

Library Assessment Conference Career Achievement Awards 2012

Remarks by Awardee Karin De Jager

October 30, 2012

Thank you very much indeed for this unbelievable honour. When she heard about it, Joan said it was only the second time in her life when she was rendered entirely speechless, and when I first read Martha's email, was astonished. So I am not standing here on my own – but very much on behalf of both of us and I cannot think of a better example of where the work of two very different people has been so complementary - and for me personally, so valuable.

Joan came to UCT towards the end of the 1990's - in the eyes of her friends probably a very brave if not downright stupid idea. But she came because she wanted to make a difference, and that she certainly did. In this, the ARL helped so much, for both of us, to make a real difference to academic libraries in South Africa.

When Joan arrived, I was part of what was then the School of Librarianship, already playing the assessment game and a regular attendee of the Northumbria conferences, which I think I can call the precursor of the now well-established LAC series. So I think it is fair to say that I introduced Joan to the delights of the performance assessment community and the immense satisfaction of working with them.

From Joan I really got to know about the ARL. Of course I had met people like Martha and Colleen and Bruce - and a few of the other ARL stalwarts who attended those early PM conferences, but they were so clearly not in my league – out there they were, maybe the stratosphere. Joan, as a real American who wasn't in awe of anybody, showed me that they were not only human, but also did very interesting things – and that they were happy to share. They showed me that by being part of the assessment community one could achieve the professional focus which we have valued enormously. This community, in particular the ARL people, programs and activities, gave our work in South Africa incredible support, guidance and focus.

Specifically, the ARL:

- Taught us so much of the importance of evaluation; that assessment was not just a matter of measurement & data collection, but a process that helps one to understand the teaching, learning & research needs of the entire academic community
- Enabled the "ARL Visiting Program Officers" in the shape of Martha & Steve & Jim, to come to UCT in 2007. They brought a cool, objective, outsider's perspective to our library & its activities & showed us how to proceed with more emphasis on research & assessment.
- LibQual+ conducted in 2005 & 2009 taught us so much about our library, how it was perceived & what our major problem areas were. Identified for us that undergrads were by & large satisfied with library services, but that postgraduates & researchers were

NOT – which in turn led to our obtaining two large grants from the Carnegie Corporation to enhance libraries' support for research, which eventually had a major impact on the libraries of the six most important research universities in SA.

- These Carnegie projects were to a large extent designed to enhance librarians' ability to support research in SA. A crucial part of this was an extended programme over several years, in which SA librarians spent 6-8 weeks as "interns" at host libraries in the US. Joan was adamant that these libraries should be ARL libraries, as those were the places where our librarians would really learn, would be in touch with best practice, have the best possible role models & mentors – and she was proved right. Eventually 39 librarians visited 20 Libraries over 4 visits (two in Canada in 2012) – a very big contribution, you'll agree.

So now the ARL has infiltrated the most important research libraries in SA, and librarians have actual experience of ARL libraries & how they work. This has been a resoundingly successful project – and if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, other institutions & consortia are borrowing aspects of the model we pioneered, for projects of their own

Thank you to the ARL and all of you so very much for this vote of confidence in our work. We are still overwhelmed by your recognition.



Karin De Jager



Joan Rapp