



FACULTY OF SOCIETY & DESIGN

Centre for Comparative Construction Research

Annual Report

2023

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INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the CCCR has sustained a period of consolidation and organic growth: consolidation in the form of clearly defined domains of interest and formation of working groups around these; organic in the sense that individuals have expressed interest in and participated in fields of research in which they have a personal interest.

The interest groups within CCCR emerged as research teams in seven discipline groupings. Gratifyingly, each of these groups had a leader emerge informally within each domain of research. Each of these groups has contributed to publications in journals, presentations at conferences, and book chapters over the past year.

DOMAINS OF INQUIRY

The CCCR discipline groupings have grown and developed momentum through self-driven focus on research and publication. The delivery of more seed funding for projects, as foreshadowed in last year's manifesto, was acknowledged by colleagues as enhancing their capabilities in terms of both undertaking research and reporting that research in journals, book chapters and conferences. The members of the CCCR should be congratulated on their efforts and the senior management team for their foresight and enhanced support for research. (see output in Appendix A).

The seven discipline specific groupings are as follows:

1. Construction management
2. Structural engineering
3. Digital construction
4. Project management
5. Urban Design and Regional Planning
6. Sustainability
7. Heritage buildings
8. Occupational health, safety and wellbeing

There are 32 PhD, and 5 MPhil students engaged in research in these areas.

SCHOLARLY OUTPUT

In terms of output in 2022, there were 55 papers published, seven book chapters and seven conference presentations. In 2023 there were 85 papers published, six conferences attended, and seven book chapters written. This shows a remarkable increase in scholarly output over such a short period.

Indeed, this uptick in performance, indicates the development of momentum in terms of research, which has been driven by the capability of the various groups and their leaders, and this has been, in the main, self-directed through the enthusiasm of academic staff.

It is important to note that in terms of academic productivity the average number of papers per person in 2022 was close to two. In 2023, the average output per person was almost four which is an impressive increase and reflects the deepening of the research culture in the Centre.

FUNDING

Undoubtedly, the increase in minor research funding and its distribution amongst the various groups has added impetus to the research in the Centre. The provision of conference funding is also a positive factor in encouraging colleagues to produce output which, although not journal standard, can become so after exposure to critique in a conference. This strategy is slowly evolving, but in order to evolve into a more impactful research-driven Centre there is a need for access to greater funding and more time to be spent on research.

It is noted that the senior academics have joined together to produce an ARC proposal for funding. This was some time in the making as the ARC changed its rules, and so delayed the submission process by almost half a year. At the same time, the new appointments in the Centre are being encouraged and supported in submitting Early Career funding.

THE WAY FORWARD

In 2023, The CCCR grew and developed momentum through self-driven focus on research and publication. The publication of the manifesto for the CCCR and the delivery of more seed funding for projects enhanced capabilities in terms of both undertaking research and reporting that research in journals and conferences. The members of the CCCR are congratulated on their effort and achievements.

Given this strong emphasis on research and dissemination, CCR is now in a position to move forward in terms of attracting funding from ARC and other institutions and businesses to further the seven research areas. To the end, it is proposed that each disciplinary group should be facilitated by the faculty in making a pitch for ARC project funding in 2024. There is a significant weight of research publications and research active individuals to make this challenge a reality. Senior staff may consider delivering seminars and advice as to how to put together a viable pitch.

At the same time, efforts are under way to establish an advisory panel to direct and collaborate in this process of moving the CCCR into a viable national research centre.