



UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE (UWC)

RESEARCH POLICY  
SECTION 8:  
MARKETING OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

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UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

# **UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE**

## **RESEARCH POLICY**

### **SECTION 8: MARKETING OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The term 'marketing of research' is understood to include a range of initiatives that are undertaken in order to draw attention to UWC's research and development activities and outputs. On the one hand, these outputs may be actual patents that require investment in order to be brought to commercialisation. On the other, UWC's premier research activities will be showcased in order to demonstrate potential for research-based services that may be provided to public authorities, corporate and non-profit organisations. When promoting departmental research to the general public, the aim is to demonstrate the high level of knowledge production and application by the teaching staff in order to enhance the external image of the Institution. In this way, it is possible to influence student choice for postgraduate studies.

In short, the beneficial outcomes of marketing of research may be any of the following: increased levels of financial support in the form of grants, contracts, endowments; improved opportunities for partnerships, research collaboration or other forms of cooperation; attracting talented human resources such as leading researchers or promising students to the institution; and investment in technology transfer. In most cases, the marketing activity will focus on existing expertise or research strengths to persuade targeted groups to enter into a mutually rewarding relationship with the University.

Enhancement of prestige is the pervasive outcome; income generation may be direct or indirect. Consequently, there is a need to diversify the marketing approach for different constituencies. Communications and overtures to industry will have a different orientation and employ different languages to those used in an approach to a philanthropic foundation or a funder with a specific target. On the other hand, a marketing plan should also create platforms that permit a comprehensive overview of all of the institution's research developments and successes.

The following sections present different types of marketing strategies.

#### **2. MARKETING FOR STRATEGIC FUNDING**

Outside of business marketing, and beyond the fields that generate patentable IP (E.g. biotechnology, physics, computer science, etc.), the University may be able to attract material support for research projects that are producing high quality research and that deserve injections of investment.

This is particularly the case where there is demonstrable overlap with strategic national imperatives - science and mathematics education or public health, for example. Government, funding agencies, and international networks are key targets for this marketing campaign. Again, pursuing the avenue of graduate student training might be a promising lever to attract grants or contracts, since public authorities need to be seen to be growing expertise.

The best way to showcase high performing research areas is to produce print material and e-communications that may be distributed to key agencies. This must be accompanied by an aggressive marketing of our postgraduate programmes.

### 3. PRINT MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Even in the age of electronic media, print is still a powerful medium to advertise **one's** 'product'. University publications have a crucial role to play in publicising and marketing the innovative, high quality and unique research projects our staff are engaged in on campus.

Most universities have a variety of publications and printed materials reaching a range of audiences. Potential donors could be anywhere: an alumnus now part of a major corporation; a government agency or funding organization representative may receive a magazine through the mailbox; or the materials can be picked up at national/international conferences/workshops.

#### **Scholarly publication in research journals:**

These remain the primary route for promoting UWC research within a disciplinary community and can lead to collaborative national/international partnerships. The specialized readership of these excludes them as an avenue for popular reach, however. Despite the limited direct marketing role of scholarly articles as far as attracting donors is concerned, evidence of a steady stream of scholarly publications, such as publications lists, engenders confidence on the part of potential funders.

#### **University newsletters:**

While these have traditionally been aimed at internal readers, the audience has been expanded to include a range of external readership, such as alumni, foreign embassies, government agencies and donors. They are published more frequently than other publications, celebrate the achievements of university staff and students and are written simply in a layperson's style. They also give the reader a sense of the achievements of the University's research projects, while also identifying those who are already investing in UWC. Faculty newsletters play the same role.

#### **Annual Reports:**

The publication of the Institution's annual report is mainly the general business of the University, and also forms part of its regulatory compliance. The document also serves as an important marketing tool.

#### **Specialised publications:**

Field-specific reviews or innovation reports are very effective. They can be published more regularly, go into more detail about the projects and text and images are chosen to persuade potential investors.

#### **University Research Report:**

This is a focussed document for the national/international audience highlighting 'excellence' at UWC. Therefore it **will** showcase our research niche areas and outstanding individual researchers, as well as emerging areas and future research leaders.

### 4. THE ROLE OF E-COMMUNICATIONS

The role of communications within an enterprise such as UWC is ultimately a very important one. The web and email are largely viewed as the traditional methods of communication using electronic formats.

This is somewhat narrow, as the scope of so-called e-Communication is much wider. Structured campaigns on SMS, Mxit and other mobile platforms will become increasingly important in the next few years. Fortunately, UWC has been at the forefront of this type of communication for a number of years already.

### **The University Website:**

It is extremely important that the website remains up to date and relevant at all times. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, including social media streams such as Twitter and Chisim ba microblogging, desktop applications that aggregate content and updates, and various automata that can act independently to source and aggregate content on a constant basis.

The Research section of the UWC website is a primary tool for marketing the Institutions research and postgraduate programmes. The structure of the website must centrally display our research niche area and emerging areas, as well as our leading research institutes and centres, with links to faculty specific web pages for further details and information on researchers of national/international standing and emerging leaders of the future.

It should be noted that data that is used and added to the web presence should at all times be both textual and semantic in nature, so as to make access to the widest possible audience readily available. Semantic data can be read and consumed by other machines, and greatly increases so called Search Engine Optimization, amongst others.

Modern e-Communication is not simply a read only interaction with a static website, but a read/write relationship that every single person is responsible for, by making use of blogging tools, wikis, robots and more.

## **5. MARKETING FOR COMMERCIALIZATION**

( In order to give force to UWC's identity as an 'Engaged University', the University should gradually strengthen its activities aimed at the development of new knowledge-based products and services which will ultimately result in the advancement of the local manufacturing base. There exists significant potential for the University to bring about breakthroughs in several nascent science and technology fields in South Africa. Where these advances are marketed in a clear and unambiguous way, this activity can also result in enhanced income generation which can be used to further develop UWC as a leading institution for human resource development, knowledge production and technology development in South Africa.

Product development research carries good prospects for wealth creation in the longer term perspective, but it requires a significant investment base which is generally unavailable in South Africa.

With the introduction of the new Intellectual Property (IP) legislation, universities will be required to take IP commercialization seriously, but this will be impeded by the same factor, namely the absence of investment capital to support manufacturing development in spin-off companies. Against this background, the role of marketing becomes paramount to attract third stream income - to support R&D work and commercialization activities, either through partner enterprises or institutional spin-offs.

Therefore, through the avenues outlined earlier, UWC must develop comprehensive strategies to market the University's:

- Protected IP (including Patents)
- Internally developed Commercial Concepts
- High Impact Scholarly Publications
- Postgraduate Programmes

## **6. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT BY UWC EXPERTS**

Increasing the level of public engagement by UWC experts is a significant way to project UWC's image as an engaged, research-driven university. Examples include participation in panel discussions on radio and television, textual contributions to current debates, or blogs relating to teaching or research.

Within disciplinary communities, faculty may advance UWC's reputation through seminars or workshops, guest lecturing, keynote/plenary addresses at conferences/workshops, or service to professional forums or learned societies, for example, developing national or regional capacity within the research/teaching field. To some extent these activities are already taking place and the University needs only to find mechanisms for reporting and evaluating faculty involvement.

## **7. VISIBILITY OF UWC RESEARCH OUTPUT**

In order to exploit UWC's existing expertise and its orientation towards openness, it is proposed that one of the strategies to market the University's research is the establishment of an institutional repository (IR) of research content in all its forms. The peer review status of each item in the archive **will** be clearly indicated.

The institutional repository enables secure deposit, management, retrieval and dissemination of the institutional research content over time. Based upon Open Archives Initiatives standards, content within the IR is discoverable by Google and *Google Scholar* and other mega-search engines. Since the repository records are automatically harvested by other engines, this secures the widest possible readership and promotion for UWC research findings.

The benefits of such a platform are many: ready evidence and promotion of institutional research output; increased downloads, citations and opportunities for collaboration; profiling of individual researchers or their units/departments; production of the annual research report; integration of local research into the Library's catalogue; insertion of local research within teaching and learning on campus and elsewhere; modeling behaviour for emerging UWC researchers; growing African web content. In addition, since the repository also secures the preservation of selected file types, the repository provides evidence of strong institutional stewardship of outputs from publicly-funded research.