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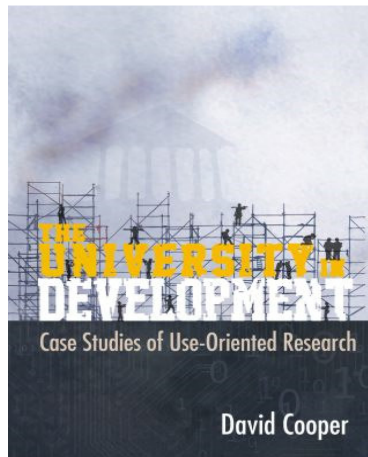


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Book by UCT academic explores universities' role in wider society



Universities are taking on the function of economic development in addition to their traditional double mission of teaching and basic research, according to a new book by Professor David Cooper, a sociologist at the University of Cape Town. *The University in Development*, launched in November 2011 by HSRC Press, analyses the complex relationship between universities and the rapidly changing world they operate in.

Professor Cooper argues in the book that this third mission should be conceived more broadly as “socio-economic-cultural development”. Moreover, he says, what academic literature terms the new triple helix of U-I-G (university-industry-government) research networks, needs to be broadened into a quadruple helix of U-I-G-CS (university-industry-government-civil society) research relations.

Professor Cooper observes that a university in this position experiences a major internal revolution or (re)development, due to the effects on its structural organisation. Already prevalent in many institutions internationally, this third academic mission has begun to pose troubling challenges to academic research cultures and systems in South Africa, he says.

The book’s central theoretical claim is that a global post-1970s new capitalist industrial revolution is driving this new international transformation within universities, with economies seeking out use-inspired basic research at academic institutions in order to survive and grow

within the competitive international market. The analysis thus provides new understandings of current concepts of globalisation, use-oriented research, knowledge society and economy, and national systems of innovation.

Professor Cooper initially conducted in-depth investigations into 11 research groups at Western Cape universities in 2000, with follow-up interviews in 2005 and 2007 and a final analysis in 2009, to explore the question: "How might universities unlock – more creatively and productively – the knowledge embedded in these research centres and units for (and in mutual association with) wider society?"

About the author

Professor Cooper is head of department and associate professor in the Department of Sociology at UCT. He has a BScElecEng (UCT) and a PhD in Sociology (Birmingham, UK). He was principal author of the book *The Skewed Revolution: Trends in South African Higher Education 1988-1998*. During 2009 and 2010 he was a Fulbright New Century Scholar under the theme "The university as innovation driver and knowledge centre", focusing his research on university-civil society relations.

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