**RHODES UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Strategic priorities for Budget 2018

Vision

1. Outstanding undergraduate and postgraduate education: CE contribution to growing *“critical democratic citizens and ethical leaders committed to the service of humanity” is* the placement, training and monitoring of **volunteers** in community partners sites.
2. Creative scholarship and research: contextually relevant knowledge through **engaged teaching and research**
3. Innovative community engagement: promote social and economic development based on respectful and mutually beneficial **partnership** with diverse communities

**CE contribution (and opportunities) to increase revenue**

As a relatively new key area introduced to HE, community engagement has potential and is a growing discipline.

The **scholarship of engagement** is gaining momentum and there is much potential nationally to build this body of knowledge. Our Division has worked hard to grow research outputs from our office. All our staff (academic and support staff) are contributing. Last year we were able to contribute more than some academic departments at Rhodes. This will grow annually as we mentor our young staff.

Having been successful with NRF funding, we are establishing the Centre for Epistemic Justice, enrolled **8 post graduates** in 2017. There is a lot of student interest in this area. If there is an appetite in the university to grow this post grad research, an additional staff member would be necessary because we only have one academic driving this. The Research office have assisted us with regards funding for student research.

Some of our CE Programmes have attracted **Donor funding** e.g. VC’s Education initiatives (2 million budget). We believe our growing partnership with the Communications office will help us sustain this stream of income.

**Social Innovation**: we are part of an international EU programme with 11 other HE institutions working on Digital Storytelling for Social Innovation. One aspect of this funding is a contribution of over 1 million to established a Digital Lab at Rhodes for the use of students, academics and community partners. This initiative may add to the overall student experience at Rhodes.

**CE contribution to student experience**

Rhodes have one of the largest, if not the largest volunteer programme in HE institutions in the country. This is becoming a defining feature of the Rhodes product/offerings. This contributes to cultivating the kind of students spelled out in point 1 of the vision above. Although the numbers of volunteers have grown exponentially this year (over 900 volunteers serving weekly) we have managed to cover costs with the RU grant and an additional R100 000 we received from the Oppenheimer Fund for transporting volunteers. We have been creative using student leadership to cover for the additional management demands.

**CE contribution to promoting contextually relevant knowledge through** **engaged teaching and research:**  We have provided support to academics in the area of teaching and research to promote and accelerate the above. Currently there are 91 service learning and community engaged initiatives established in the 6 faculties – linked to teaching. The quality of each varies radically and there is much room for ongoing support and monitoring but we don’t have the capacity to do this (same staff member who supervises 8 post graduates).

**Community Partnerships:** As we commit ourselves to become more responsive and relevant to our local community, we consider how we can make our university more porous and accessible. We have formal partnerships with 42 organisations in Grahamstown (Schools, NGO’s, CBO’s and other community groups). We have established two HUBS in Joza and now looking to establish HUB on campus where our partners can access internet, make digital stories, meet academics to work on research projects etc. We have raised the funding through the EU, we will use student leaders to run it, the only resource we need here is SPACE.

I have highlighted some points, looking at how Community Engagement can contribute to enhancing the academic product and through that fulfilling the vision of Rhodes.