Demonstrating Library value:
Appropriate methodologies and practical approaches at the University of Cape Town

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Introduction

• Demand: academic libraries to articulate their value
• Libraries need to focus on what universities value
• Traditional library statistics & measures do not by themselves demonstrate value
Value not easily demonstrated

• May be inferred: e.g. from data like attendance or seat occupancy
• Observed: e.g. mining data of what users actually do
• Solicited: by asking in surveys or focus groups
• Or unsolicited: from suggestions or anecdotes.

New Library Values project at UCT

• Collaboration between Library & LISC
• “Values Team” appointed
• Some work in progress will be incorporated
Mission statements show what universities value

UCT values expressed in 4 main points:

• Research-led identity;
• Quality education;
• Africa wide and international connections & partnerships;
• Embracing diversity among both students and staff.
<table>
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<th>Mission statement:</th>
<th>Library activities</th>
<th>Possible indicators</th>
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| Research-led identity | • Consultation & collaboration between librarians & researchers  
• Research Commons (RC) supportive space for emerging researchers | • Correlation between use of RC & production of knowledge  
• Solicited evidence of library impact on research output |
| Quality education: undergraduate & postgraduate | • Services, facilities & support that students value for their academic work  
• Establishing links between library use & student achievement | • Surveys in Knowledge Commons (KC) and 24/7 venue about use & value  
• Data Warehouse project |
| Africa-wide & international connections & partnerships | • Research Collaboration  
• UCT unique African materials open to Africa: UCT Institutional Repository; OpenUCT | • Impact on UCTs international rankings  
• Impact of use of repositories and research data |
| Environment embracing diverse student and staff community | • Library an intellectual meeting point & welcoming environment: KC & RC  
• Diverse staff: fluent in different languages | • Multilingual assistance  
• User-friendly web-presentation  
• LibQUAL+ |
Values project - plan of Action:

• Start with Quality education
• Research next – Research Commons
• African & International collaboration being explored with the Research Office
• *LibQUAL*+ in August
• Data Warehouse Project being planned in collaboration with ICTS
Research Commons - planning:

- Postgraduate students & researchers only
- Are users of RC more productive?
  - Soliciting anecdotal evidence
- Does knowledge creation take place here?
  - Users may be identified through card swipes
  - Duplicates on a single day removed
  - ‘’Long tail’’ shows many repeat visits
  - Match use with student records: do students who work in RC graduate sooner or with more distinctions?
Two investigations into value of library support for learning

Before end-of-semester examinations 2014:

• Knowledge Commons (KC)
  – Students wait for turns to use computers

• New 24/7 Study venue
  – Overnight & Sundays
1. Queues in KC before exams:

- How long are you willing to wait for a pc?
- Year of study & faculty affiliation?
- What are you planning to do?
- How long will you stay?
- What do you like about working here?
- Does working in KC help you get better marks?
2. Use of new 24/7 study venue

- Who are you?
- What are you planning to do here?
- How long will you stay?
- Device used?
- What do you like about working here?
- Does working here help you get better marks?
Year of study?

Different audiences in two venues?

**Year of Study in KC**

**Year of Study in 24/7**
What do you value most in KC?

- Quiet: 250 votes
- Environment/Comfort: 70 votes
- Equipment PC & Printers: 150 votes
- Staff/Assistance: 50 votes
- No Social Media & Distractions: 30 votes
- Group Study Rooms: 10 votes
What do you value most in 24/7?

- Quiet: 70
- Environment: 60
- Hours: 40
- Safety: 10
- Comfort: 20
Does using this facility enable you to get better marks?

**Better Marks in KC?**

- Yes: 500
- No: 100

**Better marks in 24/7?**

- Yes: 250
- No: 50
Tangible evidence:

- Students value silence & working in the Library
- They want to work in the Library rather than in other computer labs on campus
- They think this helps them to get better marks

By providing excellent learning opportunities in supportive environments, Library contributes to UCT Mission!