Locating the Urban University:
International Dialogues with South African Policy and Practice
Cape Town Lodge | 101 BuitengrachtSt, Cape Town City Centre, Cape Town
16 August 2018

Workshop Brief
Globalized urbanization presents unprecedented opportunities and profound challenges for universities, both in terms of changing expectations placed on higher education and where in the world – and in the city – urban and academic adaptions need to proactively unfold. Linking research on the urban university at Georgia State University and the Human Sciences Research Council, this workshop offers an interactive forum to discuss strategic trends and challenges facing South African universities, and their relationship with cities, in context of a rapidly urbanizing and globalizing world. As part of an on-going research project bringing American, Singaporean, and South African urban university experiences into dialogue, the conversation aims to reappraise the 21st-century urban university as a producer of urban space and urban knowledge – and in doing so, promote a critical, policy-relevant debate on the role of universities in responding to, and reshaping, urban(izing) societies.

Preliminary Schedule
9:30 - 10:00  Introduction and Welcome: Rethinking the Urban University
Dr. Jean-Paul Addie (Georgia State University)
Prof. Leslie Bank (HSRC)

10:00 - 12:00  The University as Urban Anchor
Building on place-based approaches to the urban university, this session explores the nexus of urban development and universities’ spatial practices. How do universities relate to their urban context as urban developers, economic engines, and participants in local growth regimes? How have socio-spatial transformations impacted universities’ teaching, research and engagement practices? How can universities adjust institutional infrastructures, pedagogical practices, and ways of operating, to better serve people in places, versus drawing people to a place?

Catalyst Talks:
Prof. Steven Diner (Rutgers University-Newark)
James Ransom (University College London)

12:30 - 1:30  Lunch

1:30 - 3:30  The University as Urban Knowledge Producer
In the second session we will discuss universities’ role in producing urban knowledge, experts, and capacity-building to tackle the demands of 21st-century urbanization. Does ‘urban thinking’ impact strategies of university leadership, and how are global ambitions balanced with local engagement? How can universities better support sustainable urban development and realize a greater, and more inclusive, influence on urban decision-making? What types of knowledge are needed, and how best can they be generated? Can the core social and spatial ideas associated with the social and spatial structures of the university can hold firm while urban societies are extending at increasing scales?

Catalyst Talks:
Prof. Michele Acuto (University of Melbourne)
Nisa Mammon (NM & Associates Planners and Designers)

3:30 - 4:00  Future Directions and Next Steps