Incentivising Research & Researcher development in Universities

By

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Road Map

- Should or should Makerere incentivise research
- Knowledge Production: Paradigm shift
- Challenges in African Universities
- Incentives and the debate
- The path for Makerere University
In conclusion

- Provision of Institutional and or individual incentives is associated with Research productivity (Chiara et al, 2011)

- Incetivisation could take the form of:
  - Government Research support e.g. $30 billion research grant
  - Government subsidy to the university similar to the South Africa DHET
  - Institutional support
    - competitive grant scheme
    - Recognition of excellence
Changing Paradigm

☐ Traditional role of universities
  ■ Generate knowledge and contribute to betterment of science
  ■ Developed own research agenda – Ivory towers
  ■ Research geared at growing disciplines
  ■ Minimal accountability to the public

☐ Current trends
  ■ Social Contract between science and society
    ■ Society a key stakeholder in knowledge creation - especially in Public universities
Paradigm shift...

- Nature of knowledge generation is changing (Gibbons et al 1994)
  - from Mode 1 (Ivory tower) – Academic, Mono-disciplinary, Certain, Predictive (discovery)
  - to Mode 2 – (Engaged university) - Academic & Social, Trans-& Multidisciplinary, Participative, uncertain & exploratory in nature (impact driven & values socially distributed knowledge)
Knowledge generation...

- and even Mode 3 – (GloCal – local meaning but global reach) embodies multilevel knowledge and innovation system (Carayannis, 2012; Etzkowitz, 2008)
  - Emphasis is on clusters and networks
  - Accountability to various stakeholders
Challenge in many African Universities

- Massification & teaching overload leads to the vicious cycle of ‘teach or perish’
- Thirst for research (*libido scienti*) is reduced by rushing from one overcrowded class to the other
- Material condition of the African Academic is a driver to secure additional income – non-academic contracts
Academic Core

- Concept of Academic core in research
  - teaching, supervision of postgraduate students, research and dissemination
  - core outputs of these activities are PGs, research outputs and publication of results

Key issues

- What drives Researchers/academics in Africa to be academically productive?
- What hinders African academics from being as productive as their counterparts in Asia, Europe and America?
- What kind of incentives are needed?
Drivers

- What drives the knowledge producers – the *homo academicus*
  - Curiosity
  - Taste of Science – *libido scienti*
  - Money
  - Desire for fame and reputation
  - Promotion and tenure
  (Bourdieu, 1986)

- A central tenet of economics is that individuals respond to incentives (Tirole and Benabou, 2003)
Incentives to academic enterprise

- Publish or Perish – Institution/individual level
- Goal is to publish
  - Policy to staff – At least 1 publication in 2 years
  - Policy to PG students – At least 2 publications by a PhD student before thesis defense
  - Impact - Mak ranked 4/5th in Africa by the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES)
  - Scopus database shows CHS leading publishing entity at Mak

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What can be done to incentivise Researchers at Makerere University

☐ Government research fund/subsidy
☐ Institutional incentives based on performance
  ☐ Individual
  ☐ Departmental
☐ Support researchers that bring research income to the university
a) Government support

- Government support to research
  - Support to Mak Research fund of UGX 30 billion
  - Competitive research grants
  - Small Grants scheme

- Government subsidy
  - Example: South Africa
Case study

- In South Africa, DHET provides a publication subsidy to universities ~ $9,000 per publication unit (Macleod, 2010)
- A peer-reviewed, accredited journal article or book chapter by one author equals a unit
- Some of this money goes to the researcher/author(s) depending on university policy
- Or funds are placed in a research account for researcher to use for further research
- Scheme absent in many African Countries
b) Incentives at Institutional level

☐ Institutional incentives based on performance
☐ Need clear indicators
   ■ Institutional Excellence research awards
      ☐ Individual
      ☐ Departmental
Changing Incentives to Publish

![Graph showing changing incentives to publish over years]

Source: Chiara et al., 2011

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c) Share OH costs

- Support researchers that bring research income to the university
  - Overhead costs left to researcher – first grant?
  - Share OH costs with researcher
  - Support grant writing teams
Voices against subsidies

- System may lead to publish in accredited journals with the lowest quality requirements
- Publishing in a top international journal can take 2-5 years but getting a weak paper into a local journal is far shorter (weeks-months)
- May encourage plagiarism
- Unethical arrangements may develop between institutions, or individuals, and publishers
- Driven by desire to increase university ranking
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Conclusion...

- Incentive system be based on:
  - Clear Policy – Research & Innovations Policy
  - Clear criteria and guidelines
  - Commitment by top Management
Thank you for the invitation and listening to me.
Reading Material

- HERANA