

SENATE CONFERENCE 2024

Teaching with impact:
Advancing curricular
community engagement for
societal transformation



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Make today matter

www.up.ac.za

1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1	6.	DAY 1 – SESSION 2	
2.	BACKGROUND	5		Indigenous knowledge systems: Value and opportunities for UP	
3.	THEMES	6		Prof Sandy Africa (Chair): Film screening and panel discussion – ‘Vroedvrou’	12
4.	DAY 1 – SESSION 1		7.	MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION	13
	Welcome, purpose, focus, rationale, and structure of the Senate Conference			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The film’s inspiration, and relevance for CCE The translation of the film into the classroom and scholarly space for students Whether similar work with communities is being facilitated effectively enough Being part of indigenous knowledge systems and ensuring their thriving and survival as part of the education project Trans-disciplinarity The role of men in this space 	
	Prof Loretta Feris: Taking the classroom out of the classroom	8			
	Scene-setting: Reimagining curriculum community engagement (CCE) at UP		8.	DAY 1 – SESSION 3	
	Prof Themba Mosia: Community engagement: A planned purposeful application of resources and expertise in teaching, learning and research	9		Case studies from UP	
	How do we use CCE to forge innovative links between universities that respond to interrelated global challenges?			Prof Wynand JvdM Steyn (Chair)	
	Prof Grace Ngai: Service learning by nature is a hands on, human activity	9		Design for disassembly and circularity: Embracing transdisciplinary education at the University of Pretoria	
	In the context of multiple and overlapping political, social, economic, and environmental challenges, what role can the concept of impact play in positioning South African universities as leaders in addressing the stark inequalities that continue to thwart the project of freedom?			<i>We are no longer living in a world of separate realities</i>	14
	Prof Chris Brink: An activity is not by itself an effect	10		Teaching with impact: Advancing curricular community engagement for societal transformation: A case study on transdisciplinary teaching and learning in integrative healthcare	
5.	MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION	11		<i>Effective healthcare is not only confined to a single system or methodology, but is a tapestry woven from the collective wisdom of humanity</i>	15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact, action and inaction on the part of academics Impact in applied disciplines 				

9.	DAY 1 – SESSION 4 Group discussions Prof Sunil Maharaj (Chair) GROUP 1: Teaching with impact in a polycrisis 16 GROUP 2: A reimagined CCE at UP 17 GROUP 3: Institutional ecosystem/faculty understanding 17 GROUP 4: Barriers and benefits in curricular community engagement 18
10.	DAY 2 – SESSION 1 Welcome and purpose Prof Flavia Senkubuge 19 Understanding and engaging with communities as equal partners: Teaching, learning, and research Prof Robert Kibugi: <i>Experiential learning techniques empower students to holistically solve problems beyond the courtroom, and respond to the needs and demands of a changing world</i> 19 Enabling continuity and sustainability of CCE initiatives in the face of the transient nature of the student journey Ms Priscilla Morley: <i>A touch point: any moment when one individual gains an impression of another, through some form of interaction which may alter how any individual feels and whether they choose to further interact with the other person</i> 20 A sweet spot: Doing what we're good at to address what the world needs while generating evidence for change Prof Liesel Ebersöhn: <i>CCE and research community engagement is a pathway to give back taxpayer money, to close that loop of investment</i> 21

11.	MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION 22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice for colleagues entering CE places • The contribution of indigenous communities to policy, by-laws and climate change issues • Indigenous knowledge holders and leadership • Documenting CCE impact • Changes that should be made in/to CCE
12.	DAY 2 – SESSION 2 The case for reimagined curricular community engagement Prof Caroline Nicholson (Chair) Teacher stress and well-being intervention <i>Psychologists cannot work alone, and will have to work across disciplines like nursing and community health to make a real difference</i> 23 Threaded tales: Weaving bonds beyond the needle's touch and stitching communities together with creativity <i>Creating and sustaining sound business practices while positively influencing the environment and the society</i> 24
13.	MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of the CCE experience • Indigenous methods of psychology
14.	DAY 2 – SESSION 3 Group discussions Prof Carolina Koornhof (Chair) GROUP 1: SOTL in the context of CCE 25 GROUP 2: Transformative pedagogies and practices 25 GROUP 3: Professional responsibilities and indemnities in community engagement 26 GROUP 4: Understanding and engaging with communities as equal partners 27



Teaching with impact

Advancing curricular community engagement for societal transformation

GOAL

Cultivate students who are:



- Effective problem-solvers
- Critical thinkers
- Empowered, socially responsible citizens
- Cognisant and reflective of their positionality
- Adept at understanding power and power relations

HOW?

- 1 See community engagement as embedded in the everyday work we do
- 2 See community engagement as a planned and purposeful application of resources and expertise
- 3 Bridge student teams and community leaders – communities should function as equal partners
- 4 Be mindful and respectful of communities' lived realities, and develop projects that address these challenges through open dialogue
- 5 Embrace teaching and learning with/from indigenous knowledge systems, incorporating indigenous voices, methodologies and epistemologies into the curriculum
- 6 Embrace community engagement ideas and themes that come from students
- 7 Measure the impact students make when they go into communities
- 8 Reach out to industries, the profession and government to form partnerships and open funding opportunities
- 9 Embrace the value of technology in accelerating curricular community engagement
- 10 Plan for continuity and sustainability by setting holistic, prioritised and resilient goals

CHALLENGES

Risk and liability

Resources

Managing community expectations

Logistics

Language barriers

1

3

5

7

9

2

4

6

8

Support and time allocation in workload

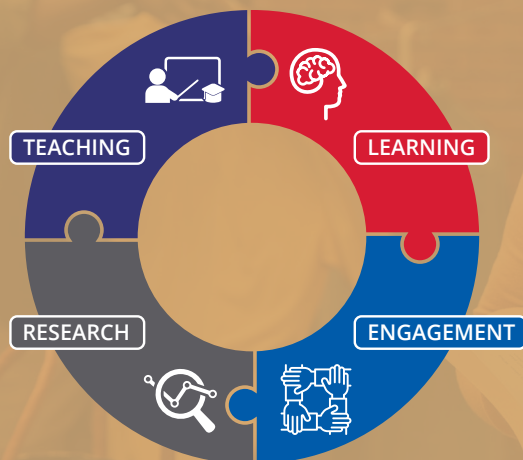
Assessment and reward for impact

Continuity in the face of transient student journeys

Buy-in from community participants

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

for an integrated academic framework



KEY THEMES

for curricular community engagement discussions

- **Engaged collaboration, consultation and communication**
- **Student-centered, pedagogical practices**
- **Trans/multidisciplinary teaching and learning**
- **Social responsiveness**
- **Indigenous knowledge systems**

Benefits of curricular community engagement



FOR STUDENTS

- Gain exposure to diverse communities, experiences and challenges
- Learn social responsiveness and civic responsibility
- Experience personal and professional development
- Develop leadership, teamwork, collaboration and effective engagement
- Learn how to be advocates or activists
- Foster a sense for the importance of being willing to teach and be taught
- Learn the value of negotiation, mutual respect and working towards a shared goal



FOR ACADEMIA

- Teach outside of the classroom and engage with knowledge outside of the university
- Teach outside of disciplinary silos
- Enhance experiential learning
- Practice ethical approaches to community research
- Bring the reality of the world into students' framework



FOR RESEARCH

- Solve complex real-world problems
- Document impact
- Fuel postgraduate community research projects
- Create a platform to investigate new emancipatory methodologies that may lead to democratising research and participatory methodologies



FOR COMMUNITIES

- Make a meaningful contribution to addressing challenges
- Bring a voice to indigenous communities and knowledge
- Provide training and opportunities for co-created products with community members
- Foster genuine community partnerships

Teaching with impact: Advancing curricular community engagement for societal transformation

The University of Pretoria annual Senate Conference was held on 15-16 February 2024, at the Future Africa Campus. The conference embraced the theme: *Teaching with impact: Advancing curricular community engagement for societal transformation*, in keeping with the institutions commitment to reimagining itself in the face of an ever-changing globalised world, and its integrated academic framework, which recognises the interdependencies between teaching, learning, research, and engagement as mutually reinforcing, and critical in advancing the academic project. The act of reimagining, however, obligates the need to ask and answer difficult questions, to challenge the status quo, to rethink and unlearn, and to propose new and novel ways of doing, being and thinking.

The presentations, keynotes, case studies, film screening, panel and group discussions provided valuable opportunity for senators to consider this reimagining by interrogating curricular community engagement (CCE) through multiple lenses; and propose practical solutions and suggestions that speak to our lived realities of our students, and the communities they are encouraged to support. Paramount in this deliberation was the overarching desire to advance CCE within an agenda of social justice; this, to be achieved by applying key social justice principles in our pedagogical practices aimed at developing students who are effective problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and empowered, socially responsible, citizens cognisant of their positionality, and adept at understanding power and power relations.

DAY 1

The first day of the conference included four sessions. In the first session Prof Feris and Prof Mosia, tasked with the opening, welcoming and scene setting, reminded senators about the critical role that CE has, and continues, to play in the curriculum, across faculties. Central to Prof Feris's message was the need to commit ourselves to trans-disciplinarity approaches to CE as a mechanism through which we can contribute to solving complex world problems; to teach outside of the classroom, and silos; and to embrace diversity. Key moments from Prof Mosia's contribution was the reminder that universities globally are obligated to contribute knowledge to society, and by extension, to be of value to the communities they serve. Thus, the University of Pretoria should continue to, as it has already done, see CE as embedded in the everyday work we do, and as a planned purposeful application of resources and expertise in teaching, learning and research. Critical thinking, reflective practices and interconnectedness are cultivated through the CE contributions that we have at the University of Pretoria.

The two keynoters addressed different CCE related considerations. Prof Ngai demonstrated the value of using CCE to forge links between universities to respond to global challenges. Foregrounding the need for human understanding, Prof Ngai also pointed out that CE collaborations encourage learning in multiple and diverse ways, to cross barriers and boundaries and to develop core skills and abilities. Providing evidence from her own research, Prof Ngai confirms the value of engaged CCE. Prof Brink, in keeping with the value of evidence-based practices, challenged senators to demonstrate the impact of their work on society i.e. what difference has one's work made, and what evidence is there to prove this. Citing multiple examples and case studies, Prof Brink provided practical advice on how to investigate and demonstrate impact, emphasising too, the interdisciplinarity inevitably present in/when demonstrating impact.

The second session with the theme: *'Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Value and Opportunities for the University of Pretoria'*, focused on the film *Vroedvrou*, followed by a panel discussion with the film's producer and director, Prof Feris and Prof O'Connell, and an

international guest Prof Kickett-Tucker and a government official, Dr Manetsi. Key moments to emerge from this discussion included the urgency to document and protect indigenous knowledge to ensure its preservation for future generations; the value of learning outside the classroom, from and through local communities; academic knowledge as not superior to other forms of knowledge; the agency of the local community that must be respected; and that collaboration and communication on equal footing is crucial. This interactive session was followed by two case studies demonstrating the action-oriented nature of CCE.

The underlying objective of the first case study was to give a practical example of how and why trans-disciplinarity is important in the built environment; and how creative pedagogical practices can lead to teaching and learning that transcends traditional boundaries. Working closely with a heritage architect and two greenhouses in close proximity to the university, built environment students had the opportunity to engage with real life challenges, devise solutions, collaborate across disciplines and engage in research writing. In keeping with the focus on trans-disciplinarity, the second case study shared an example of trans-disciplinary collaboration in integrative healthcare. This particular research saw lecturers and students cross disciplinary boundaries by including traditional healing, neuropathy, acupuncture and other aspects related to alternate healing in their teaching, thus aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 3 which emphasises the respect of people's cultures, values and lifestyles while providing care.

In the final session of the day, senators participated in group discussions. Each group was given a topic and a set of questions to guide the discussion. Group 1 discussed *'How to teach with impact in a polycrisis'*. Responses here cohere with some of the main themes emanating from the day's presentation: resilience, social responsiveness, social consciousness, engagement, and trans-disciplinarity. In addressing the question of *'How to evaluate the impact of CE and gather feedback from community partners'*, respondents believed that bridging teams and community leaders have a crucial role to play, and that it is valuable to measure the impact students have when they go into communities and the impact 'we' have through students. They noted, too, that while some factors

can be quantified and some not, a collective sense is essential, alluding to the fact that such impact measurement cannot, and should not, be carried out in isolation. Group 2 addressed the idea of *'A reimagined UP'*. Important issues they raised pertained to the role and value that technology can play in accelerating CCE at UP and the need for multi/trans-disciplinary approaches in working across faculties. The group also argued strongly that for CCE to be impactful, UP must reach out to industries or the profession to form partnerships which can open up funding opportunities. They emphasised, too, as did other groups, that the role and position of the community was a priority and that the University and communities should function as equal partners in CCE. Additionally they stated that to avoid the exploitation of communities there must be a level of respect and understanding.

The third group spoke about the *'Institutional ecosystem/faculty understanding'*. The group began by highlighting the many local partnerships faculties participate in, before offering practical suggestions on how to ensure that students engage in meaningful and dialogic ways when working with communities. Here senators indicated that staff should be facilitators of learning and CE, and that ideas and themes for CCE can come from students too. Challenges they raised in carrying out CCE effectively included large student numbers, and student- directed initiatives. Group 4 addressed the issue of *'Barriers and benefits in CCE'*. The group provided comprehensive feedback that included challenges related to logistics, resources, assessment, resistance, time, risk, support and diversity. Benefits included enhanced learning and critical thinking, problem solving, personal and professional development, community collaboration, motivation and engagement, amongst others.

DAY 2

The first session of Day 2 commenced with a keynote by Prof Kibugi, who spoke on the topic *'Understanding and engaging with communities as equal partners: Teaching, learning, and research'*. Using his teaching experience in undergraduate law teaching, Prof Kibugi demonstrates CCE through the Land Use Law course which aims to balance land rights and environmental sustainability. The tasks that students participated in were valuable

in developing skills related to teamwork, collaboration and effective engagement, which are all crucial when engaging in CCE. It also required students to identify a problem, work at solving the problem through engagement with a relevant community, seek consent for interviews and filming and provide evidence of this and, in general, apply all ethical practices related to such research and data collection. The speaker indicated that the positive impacts emanating from CCE include cooperative learning, students learn how to be advocates or activists on key issues and it provides an important opportunity to link theory to practice. The challenges included the cost implication of experiential learning, the liability and related risks, the clearance required from the university and reluctance by community members to speak on record.

The second speaker in this session, Ms Morley, spoke on *'Enabling continuity and sustainability of CCE initiatives in the face of the transient nature of the student journey'*, and like the first speaker drew eloquently on her personal experience to describe three 'touch points' that impacted directly on her understanding of, and experience with CCE. Lessons that the audience drew from her experience related to the sustainability of CE for the local community; the fact that the mentor can and should be willing to learn from the mentee; and that education is not about developing technical knowledge only, but about experience and transformation.

The final speaker in this first session once again shared a living example of CCE in action by demonstrating how educational psychology students provided counselling services to a remote border school. Doing so allowed her, and the team to act responsively, and to offer interventions that spoke to the needs of that particular community. Outcomes of this project saw a trans-disciplinary collaboration with EBIT students, successful postgraduate supervision, scholarly publications, international collaboration, research funding and mentorship.

In the moderated question and answer session that followed, key issues raised in response to the questions pertained to the overall value of CCE as a vehicle to teach, do research and be useful to local communities; it allows lecturers to bring the reality of the world into

the classroom and provides us with a systematic way of showing what the Global South is capable of. Concerns pertained to the need for a more equitable approach to voice for indigenous communities and the urgency to investigate new emancipatory methodologies which may lead to democratising research and participatory methodologies where, from the onset, people speak with each other to agree on how the research should be conducted.

Session 3 included two cases studies. The first is a CCE project in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Education and psychology postgraduate students. With the aim of empowering teachers to deal with work-related challenges effectively, the project team developed an eight session programme on stress management which was offered to teachers. Feedback from teachers indicated that the support was positively received while the student group felt that they contributed positively by helping these teachers feel heard and validated.

The second case study focused on a collaboration between B. Consumer Science (Clothing Retail Management) final year students and Mapula Embroideries, a non-profit organisation, who approached the department for support with training community members. The project has progressed successfully with students and community members experimenting and co-creating products. In addition to training the community members, students also showcased Mapula embroideries as part of their collections and businesses. In sharing her experience, a final year student who formed part of the project, recounted the successes and challenges of co-creating, the importance of being willing to teach and be taught, and the value of negotiation, and mutual respect when working towards a shared goal.

The final session was the group discussions. The first group addressed the *'SOTL in the context of CCE'*. Key offers in this discussion pertained to the need for genuine partnerships, participatory learning, action and reflection. The group noted that continuity and sustainability of CCE will require serious integration and evaluation, with the objectives of CCE being holistic, prioritised and resilient.

Group 2 addressed *'Transformative pedagogies and practices'*. Here responses emphasised the urgency for new approaches that embrace teaching and learning with/from indigenous knowledge systems, incorporating indigenous voices, methodologies and epistemologies into the curriculum, including the humanity element, respecting diversity, opening up spaces, emphasising the need for ethical behaviours and practices, and transformative learning.

'Professional responsibilities and indemnities in community engagement', was the focus of Group three's discussion. The group agreed that there is a critical need to re-look at the way the community environment is defined because most of the time what is referred to is community service to disadvantaged areas; it important for all students to leave UP at the end of their studies having been exposed to some form of CE which should be maintained in all modules. CE should also benefit students and not only communities.

Group 4 engaged with the topic, *'Understanding and engaging with communities as equal partners'*. The group agreed that respect for language is key to effective CE while undermining language undermines a person's identity. While interpreters can assist in this regard, meaning can be lost in translation so it is best to involve researchers who can speak the language. With regards to departing from an ethnographic gaze when working with communities, the group emphasised the need to not view the community as "the other" but rather determine how the community can work with the researcher, accepting, too, that in some instances the community is the "expert" in a subject. Respect was raised as crucial in such engagement, as well as the need to dialogue with communities, as opposed to making assumptions about their needs. It was reemphasised that researchers need to provide feedback and should not make false promises.

As the day, and the conference drew to a close, Prof Mosia reflected on the meaningful, robust conversations engaged in over the past two days, alluded to the urgency to start documenting fully the impact of our work, and concluded by thanking Prof Feris, and the organising committee of the Senate Conference, noting the contribution such platforms make not only to enhancing the teaching, learning and CCE, but to transforming the world.

KEY THEMES

for curricular community engagement discussions

- **Engaged collaboration, consultation and communication**
- **Student-centered, pedagogical practices**
- **Trans/multidisciplinary teaching and learning**
- **Social responsiveness**
- **Indigenous knowledge systems**

GOAL

Cultivate students who are:

- **Effective problem-solvers**
- **Critical thinkers**
- **Empowered, socially responsible citizens**
- **Cognisant and reflective of their positionality**
- **Adept at understanding power and power relations**

University of Pretoria Senate Conference 15–16 February 2024 Future Africa Campus

The 2024 Senate Conference theme 'Teaching with Impact: Advancing Curricular Community Engagement for Societal Transformation', speaks directly to the institutions commitment to strengthening responsiveness to society through teaching, learning and research. CE is routed in the curriculum and is an important aspect of the institutions social responsiveness endeavour. The theme follows on the conversation of curriculum transformation which was the focus of the 2023 conference, and has 4 drivers:

- Responsiveness to social context;
- Epistemological diversity;
- Renewal of pedagogy and classroom practice; and
- [an] Institutional culture of openness and critical reflection.

CCE at UP, defined as the 'planned, purposeful application of resources and expertise in teaching, learning and research in the university's interaction with the external community to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes that are consistent with the institution's vision and mission', links directly to these drivers.



[CLICK TO ACCESS
CONFERENCE
PROGRAMME BOOKLET](#)



[CLICK TO ACCESS
CONFERENCE VIDEOS
AND PRESENTATIONS](#)

The full context of the 2024 Senate Conference is described in the conference booklet, from which the following is extracted:

[It] is anchored on the foundation of common humanity, with the intent to address the problems of injustice and inequality across national boundaries (Frey & Whitehead, 2009; Osler, 2011; Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh, & Bush, 2011). In this sense, CCE is a key aspect of the institutional strategic intent and integral to the academic project (Bender, 2008; Gonzalez-Perez, 2010; Bowen, 2013).

Impactful teaching, embedded CCE, and societal transformation demand innovative and student-centred practices, underpinned by the principles of social justice. Traditional teaching methods and practices, generally underpinned by the banking concept (Freire, 1970) of education which resist dialogue, is theory driven, individualistic and hierarchical, are being rejected in favour of practices that link theory and practice, draw on individual and local knowledges and encourage collaboration and dialogue.

In grappling with the notion of reimagining, and in advancing the concepts and practice of CCE to meet growing needs and expectations for societal transformation, senators shared, described and reflected on current CCE projects within the UP, and broader context; and addressed issues, concerns, challenges and successes through robust dialogue and debate.

Session themes included:

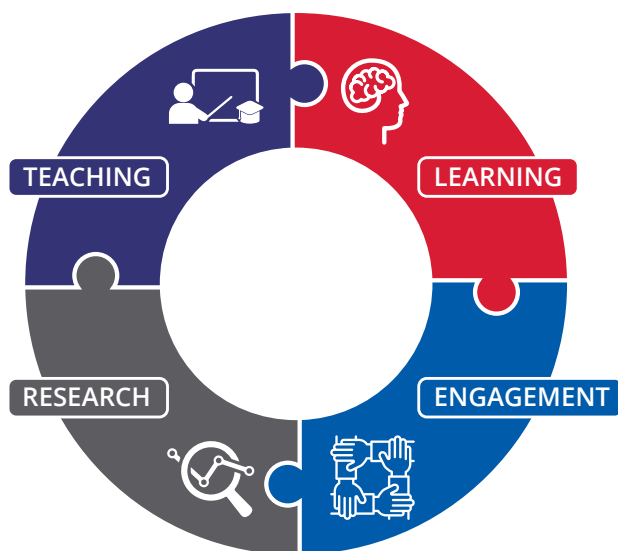
- Enabling continuity and sustainability of CCE initiatives in the face of the transient nature of the student journey
- How do we use CCE to forge innovative links between universities that respond to interrelated global challenges?
- Demonstrating the impact of what we do
- Indigenous knowledge systems: Value and opportunities for UP

¹ Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London, UK: Penguin.

Key themes for curricular community engagement discussions

Key themes that emerged over the two days of deliberation include, but are by no means limited to: trans/multi-disciplinary teaching and learning; social responsiveness; engaged collaboration, consultation and communication; student-centred, pedagogical practices; and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. These themes do not occur in isolation, but rather overlap and intertwine in various and significant ways. The order in which themes are indicated are by no means hierarchical.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE *for an integrated academic framework*



ENGAGED COLLABORATION, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

CCE cannot take place without stakeholders committing to open and engaged collaboration, consultation and communication. Such engagement requires stakeholders to listen actively with a sense of purpose and understanding, to remain transparent, and to respond with honesty and integrity. The collaborative nature of CCE dictates the need to work together with respect, on equal footing, recognising that there are multiple realities, voices, perspectives, languages and knowledges. Embracing such diversity may lead to more successful community partnerships. While consultation, in general, is valuable when a party or stakeholder seeks knowledge or expertise, and it may be characterised as a one-way dynamic (²Austin, 2023), this consultation is crucial to the CCE project which may see staff and students draw on local communities expertise, or *vice versa*. In doing so, as indicated by Prof Feris and others, such knowledge should be respected, and its value, though different, acknowledged. Various speakers also alluded to the necessity to consult with communities about their needs, as opposed to making assumptions. Both collaboration and consultation cannot take place without effective communication. Communication that encourages dialogue and provides opportunity for member participation will aide in CCE. While language could be considered a barrier to effective partnerships, bridging teams are a valuable resource in overcoming this.

STUDENT-CENTRED, PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

The need to grow and develop the global students, who can keep pace in an ever-changing world was raised in various ways. Presenters indicated their commitment to teaching and learning practices that instilled core competencies such as critical thinking; problem solving; cultural competence; social responsiveness; leadership and teamwork. CCE projects that see students participating in community outreach, learning outside the classroom, working on authentic tasks that require creative thinking and team work, that exposes them to diverse

communities, experiences and challenges, and trans/multi-disciplinary collaborations will empower students, and develop the competencies required to contribute optimally to the real world.

TRANS/MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEACHING AND LEARNING

In growing and developing the global student, senators agree that effective teaching cannot and should not take place in silos, limiting student learning to faculties and disciplines. As a prominent theme, it surfaced in almost all presentations and discussion. CCE can be a mechanism to drive trans-disciplinarity in the curriculum. Trans/multi-disciplinary teaching approaches can guide students in tackling complex social problems, allows them to engage with knowledge outside of the university, and to interrogate indigenous knowledge systems through scholarship. Senators agree that further opportunities for trans/multidisciplinary collaborations must be investigated.

SOCIAL RESPONSIVENESS

CCE at UP is an important aspect of its social responsiveness, and is effectively captured in the mission and vision. It is also considered an important graduate attribute. Developing students who are responsive to the needs of local communities empowers them to address national and global challenges, and will inspire them to contribute to positive change. Social responsiveness improves the institution's reputation by demonstrating a commitment to community service. It also strengthens relationships between the educational institution and the community, fostering positive community perceptions.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Recognition, respect and acknowledgment of local and indigenous practices, beliefs and knowledge is integral to meaningful and sustainable CE practices. Staff and students must be open and willing to learn from local communities, collaborating with them on mutually accepted terms. In accelerating the decolonisation agenda, indigenous voices, methodologies, and epistemologies should be incorporated into curricula, with indigenous partners involved in teaching and research. Key in discussions was the urgency to protect and document such indigenous knowledge so that it is preserved for future generations.

OTHER SALIENT THEMES THAT EMERGED INCLUDE:

Sustainable CE initiatives aligned to the overall strategy of the University and the teaching and learning project, subject to proper monitoring and evaluation were encouraged.

Impact and evaluation of CCE projects are necessary to determine whether a positive difference has been made. Communities must get feedback on the impact and success of the project. Senators agree that impact should be celebrated and awarded, and that demonstrating impact to students and partners enhances commitment and motivation. We were also cautioned about neglecting the human element in our haste to demonstrate impact.



Welcome, purpose, focus, rationale, and structure of the Senate Conference

Taking the classroom out of the classroom

Prof Loretta Feris, Vice Principal Academic, University of Pretoria

Prof Feris welcomed guests and introduced the overarching theme of the conference, highlighted the need for senators to reflect critically on the academic project. Prof Feris shared that this year's theme follows on last year's theme, *Turning the Tide: Reimagining Curriculum Transformation at UP*, and has been selected for three particular reasons:

1. It speaks to UP's strategic intent as set out in *Destination 2026 and beyond* in which we commit ourselves to strengthening this institutions responsiveness to society through teaching, learning and research. CE is routed in the curriculum and is an important aspect of our social responsiveness endeavour. The integrated academic framework in the UP context, specifically, also stresses the integration of teaching, learning and research and teaching underpinned and influenced by research. Thus, there must be a clear link between teaching and research with research being the interwoven link.
 2. The theme follows on the conversation of curriculum transformation framework, and has four drivers:
 - responsiveness to social context;
 - epistemological diversity;
 - renewal of pedagogy and classroom practice; and an
 - institutional culture of openness and critical reflection.
 3. CCE is already integrated into our curriculum and our approach is that every students must undertake at least one CE module throughout their study programme.
-

Prof Feris also stated that it is necessary, at this juncture, to pause and reflect on our approach to CE, and to commit ourselves to applying an approach of trans-disciplinarity as a mechanism through which we can contribute to solving complex problems, such as the ever-deepening inequality and poverty in the country and beyond, climate change and deep seated global conflict. CCE can be a mechanism to drive trans-disciplinarity in the curriculum, allowing us to foreground the afore-mentioned issues. While universities are fundamental to the creation of knowledge, they do not monopolise knowledge creation and dissemination. The trans- disciplinarity project includes knowledge from outside the university.

CCE is about 'taking the classroom out of the classroom' and exposing our students to multiple perspectives outside of the[ir] academic discipline and to an array of stakeholders: government entities, industry, non-prof organisations and members of our broader society. It allows our students to co-create with community partners, projects, knowledge spaces, or solutions that address societal problems, or creates positive impacts on people's lives. In this way we give effect to our strategic vision of providing students with the knowledge, values, and competencies to harness the intersecting identities of engaged students, future professionals and global citizens able to address national, regional and global challenges. As a last point Prof Feris shared that as part of this project of reimagining CCE, colleagues from all faculties, Education Innovation and the Mamelodi Campus are working on a framework and toolkit for CCE, which will be informed by the discussions of the next two day.

Scene-setting: Reimagining curriculum community engagement (CCE) at UP

Community Engagement: a planned purposeful application of resources and expertise in teaching learning and research

Prof Themba Mosia, Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Pretoria

In his opening address, Prof Mosia recognised the value of such a platform for setting the tone of the core business of the university, reminding senators that, as a research intensive institution, such discussions are crucial to enriching our academic experience. Like Prof Feris he reiterated the role of universities globally as having obligations to society as knowledge producers. This, because universities produce knowledge, scholarship and because their teaching activities are designed to be of service to communities.

Prof Mosia stressed that CCE must remain at our centre; that we continue to work with communities around us, and globally. With the University of Pretoria, CE is embedded in the work that we do and in the way we have defined it for ourselves: as a planned purposeful

application of resources and expertise in teaching learning and research. CE is about building sustainable partnerships that contribute to sustainable development and academic resources that are harnessed. Prof Mosia emphasised the critical thinking, reflective practices and interconnectedness that are cultivated with and through the CE contributions that are part of our development at the University of Pretoria. He emphasised the university's commitment to the CE project through our student leaders, the numerous extra-curricular committee engagement activities, Education Innovation and the many societies who work on this. In closing, Prof Mosia thanked colleagues for their participation and appealed to the colleagues joining from Australia, Hong Kong and Kenya to be honest and candid in their contributions for this will allow us to improve on our offering.

How do we use CCE to forge innovative links between universities that respond to interrelated global challenges?

Service learning by nature is a hands on, human activity

Prof Grace Ngai, Head: Service Learning and Leadership Office, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Prof Ngai began by giving an overview of CE or Academic Service Learning (ASL), as it is referred to at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, stressing that much like other institutions, social responsibility has always been one of their graduate attributes. Service learning subjects have to fulfil four common intended learning outcomes, all of which cohere with local expectations: apply the knowledge and skills to deal with the complex issues in the service setting; reflect on the role and responsibilities as a professional and responsible

citizen; demonstrate empathy for people in need; and an understanding of the linkage between service and academic content of the subject.

In Prof Ngai's view, service learning can be exploited to address multiple interrelated challenges, one of which is human understanding, something universities can work together to address. Today there are more people living close to conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a case in point. While there was a drop in the early 2000's,

today this has risen. Service learning, as a hands on, human activity develops students to respect different perspectives, cross barriers and boundaries, and have compassion for others. It could therefore be used as a bridge to respond to this challenge. Sharing exemplars from her research, Prof Ngai demonstrates the collaborative advantages available through technology, showing that innovative links between international universities is possible and valuable for students.

Like Prof Feris, Prof Ngai stressed the importance of ensuring that teaching is underpinned by research. An important consideration is what do students learn and how do they learn from these inter-constitutional collaborations that bring students from different institutions together. In line with her focus on human understanding her concern relates to how building human understanding works. Providing evidence from a preliminary study she is engaged in across five different groups of students [from China; Vietnam; Philippines; Tanzania and South Africa], the research demonstrates significant positive gains in terms of intercultural competencies of participants. When they correlated distance together with the intercultural

competency and learning gain, there was a significant positive correlation between the cultural distance of the team and the learning gains of intercultural competency. These are valuable findings that make a case for using service learning or CCE to boost the gaps in human understanding, helping students to better function in a globalised world.

Thus, forging innovative links can address the interrelated challenges she raises. With regards to the oft raised concern with the language barrier present in such collaborations, Prof Ngai stressed the importance of the bridging team as translators. When students work directly with the community there is a significant power distance which is not present when the bridging team is included. This, because they are not serving this team but are working together with this team. This is necessary in order for them to carry out the task of serving the community. As Prof Ngai drew to a close, she foregrounded once again her main message: the need to work collaboratively, with each other, and other universities, in addressing complex issues in our community and to use CCE to forge innovative links to address the interrelated challenges.

In the context of multiple and overlapping political, social, economic, and environmental challenges, what role can the concept of impact play in positioning South African universities as leaders in addressing the stark inequalities that continue to thwart the project of freedom?

An activity is not by itself an effect

Prof Chris Brink, Emeritus Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University and Stellenbosch University

Describing himself as a champion of the idea of impact, Prof Brink spoke emphatically about the urgent need to demonstrate impact i.e. the difference that one's academic work has made in society. Impact is demonstrable in research, teaching and learning or CE, and shows the beneficial effects or valuable changes emanating from one's scholarly contributions. This cannot

be confused with academic impact which is limited to esteemed publications, citations or impact factors of journals. With regards to CE, the mere activity of engaging with the community is not the impact; an activity is not by itself an effect. The impact is the contribution made to solving or addressing the challenges in society by showing examples of the beneficial impact of your work.

Impact is more important today because of the current global shift in understanding what the mission of higher education is, which requires academics to answer the 'What are we good for?' question. Answering this, and motivating your existence will require you to show examples of the beneficial impact of your work. Prof Brink demonstrates this through multiple examples in which institutions, organisations, departments and research groups were required to provide evidence of impact. In doing so, they would have to ensure, firstly, that [it] must have/make a beneficial change in/to society; have already happened and be a causal effect of academic work. Evidence provided could include the academic work engaged in, publications, and when and

how the effect became clear (so there must be a causal chain leading to the impact), when you did the original work, demonstrate the impact and provide evidence. Impact must be substantiated and retrospective.

He cautions that one cannot and should not expect every professor individually to become successful at generating impact; the expectation of impact does not fall on the individual, but from institutional level to organisational units, faculties, departments and research units. As a close to final point, Prof Brink shares evidence of impact from an empirical study where impact was not limited only to the academic unit in which it was conducted, thus pointing to the inter-disciplinarity present in impact work.

MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Questions in this session pertained to:

- impact action and inaction on the part of academics;
- impact in applied disciplines.

Panellists agreed that:

- the lack of trans/multidisciplinary in research may limit impact;
- the reward system needs adjustment so that impact is rewarded;
- impact is time-consuming and is not often afforded to academics;
- academics may not want to deal with the real world, or be talking with people who are not like them;
- there is a difference between the notion of applied work and the notion of impact;
- the methodological approach to application is first to generate the knowledge, share this and then use it to solve a problem while impact is beginning with a societal challenge, a knowledge base that can be used to address it; one begins by accepting a challenge, not by projecting out into the world one's own academic work.

Indigenous knowledge systems: Value and opportunities for UP

Film screening and panel discussion – ‘Vroedvrou’

Chair: Prof Sandy Africa, Acting Dean: Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria

Panellists:

- Prof Loretta Feris, Vice-Principal: Academic, UP Prof Siona O’Connell, Faculty of Humanities, UP
- Dr Thabo Manetsi, Director: Heritage Tourism at the National Department of Tourism
- Prof Cheryl Kicker Turner, Professor in the School of Education, Curtin University, Australia

Vroedvrou

n. ‘attendant during pregnancy and labour’.

vroed = capable; knowledgeable

vrou = woman

This 28 minute documentary, directed by Prof Siona O’Connell pays homage to an age-old tradition that sees experienced elderly females in the community provide midwifery support to young mothers. Situated against the background of Namaqualand, the film was driven by the concern that such indigenous knowledge and tradition will be lost to present and future generations, if not captured and recorded. Reminiscing on her own childhood, executive producer, Prof Feris shares her personal experience of being brought to life by a vroedvrou. The vroedvrou, who brings you into this life becomes your third Ouma (grandmother), providing maternal healthcare even after the birth. The Khoi and San Centre at the University of Cape Town was willing to fund an initial archival project related to this documentary. The documentary is a haunting reflection of contradictions: impoverished communities and scarcity, beautiful landscapes, hope and an unmatched sense of community. What it brings to the fore is that the care and support provided by the vroedvrou is crucial in a community where immediate medical assistance is neither available nor affordable. The documentary, in spotlighting the vast knowledge and experience the vroedvrou holds, demonstrates the value of embracing, recognising and respecting the purveyors of such indigenous knowledge.

MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Questions in this session pertained to:

- the film's inspiration, and relevance for CCE;
- the translation of the film into the classroom and scholarly space for students;
- whether similar work with communities is being facilitated effectively enough;
- being part of indigenous knowledge systems and ensuring their thriving and survival as part of the education project;
- trans-disciplinarity;
- the role of men in this space.

Panellists agreed that:

- conversations cannot take place in isolation, and will not always be comfortable;
- community engagement, and transformation must be aligned with issues of diversity, inclusion and transformation of the higher education space;
- there must be respect for the multiple ways of thinking, learning and practices;
- do not underestimate what it means to document listening to somebody who has not been listened to before;
- we can interrogate indigenous knowledge in terms of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary scholarship, through the projects across faculties;
- universities do not have authority over the management or conservation or promotion of indigenous or traditional practices or groups;
- resources should be channelled towards the knowledge bearers who are doing the work;
- the decentralisation aspect of conservation management of our heritage resources in South Africa should start with the knowledge bearer;
- governments are key in preserving, nurturing and supporting indigenous people and systems who must be included and engaged with, on equal footing in decision making;
- it is equally important to provide opportunities and spaces to interrogate these topics;
- including other faculties in the making of the film/CE projects would have allowed collective engagement as a film by women, for women and about women, the men took on the supporting roles while the women took the lead.

Case studies from UP

Chair: Prof Wynand JvdM Steyn, Dean: Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT), University of Pretoria

Design for disassembly and circularity: Embracing transdisciplinary education at the University of Pretoria

1

We are no longer living in a world of separate realities

Dr Calayde Davey, Department of Architecture, Faculty of EBIT, UP

Dr Davey's focus is on why it is important to do trans-disciplinary learning in the built environment, especially in South Africa, where we are no longer living in a world of separate realities. In the built environment architects do not learn with engineers, planners or quantity surveyors. With that in mind the built environment specialists must consider how they are going to change their learning practices to trans-disciplinarity. When these student make cities and buildings they will need to know how to work as teams, as complex problem solvers, learning skills from each other. The Transdisciplinary Honours Studio is a shared learning space where staff and students teach and learn in creative ways, across disciplinary boundaries. They also work parallel with international students. While South Africans students may be in the classroom, the other students will be online, working on a shared problem. The project, which

affords students the opportunity to work in a greenhouse with a heritage architect, sees them cross disciplinary boundaries in seeking workable solutions.

The value of this trans-disciplinary approach is that students see all disciplines in the same environment, learning together through conversation, changing and challenging what is experienced about a topic. The project allows innovative and exciting possibilities that are appealing to students - digital inventories, drones and mapping of the world. As the students work together, they experienced technical challenges not solvable from a single perspective, leading to team teaching and across discipline collaboration to solve problems. This is an excellent example of how staff in the built environment can work together to effectively prepare their students for the real world.

Teaching with impact: Advancing curricular community engagement for societal transformation: A case study on transdisciplinary teaching and learning in integrative healthcare

2

Effective healthcare is not only confined to a single system or methodology, but is a tapestry woven from the collective wisdom of humanity.

Dr Varshika Bhana-Pema, Prof R.S. Mooa & Dr Cebisa Mabena (traditional healer) with Student participation: Ms Zanoluhle Sibisi (third-year Nursing Science)

This case study described a cross-disciplinary collaboration with traditional healers, neuropathologists, acupuncturists and other experts engaged in healing practices, in a second year module for nursing students. The purpose was to leverage a trans-disciplinary teaching and learning approach that impacts both nursing students and society, utilising different teaching strategies, such as face-to-face, online Expert Guest Lecturers' Series, panel discussions, live demonstrations, field trips and most recently, the Global Online Teaching and Learning at UP, a community of practice with Chandigarh University, India. An important part of this initiative, was the inclusion of multiple experts from different clinical fields who were invited to lecture the nursing students. These lectures included live demonstration which were recorded and used in the teaching. Field trips were also an important learning opportunity as will be shared by the student presenter.

A nursing student who participated in the Integrative Healthcare programme shared that the opportunity

allowed her to delve into the world of traditional healing practices by exploring cultures and medical alternatives that transcend borders and centuries. In her words, the exposure allowed her to explore the intersections between different traditions, stepping into their world, and entering a realm where ancient wisdom intertwines with modern challenges; a poignant reminder of the wealth of knowledge that is embedded in our indigenous practices. Through these experiences she has come to appreciate the richness and diversity of healing traditions around the world, having learnt that effective healthcare is not only confined to a single system or methodology, but is a tapestry woven from the collective wisdom of humanity.

As the final speaker in the session, Dr Mabena spoke about the pain that traditional healers have experienced, and the urgency to educate those that respond negatively to traditional healing. As a practice that governed by the philosophy of Ubuntu, he believes that nursing student too should embrace the philosophy in their everyday work.

Group discussions

Chair: Prof Sunil Maharaj, Vice-Principal: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Education, University of Pretoria

1

GROUP 1

Teaching with impact in a polycrisis

- How can we effectively teach with impact?
- How can we evaluate the impact of community engagement and gather feedback from community partners?
- How can we evaluate the impact of community engagement and gather feedback from community partners?
- What bold teaching and research strategies can be employed to work through the multiple crises that affect the most marginalised in South Africa?
- How can we devise teaching and research programmes that are adept, responsive, and agile?

Senators agreed that teaching with impact during uncertainty, conflict and global concerns will require academics to display resilience, and human-centred, responsive, engaged and flexible. We should aim to develop students who are confident, competent, creative, who deal with the uncertainties of life, embrace different perspectives, have multiple skills sets, are open to options and possibilities, are socially conscious, and who are problem-solvers. In order to achieve this we must cross disciplinary boundaries to interact with others. Teaching with impact obligates us to become aware of the context-specific challenges we face, and to work collectively to find solutions that impact positively on society.

We must engage with bridging teams and community leaders and measure the impact students have when they go into communities and the impact 'we' have

through students. Also consider the importance of engaging new knowledge and embracing non-traditional ways of surveying. What is needed is a framework of engaging instead of measuring and counting only.

The teaching and research strategies required in the face of a polycrisis, include but are not limited to engagement; creativity; risk taking; learning from mistakes; encouraging a culture of reading; developing transitions for, and providing support to, students; be open to learning from local indigenous communities, and digitalising knowledge to be transferred to society so that information cannot be lost.

Trans-disciplinarity, which is key to adept, responsive and agile teaching should depend on topics and not be restricted by credits.

2

GROUP 2

A reimagined CCE at UP

- Where are we now, and what is working?
- Where do we want to be?

In reimagining CCE, senators noted the role and value of technology to assist in accelerating CCE at UP. While assessing impact is important one is unable to measure CCE at UP due to the diversity of CCE projects across faculties. Multi-/transdisciplinary approaches among the different faculties in the University is working and should be expanded on. For CCE to be impactful, UP must reach out to industries or the profession to form collaborations and partnerships which can open up funding opportunities. The University and partner communities must function as equal partners in CCE, showing mutual respect and understanding. Language is an important instrument to bring equality, thus knowing and embracing the local language is important. The university should move away

from the practice of doing 'for' communities to the philosophy of doing 'with' communities and should engage communities in problem-solving as opposed to being prescriptive. This will enable effective and collaborative solutions among stakeholders.

Future considerations regarding CCE at UP include the development of a framework and funding strategy for CCE, the early involvement of students in CCE across all faculties and timeous feedback to communities on the impact and success of project. CCE must remain human centred, and grounded in the philosophy of Ubuntu. Both staff and students engaged in CCE must be rewarded or awarded. CCE collaborations at UP must start with the current projects in the various Faculties.

3

GROUP 3

Institutional ecosystem/faculty understanding

- How does UP's ecosystem interact with the local community and those beyond Gauteng? How do we include our students in meaningful and dialogic ways when working with communities?
- How can faculties better support inter-and-transdisciplinary scholarship to support and enrich community-focused research and teaching?
- What collaborative partnerships have faculties engaged in with community partners, and what have been the outcomes?
- What role does UP play in communities' economic, social, and cultural development, and how is impact evaluated?
- In what ways can CCE at UP address the SDGs in meaningful ways?

Senators noted that there is currently significant involvement with the local communities. Staff should be facilitators of learning and CE and should recognise student agency by encouraging students to provide themes and possible contexts for CE which staff can support. The 'classroom' can also function as space for CE at university. Some challenges include large student

numbers, how to recruit the whole university for the CE purposes and how to let students direct initiatives.

Inter-and-transdisciplinary scholarship is integral in supporting and enriching community- focused research and teaching. Working in disciplinary silos must be discouraged. Opportunities must be created for students

to work together. Systemic challenges that prevent inter-and transdisciplinary CE cooperation must be addressed. CCE projects should first address challenges in local communities. Senators also proposed that CE be included in the Performance Management System.

There are various existing partnerships between faculties already and further partnerships must be encouraged. There is the need to rethink and re-evaluate previous IRT (Institutional Research Themes) and to be innovative and open up existing spaces for

cooperation. Systemic change is required at UP to work more inter-and trans-disciplinarily.

Community awards at graduation sessions, and awarding impact can be considered (we tend to award outcome and not impact).

The SDG hub is located at UP thus more use of this opportunity can be made. Across all faculties CCE projects, almost all SDG's can be covered, opening doors to existing opportunities and projects.

4

GROUP 4

Barriers and benefits in curricular community engagement

- What are the barriers to the implementation of CCE in higher education?
- What are some benefits of embedding CCE in teaching, learning, and research?
- How do we build on what is working well?
- How will we address our challenges and achieve our desired future?

Barriers included practical and logistical challenges; limited resources; staffing challenges; assessment and evaluation; potential risks or liabilities associated with community-based activities and concerns about the commitment and reliability of students. Other challenges senators noted was aligning the goals and expectations of academic institutions and community partners, and the cultural differences and diversity in community settings which require sensitivity and effective communication. Despite these barriers, CCE develops important skills, abilities and behaviours such as: enhanced learning and critical thinking problem-solving ; civic responsibility and social awareness; active citizenship; interpersonal and communication skills; leadership, teamwork, and adaptability; collaboration; cultural and social responsiveness, amongst a host of others.

In extending existing practices, suggestions included demonstrating and documenting impact; gathering and

analysing data; sharing feedback; promoting best practices and successes; professional development; student-centred practices; advocacy that support the integration of community engagement into the academic culture; innovation and experimentation.

In addressing challenges to achieve our desired future, senators proposed multiple considerations, one of which can be exploited to address these. They propose the creation of a strategic plan that outlines clear goals, objectives, and action steps for enhancing CCE, and aligning that plan with the institution's mission and values, ensuring integration into the broader educational framework. Doing so will all us to thoroughly investigate CCE related challenges, and to, through cross-disciplinary collaboration and consultation, devise context-specific solutions that may lead to sustainable CCE practices.

Welcome and purpose: **Prof Flavia Senkubuge, Acting Vice-Principal: Student Life, UP**

Understanding and engaging with communities as equal partners: Teaching, learning, and research

Experiential learning techniques empower students to holistically solve problems beyond the courtroom, and respond to the needs and demands of a changing world

Prof Robert Kibugi, Associate Professor of Law, University of Nairobi

Prof Kibugi uses his experience in undergraduate law teaching as the foundation for this contribution. He observed, too, the changing functions of the university, from traditional in their approach to teaching and learning to, more recently, its engagement with community.

One of the core philosophies in the Bachelor of Laws Programme that he teaches is the focus on the training of practice-ready graduates using experiential learning techniques that empower them to holistically solve problems beyond the courtroom, and respond to the needs and demands of a changing world. While the curriculum does not explicitly refer to CE, the idea is present in various dimensions within the learning expectations. Prof Kibugi, focuses his remarks within the field of environmental law which provides opportunity for CCE through non-doctrinal approaches. As university teachers when pursuing teaching through CCE, there is the expectation that attention is paid to the expected learning outcomes which the university expects us to follow through summative and formative engagement, various pedagogical and andrological skills that are required, as well as a focus on empowering students with knowledge on how to engage respectfully, and with sensitivity with community members, while pursuing an outcome that they want to pursue.

In his experience with CE in university teaching, the premise has been the use of non-doctrinal approaches to legal education and research. This has required equipping students with multi-disciplinary skills beyond knowledge but also on how to engage with others, internalising the parameters of academic freedom that students can bring with them when engaging with communities, relative to levels of ethics and cultural

sensitivity that are required. As an example of this, Prof Kibugi shared that while in a classroom setting students may be encouraged to observe high levels of academic freedom, in a community setting there may be requirements of decorum or deference to seniority, patriarchy or authority that may be counterproductive and challenging.

Prof Kibugi proceeded to demonstrate CCE through the Land Use Law course which aims to balance land rights and environmental sustainability. The curriculum provides freedom in terms of formative continuous assessment while the summative assessment is an examination. The tasks included are valuable in developing skills related to teamwork, collaboration and effective engagement, which are all crucial when engaging in CCE. Another relevant task which sees students develop a documentary requires them to identify a problem, work at solving the problem through engagement with a relevant community, seek consent for interviews and filming and provide evidence of this and, in general, apply all ethical practices related to such research and data collection. In framing their research, students are expected to identify community members and geographic areas for subject inquiry, develop rubrics, conduct fieldwork and interviews, plan the report, edit videos and search related outputs towards the outcome.

The positive impacts emanating from such CCE included cooperative learning, students who act as advocates or activists on key issues and the opportunity to link theory to practice. Some challenges raised included the cost implication, liability and related risks, the clearance required from the university and reluctance by community members to speak on record.

Enabling continuity and sustainability of CCE initiatives in the face of the transient nature of the student journey

A touch point: any moment when one individual gains an impression of another, through some form of interaction which may alter how any individual feels and whether they choose to further interact with the other person.

Ms Priscilla Morley, PhD candidate, Albert Luthuli Leadership Institute, University of Pretoria

Ms. Morley began by defining a touch point as any moment when one individual gains an impression of another, through some form of interaction which may alter how any individual feels and whether they choose to further interact with the other person. Multiple touch points create a journey and influence a journey with the ultimate goal being to provide a person with a positive experience and allowing the space for the person to become better than what they were. Touch points are key points of contact and opportunities to make a difference.

In her first touch point, she relays her experience of working in a large financial services company, she describes the company's commitment to delivering the best corporate social responsibility intervention. Partnering with a community called Orange Farm located 60 kilometres from the Sandton headquarters the company referred to this intervention as its social value model. The community was selected because it was characterised by high unemployment, dilapidated health facilities and young people who were struggling due to a lack of opportunity. Within the corporate space this company was demonstrating innovation because its social value model concentrated on one community for an extended period of time, addressing very specific focus areas namely youth health and entrepreneurship. The model also included employees volunteering their billable hours and sharing their expertise with various community stakeholder. While the programme was working well, with other corporates were marvelling at the approach, it was meeting organisational objectives, Ms Morley found herself doubting the sustainability aspect of this community wide intervention, a concern that was not met very favourably by her management.

In her second touch point, focused on building leadership, capacity and competencies to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, and driven by her desire for social responsiveness, she chose to mentor one of the entrepreneurs in Orange Farm who owned a construction business. Ms Morley confesses that her mentee also ended up mentoring her, leading her to changing her thoughts on how people impact each other, and thinking carefully about how and where she could best make an impact

The third touch point in her story demonstrates how she indirectly impacted her siblings and children. Through family discussions and engaged conversations she found herself influencing them to address sustainability problems within their environments.

These touch points have influenced her role in society, to one committed to bringing about positive change in the lives of others. She no longer views education as developing technical knowledge for students only, but giving them some form of experience. Learning should be a personally transformative process. In designing CE programmes, she reminds us to focus on the whole person, to provide students with an experience, to include an opportunity for students to consider some cause they are passionate about, and to continue to pay it forward, for in doing so we learn more about ourselves. She reminds us, too, that individuals do not need to hold a senior position in an organisation to lead and engage students, that everybody can make a difference. Finally, she encourages us to invite students to reimagine leadership and lead in the spaces they operate in, and to build opportunities for students to reflect on the process and the journey have they have been on.

A sweet spot: doing what we're good at to address what the world needs while generating evidence for change

CCE and research community engagement is a pathway to give back taxpayer money, to close that loop of investment

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn, Director: Centre for the Study of Resilience, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

For Prof Ebersöhn research and community engagement provides a platform to enable well-being in challenge contexts, helping us to do the most of what we can with the resources available to us to address challenges. As an educational psychologist teaching on a master's programme in Educational Psychology and Career Psychology, she was approached by a large remote boarder school, lacking educational psychology services. The disjuncture is that while the demand for educational psychology services is huge, the educational psychology model is a one-on-one exclusive, privileged space of a trained professional seeing a client who can pay money for exclusive services. Questions that plagued her related to: What would be responsive educational psychology training, given the challenges of our South African space? and How do we train to meet the high demands of educational psychology services? Worldwide, the teaching and training of psychology is evolving as other models are being thought of in the Global North, Asia Pacific and Latin America. The question then is what is being done currently to be responsive, to include content that is local, that matters and is relevant to South Africa? How can we respond to the high demand for these services?

Committed to supporting the school and armed with resources from the Department of Research Innovation, Prof Ebersöhn working with educational psychology students, provided a service that would otherwise not be possible. Beginning with support for academic service learning, the team later brought in their Masters and PhD students to contribute to developing a distilled body of knowledge around educational psychology, given the challenging context. Intended outcomes saw a transdisciplinary collaboration with EBIT students, successful postgraduate supervision, scholarly

publications, international collaboration, research funding and mentoring of early career scholars. While the issue of research funding is always a contentious one, and while it is beneficial to secure such funds, CCE can be successfully executed with limited funds if integrated into a module. Unintended outcomes included teacher professional development which the team provided for teachers who did not have opportunities for professional development, involvement of parents, meaningful reciprocity in communication knowledge by generating types of psychological assessment measures that can be developed and customised for use with particular language groups and individuals, for example, contributing knowledge and evidence to/in teacher resilience in challenged contexts.

CCE and research community engagement is a pathway to give back taxpayer money, to close that loop of investment. This one case study with educational psychology training touched on good health and wellbeing, quality education, decent work and economic growth, partnerships, networking, collaborating and hands-on learning for students, researchers, partners across international spaces, and stakeholders in schools and government. An important realisation was the need to move away from the sanitised clinical space of one-on-one educational psychology and to go to where inequality is high, where expertise is a resource and where it matters. Important, too, was need to consider how to systematically document impact. While measuring impact was not intentionally done in this case study, it may be valuable as an institution to develop a protocol that outlines how to systematically document impact to attract funding should it continue and how to institutionalise it.

MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Questions in this session pertained to:

- advice for colleagues entering CE places;
- the contribution of indigenous communities to policy, by-laws and climate change issues;
- indigenous knowledge holders and leadership;
- documenting CCE impact;
- changes that should be made in/to CCE.

Panellists agreed that:

- CCE must be implemented in a way that matters and is useful;
- engagement with communities is important in providing a better understanding of the reality of our context;
- teaching without bringing reality to the classroom may render such teaching purposeless;
- teaching must include more practical experience, focusing on creative mind-sets;
- CCE and research community engagement provides a systematic way of showcasing what the Global South are capable of, giving a base on which to generate knowledge that can be provided to the Global North, as opposed to waiting apathetically for solutions to come from external spaces;
- democratic systems and access to the court has become one of the means through which indigenous communities have sought to reclaim their voice;
- the progressive framing of the concept of free prior informed consent when dealing land rights for communities has been welcomed;
- a more equitable approach to voice for indigenous and local communities, is required;
- indigenous spaces must be open to leadership development;
- researchers are not always intentional about measuring, tracking and systematically documenting impact;
- transformation of/in university education is necessary in addressing the various challenges facing humanities and societies;
- higher education must prepare students to think and handle problems that are not oriented in an office setting but in a community setting as well.

The case for reimagined curricular community engagement

Chair: Prof Caroline Nicholson, Registrar, University of Pretoria

Teacher stress and well-being intervention

1

Psychologists cannot work alone, and will have to work across disciplines like nursing and community health to make a real difference

Prof Maretha Visser, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, and, Student participant: Dylan Tshuketana, MA Counselling Psychology student, UP)

Community psychology, as its name suggests, sees psychologists work with communities to know and understand where and how one can support and improve the environment and relatedly, the mental health of community members. Working on one such project, project, Prof Visser involved postgraduate students in a community project with the Gauteng Department of Education. Using an action-research approach, the team began with a situation analysis survey to explore the teacher's experiences, stressors and challenges. Some issues that teachers addressed in the survey included large classes, disruptive students, high administration levels and no work life balance. With the aim of empowering teachers to deal with these challenges effectively, the project team developed an eight session programme on stress management. These were implemented in a small workshop format with a few teachers in each session.

In total, 120 teachers volunteered and 70 completed the course. A mixed-methods design was used to evaluate feedback on the sessions. The feedback demonstrated how people change when they start dealing with their own issues and how this can make a difference. Some of the teachers said that they gained an understanding

of themselves, learnt how to identify and cope with stressors and how to take care of themselves. One teacher stated that after the sessions she felt that she was finally in control of her life. This was the underlying aim of the project - to teach the teachers about themselves and to empower them on how to deal with the challenges they were experiencing. In achieving this, Prof Visser agrees that psychologists cannot do this alone, and will have to work across disciplines like nursing and community health to make a real difference.

A Master's student who participated in the project shared that this was an 'eye opening experience' that allowed them to see the significance of the relationship between the structural issues that teachers face in their working environments and their mental health. In demonstrating their understanding of this, the students encouraged the teachers to speak openly, and although they did use psychological research to come up with ways to help them beyond their structural challenges, they used the aid sessions to help teachers feel heard and validated, something they were not receiving from their work environments. The 2023 student group felt that they did contribute something to the country by helping these teachers feel heard and validated.

Threaded tales: Weaving bonds beyond the needle's touch and stitching communities together with creativity

2

Creating and sustaining sound business practices while positively influencing the environment and the society

Dr Hanri Taljaard-Swart, Department of Consumer and Food Sciences: Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, and, Student participant: Ms Emmy Lombard (first-year Master Consumer Science)

This second case study from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences focused on a collaboration between B. Consumer Science (Clothing Retail Management) final year students and Mapula Embroideries, a non-profit organisation. Aptly exploiting the metaphor of stitching communities together beyond the needles touch, this project, which was situated in the Product Development module, saw Mapula Embroideries approach the department for support with training community members. While community members were excellent embroiderers, they needed training with entrepreneurship. The project team, on embarking on this initiative agreed that the aim was to create and sustain sound business practices while positively influencing the environment and the society, and also contributing to the economy of the country. The project has progressed successfully

with students and community members experimenting and co-creating products. In addition to training the community members, students also showcased the Mapula embroideries as part of their collections and businesses. These training sessions, which empowered the embroiderers and saw them develop new skills and abilities, also gave students the opportunity to take on the role of teacher. The audience heard from a final year student who formed part of the project. In sharing her experience, the student recounted the successes and challenges of co-creating, the importance of being willing to teach and be taught, and the value of negotiation, and mutual respect when working towards a shared goal. From a student's perspective, the experience was enriching, and they learnt lessons that could not necessarily be taught inside the classroom.

MODERATED QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Questions in this session were directed at the student participant and pertained to:

- the value of the CCE experience;
- indigenous methods of psychology

The panellist agreed that:

- while psychologists cannot change a situation, they can control what they are trained for which is to empower the client with coping mechanisms;
- indigenous methods may not be so different from traditional psychology if one embraces the principle of ubuntu which is to live with people, understand what they do, see their own experiences, and find solutions together.

Group discussions

Chair: Prof Carolina Koornhof, Executive Director: Finance and Business Initiatives, UP

1

GROUP 1

SOTL in the context of CCE

- How can we incorporate transformative pedagogies and practices in curricular community engagement?
- How can we ensure the continuity and sustainability of curricular community engagement initiatives?
- What is the role of curricular community engagement in addressing the polycrisis?

Pedagogies should be transformative and should include students and communities in which they are engaging. The intention should be one of genuine partnership that will empower students and communities and the design should emphasise participatory learning and be problem-based. Problems should be identified by the community, not imposed on them by the instructor or the students. Practice should be action and outcome-oriented, encouraging reflection and feedback on the part of both students and communities.

CE initiatives must be integrated to the greater teaching project, to curriculum development, faculty development and resource allocation. It is difficult to build a sustainable programme of engagement if it

is not aligned to the overall strategy of the University and the teaching and learning project. Initiatives cannot be sustainable unless they are subject to proper monitoring and evaluation. There must be clear impact objectives that can be monitored and assessed, adjusting the programme as needed. Achievements must be celebrated.

CCE must be an institutional response that is strategic, starts with the community, develops a common language and understanding and collaborates with students and the community in an inter-disciplinary manner. The objective should be to develop a programme of engagement that is holistic, prioritised and builds resilience into the system.

2

GROUP 2

Transformative pedagogies and practices

- Teaching and learning of indigenous knowledge systems—new approaches that include grappling with the complexities of indigeneity.
- Fostering a change in the ways we relate and build knowledge with others instead of about others
- Drawing from best practices on the continent and in the Global South
- What kinds of research and teaching produce the kinds of leaders who are capable of transforming shattered communities?

Transformative pedagogies and practices can include incorporating indigenous voices, methodologies, and epistemologies into curricula, fostering respect for indigenous ways of knowing; having a small group dialogical approach in lectures; building a wanting-to-know climate; engaging with/in a diverse society and accepting that indigenous knowledge is ever-changing. Lecturing staff must be competent, teaching must be inclusive, and should include indigenous partners in teaching. There should be awareness on the difference between indigenous knowledge and ancient practice and different cultural practices/complexities should be handled with sensitivity.

We should include the humanity aspect; social/emotional competence must be brought into the classroom; there should be multi-directional

relationship between 'mentor and mentee'; the language barrier should be considered; embrace the philosophy of Ubuntu and respect communities; academics are in a powerful role but should relinquish power and 'give it away'; create open spaces and opportunities for co-creation of knowledge and respect student agency in the UP Space. We must consider the extent to which the students feel that they have agency in the UP Space.

Ethical behaviour needs to be emphasised; transformative adult learning should be a priority where students understand that they are more than a vocation. We must co-create solutions with society and students. Our research should be relevant and show impact, and we must incorporate feedback to research communities.

3

GROUP 3

Professional responsibilities and indemnities in community engagement

- How do we rethink our understanding of 'community'?
- What are the ways in which we can straddle the divide between the University and the various publics that it serves?
- What does a just and ethical community engagement look like, given asymmetrical power relationships?
- How can we foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in community-based programmes in order to enrich the learning experience?
- What agile and responsive pedagogical strategies can be employed in order to respond to societal challenges? How can we evaluate the impact of community engagement and gather feedback from community partners?
- Which hurdles do we need to address to enable meaningful engagement by unqualified students in communities?

Community is not necessarily geographic, external or a disadvantaged group of people; it is where we can make a difference and/or where everyone benefits from the presented experience. There is a critical need to re-look at the way we define 'community environment' because often what is referred to is community service to disadvantaged areas; consider doing outreach on social issues in more affluent areas.

It important for all students to leave UP at the end of their studies having been exposed to some form of CE which should be maintained in all modules. This should be a continuous process and not necessarily be assessed; rather than assessing individual students, the focus should be on the university's impact. CE should also benefit students and not only communities.

4

GROUP 4

Understanding and engaging with communities as equal partners

- How do we deal with the question of language?
- How do we depart from an ethnographic gaze when working with communities?

Senators saw language as important in engaging with different communities as equal partners. Language can be a barrier but interpreters can assist. While meaning can be lost in translation so it would be best to involve researchers/partners who can speak the language. Challenging the language is challenging the identity of the person so it is important to acknowledge a person's language. Language plays a very important role in the communities and by losing the language, you lose the value, meaning, and knowledge. The question was raised as to how does the researcher ensure that the answers received are understood by the researcher. Multiple languages should be included in the curriculum. Follow up and feedback is important.

The ethnographic gaze refers to images taken of communities as outsiders and the expectation that

communities should then transform into that image. Researchers should not view the person/community as “the other” and should rather see how the community can work with the researcher; in some instances the community is the “expert” in a subject. Rather than dictating what we think the community needs, the community needs to be consulted to determine what their needs are. These issues do not apply to research only, but also to encounters in our daily lives. Some communities are not aware that their children can now go and study at historically white Universities and will be able to thrive there; communities need to be informed that black students are encouraged to study at historical “white” tertiary institutions such as UP. Researchers need to provide feedback and should not make false promises.

TOWARDS CLOSURE

Prof Themba Mosia

Prof Mosia reflected on the meaningful, robust conversations engaged in over the past two days and believes that there are key take-aways for everyone. He noted that the case studies focused on were instructive and that while the institutions has many exciting examples, all could not be shared. The examples selected for discussion were diverse and forced him to reflect on the impact we have in communities. He, too, alluded to the urgency to start documenting fully such impact so that our learning is inspiring. Prof Mosia concluded by thanking Prof Feris, and the organising committee of the Senate Conference, noting the contribution such platforms make not only to enhancing the teaching, learning and CCE, but to transforming the world.

Make today matter
www.up.ac.za