



COMMITTEE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LIBRARIES OF SOUTH AFRICA

Reg. No.: 140-828-NPO

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

REPORT TABLED AT THE CHELSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

28 MAY 2021

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

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For more information visit: <https://chelsa.ac.za/>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ABOUT CHELSA.....	3
2. MEMBERSHIP	4
3. MOVEMENTS, RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS.....	5
4. PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT	6
5. GOVERNANCE.....	6
6. STRATEGIC PLANNING	8
7. OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR: CORPORATE PROJECTS.....	9
7.1 Academic Library Standards Framework (Convenor: Ujala Satgoor)	9
7.2 The State of Academic Libraries in South Africa Report (Convenor: Dr Shirlene Neerputh)	9
7.3 Leadership Development Programme (Convenor: Ms Zanele Mathe)	10
7.4 CHELSA Marketing Team (Convenor: Dr Connie Bitso).....	11
8. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS.....	11
8.1 National ETD Repository project (Convenor Dr Reggie Raju).....	11
8.2 Copyright	12
8.3 Memorandum of Understanding between CHELSA and USAf	13
9. CONCLUSION.....	13

1. ABOUT CHELSA

AIM:

CHELSA aims to improve library and information services for public higher education and research in South Africa through adopting the following vision and mission:

VISION:

To transform existing library practices in Higher Education to respond to existing and new realities and to lay the foundation for the development of a learning society.

MISSION:

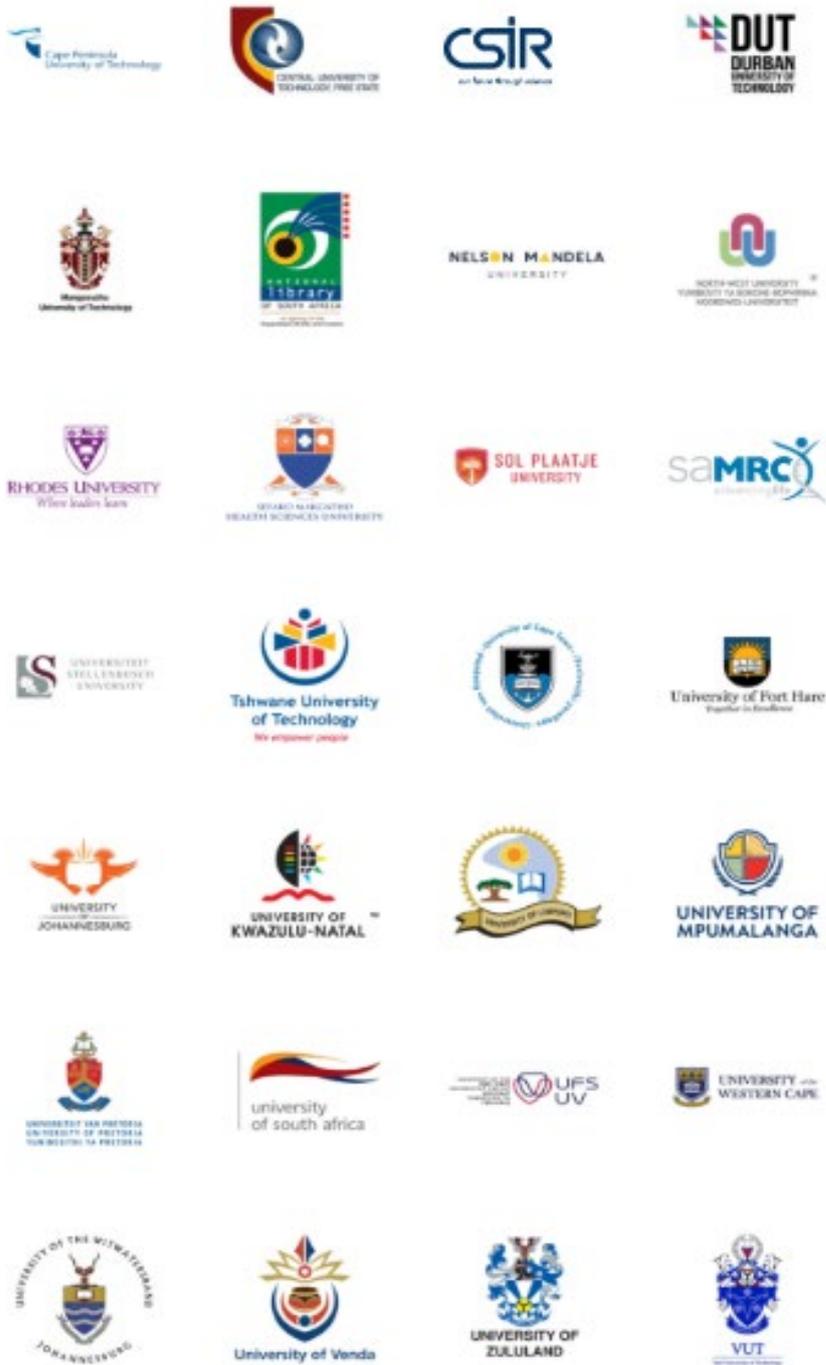
- CHELSA strives through visionary and visible transformational leadership to ensure that the Higher Education sector is provided with optimal access to information for the purpose of learning, teaching, research and community development.
- CHELSA will support knowledge management practices in academic and research libraries.

OBJECTIVES:

CHELSA is a non-profit organization established for the following public benefit objectives:

- To promote the role of libraries in Higher Education
- To foster academic and research librarianship through partnership
- To develop information access policies for Higher Education libraries
- To enhance the use of technology within the Higher Education library environment
- To develop an active quality assistance programme for Higher Education libraries
- To establish human resources development programmes
- To transform the Higher Education Library and Information Services in terms of their fitness for purpose in a new era
- To ensure that all Higher Education libraries participate and contribute to community-based services.

2. MEMBERSHIP



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3. MOVEMENTS, RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS

New Appointments:

The following new appointments were made in 2020/2021:

- Ms Sanele Kunene: Director of Library and Information Services, Tshwane University of Technology from 1 September 2020.
- Ms Betsy Eister: University Librarian, Central University of Technology from 1 October 2020
- Ms Jeannet Molopyane: Director: Library and Information Services at the University of the Free State from 1 January 2021.

Retirements:

None.

Resignations

Ms Betsy Eister: Director: Library and Information Services, University of the Free State

We Remember:

2020 will go down in history as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic that caused havoc, stress and strain to every sector in SA and globally. Higher Education was in lockdown almost the whole year in most institutions. Academic Libraries valiantly offered virtual services and online access (including zero rated connectivity) to “save the academic year 2020”. Library Directors and Staff Teams must be applauded for their unstinting support to learning, teaching and research, during a time when most colleagues lost loved ones and family.

I wish to also offer CHELSA’s condolences to all libraries who have lost Librarians during 2020. Never has there been a better time than now, for us to rise to humanity, by offering excellence in our services and come together for our Library Profession – that is what shapes us as true Leaders.

I also remember Ms Clare Walker, who passed on last week, who served as an inspiration to the LIS profession in the country. The sector was irrevocably shaped by her passion and dedication. She will be sorely missed.

The Cape Town Fire and destruction of the UCT Main Campus Library Special Collections and the famous Jagger Library Reading Room, on the 18 April 2021. CHELSA acknowledges UCT and Library Director – Ms Ujala Satgoor, Management and UCT Librarians during this devastating time for the loss of a legacy, and jewels to intellectualism of the African Studies Collections amongst other important inherited original literature. CHELSA offers support and conveys our regret for the loss. May UCT find inner strength and fortitude as it builds upon the evidence that good people and colleagues have come to assist. We are hoping to see UCT rise above and higher from this rather unfortunate devastation.

4. PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- Ms Ujala Satgoor was nominated onto the Board of IATUL as the Africa Representative.
- Dr Daisy Selematsela was nominated to the Boards of: Research4Life, ORCID, International Science Council – South African National Committee for Data and Science (SA CODATA), and the Editorial Board of Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture (PDT&C).

Congratulations colleagues.

5. GOVERNANCE

The CHELSA Executive Committee is guided by the CHELSA Constitution and subscribes to the characteristics of good governance, namely, participatory leadership, consensus oriented, accountability, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive.

CHELSA Executive Committee for the term 2020 – 2022:

- Dr Shirlene Neerpath, Chair
- Dr Daisy Selematsela, Chair-Elect
- Ms Zanele Mathe, Secretary
- Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi, Treasurer
- Dr Connie Bitso, Marketing
- Ms Ujala Satgoor, Additional Member

Executive Committee Meetings:

CHELSA Executive Committee Meetings in order to ensure the continued operations of CHELSA and realisation of priorities took place on the following dates:

- 4 August 2020 via Zoom – regarding SABS and the CHELSA ALSF
- 18 August 2020 via Zoom – meeting with SABS re the CHELSA ALSF
- 21 August 2020 via Zoom
- 11 September 2020 via Zoom - National Research Repository
- 28 September 2020 via Zoom – Meeting with Sabinet
- 21 - 22 November 2020 - City Lodge Hotel at ORT – SoAL Survey
- 8 December 2020 via Zoom - National ETD Repository Task Team Briefing Session
- 17 – 19 December 2020 - Cape Town Marriott Hotel Crystal Towers - SoAL Report
- 9 February 2021 via Zoom
- 31 March 2021 via Zoom – Meeting with SABS re ALSF
- 21 May 2021 via Zoom

The minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings are available on the members section of the CHELSA website.

CHELSA Finances:

The recommended increase in membership fees for 2021 had not been approved at the CHELSA Annual General Meeting held in June 2020.

The Executive Committee subsequently reconsidered the Budget for 2021, A zero percent increase on membership fees for 2021 would be implemented.

The legalities for the setting up of the CHELSA Treasurer, Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi on the CHELSA Bank accounts were finalised early 2021. The Logistics of expediated handover posed numerous challenges. Administrative issues encumbered were COVID 19, related lockdown processes, re-application of the FICA banking requirements and certification of the physical address of the CHELSA office, which had to be authorised by the National Library of South Africa CEO.

This was a time-consuming and laborious process which is now on track thanks to Ms MushoninMulaudzi's and Anke McCallum's efforts.

CHELSA Domicilium:

The ongoing utilisation of the CHELSA Office at the NLSA campus was formalised with the issuing of a Certificate of Office Occupancy by the NLSA in February 2021.

CHELSA Postal Address:

The CHELSA PO Box address was changed to P.O. Box 1598, Pretoria in 2021. LIASA had generously offered the sharing of the LIASA postal box with CHELSA. All relevant stakeholders were informed, and the postal address updated accordingly.

CHELSA Membership:

No new members were admitted in 2020 to 2021.

The CHELSA Executive Committee has identified Strategic Partnerships and new members as one of its action plans for the period 2021 to 2024.

Appointment of the CHELSA Project Manager:

Ms Anke McCallum's contract was renewed for the period 01 June 2020 to 31 May 2021.

CHELSA AGM and OGM:

The 2021 AGM and OGM are scheduled to take place on 28 May 2021.

Department of Social Development Compliance:

The Department of Social Development requires that all non-profit organisations upload narrative report of all activities annually. Upon making enquiries regarding the creation of an online profile for the uploading of the narrative reports, it was established that there was some confusion regarding issuing of the NPO Certificate for CHELSA.

No progress was made with this in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown and restrictions on physical meetings.

Central Supplier Database:

The updating of CHELSA's details on National Treasury's Central Supplier database, is pending, as the new NPO Certificate is required for the details to be changed.

No progress was made with this in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown and restrictions on physical meetings.

6. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Members of the CHELSA Executive Committee participated in a Strategic Planning Session at the City Lodge, OR Tambo International Airport on 17 March 2021. The session was attended by Dr Shirlene Neerpath, Dr Daisy Selematsela, Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi, Ms Zanele Mathe, Ms Ujala Satgoor and Ms Anke McCallum.

The current context was reviewed, bring into CHELSA sharp focus and perspective:

- Shrinking institutional budgets and increasing costs,
- Changing student needs/demands,
- Institutional business continuity (disruptions/risk analysis),
- Health & Safety (facilities/spaces, COVID response),
- The changing roles of libraries and librarianship,
- Open Science, eLearning and the support of teaching and learning,
- Equitable Access (eResources, eBooks, eTools),
- Digital and scholarly literacies,
- Resource sharing/collaboration.

Pathways for driving CHELSA's purpose: *to lead the South African Academic Library Sector*, the strategic goals for the period 2021 to 2024 were identified as:

- Strategic Positioning for increased visibility

- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Governance and Finance
- Standards for Practice
- Meaningful dialogue for continued relevance

Arising from the above Goals, broad-based action plans were drawn up.

7. OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR: CORPORATE PROJECTS

7.1 Academic Library Standards Framework (Convenor: Ujala Satgoor)

The development of the framework had started as a collaborative process in 2018. The principles had been identified and subsequently unpacked. CHELSA established norms and standards for the academic library community, which was submitted to SABS for endorsement. The framework had received overwhelming support from SABS, but CHELSA needed to decide the SABS route, in which the framework would become completely absorbed by SABS with their business continuity processes to be followed, and while the framework would be internationally recognised, CHELSA would lose ownership, with invited CHELSA Executive on board as part of the SABS process for national and international accreditation.

A request was submitted to the SABS Executive in late 2020 in order to clarify the future ownership of the Framework, especially in light of the fact that access to the Standard as a SANS would be limited and behind a paywall. CHELSA also requested whether an endorsement of the current CHELSA Framework by the SABS could be considered.

This matter was discussed further at a meeting held with the SABS Executive. SABS recognises the importance of the CHELSA Academic Library Standards Framework and recommended that CHELSA engage with DHEST and USAf, before deciding on a way forward. Engagements are ongoing.

7.2 The State of Academic Libraries in South Africa Report (Convenor: Dr Shirlene Neerpath)

The State of South African Academic Libraries Report with the theme “Embracing new frontiers” consists of a broad overview of academic libraries within the context of a changing SA Higher Education landscape, amidst the global pandemic. The report provides a synopsis of academic libraries in higher education in South Africa. The report addresses Library: Governance and Administration, the Value Proposition, Funding, Facilities and Infrastructure; Collections Management; Human Resources; Partnerships and Collaboration, Trends impacting Academic Libraries, including responses to the global pandemic - COVID 19.

The notion of new frontiers speaks to the shedding of old restraints, unlimited opportunities, optimism and future orientation. This has been demonstrated by the narrowing of historical disparities amongst libraries; cognitive underpinning of social justice, access and inclusion; consciousness of student experience and success; the impact of COVID-19 and the agile responsiveness of academic libraries; as well as the demonstration of the value of academic libraries to the teaching, learning and research endeavours of the university.

The final report is in the process of being finalised and covers the major areas that enable optimal functionality and alignment to institutional goals and mandates of South African universities.

It is envisaged that the report will provide a snapshot of the investment made in the 26 public Higher Education Institutions Library facilities, resources and services; contribute to the body of academic library and information services (LIS) developments in South Africa, thereby contributing to the national and international literature on LIS; demonstrate to parent institutions the reality of libraries at the heart of the university and showcase academic libraries contribution and value to the teaching, learning and research endeavours of universities in South Africa; articulate the evolution, responsiveness and adaptability to technologies and trends impacting academic library practice; serve as a benchmarking resource for advancing academic library services and professional development; create a shared resource on the State of Academic Libraries in South Africa; examine emergent trends in South African Academic libraries and also demonstrate the value an academic library adds to the teaching, learning and research endeavours of a university.

The Report was informed by data collected from a CHELSA survey sent during November 2020 to all 26 public funded higher education libraries. The report was commissioned as a project of the CHELSA Executive Committee and was sponsored in part by the SALI Trust in 2019.

An online survey composed on Google forms was designed to elicit accurate data per institution. A total of 20 members responded to the online survey. The response rate of 76,92% serves as a credible reflection of the status of academic libraries in South Africa. Such data and contemporary issues impacting higher educational libraries comprise the body of this report.

7.3 Leadership Development Programme (Convenor: Ms Zanele Mathe)

The purpose of the programme was to support aspiring middle managers and new LIS leaders. A proposal had been formulated, and initial discussions held with facilitators in 2020, with a view to establishing a think tank aimed at library directors and the second level of leadership. Much work was put into the project, which unfortunately was placed on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.4 CHELSA Marketing Team (Convenor: Dr Connie Bitso)

In light of placing more value on CHELSA matters and creating better communication during a challenging pandemic, a CHELSA Executive noted that a Marketing Officer was required in terms of the CHELSA Constitution, and subsequent to the Annual General meeting, held in June 2020, Dr Connie Bitso agreed to lead the Marketing portfolio. The Executive Committee also recommended that additional resources be called upon to assist with the marketing portfolio, especially for social media and website matters.

The CHELSA Marketing Team was constituted in March 2021 and currently consists of the following members:

- Dr Connie Bitso (Chairperson) – University of Fort Hare
- Mr Errol Solomon – University of the Western Cape
- Ms Natalia Molebatsi - UNISA
- Ms Janine Dunlop – University of Cape Town
- Ms Anke McCallum – CHELSA

The following matters are in the process of receiving attention:

- Corporate image templates for CHELSA
- CHELSA Website
- CHELSA Facebook page
- Marketing contacts at member institutions
- CHELSA Marketing Team Terms of Reference

8. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

8.1 National ETD Repository project (Convenor Dr Reggie Raju)

The Sabinet Proposal to USAf for funding for a National Repository in 2020, had been withdrawn at the request of CHELSA. Member institutions had indicated their unhappiness with the proposal to USAf, as it was felt that there was capacity within CHELSA to undertake the project. CHELSA set up an inclusive Task Team and formal meetings are underway to look at pathways forward for good practices and a sustainable ETD repository for SA, that promotes Africa's Research nationally and internationally.

A letter and meeting was held with the NRF to request the retrieval and transfer of the NETD archives and all related documentation such as MOUs and NETD Data housed on the NRF server for CHELSA's ownership. No MOUs were traced despite the call from CHELSA.

The first meeting of the Task Team took place 20 December 2020. Dr Reggie Raju, was approached to assist CHELSA lead the Task Team, vetted by his national and international

stature in building Repositories, Research Recognition, promoting Open Access. Towards the creation of a S.A. National Repository:

“Towards the creation of a National Repository- Developing a Conceptual Framework” drafted for the Task Team’s engagement and was shared with CHELSA members.

This was followed by an institutional survey, which was compiled by Mr Mark Synders. The survey provided a snapshot of institutional repositories at universities in SA for consideration by the Task Team in further discussions.

The project-work is proceeding as planned by Dr Raju and the Task Team, and dedicated time has to be allocated for key discussions. This is an inclusive project of all institutions, acknowledging the following key challenges stated in the above conceptual framework document:

“The growing landscape of ETD repositories call for explicit content policies to inform users about their rights and reuse policies. The absence of adequate policies and infrastructure to handle the ETDs at a national level is an issue of concern. Other issues like archiving, preserving, cataloguing, harvesting, interoperability, copyright and plagiarism are also noteworthy issues for the ETD repositories which need immediate attention for redress. The purpose of this concept document is to examine the above issues and the response to the call for greater collaboration to address a national challenge. As a concept document, it does not interrogate workflows. The document will propose scenarios for a way forward that will be of benefit to all 26 institutions in South Africa. It is deemed that the way forward will address the critical issue of research becoming more accessible not only to fellow South Africans and Africans but also to the rest of the global south and the global north. Further, this concept document will table scenarios that will improve visibility and discoverability of South African research for the advancement of further research”.

8.2 Copyright

The Executive engaged with Ms Denise Nicholson on the amendments to the SA Copyright Bill and submitted a letter for consideration to USAf and to Parliament, reflecting upon the following excerpts submission:

The limitations and exceptions in the Copyright Amendment Bill were welcomed by CHELSA. The Bill addresses the needs of modern libraries and related entities in the 21st century, including responding to the Fourth Industrial Revolution developments in our country. Most of our member institutions and libraries have embarked on digitisation and digital curation programmes and have created open access institutional repositories and/or research archives but our current copyright law creates ongoing barriers and challenges for them. Some have also moved into the realm of artificial intelligence, 3D productions, augmented reality, etc., but the current copyright laws are a major barrier to development and expansion in these important areas.

The limitations and exceptions in the Bill address the constitutional rights of access to information, education, non-discrimination, and many others as set out in the Bill of Rights. They address the statutory mandates of libraries, archives and related entities which have been standard internationally accepted practices for centuries, but now extend to the digital world. Some of the exceptions in the Bill are already permitted in the current law except they do not extend to the digital environment, such as resource-sharing, interlibrary loans, preservation, replacement of works, etc.

Some of the exceptions and limitations also support and/or facilitate Open Access, Open Licensing and Open Science programmes, to which Government has committed”.

CHELSA also added its name in support of the *Statement on Copyright and Proposal of a Waiver from Certain Provisions of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of COVID-19 (IP/C/W/669)* in support of the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic through the promotion of access to knowledge.

8.3 Memorandum of Understanding between CHELSA and USAf

A formal Memorandum of Understanding between CHELSA and USAf was drafted, to effect best opportunities for engagements on CHELSA projects/issues warranting higher decision-making. The MoU has been approved by members for signing.

Prof Ahmed Bawa has also been invited to attend the CHELSA Ordinary General meeting to take place on 26 May 2021.

9. CONCLUSION

2020 has been an extremely challenging year with lockdown presenting unique challenges of achieving CHELSA’s goals. Nonetheless, gratitude to CHELSA Executive and Ms Anke McCallum, Dr Raju, the NEDT Task Team; Marketing Task Team members, Prof Bawa and the USAf team - together we have achieved, amidst the darkness of COVID-19 in higher education.

CHELSA and Academic Libraries continue to grapple with: Health and Safety; Constrained Funding; Open Access and e-Science and Research; Institutional Sustainability of physical campus life; POPIA Compliance in Higher Education; Technological immersion in Teaching, learning and Research; Business Risks and compliance issues, Staff Development; Work from home; and Service excellence issues in South African pandemic crisis.

Academic Libraries have stood steadfast, often being the beacon of hope to academia and to each other, admirably demonstrated comradeship during the UCT Fires. Academic Libraries were also the forerunner to transit to cloud computing systems and the offering

of virtual services and access to zero rated online resources which has sustained learning and research across higher educational institutions, both locally and globally.

In the main, CHELSA Executive and Members had to ensure institutional business continuity and deal with higher education's life threatening COVID-19 challenges, foremost being wellness and mental health issues. As we face the possibility of an imminent third wave in South Africa, CHELSA pledges its adherence to stringent COVID-19 protocols and compliance, just because we all have the Right to Life!

Go Well and Take Care Colleagues

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Shirlene Neerputh".

SHIRLENE NEERPUTH

CHAIR (2020 -2022)