

Title: The Management of the Development of a Research Culture
at the Philippine Normal University: Some Lessons and
Practices to Learn
Author(s): Jesus A. Ochave, Ph.D.
Journal Name: Research Series
Journal Citation: No. 91
Publication Date: June 2007
Publication Type:

Abstract:

The purpose of the paper was to describe and share the experience in managing the development of the research culture at the Philippine Normal University. To accomplish the purpose, the following sub-topics were discussed: 1) A conceptual framework for the management of the development of a research culture; 2) A description of the management intervention employed; 3) An interim description of the aspects/facets of Research Culture in the University and Faculty involvement in research: and 4) Presentation of empirical evidences and indicators of research culture before, during and after the intervention.

The conceptual framework of this paper includes: 1) the goal, which is a scenario of a developed, enhanced and a sustainable culture of research at PNU, 2) a symbol of a vehicle containing the faculty, students, driven by management, including the Board of Regents (BOR) towards the scenario; 3) tailwinds symbolizing the Driving Forces (DF) which are positive forces that make the vehicle move toward the goal; and 4) headwinds which symbolize the Restraining/Constraining Factors (RF/CF), which are the negative forces that restrain the movement of the car towards the goal to develop a research culture in the University.

The driving forces (DF) which help the car (the university, PNU) to move towards the future scenario, include the following: 1) qualified faculty: 30% with doctoral degrees; 50% M.A. with theses; 2) organizational structure for the research function, therein are a Vice President, a Director, Faculty Researchers and College Research Coordinators; and 3) supportive management and technically knowledgeable managers on research and statistics.

The Restraining or constraining forces are also called the weaknesses/ limitations of the organization that impede its move towards the future scenario . . . vision: 1) Faculty apathy or lack of motivation; 2) no or very few fora on research; and 3) no incentives.

Intervention for a Research Culture involves the following research-related activities:

1. The development of a continuing intervention (subtle or overt) must be led by a manager who enjoys credibility. If possible, he/she must be a Ph.D. in Research, Statistics and Evaluation from a respectable university, with credentials including experiences and publications on quality researches.
2. Mastering and orchestrating an array of work information in addition to the manager's substantive knowledge on research and statistics. This information

must include the following: a) vision, policies and rituals of the universities; b) budget allocation for research; c) other resources for funding and learning; d) research capital (people and institutional knowledge); e) history of research in the institution, f) strategies in developing faculty research competence (e.g., junior-senior faculty tandem, mini-groups, focus groups, dyads); g) research activities of faculty and students; and h) opportunities for research partnerships;

3. Convening a series of research fora, conferences and symposia;
4. Inviting stakeholders and clients of other institutions to panel discussions or focus group discussions to share their research-based knowledge or information.
5. Crafting a Research Agenda for the University – Encourage the different colleges to draft theirs based on the University Agenda.
6. Sharing the Research Agenda, proposals, plans and research findings, and periodically reviewing the agenda items
7. Encouraging and joining research endeavors and conducting research in tandems or teams. Visibility of the institutional vice president/director counts a lot at the initial stages.
8. Sending faculty members to research conferences (both national and international) and sharing their experiences/knowledge with other faculty members thereafter.
9. Crafting and lobbying for the approval of research-friendly issuances from the BOR. Feel the need of the faculty, craft faculty-friendly research entitlements/incentives. Develop allies from among the members of the Administrative Council and the President. Convince/persuade others of the importance of research.
10. Stressing the importance of research competence as a qualification of nominees for positions in university-based colleges and centers, like Deans, Directors and Department Heads. Requiring research activities to be transparent in college, center and department plans, with research monitoring scheme.
11. Maintaining a structure, and being selective in identifying faculty-researchers, an important capital
12. Maintaining active linkages with other institutions
13. Suggesting research topics that are meaningful to the faculty, like Tracer Studies; Predicting Success of Students; Students' Instructional Methodology Preferences; Dependability of Students' Ratings of Professors' Competence, etc.
14. At PNU, the following were some of the BOR issuances that have helped in the nurturance of a research culture:
 - a. Four (4) research incentives – subsidy for research presentation abroad, entitlements, recognition and awards for publications in refereed journals; consistent semestral submission of studies; and concrete evidences that the study was cited as reference, as shown by at least ten (10) references or applications in other researchers' studies.
 - b. Annual Research Awards. For two years, this has become a feature of University Week Celebrations.

- c. Student fellowships in the Graduate School – Research fellows can constitute a pool of potential faculty.
- d. Rationalization and institutionalization of research loads of faculty

Aspects of a Research Culture: A List in progress

According to Ochave (2005), the following defines the attributes of a culture of research.

Culture is a body of learned behavior common to a given human society. It acts like a template in shaping behavior and consciousness within a human society. A culture of research is promoted when the following conditions exist:

1. A structure for the function of research is set. Example: A Research Center with budget, and competent and trainable personnel, composed of a Research Director, Faculty Researchers and Research Coordinator from each college.
2. A system that is supportive of research endeavors is put in place.
 - Structure
 - Policies/Practices (loading, incentives, opportunities, awards and recognition)
3. Development of Faculty Research Competence and Confidence
4. Rituals of sharing and review of research plans and outputs in research fora and symposia
5. Extension of sharing through publications and research portals
6. Interchange of research outputs and concerns with other institutions
7. Presentation of outputs in national and international venues
8. Development of norms and expectations on research quantity and quality
9. Pronouncements, issuances and stances on issues are based on research results – Discussions among faculty, students and managers about research findings
10. Policies are based on empirical evidences rather than on folk knowledge or unverified facts