The President  
Max Planck Society  
Hofgartenstrabe 8  
Munich, D-80539  
Germany

9 November 2012

Dear Professor Gruss

Signatory to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, formally requests that its name be added to the list of signatories to the Berlin Declaration.

Wits, as it is colloquially known, is one of the top research universities in South Africa. It operates at the cutting edge of teaching, research and partner engagement in key fields such as science, engineering, humanities and health sciences. Wits’ strategic objective is to be a top global university by 2022 and striving towards greater research openness, visibility and internationally recognised research excellence, is key to achieving this goal.

We wish to advise that the University Council and Senate have decided to join the increasing number of research intensive higher education institutions across the world that have adopted and signed the Berlin Declaration. In doing so Wits commits to the following:

1. Wits will actively promote publishing of research articles in open access journals and encourage its researchers to adopt open access models of scholarly publishing. In so doing, Wits will seek to meet the first open access condition of the Declaration, namely to grant users of its OA research “a free, irrevocable, worldwide, right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship.”
2. Wits will promote the practice amongst its researchers of making available a copy of their published articles and all supplemental materials, with permissions, where applicable, in Wits’ Open Access repository known as WIReDSpace, or another open access repository, in support of the second open access condition of the Declaration.

Through its unequivocal support for open access to knowledge, Wits would like to foreground the importance of its view that research-based knowledge should be utilised as a driver of socio-economic change, not only in South Africa but across the world. Wits believes that being a signatory to the Berlin Declaration is a visible and powerful demonstration of and commitment to this view.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

PROFESSOR LOYISO G. NONGXA
Vice-Chancellor and Principal