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 sciendi)* 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

(HERANA, http://chet.org.za/programmes/herana/

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 sciendi*
  - 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)

    https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2019/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats
  - Scopus database shows CHS leading publishing entity at Mak

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

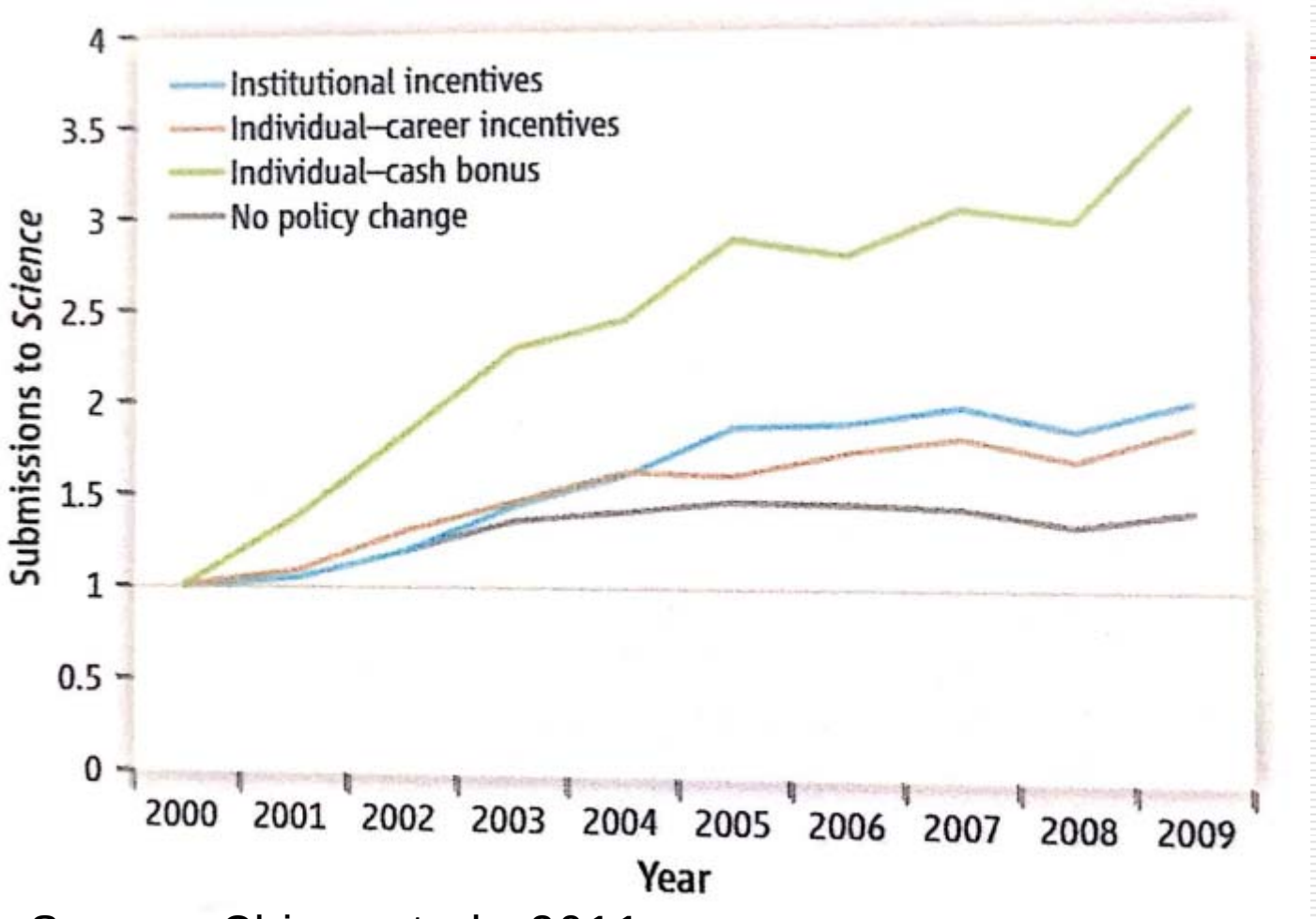
Case study

- 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



Source: Chiara et al., 2011

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

- Carayannis, E. G. (2012) Sustainable policy applications for social ecology and development. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
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- HERANA