

**Launch of ‘Measuring the value of culture: methods and examples in cultural economics’
(Dr Jen Snowball)**

21 November 2007

The Dean, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good evening, molweni

It is always a great pleasure to welcome people to the launch of a new book; and in the case of this evening an additional pleasure as it is the launch of a new and first book by one of our own colleagues, Jen Snowball.

While the bean counters will rejoice at the implications for the University’s finances in terms of subsidy we, of course, are more cultured and will rejoice for other reasons.

Einstein had a sign in his office that read: ‘not everything that can be counted counts, and **not everything that counts can be counted**’.

It is debatable whether culture in its myriad and different forms and products (art, sculpture, books, etc.) can ever have a monetary value attached to it.

Alas, we live in an epoch of the rampant commodification and commercialisation of education, culture and many other domains of social life and seem determined to reduce everything that should be precious for non-monetary reasons to also a monetary value.

I am confident that Jen would share this concern, without the need for any persuasion or prodding from Warren. But playing the game, if it must be played, Jen’s work engages critically with the value of culture and also seeks to innovate methodologically in terms of the measurement of its value and contribution to economy.

It is pioneering scholarship in the South African context and work that I hope Jen will continue to develop as part of creating a niche area for herself and building her leadership and that of her department and Rhodes in this area.