended and close-ended questions. Four sections were included in the questionnaire, namely: Project details; Project partners; Project outcomes; Funding information; as well as how the projects align with the UWC institutional strategic plan, and which scholarships in the SoE, model adapted from Boyer (1996), are practised. In the project details section, demographical data on the project and project manager/coordinator were collected. In the project partners section, demographical information about the external partner were collected. In the project outcomes section, the aim was to solicit information on how the project was operationalised, how the engagements of the project created change, as well as the overall purpose and goals of the project. In the funding section, minimal funding information on the project was provided. Ultimately, the questionnaire was developed into a web-based survey, which the participants were required to complete electronically.

Project details (Societal)

The SoE database highlights information relating to CE projects in departments, schools, centres, divisions, and support units. These sections are divided into Faculties and Offices (for example, the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic). It comprises projects across UWC campus, and offers access to over one hundred UWC CE projects. The information gathered in this section provides a brief overview of each project, which includes a description, highlighting the aims and objectives, niche areas, as well as discipline categories of the projects. Specifically, this section provides data on the number of CE projects within each faculty or office. In addition, it records information on when projects had started and ended, which provides data on the project cycle. Lastly, it allows the CEU to summarize the socio-economic information of CE projects within faculties and offices across the university, as well as compare the engagements of various years.

Project partners (Association)

The SoE database offers opportunities to forge links and partnerships within the institution, as well as create partnerships that could be extended to other universities and various communities, locally, nationally, and internationally. This section of the database provides the audience with information about the partnership, namely: information regarding the primary objective of the partnership; type of partnership; and the geographical location of the CE activity. The objective of this section is to provide insight into the collaboration, as well as the number of CE partners, with whom the university is actively engaged. For example, in 2017, it was reported that the university had 521 CE partnerships. The classification of the partnerships provides the CEU

with a summary of the collaboration, and with which partner the university is most, or least engaged. For example, the 2017 data indicated that a third of UWC partnerships were forged with educational institutions, and a quarter with government agencies. Lastly, the location of CE activities provides the university with information regarding the geographical location of the engagement, in relation to the university's location. For example, the 2017 database report indicated that 76 per cent of CE activities were located in the surrounding areas of UWC campus, which is a reflection of UWC's internal and external profile and influence.

Project outcomes (Operationalisation)

The aim of this section is to solicit information on how the project operationalises, how engagements create change, and the overall goals of the project. However, very often, the challenge is in defining CE, as it takes on many different forms (Department of Higher Education and Training 2013, 39). In the database report, Daniels and September-Brown (2019, 13), therefore, identified nine contact points at which the community could interact with the university. This section of the database demonstrates how CE projects are linked to one or more of the contact points, within the context of UWC. It provides a breakdown on how many CE projects, in each office or faculty, are linked to one or more contact points.

The placement of CE activities into the CEU model is relevant because Boyer's (1996) SoE refers to CE as a process that involves an evolution and transformation of knowledge, as opposed to the simple transfer of information from one learning partner to another. It provides a theoretical framework for the CE activities at UWC. Here the database demonstrates the link between the CE projects and the CEU model; consequently, highlighting the alignment of projects with the SoE and its respective interdependent scholarships.

The UWC developed four holistic overarching enabling attributes that characterise the twenty-first century graduate (UWC 2017, 1). It provided departments with a framework to create opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge actively to real-world issues, as well as connect with a range of professional, business and social communities outside the institution (UWC 2016, 20); and as such, it was also included in the database. The data collected in this section of the database highlighted which graduate attribute was mostly linked to CE activities. For example, in 2020, the database report revealed that attribute two (Critical Citizenship and the Social Good) was linked to more projects than the other three, because of the CE nature of the projects.

In 2016, the database included information of monetary value, which highlighted the amount of time engaged in CE projects by staff and students. In addition, it summarised the partnerships and engagement hours for each office and faculty. CEU included this to

demonstrate the impact of CE, and to acknowledge the sweat equity input of UWC's partners.

Funding (Support)

The funding information section of the database only requires the project manager, or coordinator, to specify whether the CE project received funding, and if it did, to identify, or name the funder. In the CEU's experience, some project managers were uncomfortable with speaking about project funding information; therefore, the database only allows project managers and the executive of the university to access this information. The data accumulated in this section provided information on the number of CE projects that actually received funding, compared with those that did not.

Knowledge collection process

A letter of communication, drafted by the CEU, regarding the data collection process, was sent via the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Academic to the deans of faculties. It was expected that this message would filter through to the relevant heads of departments, schools, divisions, centres, and support units; however, it was observed that this process did not transpire, as envisaged. This activated a new communication process, which required the CEU researcher to compile a contact list of all heads of departments, schools, divisions, centres, and support units, by using the UWC website, and combining it with an existing list, which the unit had compiled previously. Following this exercise, the original letter was again circulated to the heads of departments, schools, divisions, centres, and support units from the Director of the CEU, as well as weekly email reminders to participating individuals of the survey, until contact was established, or the survey questionnaire was completed.

Due to the slow response to the online survey, several face-to-face visits were also conducted, which increased the response rate. This process of establishing contact ensured connection and communication with potential participants, who were engaged in CE activities. Most responses were received from heads of departments, schools, offices, support units, or their administrators. Annually, since 2017, an update process was implemented, as part of the maintenance of the database. This component involved one-on-one conversations with each project leader, to update project information. It ensured that project information was updated, and often project leaders shared knowledge on new projects freely, or referred other colleagues, who were engaged in CE activities. Over the years, CEU has learnt that knowledge-sharing involves relationship building, trust and networking.

Access to knowledge

The next process was to determine how the knowledge would be accessed. The CIECT was the CEU's partner in engaging the services of ICS, and establishing the platform to host the

database. The institutional Learning Management System (LMS), Sakai platform (branded as iKamva at the UWC) was identified as the knowledge management solution, as all staff and students at the university, as well as people off campus have access to this platform. In 2019, the platform was globally ranked as the top Open-LMS for its user experience (CIECT 2022). The platform was user-friendly and included useful features, such as adding pictures, videos, links and documents related to engagement. A vital component of this process was ensuring a highly secure platform, because some information, such as funding, was not accessible to everyone, on request from project managers. Consequently, CIECT created and configured permissions according to user roles; for example, everyone had access to project details, all staff had access to project partners and project outcomes, but only project managers and executive staff had access to the funding information section.

Knowledge-sharing barriers

Certain barriers existed with the use of an electronic platform for data collection, even though it was in an academic environment, where knowledge and resources were in abundance. Unfortunately, one of the barriers was the actual online software used for the questionnaire, such as only being able to access the questionnaire from the same electronic device, if a staff member was unable to complete it in one go. Another challenge experienced was the lack of dissemination of information via email to staff within faculties. There were several cases where academics only completed the questionnaire after one or two telephonic prompts, or face-to-face meetings. In certain circumstances, they indicated that it was due to time constraints, while in other cases, project managers were sceptical, due to a lack of trust. A few project managers were reluctant to provide too much information about their project, especially funding or partner information. The challenges were resource constraints, such as time, finances, and access to expertise on a continuous basis.

Knowledge-sharing benefits

The development of a KMS presented various faculties, departments, schools, centres, divisions, and support units with access to information about what was happening on campus, provided cross-links and references to each other's activities, and identified sites of CE practice. In addition, it shared resources to achieve optimal impact, and identified strengths, as well as challenges facing academics in CEs. Essentially, the development of a KMS could facilitate partnerships within the university, improve excellence in delivery, and acknowledge the effort and CE initiatives of staff and students. Therefore, the database forms the knowledge base, to monitor and profile CE activities at UWC.

Knowledge-management outcomes

The information in the database was used to develop the 2014, 2016 and 2018 CE publications. The publication highlights the unique way in which the UWC extends its teaching, research, and operations, as integrated activities in partnerships with local, regional, national and international communities. It recognises that the community of students, academics, and partners, in institutions of higher education, also form part of a global community.

Annually, since 2017, the Community Engagement Report was published and provided updated information related to the CE activities at UWC. This baseline document promotes departments, schools, centres, divisions, and support units, while encouraging further discussions about CE. The report highlights the various types of partnerships, their geographical locations, as well as the monetary value of the diverse engagements, and provides a summary of each office and faculty, in relation to their partnerships.

ENABLERS THAT FACILITATED INSTITUTIONALISATION

Building trust-based partnerships for sustainability in SoE

The South African culture is influenced by an influential principle of Ubuntu, which is an example of African philosophy, and could be used to advance the building of trust relationships. The Nguni term implies humanity, translated as "I am because we are". There could be a collective, underlying, subconscious system of socio-cultural values, which could guide and influence behaviour. This implies that, if connection among academics, stakeholders, and partners of the university is created, based on humanity, it will influence the institutional culture, and create an atmosphere of cooperation, instead of competition, facilitating teamwork, innovation, and successful outcomes for SoE projects.

The creation of an academic environment of knowledge-sharing, which is secure and connected, creates possibilities and opportunities for people to live their passion through teaching and learning, research, and CE, while harnessing innovative ideas. It also influences leadership styles, as there is not a harsh separation between executive, middle management, academics, support staff, and students, which enables commitment to a SoE brand of inclusivity through diversity, and also contributes to the social transformation purpose and decolonisation agenda of HEIs. Preece (2013) contends that South Africa could benefit from mutual learning of research and experience across the continent, which highlights aspects, such as multi-partner collaborations, networking, focusing on community relationships, interdisciplinary approaches to community-identified needs, and the application, as well as elaboration of context-specific indigenous knowledge that will facilitate the Africanisation in CE. Considering the premise of

Preece (2013), it would appear to be a valuable contribution to the expansion of the debate on exploring an understanding and conceptualisation of CE, in the context of South Africa and Africa, before researching the various types of CE, of which service learning is but one type. The SoE database provides an opportunity to do both. These are all outcomes that databases, as part of the KMSs at universities, could facilitate.

Institutional culture

Higher Education Institutions are best positioned, as knowledge and innovation production agencies, to drive partnership processes that would contribute to achieving international, regional, and national strategies (African Union Commission 2015; Republic of South Africa (RSA) 2012; United Nations 2015). It is vital to develop an understanding of the context of higher education, especially the one in which the KMS is being developed and implemented, to contribute to the social transformation and decolonisation agendas. Universities are knowledge intensive organizations, whose core business is to co-create knowledge with other stakeholders and partners, as well as share, apply, and trade/exchange the knowledge, in an equitable and ethical manner, to the benefit of the university and academics, while facilitating SI. Although the intention is co-creation, knowledge creation could be individualistic, lonely, and costly, with regards to time, energy, and financial cost. Academics engage in this activity for academic recognition and expert identity, as well as professional group identity. Therefore, it is clear that there must be benefits to knowledge-sharing, to entice academics to agree to the inclusion of their work in a KMS, whilst at the same time expanding on the culture of ethical and socially just CE practice. The experience and reflection of this case study presents the following enablers for the promotion of an organizational culture of ethically sound knowledge-sharing.

Partnership building

It is important to develop tools and systems that enable and facilitate knowledge-sharing. This will assist in generating shared understanding, focus, and insight; ultimately building trust in new, developing, and existing relationships. The key elements of trust-based partnerships are trust, motivation, incentives for all partners (both external and internal), innovation, leadership, and institutional culture. Academics cannot expect communities and partners to enter into knowledge-sharing and knowledge production enterprises, without the same security and protection for their indigenous knowledge and skills, as well as funding and various other resources.

Communication

Communication is an important tool to broker power and ensure equality and equity. Communication should be regular and frequent initially, to keep the project in the foreground, as well as maintain the momentum, and as the SoE process becomes institutionalised, so should the communication systems. Messages should be concise and transparent to ensure inclusivity and build trust.

LESSONS LEARNT

The need to build safe spaces exists within HEIs, to enhance the confidence of sharing information, as academia is a competitive space, resources are limited, the landscape is riddled with professional jealousy, as well as the jostling for positions, which hamper the ability to build sustainable, trust-based partnerships.

As a result, the implementation process was slowed down in the beginning, and the CEU researcher, as well as the director had to engage in personal meetings with key stakeholders. Trust is an essential element of any sustainable partnership; however, so many partnerships between SoE academic practitioners and other stakeholder implementation partners are hindered by the lack of trust. Therefore, a need exists to foreground projects or systems like these, with a formal process and structure, to build and grow this trust, in order to safeguard the creation of ethical, equitable, trust-based partnerships, and guarantee the sustainable impact of the SoE.

It is also extremely important to build in security measures at different levels of the databases, to facilitate the trust and security of information, especially of funders. A real threat of intellectual property appropriation exists, where others may unfairly benefit from work that is not theirs, and gain recognition, accreditation, and promotion. Consequently, the leader of the projects should be in a position to request special access for a partner, when required.

CONCLUSION

In this article, the discussion was focused on the broad approach to CE by HEIs, manifested in the different "communities" with whom they work, and translated through the different types of scholarships in the SoE that actions the three core functions of HEIs. The UWC SoE database was presented as a case study, to propose a framework for profiling the CE landscape at HEIs.

The infused principle of CE at UWC was presented in its SoE model that consists of all forms of scholarly activity, deployed by the university as: engagement through learning and teaching, engaged research, engagement with business, industry and professional links (i.e. partnerships), social and cultural engagement, and economic engagement. It is therefore very

important to have classification types for engagement available, in order to monitor and evaluate the university in this regard. The SoE profile database is the first step towards developing engagement categories. The development of the said database, during the past six years, enabled the UWC to, not only present its scholarly engagements, but also conceptualize a decentralised framework, through which to attempt the monitoring and evaluation of its SoE "footprint", towards Societal/Broader Impacts (SI/BI). Globally, the HEI sector has only recently become more specifically structured towards the assessment and measurement of their CE impact in society.

At the time of writing this case study, the UWC has embarked on piloting its SoE Monitoring and Evaluation Decentralisation Framework (MEDF) that is operationalized via an interactive web portal. Subsequently, the original SoE database template has also been extended to include: partnership types, geographical location, target beneficiary type and quantity, scholarly discipline, monetary value, societal well-being indicators, and development drivers, for example, national: South African National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 (RSA 2012); regional: African Union Vision 2063 (AUC 2015); and international: United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015). In conclusion, we contemplate the following words of Joseph Mbembe (2016, 41):

> "... We will foster a process of decolonisation of our universities if we manage to build new diasporic intellectual networks and if we take seriously these new spaces of transnational engagement and harness the floating resources freed by the process of globalized talent mobility ...."

These words summarise the reason, the purpose, the benefits, and the future justification for HEIs to profile their SoE, using databases, such as the example case presented in this article, to not only expand their reach, but also provide evidence of adherence to their core functions of knowledge production, social justice, and transformation; all of which must be inclusive, equitable, and ethical, when engaging and partnering with communities, to collectively achieve SI.

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CIECT *see* Centre for Innovative Education & Communication Technologies.

CEU see Community Engagement Unit.

CHE *see* Council on Higher Education.

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UWC *see* University of the Western Cape.