**Learning brief – UCT Global Citizenship programme**

**1 October 2013 – 31 March 2014**

**Introduction**

We have come to the end of the initial 2-year funding cycle from DGMT for the UCT Global Citizenship programme (GC). During this period (April 2012-end March 2014) we have worked hard to consolidate the programme and to position it strategically within the institution. We feel we have been quite successful in this regard.

We will therefore use this Learning Brief to summarise where we have come from, challenges we face and how in the next funding cycle, we will focus more on understanding possibilities for student and institutional change, as well as identifying and developing what might be called ‘traction spaces’ for this at UCT. In addition to this, we need to develop a more robust theoretical framework to locate our work within the larger emerging landscape of global citizenship education. This is one of the key goals for the next year.

**Key milestones and challenges to date**

The UCT GC programme was started in 2010 as a programme responding to UCT’s desire to work more actively to develop programmes that contributed in direct ways to the development of a set of core attributes amongst UCT students. In particular, the attributes needed to reflect the core goals of the institution. The GC programme was developed in response to a particular goal – Goal 5.

**GOAL 5 — Enhancing the quality of UCT's graduate and profile**

Our mission is to educate students who will have a broad foundational knowledge that goes beyond the immediate requirements of their professional degree or major discipline; who will be equipped to compete in a globalised workplace; who will have a spirit of critical enquiry through research-led teaching; and who will have an understanding of the role they can play in addressing social justice issues.

GC programme has taken this goal on in various ways and the goal is reflected in the key purposes of the GC program:

1. To **expose students** to global citizenship & social justice issues **beyond degree or discipline;** all faculties (*knowledge*)
2. To develop capacity for **leadership** on contemporary global-political & social justice issues by **improving active listening, critical thinking & logical argument** (*skills*)
3. To promote **awareness** of themselves as **future global citizens** **motivated to work for social justice** through community service/volunteering (*values*).

The GC programme has taken root in 2 spaces and is beginning to be identified as a ‘brand’ on campus. This has meant that increasing numbers of students are joining the programme because they have heard favourable things about it from previous students.

However, the programme has not been without some challenges and the rest of this learning brief will summarise these. The reason for this is so that we can take these into consideration going forward. In particular, if we are wanting to identify ‘traction spaces’ for growth of the programme and in particular for the understanding of what it takes to develop programs that speak to graduate attributes, we need to take these into account.

**1. Co-curricular**

3 Short courses – GC1 (debates); GC2 (service learning course); GC3 – 60 community service hours with critical reflection – were developed and appear on students’ transcripts on successful completion. Over the past 4 years to end 2013, more than 650 students have registered for at least one aspect of the programme. During this time, we have had about a 70% active participation, with 45-50% of students completing. This figure needs to take into account the fact that GC is extra-curricula and therefore students drop out when their other academic pressures increase.

Linked to Goal 5, one of the main achievements of the GC programme has been to have students from all faculties in the same room engaging with each other. In this way, we believe that we have been able to move students beyond immediate requirements of degree programme

**Challenges**

As the programme is outside the curriculum, we have to compete with degree courses e.g. tests, exams etc. and students drop this before degree course. Given this, it could be argued that perhaps the most capable students take it, meaning that a broad reach across student body is difficult. In this snese we have come to see it as a leadership development programme for a small section of the university community.

Given that the programme sits outside of regular courses, administrative systems can be quite arduous to set up. This has also meant that it is difficult to get academics involved in teaching on it on a regular basis because it is not credit-bearing teaching so it probably can’t count towards recognition for teaching hours.

Funding needs to be raised annually although we are trying to institutionalize many of the roles. This has been increasingly successful, although there are aspects of the programme that will continue to need soft funding.

Finally, the issue of scale has often come into the discussion from senior management in the university. Given the pedagogical approach we have used (focused on ‘deep learning’) the issue of scale needs to be considered in slightly more nuanced ways. Our focus on developing increasing numbers of institutional links and partnerships has been the strategy designed to deal with aspects of this issue.

**2. Credit-bearing**

An 18-credit elective based on GC goals was introduced in 2013 in the Engineering and Built Environment (EBE) faculty open to all students across UCT. It was strongly and strategically driven by faculty leadership in partnership with CHED. The course is seen as interdisciplinary with a social science thrust. Coleagues from EBE as well as Science and the African Cente for Cities have been involved in teaching on the programme. It has enabled students from all the departments in the EBE faculty to take the course together, and a framework of critical enquiry and social justice underpin the curriculum.

**Challenges**

However there have been a number of challenges in developing the course.

Besides the fact that across faculties degree programmes have courses with different credit weighting as well as elective space, within the EBE faculty itself, common timetable space across departments vary hugely. It has thus been difficult to find common slot in regular semester. Only one other faculty listed it (Commerce) so it is difficult for non-EBE students to take it without incurring additional course load and costs.

We have moved it to Winter Term this year (June/July) as this is perceived to be more flexible and open to all faculties. Students can also only register for one Winter Term course, so we are hoping for a ‘deep immersion’ into the course by all students.

**Summary: Challenges as experienced on GC programme are of 2 kinds**:

**Structural challenges**:

* Disciplines firmly entrenched and very little opportunity for interdisciplinary teaching and learning
* Degree programmes full – little or no opportunities for electives
* In programmes where there are no electives and students are permitted to do a course over and above the requirements, they often often have to pay for it (supernumerary)
* Where there are elective spaces e.g. EBE, very difficult to get synergies across departments in terms of timetabling
* Also there is variance in credit weighting for course – across faculties but also within faculties e.g. in EBE depts. electives vary from 6, 9 or 18 credits

**Teaching and learning & other challenges**:

* Learning approach – deep vs. light touch – very different approaches requiring different curricula
* Requires very different experiences of teaching – learning is not content driven - process and facilitation is required to enhance opportunities for critical thinking and debate
* Often an inherent tension between throughput and projects like the First Year Experience, and breadth and projects like GC.

**Where to from here?**

There are a number of interesting challenges and new opportunities for us in the coming funding period. These include some of the following:

* Exploring a ‘GC-light’ online course version of the programme. We hope that this will help in some ways to address the scale issue, but also contribute towards debates and discussions on online learning.
* Developing a theoretical framing for our work. We have always had a set of inherent frameworks and principles guiding our work; however we feel the need for a more robust theoretical framing so that our work can contribute to broader debates on global citizenship.
* Identifying and consolidating more spaces on campus that have traction for our programme. This is aimed at ensuring that the programme is sustainable – both finically but perhaps more importantly, politically and strategically.
* Exploring the relationship between student and institutional agency. One of the challenges we have faced on the programme is involving students in activation activities on campus – we want to help them see that campus is a very privileged site and that they as students and leaders, have an important role to play in making more students aware of key GC issues. Many students at an elite research-intensive university like UCT do not inherently see activism as a component of their university experience. What we need to try and analyse and understand better is the relationship between university change and agency, and student change and agency. What does it take to engage students as young leaders and citizens?

The last issue is something that we hope to explore in our Learning Briefs in 2014-2015.

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