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Library and Information Studies Centre

Library and Information Studies Centre

University of Cape Town

Annual
Report

2015

for the

Library and
Information
Studies Centre
Advisory Board
Meeting

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Contents

1. Introduction

It has been four years since the re-instatement of Library and Information Studies (LIS) at the University of Cape Town and this annual report is for the fourth meeting of the Advisory Board of the Library and Information Studies Centre since the establishment of the Board in 2012. 2015 sees the beginning of the next three-year term of Board members, as per the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Board.

In 2012, the University of Cape Town (UCT) re-affirmed its commitment to the continuation of Library and Information Studies at UCT. The Library and Information Studies Centre (LISC) continues to be located organisationally within the University of Cape Town Libraries and offers, through the Faculty of Humanities, five programmes in Library and Information Studies: the Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies (PGDipLIS); two masters by coursework (the MLIS and the MPhil (specialising in Digital Curation)); masters by research (MPhil); and, the PhD. The Humanities Faculty oversees registration of LISC's students, has academic oversight of both its curricula and programmes, and its quality assurance. LISC, through its teaching and research programmes, offers the library and information services sector a postgraduate route for attaining professional qualifications and further specialisations, as well as research scholarship. Its programmes are also useful in servicing the wider professional information market. While LISC was re-instated in 2012 with contract posts only (including that of the Head), the Centre now has four permanent full-time academic posts: a Head at Associate Professor level; a Senior Lecturer; and, two Lecturers. In 2015 the Centre continued to be supported by two of its emeritus associate professors on one-third contracts. LISC now has a full-time permanent Administrative Assistant. Programme offerings continue to be enriched by specialist experts from UCT Libraries and from other sources within and outside of UCT. With the re-instatement of LIS at UCT, LISC in 2012 undertook a radical review of its teaching and research programmes which are firmly located within a focused strategic framework (see Section 2 of this report) informed by the strategic directions of its parent organisation, the University of Cape Town. This annual report highlights the activities of LISC, for the 2015 academic year, in response to these strategic directions.

Founded as the School of Librarianship in 1939, the Library and Information Studies Centre, in 2014, celebrated 75 years of professional education in Library and Information Studies - making it the oldest source of such education on the African continent. On 27-28 November 2014 LISC hosted a successful commemorative conference, with the theme *LIS Education and Research in a Dynamic Information Landscape*, to mark this milestone occasion.

2. LISC Strategic Directions 2012-2016

Figure 1: Graphic representation of LISC Strategic Directions
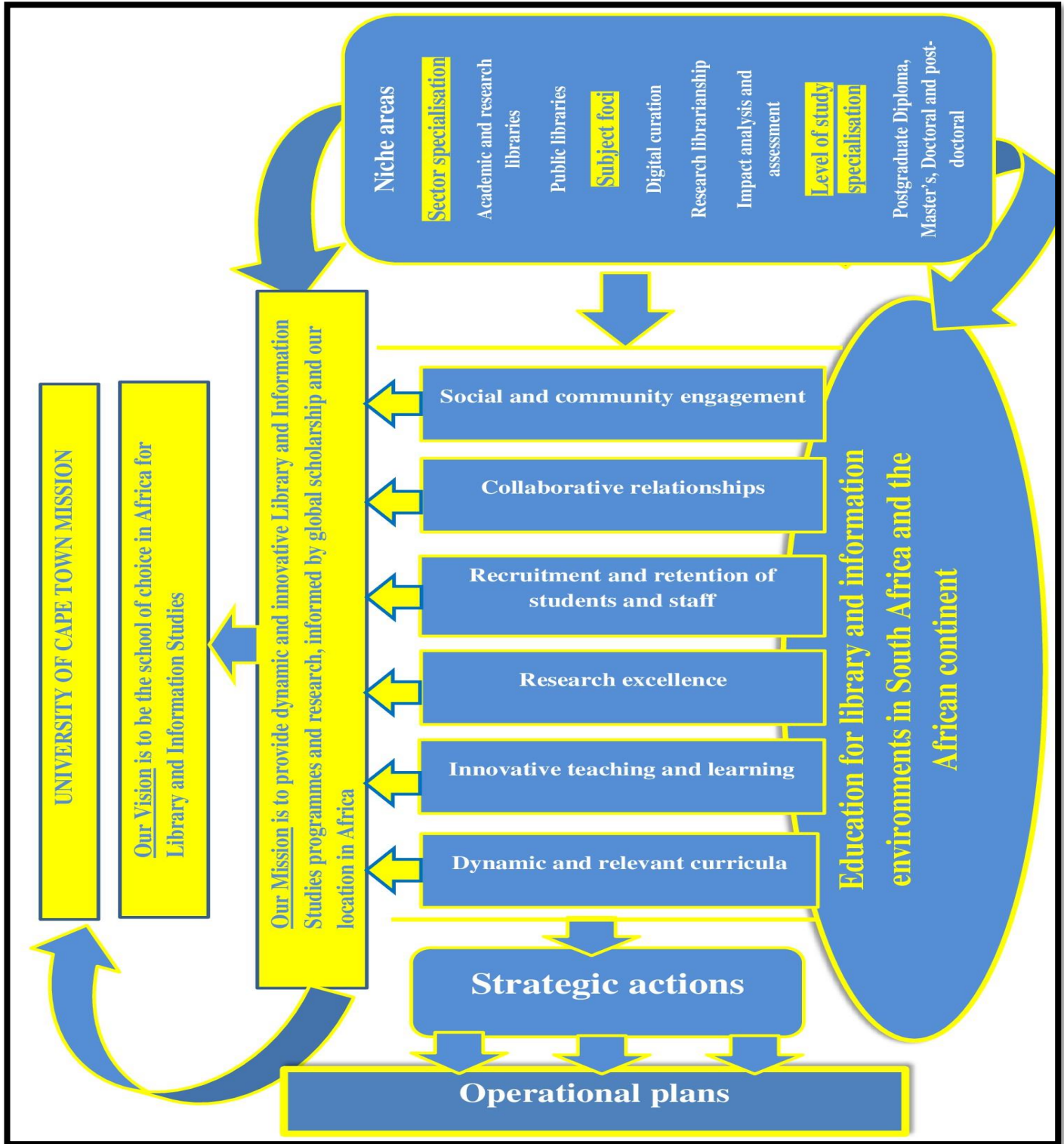
LISC Strategic Directions 2012-2016 are summarized in *Figure 1*. It is intended to be robust, dynamic and fit for purpose to provide LIS teaching, learning and research for a new generation of library and information professionals. The mission and the vision are aligned to that of the University of Cape Town and for a 21st century library and information environment. Based on a set of core values (namely, Academic and intellectual leadership, Excellence in scholarship, Excellence in teaching and learning, Relevant and cutting-edge LIS research and Social justice) these strategic directions provided LISC with focus and direction in its curriculum development, teaching and learning, research, and social and community engagement. LISC, over the last year (end 2014/2015), re-visited its strategic directions in terms of its growth over the past four years, and, based on this, made adjustments to the strategic framework which are reflected in *Figure 1*. As work-in-progress and in preparation for its next five-year strategic projection (2016-2020), **Collaborative relationships** has been added to the strategic themes and **Digital curation** has been added to the subject foci. Intensive workshops among LISC staff in 2015 on strategic actions and operational plans that speak to these strategic actions, have addressed issues of curriculum transformation as well as transformation of pedagogic and research practices in response to UCT's re-focused transformation agenda in the wake of its 'Rhodes must fall' experience at the beginning of 2015. In 2016 a revised strategic directions document for the period 2016-2020 will be produced to guide LISC's curriculum development, teaching and learning, research, collaborative relationships, and social and community engagement for the next five years.

3. Curriculum renewal

PGDipLIS

In 2015 LISC continued with delivery of the re-curriculated Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies (PGDipLIS), cognizant all the time of new trends impacting the technology-driven information landscape (e.g. research data management, digital curation) and ingesting this into the curriculum. Particular attention was given to trends re-defining the LIS sector and delivery of information and information-related services, particularly those in the academic and public library sectors which are identified in LISC's strategic framework as sector specialisations. The PGDipLIS is curriculated at NQF Level 8, with a significant Research Methodology component (24 credits), and allows for direct articulation to masters studies. This professional qualification, the 'tap-root' qualification for this postgraduate LIS School, offers a conspectus of the field of LIS. In 2015 the consolidation of a critical core of full-time permanent academic staff saw a continuation of a trend begun in 2014 towards greater independence on the part of LISC in the delivery of the PGDipLIS (and less reliance on staff from UCT Libraries to complement the teaching). While LISC is appreciative of the contribution from specialist practitioners from UCT Libraries, it ensures that the conceptual core and epistemological grounding of the LIS discipline are the responsibilities of LIS academics, with curriculum

enrichment coming from UCT Libraries, particularly in new areas impacting on scholarly communications such as research support and bibliometrics, digitization, metadata handling, open access and institutional repositories, social media, etc.

MLIS

2015 saw a third round of delivery of a re-curriculated coursework masters programme (Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS)) which addresses deeper level skills specialisation required by the modern LIS sector in the areas of Digital Curation, Research Librarianship and LIS Leadership & Management. A number of students who had begun the MLIS in previous years and who have completed the coursework part, either completed their minor dissertations in 2015 or are currently working towards completion by 16 February 2016.

As explained in previous annual reports, LISC took advantage of the emerging skills requirements in the general area of curation of digital objects and the associated challenge of developing archiving and governance infrastructure for the description, management, access and sharing of digital content, by opening up its MLIS Digital Curation course (48 credits) as an occasional course. Completion of the occasional course earns the occasional student 48 credits towards a masters degree in a cognate discipline and a UCT academic transcript as evidence of completion of a Digital Curation course at NQF Level 9. Once again in 2015, LISC advertised the course to attract applicants from disciplines such as Knowledge Management, Archival Science, Museology, Anthropology, Publishing, Media Studies and Journalism. Richard Higgs, the Digital Curation course convener, packages the course content in a manner that makes it attractive to both LIS and non-LIS students thus demonstrating the capacity of the LIS curriculum to exploit its natural intellectual relationships with cognate disciplines to promote the richness of interdisciplinarity and the relevance of LIS to the broader professional information market. Richard Higgs brings to LISC strong IT and digital content management expertise and experience from academia and corporate and community contexts. This third year of offering Digital Curation as an occasional course saw fewer occasional students but an increase in the number of students taking it as a mainstream MLIS course, demonstrating the demand for these emerging skills in the LIS work environment. LISC is currently the only LIS school in Africa to teach Digital Curation as a discrete set of skills (that is, not embedded in other course content). In 2015 LISC continued to offer this masters course via blended format (online and face-to-face) after successful piloting of this delivery mode in 2014.

LISC in 2015 curriculated and received Faculty approval for offering a brand new MLIS elective in the critical area of Teaching & Learning for LIS Professionals, making it the only LIS School in the country and on the continent with such an offering, Again, LISC responded timeously to a gap in the LIS education and training market and tasked Dr Connie Bitso, who holds a pedagogic qualification, to convene and lead curriculation for this offering. The new offering addresses the need for LIS professionals in academic and public library settings to understand pedagogical theory and practice for purposes of equipping the end user with the necessary skills to mediate a

technology-intensive information terrain. As an opportunity for continuing professional development, this new 48-credit masters course will also be offered in 2016 as an occasional course, also via blended delivery.

MPhil (Digital Curation)

The emerging discipline of Digital Curation and its sub-discipline of Research Data Management are not only re-defining the information landscape in the digital age but also have huge relevance for e-Science, e-Research, Digital Humanities, etc. in the higher education context. As part of LISC's intention to entrench its lead in education for Digital Curation (which it began with a single module in the MLIS), LISC successfully curriculated in 2014 a masters stream specialising in Digital Curation, and offered this new coursework degree programme for the first time in 2015 (via blended delivery). Courses include a compulsory 48-credit course on Principles of Digital Curation; 24-credit electives in Curating in Context, Curation for Digital Media & Formats, Technology Enablers for Digital Curation, Information Architecture & Metadata, Research Data Management; and a 96-credit research component in the form of a minor dissertation. The programme is designed to attract LIS and non-LIS applicants and hence its location within UCT's generic MPhil suite of masters offerings. This means entry into this masters specialisation stream can be from an NQF Level 8 qualification in any discipline, and not necessarily in LIS, once again providing LISC with an opportunity to use its inherent interdisciplinarity to diversify its offerings and thus widen its potential markets. LISC sees this as an important step in opening up its programme offerings to wider professional information and other markets and as being important to its viability as an academic project at UCT. If all goes well at the end of 2015 with the coursework component of the programme, this first cohort of MPhil (Digital Curation) students would embark on the dissertation aspect of the degree in 2016.

Short courses

To accommodate the demand for training in emerging skills areas from individuals who do not meet the NQF Level 8 entrance requirement for LISC's masters-level courses in Digital Curation and Research Data Management (RDM), LISC carved out three-day short courses at NQF Level 7 in these areas and applied successfully to the Humanities Faculty Short Course Committee for approval for these short course offerings. While the Digital Curation short course was successfully offered in 2014, the focus by LISC staff in 2015 on the new MPhil (Digital Curation) offering, as well as challenges associated with initialising PeopleSoft management of short courses in the Humanities Faculty, caused LISC to take the decision to defer offering of both the RDM and Digital Curation short courses to April and September 2016, respectively. While these short courses generate income (R6000 per participant for the last one) for LISC, a more important motivation in offering them is the community outreach that it makes possible, especially to those individuals who are not ordinarily able to access courses in these emerging skills areas at the masters level. At the same time, LISC is cognizant of its staff capacity and

hence is circumspect about the burden such offerings place on staff. Therefore these short course offerings do not take precedence over mainstream programmes and are hence offered intermittently.

4. Teaching and learning

LISC academics are encouraged to allow their teaching to be informed by relevant learning theories (behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, critical theory) and to match learning styles to the classroom needs of their students. For example, popular among classroom facilitators is the constructivist approach to teaching and learning where students, coming from a diversity of backgrounds, are considered to be significant role players in the co-construction of knowledge in the classroom. In such a learner-centred context, the following curriculum delivery methods are used to promote collaborative learning and critical thinking: debate and discussions, group engagement, peer learning, case-study, self-directed learning, reflective practice, work-integrated-learning, on-site engagement, and hands-on computer laboratory sessions involving exposure to a variety of information resources in a state-of-the-art academic library as well as to Web 2.0/Web 3.0 technology (wikis, blogs, Google docs, tag clouds and other crowd-sourcing content instruments). The 2015 roll-out of blended learning via Adobe Connect and Vula, piloted in 2014, allowed for interactive virtual learning in online chat rooms and opportunities to contribute content to wikis and other crowd-sourcing content instruments. A variety of formative and summative assessment methods are employed, depending on the nature and content of the course.

PGDipLIS

The PGDipLIS continues to be offered full-time (over a year), part-time (over two years) and by block release (over a year). The latter is still a popular option since its inception in 2012, especially among individuals already employed in LIS services and wishing to obtain a professional LIS qualification over a year. The UCT LIS school is currently the only school in the country (of the 10 existing schools) to offer the block release option and seems to have established this as a niche for UCT to attract individuals from across the country who are employed but wish to obtain a LIS professional qualification. While 2012 saw 10 out of 12 block release students coming from LIASA's Carnegie-funded Next Generation Public Librarian Scholarship Programme (NGPLS Programme), 2015, as in 2014 and 2013, demonstrated less dependence on LIASA (the LIS professional body) as a source of students, with the LIS school at UCT attracting block release students, through its advertising and marketing, from places such as major academic libraries in the country and in Namibia, and Provincial Library Services in South Africa. LISC views this diversity of sources (and not just public libraries) from which it is attracting block release students as a good sign in that the 'intellectually rewarding experience' for these students seems to be spreading the message around the country about this innovative study option. UCT Libraries continued in 2015, as it had done in 2013 and 2014, to formally incorporate the block release option into its HR approved Academic Librarian Development

Programme whereby, the Library facilitates the opportunity for staff members who wish to pursue the PGDipLIS and who meet its entry requirements, to do so in one year via the block release option. The academic library at the University of Namibia (UNAM), despite the presence of a library school at its university, continues every year to send funded students to LISC, again a testimony to the quality of LISC's PGDipLIS and other programmes. Rhodes University as well as the University of the Free State have been consistent supporters of LISC's block release offering. Only time will tell whether UNISA's decision to begin with the PGDip in 2016, will indeed affect UCT's block release numbers - hence the need for rigorous marketing.

In 2015, part-time registrations for the PGDipLIS (13) were almost on par with block release registrations (12), while full-time registrations were not far behind at 10. It is interesting to notice LISC beginning to attract part-time registration from UCT departments such as Student Admissions, Student Records, the University Secretariat and academic administration in a variety of departments, demonstrating the value of the PGDipLIS in the wider information market. A continuing trend from previous years is that, of the 12 full-time students, almost 50% are young, bachelor degree graduates (gender inclusive) with many of these recently graduated from UCT. This not only shows signs of LISC's Postgraduate Diploma becoming an attractive proposition for general degree graduates at UCT and other universities, but also augurs well for the LISC programme attracting e-savvy young people ('digital natives') for LIS professional development so that it can produce cohorts of graduates of the calibre required for libraries and other information services to remain relevant in a very digitally oriented information environment. Again, as in 2014, the full-time class in 2015 included a larger number of international students compared to those of 2012 and 2013 – with students coming for full-time study from Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. This is an indication that LISC does seem to be making inroads into Africa with its marketing. Of the group of 35 registered PGDipLIS students in 2015, eight are holders of LIASA-Carnegie Scholarships (nine in 2014), the difference in 2014 and 2015 being that many of these were directed by LISC (because of their public library employment) to LIASA for the scholarship instead of them coming to LISC via LIASA. If all goes well, LISC should see 30 of the 35 PGDipLIS students graduate at the end of 2015 (the remaining five are part-time students with still a year to go before completion). Application figures for 2016 look encouraging with LISC having made, as at 15 October 2015, around 30 firm and conditional offers. Conditional offers depend on completion of a bachelor degree at the end of 2015. LISC closes for applications for all its taught programmes on 31 January 2016.

PGDipLIS lectures are held in the late afternoon/early evening so that part-time students are accommodated without necessitating 'double teaching'. Some 'double teaching', however, is unavoidable to accommodate block release students. This is kept to a minimum through the block release option being used closely with UCT's learning management platform, Vula, to manage teaching and learning during students' 'away weeks'. This fourth round (2012 was the first) of synchronising full-time, part-time and block release options allowed a committed team

of academics opportunities to fine-tune aspects in the delivery of their individual courses so that students gain maximum benefit from the teaching and learning experience. 2015, like 2014, saw the added challenge of accommodating a physically challenged part-time student in terms of classroom access, computer lab facilities, examination venues and access to teaching tools (*DDC, Sears Subject Heading*s, etc.), all often complicated by frequent electric power 'load shedding' in 2015. The commitment of LISC academics and the LISC Administrator ensured that the experience of the physically challenged student was as painless as possible. Computer laboratory sessions continued in 2015 to include the use the RDA Toolkit (purchased with multiple simultaneous use for classroom teaching of resource description and access) and Web Dewey.

In an effort to strengthen research grounding in the PGDipLIS, especially as this serves as a pool from which many of LISC's students articulate to masters-level study, a significant amount of research theory and philosophy was added to the LIS5020W (Research Methods & User Studies) course in 2015. Specialist LISC expertise, for example, in information seeking theory, learning theory, critical theory, technology and systems theory, was used to expose students to the use of theory to inform research investigations. Following on this, the major research proposal assessment incorporated for the first time in 2015, a 15% mandatory inclusion on theory informing the research; students and supervisors alike embraced this with rigour and enthusiasm which augurs well for the preparation of LISC students for research studies at higher levels.

LISC will continue to be creative and innovative in the synchronised delivery of the three PGDipLIS options for maximum educational benefit and quality of delivery. LISC continues to be cognizant of the diversity in the classroom in terms of age, cultural backgrounds, work experience and cognitive abilities. This diversity is incorporated into the constructivist teaching and learning methodologies adopted, to elicit a rich and satisfying classroom experience. With this diversity in mind, in 2015 LISC formally time-tabled an Academic Orientation Programme beginning in teaching week three, once students had settled into the academic programme. The Academic Orientation Programme included time-tabled sessions on: navigating Vula (UCT's learning management platform); plagiarism; the use of Turnit-In (plagiarism checker); general writing skills; academic writing; and, referencing (including the use of bibliographic management tools such as RefWorks, Mendeley and Zotero). Students 'at risk' are identified early in the programme, and interventions are put in place immediately to assist them. These include one-on-one interaction, counselling, allowing for drafts of projects to ascertain if the students are on the right track, pairing stronger students with weaker ones to facilitate peer learning, giving students an opportunity to re-submit projects that do not meet project requirements, allowing for re-examinations, etc. All interventions undertaken are done so within UCT assessment guidelines. The end of the first semester of 2015 saw all students in the PGDipLIS class pass courses completed to date. In 2015 all LISC course evaluations were undertaken online via Vula. While evaluation reports have been largely positive, students have

also made some useful suggestions which LISC will take into account for course improvement during its 2016 planning discussions scheduled to take place at the end of 2015.

MLIS

LISC's marketing of the MLIS in 2014 paid off as the MLIS (commonly done over two years) in 2015 saw 12 new registrations added to the returning eight MLIS registrations from 2014, giving a total of 20 MLIS registrations for 2015. After having 13 and 11 occasional student registrations in the Digital Curation course in 2013 and 2014 respectively, in 2015 there was only one such registration. While earlier advertising of the occasional course perhaps needs to be given more attention in 2016, one needs to also take into account the increase in new registrations for the mainstream MLIS programme which saw 12 new registrations in 2015 compared to just five in 2014 (this might have off-set the occasional course registration). MLIS students are required to complete two elective courses (48 credits each) and a minor dissertation (96 credits). While Digital Curation remains a popular choice (10 students plus one occasional course registration), in 2015 this number of registrations was equally matched by Research Librarianship (10 students), a clear indication of the growing interest in research support skills in academic libraries. LIS Leadership & Management garnered four students. Nine of the 20 registered 2015 MLIS students have completed the coursework and are currently busy with their minor dissertations. LISC is very aware that it needs to market the MLIS more aggressively, especially in view of its new MPhil (Digital Curation) coursework masters offering and the fact that to date (as at 15 October 2015) LISC has only been able to accept around eight MLIS applications.

MPhil (Digital Curation)

2015 saw the first offering of this new programme. It made a modest start with nine students. Students are required to complete a compulsory course in the Principles of Digital Curation (48 credits) and two electives (24 credits each) as well as a minor dissertation (96 credits). While all nine students registered for the compulsory Principles in Digital Curation course, five plus one occasional student registered for Research Data Management; eight for Information Architecture & Metadata; four for Curation for Digital Media & Formats; and, one for Curating in Context, a site-based research exercise. LISC took a decision not to offer Technology Enablers for Digital Curation in 2015 but to do so in 2016. As this is the first year of the programme, there are no registrations for the minor dissertation; this will happen in 2016 as this first cohort would have completed the coursework component. It seems like there is going to be a dramatic hike in numbers for this coursework masters in 2016 as to date (15 October 2015) LISC has been able to make in excess of 25 offers (firm and conditional) from applications received. This does indeed vindicate the timeous decision by LISC to embark on a specialisation stream in an emerging discipline that seems to be re-defining the information landscape in the digital era.

Research seminar series

In view of the growing number of LISC students engaged in research (minor dissertations and full research degrees) as well as in the interest of growing a strong research culture in the Centre, LISC time-tabled for the first time in 2015 a research seminar series in which masters and PhD students and all LISC academics were required to participate. The workshop-driven seminars, designed for active involvement of participants, were facilitated by LISC academics and covered the following areas: Research ethics; Role of theory in research; Research approaches & paradigms; Information behaviour theory; Teaching & learning theory; Technology & systems theory. The research seminar series, which was held at the close of the second semester, ended with a research supervision workshop for LISC research supervisors. The richness of research expertise and experience of Emeritus Associate Professors Mary Nassimbeni and Karin de Jager was a significant contribution to this research seminar series. The online evaluation received overwhelmingly positive comments from students, especially that they found the series an incredible support for research and a forum for clarification, especially in the complex areas of research theory, philosophy and design. Students want to see a continuation of this research support, especially the active engagement between research students and all LISC academics. They also made useful suggestions for further iterations of the series. Out-of-town research students either made an effort to attend those seminars related to their research or accessed the content placed on Vula. If the demand is significant enough, these research students have the option of requesting arrangements for virtual participation via Skype or Adobe Connect. With this in mind as well as for purposes of supporting the increasing roll-out of blended delivery of masters courses and for other web conferencing purposes, LISC purchased in 2015 a webcam and tripod.

Blended learning

On the basis of the successful piloting in 2014 of the Digital Curation course by blended delivery, LISC in 2015 offered all its taught masters courses, both in the MLIS and MPhil (Digital Curation) programmes, in this new transformative format. This combination of face-to-face and online learning not only opens up enrollment opportunities for LISC outside of Cape Town but also provides a transformative experience for both students and academics to become online-focused in an e-learning higher education context. While some conveners opted for the use of UCT's learning management platform, Vula, for delivery of the online aspects, others used web conferencing software, Adobe Connect. The 48-credit courses (over 12 weeks) included two contact weeks while the 24-credit courses (over 6 weeks) included one contact week. The contact weeks are essential for the course convener to touch base with students on a one-to-one basis, and for students to connect with each other more personally. The weekly electronic chat sessions involve discussion of prior reading and other tasks provided. The emphasis is on interactive learning rather than just electronic readings, instructional videos and slide presentations. While some students initially find it difficult to adapt to the online medium

and the non-linear learning processes of the courses, others take to it naturally; both facilitators and students learn together to navigate the new online learning space and very quickly become adept at trouble-shooting Internet connectivity and other technology challenges. Nevertheless, the demands on the course facilitator are not to be underestimated, for example: time and effort involved in teaching preparation (planning, structuring online interaction, preparation of learning materials), in continuous formative assessment and in learning to moderate and guide interactions in chat sessions to maintain focus on the topic and to keep all participants equally involved. Evaluations have been conducted for all blended delivered courses (for both content and delivery); the outcomes of these evaluations would be unpacked at LISC's 2015 evaluation/ 2016 planning workshop in December 2015, with the intention of improving, where necessary, both content and delivery.

The delivery of the PGDipLIS is still by contact only because of the nature of this professional programme in which all five 24-credit courses are compulsory. The 2015 end-of-year evaluation will seek to ascertain whether this is still the position LISC wishes to maintain.

WiL (Work Integrated Learning) and PPDP (Personal and Professional Development Programme)

The purpose of WiL in the PGDipLIS programme is to ensure that students have an opportunity to relate theory to practice and to gain some practical knowledge of different types of information work, routine procedures and managerial problems. WiL placement in 2016 (approximately three weeks), distributed between the Winter and September vacations (with some students in full-time employment making up their time on Saturdays instead), included hosts such as: UCT Libraries, public libraries, law firm resource centres, the National Library of South Africa, the Iziko Social History Museum, Artscape Resource Centre, the South African Air Force Museum and school libraries.

Once again in 2016, an inclusion in the PGDipLIS programme has been personal and professional development. In order to equip PGDipLIS students (many of whom are recent graduates) with skills to plan their careers, a Personal and Professional Development Programme (PPDP), developed and delivered for LISC by UCT's Career Services, has been included in the Resource Planning & Use course. PPDP, which is time-tabled for a double period once a week, runs for a term and, this year, was piloted as a blend of face-to-face and online sessions. The programme provides participants with self-awareness and self-assessment tools, helps them develop CVs and covering letters, explores their career options, and takes them through the job search process. 80% attendance and an assignment (preparation of a CV) count 5% towards the total course assessment for Resource Planning & Use. Students receive a PPDP certificate on successful completion of the course. All students, including those already employed, are required to attend the course. Because part-time students were not able to attend face-to-face sessions, they were able to complete the PPDP requirement exclusively online through the Careers

Service's online learning platform. The feedback received will be used to adapt the online offering going forward.

Culmination of the 2015 academic year

On 13 November 2015 the PGDipLIS students will conclude the academic year with a prize-giving ceremony with prizes (R500 'book' vouchers) for Best Academic Performance in the PGDipLIS, for Leadership, and for Dedication & Perseverance. Certificates of Excellence as well as Certificates of Acknowledgement will also be awarded. In 2015, there will be two additional prizes of R500 'book' vouchers sponsored by a 2014 block release PGDipLIS student, Righardt le Roux. He was inspired by Richard Higgs' 'Name of the Rose' essay that encouraged students to engage with understanding leadership styles and attitudes to access to information, and by Michelle Kahn's 'Library Space Planning' project; hence he requested for the top achiever in each of these two assessments to be awarded a prize via his sponsorship. As indicated in previous annual reports, LISC believes that a prize-giving culmination of the academic year provides students with an incentive to strive for quality in their performance in preparation for delivery in the work environment and/or for the pursuit of further postgraduate studies.

5. Research

In 2015 LISC continued, as per its strategic framework, to balance both teaching and research. This included supervising masters and doctoral studies, writing papers for conference presentations and for journal publication, and conducting independent research.

Masters and PhDs

From figures of 10 masters students and 3 PhDs registered in 2012, 19 masters and 4 PhDs registered in 2013 and 20 masters and 7 PhDs registered in 2014, LISC moved to 35 masters and 7 PhDs in 2015 (note that there have been completions in 2012, 2013 and 2014). Of the 35 masters students registered in 2015, six are registered for masters by research (MPhil) and the balance (29) for masters by coursework (MLIS and MPhil (Digital Curation)) but with a 50% research component (minor dissertation). Additionally, LISC is currently working with three potential PhD and three potential MPhil (Research) candidates in anticipation of submission of research proposals early in 2016 for registration in LISC. LISC is very selective about acceptance of PhD candidates and hence rigorously reviews research proposal submissions – 2015 saw many PhD applications declined. LISC had four masters students graduating in June 2015 and one PhD, the first PhD graduation since the re-instatement of LIS at UCT in 2012. Thomas Matingwina, supervised by A/Prof. Jaya Raju, first registered around mid-year 2012 – he completed his PhD in just under three years. As with other academic departments in the Humanities Faculty, LISC has since 2012 been assisted with supervision capacity, where necessary, by External Supervisors. This has been kept to a minimum in LISC. Currently there is only one research study left (the rest have been completed) being supervised in this way (but

with an internal co-supervisor) – the PhD student is due to complete by 16 February 2016. LISC's two Emeritus Associate Professors Mary Nassimbeni and Karin de Jager are currently playing a significant role in the supervision of masters and PhD students and will continue to provide this support to LISC's young academics and research supervisors. LISC's growing international collaboration has also resulted in the use of external expert co-supervisors; for example, in the emerging disciplines of Digital Curation and Research Data Management, expert co-supervisors have been sourced from the Digital Curation Centre (based at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, UK). As done in the past, in 2015 too, LISC will hold an annual Research Day (23 November 2015) at which registered masters and PhD students will present their research-in-progress. This annual event serves to provide an opportunity for LISC senior research students to share their progress as well as their challenges with LISC academics and with fellow students.

Conferences and publications

Among the staff of six academics currently in LISC (four full-time permanent and two one-third contracts), LISC in 2015 (as at 31 December 2015) would have achieved an average of at least two publications per academic in accredited journals and peer- reviewed books. LISC academics have also reported findings from research conducted, at both local and international conferences. Some of these important meetings in 2015 included: WLIC 81st IFLA General Conference and Assembly (Cape Town, South Africa); 11th Northumbria Conference on Performance Measurement for Libraries and Information Services (Edinburgh, Scotland); 16th Information Studies Annual Conference (Richards Bay, South Africa); Doctoral Forum of the 8th Biennial DISSAnet/ProLISSA Conference (Pretoria, South Africa).

LISC has nurtured the trend of supervisors working with their students to publish out of their completed studies. Many LISC students have papers out or in press or in review for 2015 (with their supervisors as second authors).

Journal management

The current LISC Head (Jaya Raju), Editor-in-Chief of the *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science* (*SAJLIS*), brought out, in 2015, two issues of the DoHET accredited journal in its online open access format. As Editor, she is currently seeing the journal through peer evaluation by ASSAf (Academy of Science of South Africa) for possible SciELO-SA journal listing. Senior academics in LISC all serve on the Editorial Advisory Boards of various accredited journals both within and outside of South Africa. Michelle Kahn, a young academic in LISC, serves as the Language and Layout Editor for the *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*.

Research and rating

Three academics in LISC (Mary Nassimbeni, Karin De Jager and Jaya Raju) are currently NRF-rated researchers. Both Mary Nassimbeni and Jaya Raju are currently fund-holders in the NRF's Competitive *Programme for Rated Researchers*. Mary Nassimbeni is the principal investigator of a team project with other LISC staff as co-investigators and in collaboration with UCT Libraries. Her project *Measure for measure: developing a values matrix for the academic library,* has masters and PhD students attached to it. Jaya Raju, the principal investigator, has masters and PhD students as well post-doctoral fellows participating in her project involving the *Development of a national LIS skills statement for the higher education sector in South Africa.* Both projects run for three years (2014-2016) and involve annual awards of grant-holder bursaries to masters and PhD students in LISC working in the research areas of the principal investigators. Both principal investigators have published from the preliminary aspects of their research and are currently in the midst of the main data collection, with Mary Nassimbeni extending her study to include values studies in public libraries (in keeping with LISC's strategic focus on academic as well as public libraries). Jaya Raju secured Dr Crystal Powell (New York, USA) as a post-doctoral fellow from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and Dr Thomas Matingwina (Bulawayo, Zimbabwe) for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. Both young academics have been working with Jaya Raju on her skills statement research while gaining exposure in teaching, research supervision and writing for publication in LISC.

Collaboration

As reported previously, LISC seeks to partner with appropriate establishments and funding agencies in order to build research partnerships at the national and at international levels; and to cultivate a healthy research environment in which to build research projects that attract funding, strong LIS academics, good postgraduate students and post docs - particularly in the research niche areas identified in its strategic framework. As an extension of efforts in the past few years, in 2015 LISC continued to partner with the professional body, LIASA, in the Carnegie-funded Next Generation Public Librarian Programme. Eight (out of 35) of LISC's 2015 cohort of PGDipLIS students are recipients of these Carnegie Scholarships.

LISC continues its relationship (via its Digital Curation convener, Richard Higgs) with the Five Hundred Year Archive Project (based at UCT) where the latter have undertaken, where possible, to make available scholarships to students registered for LISC's new MPhil specialising in Digital Curation if they choose to focus their dissertations on aspects of the Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA). This is a new digital archival initiative that aims to make available, through a single, searchable portal, the digitised collections of various South African and international institutions. LISC also has an arrangement with acclaimed photographer and curator, Paul Weinberg, who undertakes to provide sites in photographic collections for MPhil (Digital Curation) students wishing to register for the Curating in Context elective with the photographic

context in mind. Both Paul Weinberg and Dr McNulty from the FHYA are also willing to serve as co-supervisors in LISC students' Digital Curation minor dissertation research projects, due to begin in 2016.

In 2015 LISC continued to the build its relationship with the Digital Curation Centre (DCC, UK - one of the definitive global leaders in research data management advocacy and training) and which has close ties with the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII) based at the University of Glasgow in the UK. This relationship was initiated by a study visit by LISC to the DCC in 2013 and LISC's hosting of Joy Davidson and Sarah Jones from the DCC/HATII in 2014 for purposes of building relations in teaching and research collaboration in the area of Digital Curation. Joy Davidson and Sarah Jones from the DCC/HATII are currently serving as expert external co-supervisors for LISC PhD studies and have published jointly in the area of RDM with Richard Higgs and Michelle Kahn from LISC. As a result of these collaborations Professor John Briggs, who oversees International Relations (Africa) for the University of Glasgow met with the LISC Head on more than one occasion in 2014/2015 when he was in Cape Town in order to touch base on the collaboration between LISC and DCC/HATII. As a result of these interactions and engagements, a formal MoU, initiated by the University of Glasgow and signed by its Principal and the DVC for international relations at UCT, now exists (finalised in 2015). In the spirit of this MoU, Richard Higgs was funded by LISC to travel to HATII at the University of Glasgow in October 2015. He spent a week at the University of Glasgow engaging primarily with HATII academics, but also with other departments that have programmes and courses related to Digital Curation, including Museum Studies. He engaged in many fruitful discussions with HATII academics, as well as with the Heads of Digital Media at the Kelvingrove Museum and Hunterian Gallery, delivered two seminars to students in HATII, and attended seminars in the department, in the interest of sharing knowledge about both practical and educational aspects of Digital Curation. Richard Higgs commented: "HATII are very genuinely interested in what we are doing and in our approach [to teaching Digital Curation]". This augurs well for our continued engagement with HATII. Adele Redhead from HATII will spend a two-week period in LISC in April 2016 in reciprocation of Richard Higgs' academic visit in October 2015.

A/Prof. Ismail Abdullahi from North Carolina Central University in the USA and co-convener of IFLA's (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) LIS Education in Developing Countries Special Interest Group (SIG), invited LISC to co-host the 2015 Satellite Meeting of the SIG in Cape Town as part of the WLIC 81st IFLA General Conference and Assembly which took place in Cape Town in August 2015. The LISC Head was asked to give the keynote address at this international satellite meeting. LISC was complimented at the SIG business meeting at the main Conference for the generosity, efficiency and congeniality with which it hosted international delegates at the meeting. LISC provided the venue (at a cost to itself) at the University of Cape Town as well as transport and catering for the whole-day event. The title of the Jaya Raju's keynote address was: *Developing strategies for LIS education in*

developing countries: addressing the theory-practice divide. The meeting was attended by the Editor of the journal *Libri* who asked the convener to forward papers from this meeting for a special issue of the journal. The papers have been forwarded. As part of the same IFLA Conference, UCT's LIS school Head was approached by the professional body (LIASA) to contribute an article on LIS education in South Africa to the publication on *The State of Libraries in South Africa* (ISBN 978-0-7961-0124-2). Related to the issue of LIS education in Africa, the LISC Head at UCT was approached by the Editor of a special Africa issue of the prestigious *Library Trends* to contribute a paper on LIS education for an African agenda. The paper has been written, peer-reviewed and is currently in press for publication.

In March 2015 LISC hosted the inaugural meeting of the L/IS Heads of Schools Forum constituted to "respond to challenges affecting L/IS education, training and research, as well as employment opportunities for L/IS graduates in South Africa". LISC was instrumental in drawing up the Terms of Reference for this body representing the ten LIS schools in South Africa and was also responsible for setting up the shared means, using Google Drive, for virtual archiving of documentation emanating from this newly formed body. LISC was thanked by other LIS school heads for the time, effort, generosity and efficiency in hosting and providing leadership for this important collaborative meeting.

Dr Connie Bitso, Senior Lecturer in LISC, is involved in a University-School-Community partnership with the Bookery, UCT's Schools Improvement Initiative (SII) and selected primary schools in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. The partnership has formed a community of practice (CoP) that aims to develop and sustain functional school libraries. To date one journal article has been published (2015) from this collaboration and in August 2015, Dr Bitso and four school library assistants, in a paper presentation, shared highlights and lessons learnt about the CoP at a symposium held in Khayelitsha and organised by UCT's School Improvement Initiative and Poverty and Inequality Initiative.

75th Commemorative Conference

The 2014 Annual Report reported LISC's plan to host on 27-28 November 2014 a commemorative conference, with the theme *LIS Education and Research in a Dynamic Information Landscape*, to mark 75 years of education in Library and Information Studies at the University of Cape Town. It also reported a stellar array of international speakers including Prof. Herbert van der Sompel from the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Prof. Carol Tenopir from the School of Information Science at the University of Tennessee in the USA and open access guru, Prof. Stevan Harnad. Thanks to the tireless efforts of conference convener, Dr Connie Bitso as well as staff of LISC and UCT Libraries, notably Dr Reggie Raju, the conference which attracted 128 participants, was a huge success evident from the following statistics:

Financial highlights:

Total conference income	510 797.04
Total expenditure	458 265.38
Net Surplus	**52 531.66**

LISC wishes to acknowledge the generosity of the following sponsors:

Cambridge University Press	3 000.00
EBSCO	20 000.00
Emerald	7 000.00
Ex Libris	32 597.96
National Research Foundation	45 000.00
SABINET	40 000.00
Springer	20 000.00
Thomson Reuters	10 000.00
Universal Knowledge Software	5 000.00

LISC is currently nearing completion in publishing the papers from this commemorative conference in the form of a peer-reviewed open access book, edited by Drs Connie Bitso and Reggie Raju. All the papers have been double-blind peer-reviewed and Open Monograph Press is being used to publish the book to make the contents openly available.

6. Recruitment of staff and students

Staff

In 2015 the delivery of LISC teaching and research was carried out by four full-time permanent academic staff and two one-third contract retirees. At the beginning of 2015 LISC made two permanent lecturer appointments (previously contract) and in October 2015, a permanent senior lecturer appointment (previously lecturer contract) was made. LISC is grateful to the two retirees on one-third contracts (Emeritus Associate Professors Mary Nassimbeni and Karin De Jager) who have since January 2012 worked as full-time academics (despite their one-third contracts) in

the spirit of their commitment to the University to support the re-instated LIS programme at UCT. Over the past four years during which they have mentored younger academics and supported the LISC Head, their teaching and convenership responsibilities lessened incrementally as they made room for younger staff to take over; however, they continue to be active at the level of research, postgraduate supervision and publication support for LISC. Their support, guidance and contribution to teaching, research and academic management in LISC have been invaluable. While 2015 sees the last of their contract relationship with LISC, allowance (on the basis of pay-on-claim) has been made in the 2016 budget for them to continue with postgraduate supervision and some specialist teaching support in the interest of growing a critical core of younger LIS academics and researchers, especially in a context of increasing numbers of students requiring research supervision. Emeritus Associate Professors Mary Nassimbeni and Karin de Jager are active and highly respected LIS academics and researchers, both nationally and internationally, and while the young academics in this small department are still establishing their national and international reputations, it would be prudent for LISC to continue its association with these two highly experienced academics and researchers.

The Humanities Faculty undertakes formal assessment of academic staff every four years. In the final year of the cycle an assessment of the full four-year period is required. This has been completed for the 2011-2014 cycle, with the HoD having been responsible for reviewing and assessing the performance of academic staff (Dr Bitso, then on a T2 contract) and the Dean fulfilling this role for the HoD (A/Prof. J. Raju). 2015 sees the beginning of the next four-year cycle, and in anticipation of the culmination, at the end of four years, of assessment of the academic performance of the now three permanent academics in LISC, the HoD will hold annual one-on-one conversations with these academics to monitor academic performance and identify possible areas for strengthening. For 2015 these academic performance conversations are due to take place in November/December 2015. In terms of the LISC Administrative Assistant, UCT's Development Dialogues process will be followed to evaluate performance and monitor development paths. The current incumbent is due for her first performance assessment only in 2016 as she was appointed on 1 September 2015.

As reported in previous annual reports, LISC is cognizant of the fact that the available pool of strong LIS academics in South Africa (and internationally) is shrinking and of the need to grow a new generation of LIS academics. Hence as part of a strategy of 'growing its own timber', LISC is committed to providing young individuals amongst its students, who show strong academic and research potential, with opportunities to be mentored in teaching, assessment, supervision, research, academic administration, professional body interaction, monitoring of Work Integrated Learning, and other tasks associated with academia. While this mentoring and coaching has been time-consuming for LISC, LISC believes it is a worthwhile investment towards succession planning and contributing to growing the next generation LIS academics, not just for UCT but also for the national and international contexts in the LIS discipline. As a result of this mentoring strategy LISC has been able to easily source graduate and research assistants, when required,

especially in the context of growing student numbers and research activities. Toward this end, LISC is very grateful to the generosity of its senior academics holding research funds and who have during 2015 bought conference registrations, sponsored conference travel, provided grant-holder bursaries and paid for other research related costs for multiple students in LISC. LISC students have benefited immensely from the exposure this sponsoring has made possible. One of the permanent lecturer appointments made at the beginning of 2015 is in fact a product of LISC's 'growing its own timber' strategy.

Students

In order to attract good quality students (including international students) LISC in 2015 maintained the momentum of its marketing which began in 2012. Again in 2015, the marketing section of UCT Libraries has been very supportive of LISC in the creation of promotional material such as flyers, posters, banners and e-adverts. LISC staff distributed promotional material at national and international meetings attended during 2015 and displayed, at these events, banners show-casing LISC's strategic drivers, sector specialisations, subject foci and its various research initiatives. International applicants have been heeding LISC's call for early application to allow for study permit processing – to date (15 October 2015) LISC has received many applications from international students across LISC's PGDipLIS, masters and PhD programmes. As already mentioned, to date (15 October 2015) LISC has accepted around 30 applications for the PGDipLIS for 2016 (excluding applications that are still being processed). If this steady flow of applications continues LISC might be able to, in 2016, match or even surpass its 2015 intake (35) for the PGDipLIS, despite projections (for budget processes) requiring only 28 (see *Figure 2*). As mentioned in Section 4 (Teaching and learning), to date LISC has made offers to more than 25 MPhil (Digital Curation) applicants and to about eight MLIS applicants (noting that these figures do not include returning students and that there are applications still being processed). These figures look favourable especially in view of the fact that applications for LISC taught programmes only close on 31 January 2016. Masters by research (MPhil) and PhD applications are treated slightly differently and involve iterative reviewing and crafting of the research proposal before an applicant is allowed to proceed with registration – this process takes place on an ongoing basis during the course of the year. For both these research qualifications LISC academics are working with identified promising applicants in the hope of finalising research proposals for registration in 2016.

Marketing

LISC once again updated and printed about 1400 of its attractive double-sided A/4 flyers which carry content details of each of LISC's courses in the PGDipLIS, the MLIS and the MPhil (Digital Curation), and this time also announced its brand new MLIS elective for 2016, Teaching & Learning for LIS Professionals. Again, 1300 of these were placed as inserts, at a cost of about R3000.00, in the mid-year issue of the popular professional body magazine, *Liasa-in-touch*, which is delivered to 1300 addresses. LISC continued in 2015 to its carry its branding together

with '75 years of service' on its marketing material (A/4 and A/5 flyers, banners, etc.) and in email signature banners and PowerPoint presentations. A *Mail & Guardian* advert was used in mid-2015 to advertise masters level occasional courses taking place in July and September – in hindsight we believe this was perhaps a bit late and hence in 2016 LISC intends to put out the *Mail & Guardian* advert for the occasional courses earlier in the year. These *Mail & Guardian* adverts, albeit expensive (more than R20 000.00 apiece), are not only intended to attract applications but also, importantly, to use a high impact media platform to insert LISC in a public space to show its cutting edge curriculum innovations. LISC, at appropriate and regular intervals especially in the second half of 2015, used its branding and promotional material to advertise its programmes on listservs such as Liasaonline, Sabinews, the HELIG list and irtalk. In view of potential competition in 2016 from UNISA which will be offering the PGDip in LIS for the first time, LISC in 2015 stepped up its marketing, especially of the block release option, by writing to identified potential employer constituencies to promote LISC's brand quality, by paying visits to relevant stakeholders to promote LISC programmes and by engaging in focused marketing among especially 2015 graduating bachelor degree students at UCT. As was done in 2014, LISC again in 2015 accumulated funds from interest earnings from capital investments in the Buyskes and Spilhaus funds to advertise two bursaries (R35 000.00 each) for the PGDipLIS in 2016. In a space where there are very few bursaries available for those wishing to do a LIS professional qualification, LISC sees such adverts as drawing useful attention to its PGDipLIS. LISC was very careful in ensuring that the conditions of these gifts bequeathed to the school many decades ago, are fully complied with.

LISC website and social media presence

The LISC website continues as an integral part of marketing and promoting LISC to the outside world, advertising its academic courses and research. Integration with the UCT Web Content Management system ensures consistent branding and look and feel and compliance with policies and standards. The system has made it easier to ensure that requirements such as placing LISC's Ethics Review process online are complied with simply and effectively. With LISC's domain name change in 2014 (lisc.uct.ac.za), LISC has continued to have occasional issues with links into the site from other sites (such as the Humanities Faculty site), but most of these seem to have been trapped and fixed. A few broken links were found within the site as an artefact of migration, but these have also been rectified, thanks to the very efficient support of the LISC website editor, Gareth Dawson.

A total of 5 658 visitor sessions on the site between January and September 2015 reflects a healthy interest, with 68% of these being new visitors. A page-per-session rate of three (3) suggests that the navigation is effective in providing users with the information that they are looking for, although an average session duration of under four (4) minutes may indicate that content could be more user-centric in providing more comprehensive information targeted at user needs. A spike in sessions in late August/early September is consistent with expectations that

prospective students are seeking information about LISC programmes and applications (the most popular pages on the site). Leveraging (highlighting) course-related content in this period is a priority, and integrating to and linking to relevant additional content should become part of LISC's web strategy. As expected, the bulk of website visitors (65%) are from South Africa, with significant numbers from other African Countries (Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and Namibia). This fits LISC's international student profile (alluded to earlier in this annual report), and these visitors spend a proportionally large amount of time on the site, in comparison with other visitors. Site visits from India (3% of visits) reflect an interest expressed in LISC courses from the Indian subcontinent. Site visits from the USA account for 4% of visitors, which is a reasonable benchmark.

The Humanities website and UCT websites are efficient referrers (35% and 33% of traffic, respectively), and therefore existing links with these sites should be maintained and kept updated. Social media referrals account for just under 11% of traffic to the LISC website, and hence this is another channel that can be capitalised upon. Mobile referrals from Facebook are relatively low, at 1%, but this can be expected to grow. The responsive design of the site is mobile-friendly, but LISC needs to continue to ensure that content is also mobile-friendly, making sure that academic programme content is given priority for mobile visibility and accessibility. In-site searches, while rare, reflect the interests of our target audience. Terms searched for include: fees, digital archiving/digital curation, PGDipLIS, scholarships. In order to retain an impression of relevance and currency, regular content updates are required. Newsworthy items, while not necessarily responding to primary audience requirements, do help to establish and maintain a good presence and image. Information about research publications from LISC is equally important, and is kept up to date. In comparison with other LIS schools' websites in South Africa, the LISC website is certainly competitive in providing both relevant and current content.
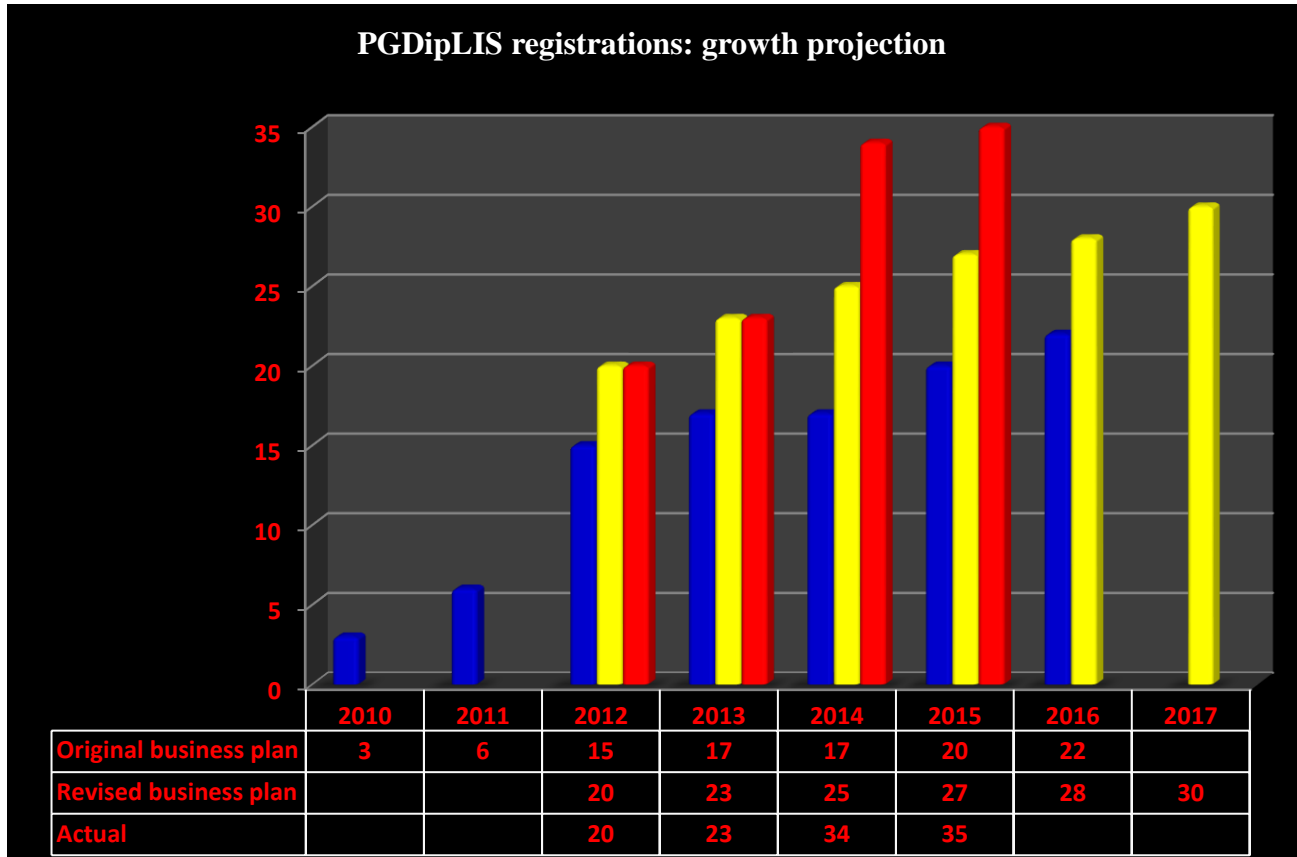
LISC's social media performance indicated in this annual report is at 7 October 2015 and does reveal a steadily growing social media presence for LISC. In 2015 LISC's Twitter site saw 355 tweets (compared to 259 in 2014), it followed 31accounts (26 in 2014), and had 197 followers (compared to 140 in 2014). LISC censored and blocked off four followers in 2015. On Facebook, LISC enjoyed 495 'likes' (303 more than in 2014) and 15 posts (almost equal to 17 posts in 2014). Most of the posts reached more than 100 people in 2015. The highlight among the 2015 posts was the June 2015 PhD graduation picture of Dr Thomas Matingwina and his supervisor, A/Prof. Jaya Raju, which reached 438 people - this being the highest number of people reached for a single post since LISC has been on Facebook.

Going forward

Figure 2 captures a growth projection for the PGDipLIS, LISC's 'taproot' qualification, based on a revised projection of student registrations done in 2013 due to the increased student registrations compared to the projections in the original Business Plan of 2012. The graph points

to an upward trajectory in PGDipLIS registrations, which augurs well for the viability of LISC as an academic project, as student registrations for many of the qualifications that follow, to a large extent, rest on the pool of students emanating from this 'tap root' programme.

Figure 2

PGDipLIS registrations: growth projection

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Original business plan	3	6	15	17	17	20	22	
Revised business plan			20	23	25	27	28	30
Actual			20	23	34	35		

7. Social and community engagement

2015 has seen LISC staff continue to provide input into forums working towards advancing community development and social justice. Some of these include: the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) which advises the Ministers of Arts and Culture, Basic Education and Higher Education and Training on LIS matters in South Africa; the Library and Information Services Transformation Charter Technical Team commissioned by NCLIS and the Department of Arts and Culture to provide a framework for effecting transformation of the LIS sector in order for it to contribute to the elimination of illiteracy and inequality in South Africa; the RDA-SA Steering Committee which is guiding South Africa's adoption of standards in resource description and access; the Board of the National Library of South Africa; Council of the National English Literary Museum; the International Standards Organization (ISO) Working Group established to develop procedures and standards with which to evaluate the impact of

libraries; the Representative Council of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), the policy making body for the professional association; the L/IS Heads of Schools Forum constituted to respond to challenges affecting LIS education, training, research and employment opportunities for LIS graduates in South Africa; a University-School-Community partnership based in Kayelitsha (Cape Town), working towards developing and sustaining functional school libraries. These are key forums and LISC's participation in them is an indication of LISC as a source of intellectual guidance for policy making and community development.

8. General

LISC continues to enjoy comfortable working space on the Hlanganani level of the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library. It has access to Wi-Fi and modern IT hardware (laptops with docking stations, iPads, plasma screens, printing facilities, webcams with tripods for web conferencing, etc.) and required software. However, its growing student numbers, especially at the PGDipLIS level, has meant that its dedicated teaching venue in the Library can now only be used for smaller classroom sessions, while the UCT-centralised venue allocation system needs to be accessed for bigger group sessions.

During 2015 LISC staff continued to work productively within the Library organisational structure in the interest of maintaining the quality of teaching, learning and research which are the core activities of this academic unit. At the same time, it has continued to participate in academic structures of the Humanities Faculty which are critical for quality assurance of its curricula and programmes. UCT Libraries has continued to be hospitable and generous in integrating LISC into its organisational structure, particularly in areas such as space provision, IT support, the budget process and marketing support. A growth in LISC's programme offerings, student numbers, academic staff and research activities have, unfortunately, placed an onerous burden on Library finance staff who have had to deal with course codes and costs, student fees, multiple research accounts, and regular international travel by LIS academics. Many of these activities are not generic to library activities and hence consume the time and effort of almost an entire Library finance post, thus placing pressure on the Library's finance and other functions. The Library Executive Director has brought this to the attention of the University on more than one occasion. Notwithstanding this, UCT Libraries continues to be very respectful of LISC's space and expertise and allows it the necessary autonomy to grow as an academic unit. As previously reported, LISC's proximity to UCT Libraries has given it a close-up view of the skills and competency requirements of a modern state-of-the art academic library and this has proved very beneficial in curriculum design and development. It also allows LISC access to specialist practitioners whose expertise may be drawn on to sustain relevant and dynamic LIS curricula. This inclusive relationship with UCT Libraries has also impacted positively on LISC's research activities.

LISC continues to hold regular departmental meetings (every six weeks) at which teaching, learning and research activities are reported and debated, administrative matters are discussed, and planning of LISC actions and activities take place. Minutes of these meetings are always carefully recorded, approved and filed. LISC is fortunate to have a very dedicated group of academics who are all very willing to contribute to LISC activities. A very positive departmental culture exists in LISC with a great commitment to collegiality and professionalism. Unfortunately, in 2015 LISC has had to endure a change of administrative assistant three times (resignation for personal reasons, temporary appointment and then a new permanent appointment). LISC academics are to be commended for their contributions to administrative support during this 'bumpy ride'. It is hoped that the present incumbent will have a long and productive stay with LISC. The LISC Head wishes to thank the retirees of the school for their continued support, guidance and the very special care and interest they take in its growth and development. LISC continues to enjoy a warm and friendly yet professional relationship with all of its postgraduate students and post-doctoral fellows. Students find it easy to approach LISC staff for guidance and advice, when required.

9. Conclusion

It has been almost four years since the re-instatement of Library and Information Studies at UCT within a Library/Faculty dichotomous arrangement. The intention has been for the University to review, at some stage, both the viability of the unit as well as its location. It is the prerogative of the University to decide when the time is right to do this. In the meantime, LISC wishes to thank UCT Libraries, the Humanities Faculty and the University generally for their support and for acknowledging progress made by LISC, especially by signaling this via the permanent appointments made in LISC. LISC also wishes to thank the professional body, LIASA, which continues to support the UCT school in its efforts to serve the LIS community in a highly digitised age. And last but not least, thank you to the staff of LISC for their hard work, commitment to quality of service and a desire to see this small academic unit grow from strength to strength in all its identified strategic directions.

Associate Professor Jaya Raju (with input from LISC staff)

Head: Library and Information Studies, UCT

October 2015