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The Management of the Development of the Research Culture at the Philippine Normal University: Some Lessons and Practices to Learn

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The Management of the Development of the Research Culture at the Philippine Normal University: Some Lessons and Practices to Learn

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The development of a culture of research calls for a deliberate management of the advocacy, processes and direction of research. The experience of the Philippine Normal University shows that the management of a research culture is a mix of simple to complex factors and processes which must be attended to and nurtured by inspiration, expectation, role definition, monitoring and incentives. While there are many factors to the development and nurturance of a research culture, the following seem to stand out:

- ⇒ *University research agenda that cascades to the faculty*
- ⇒ *Support of the management that is communicated to the faculty*
- ⇒ *Competence and confidence of the faculty*
- ⇒ *Existing organizational structure for research*
- ⇒ *Visible incentives for the faculty*
- ⇒ *Research-related rituals, practices and tradition including team research and mentorship*
- ⇒ *Credibility of the research manager/s (V.P. and/or Research Director)*

With the year 2003 as the point of interventions for faculty involvement in research the years 2004, 2005 and 2006 are

¹ In coming up with this paper, Dr. Ochave was assisted by the Faculty Researchers (E. Abulon, L. Fetalvero, R. Oxiño, R. Suatengco, and T. Tabbada). Dr. Ochave who wrote the full paper assumes full responsibility.

significantly far much higher in frequency of participation than in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 in all the ten research-related items including for a, paper presentations, team research, etc. This indicates that research is fast becoming a natural part of academic ethos at PNU.

The issue of sustainability of a research culture stares in the face after a research culture shall have been established. Lessons would be learned from the practice and experience of PNU in its pitch for research activities. While research seems to have become a capital of PNU, there are still a lot more to be done, more push for the faculty, more junior-senior research tandem and more supportive type of leadership are needed to maintain the momentum gained on research culture development.

Introduction and Purpose

Research as a university function is problematic in universities, colleges and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It seems to be problematic partly because the main bulk of intellectual capitals of these HEIs are trained to teach and have applied for university positions to teach. Research it seems is farthest to their minds. As a result, what we have now are universities and colleges that are historically and traditionally teaching universities.

In the meantime, the pressure to do research is getting stronger. Due to some factors that pressure to do research becomes legitimate. Such factors include:

1. the acceleration of obsolescence of knowledge;
2. the quality of education;
3. the need to provide empirical evidence that higher education is making a difference; and

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4. the challenges brought about by a fast-changing time especially those of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Research is enough a compelling reason why this topic was chosen.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and share the experience in managing the development of the research culture at the Philippine Normal University. Other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may benefit from the practices of developing a **Research Culture** in an academe.

To be able to accomplish this, the following sub-topics will be discussed:

1. A conceptual framework for the management of development towards a **Research Culture**;
2. A description of the management intervention employed;
3. An Interim description on the aspects/facets of **Research Culture** in a University; and
4. **Faculty Involvement in Research:** Presentation of empirical evidences and indicators of **Research Culture** before, during and after the intervention (no definitive line draws between “during” and “after” because the years 2004, 2005, and 2006 classified as “after” are actually part of the intervention years).

Using a Conceptual Framework in Understanding the Problem

The problem is the development, enhancement and sustainability of a research culture. A conceptual framework will be useful in undertaking this problem.

It is obvious in the illustration that the goal or end of the arrow symbolizes the scenario of a developed or an enhanced **Research Culture** in an academe. Research is given equal importance and allocation of resources as instruction.

Research occupies the centrum, side by side with instruction of all activities in the university.

The vehicle is where the university is at a certain point in time. Filled with students and faculty, it is driven by management including the Board of Regents (BOR) towards the future scenario. The scenario is a mental image of what we wish to be the place of **Research Culture** at PNU.

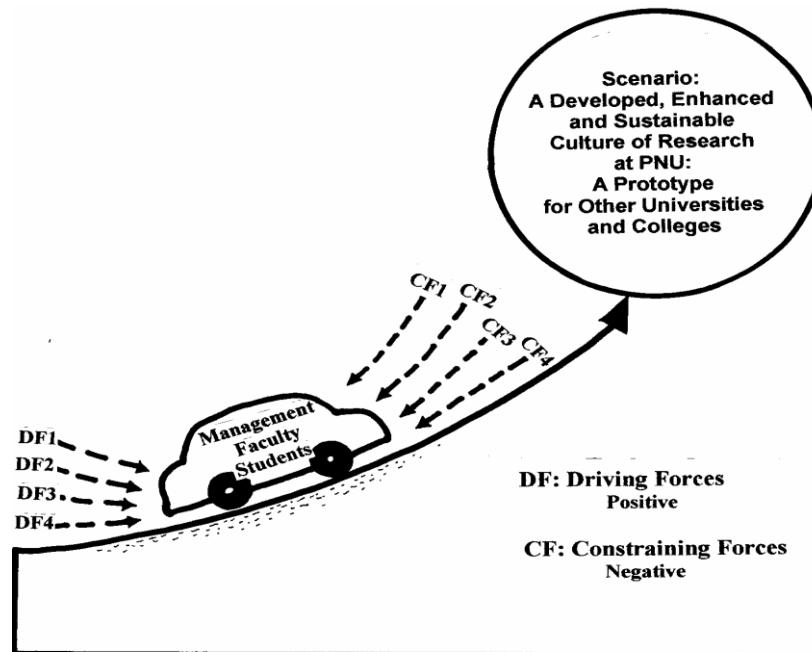


Figure 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

At the rear end and at the front of the vehicle are tail winds and head winds as illustrated respectively. The head winds symbolize the Restraining/Constraining Factors (RF/CF) in forging ahead in developing and enhancing a **Research Culture**. The tail winds symbolize Driving Forces (DF) which are positive forces that make the vehicle move toward a developed and enhanced **Research Culture**. Pinpointing these is somewhat similar to identifying strengths and weaknesses of the university research function.

The metaphor of the vehicle in the RF/CF is completed with managers, faculty and student competence or at least potential as fuel. Faculty and student free-loaders are considered added burdens, a constraining factor or negative factors. Just as competent and confident and work-oriented faculty are positive factors. The driver is symbolized as managers who will know their research directions, after reviewing strengths, weaknesses, talents, opportunities and threats. The management must identify all of these in the institution before he comes up with the strategic plan of the management and developing a **Research Culture**.

Driving Forces or DFs are positive forces or strengths that help the car (the university, PNU) move towards the future scenario – the vision. A list of these DFs may include the following in the case of PNU:

- ⇒ qualified faculty (30% with doctoral; 50% MA with theses;
- ⇒ organizational structure for the research function, therein are, a Vice President, a director, faculty researchers and college research coordinators; and
- ⇒ supportive management and technically knowledgeable managers on research and statistics.

Restricting or Constraining Forces (CFs) are negative forces or weaknesses/limitations that impede the car (PNU) to move towards the future scenario...the vision. A list of these is as follows:

- ⇒ faculty apathy or lack of motivation;
- ⇒ no or rare fora or symposia on research; and
- ⇒ no incentives.

What follows is a telegraphic description of the intervention. While it began in the late 2002 when a Vice President for research and planning was designated, the intervention referred to got full blown in 2003 and continues on through the years 2004, 2005 and 2006.

The Intervention in Developing a Research Culture

Intervention for a **Research Culture** is a mix of simple to complex factors on research or research-related activities. These factors are as follows:

1. Developing a continuing intervention (subtle or overt) must be led by a manager who enjoys credibility. If possible, the manager must be a Ph.D. in Research, Statistics, and Evaluation from a respectable university. His credentials including experiences and publications are mainly on research and are of quality. He must share his expertise with his colleagues, faculty and staff as he causes sharing and exchange of knowledge among themselves.
2. Mastering and orchestrating an array of work information in addition to his substantive knowledge on research and statistics. This information must include the following:
 - Vision, policies, and rituals of the universities (most of the time, the VP is the initiator)
 - Budget allocation for research

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- Other resources for funding and learning
 - Research capital (i.e. people and institutional knowledge)
 - History of research in the institution
 - Strategies in developing faculty research competence (e.g. junior-senior tandem, mini-groups, focus groups, dyads)
 - Research activities of faculty and students
 - 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 colleges to draft theirs based on the University Agenda. This must be done collectively and the consultation must be very visible.
 6. Sharing the Research Agenda, proposals, plans, and research findings, and periodically reviewing its items.
 7. Encouraging and joining research in tandems or teams. Visibility of the institutional research 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 others thereafter.
 9. Crafting and lobbying for the approval of research-friendly issuances of the BOR. Feel the need of the faculty, craft a faculty friendly research entitlements/incentives. Develop allies from among the members of the

Administrative Council and President. Convince/persuade on the importance of research.

10. As a footnote, it came to pass that the following became BOR issuances:
 - Four (4) incentives. A number of faculty have taken this entitlement. These four incentives must be communicated, as they were, to the faculty. This includes subsidy for research, presentations abroad, entitlements, recognition and awards for publications in refereed journals; consistent Semestral submission of studies, and concrete evidence in the uses of one's study as shown by at least ten (10) references or application in the research of others.
 - Annual Research Awards. On its second year the contest continues to draw more entries. This has become a regular fare during the University Week celebration.
 - Student fellowships in the graduate school. It is also a pool of potential faculty.
 - Rationalization and institutionalization of research loads (see attachment) of faculty.
11. Stressing the importance of research competence as a qualification to nominees for positions in university-based colleges and centers like Deans and Directors and Department Heads. The VP for Research looks for the research emphasis in their plans during interviews. Requiring research activities to be transparent in their plans for the center and following this up.
12. Maintaining a structure, and being selective on the selection of faculty-researchers – an important capital.
13. Maintaining active linkages with other institutions.

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14. Suggesting Research that is meaningful to them like Tracer Studies; Predicting Success of Students; Students' Instructional Methodologies Preferences; Dependability of Students' Ratings of Professors Competence, to suggest a few.

Aspects of a Research Culture: A List in Progress

To quote a paper of 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 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. For a university, a Research Director, at least, Faculty Researchers and Research Coordinators from each college.*
2. *A system that is supportive of research endeavors*
 - *Structure*
 - *Policies/Practices (loading, incentives, opportunities, awards, and recognition)*
3. *Development of Faculty on Research Competence and Confidence. This is most important.*
4. *Rituals of sharing and review of research plans and outputs in research fora and symposia.*
5. *Extension of sharing through publication and research portals.*

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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, issuance and stance on issues are based on research results. Discussions among faculty, students and managers cite research findings.*
 10. *Policies are based on empirical evidences than on folk knowledge or unverified facts.*

Research Culture is elusive and slippery to define, however, **Research Culture** may be likened to a diamond with several facets/aspects: The facets are as follows:

1. A philosophy of **Research Culture**
2. Vision/Mission/Commitments and Structure
3. Intellectual capital
4. Financial resources
5. Linkages, cooperation and partnerships
6. Agenda, meaningful and challenging
7. Program/Activities/For a
8. Incentives
9. Rituals, programs and practices

Faculty Research Involvement

Planned and implemented by the Vice President for Planning, Research and Extension, the management of intervention for the development of **Research Culture** in the year 2003 is **deliberate** and extends beyond this year.

Data on faculty participation were taken from the years 2001 to 2006.

Intervention still continues and hopefully it eventually normalizes. That is, it becomes part of the rituals, traditions and routines of PNU in the near future. It becomes a collective exercise: a Culture

Three matrices are presented showing in each matrix the frequency of faculty participation/involvement in specific research activities.

Data from these matrices were gathered from four colleges. One college has not submitted the data on faculty involvement in research. Thus the reader must consider the data as underestimates.

Nonetheless, the matrices show that generally and consistently across activities there were very few involvement of faculty prior to year 2003. This involvement, however, increased with acceleration from years 2004 to 2006.

Matrices numbers 1, 2, and 3 take stock of faculty participation in research in a seven-year span from years 2000 to 2006. Intervention began in the year 2003.

Matrix number 1 is on Faculty Involvement and Participation in Research Fora and Conferences. During the pre-intervention years 2000, 2001 and 2002, total participation is 144. The intervention year 2003 yielded 83 times. The post-intervention or subsequent continuing years 2004, 2005 and 2006 yielded 478. Take note of the symmetry of the number of years before and after intervention. That is, the three years before and after intervention. The 478 vs. 144 times of participation of faculty indicates that the intervention appears to be effective.

**Matrix No. 1 Philippine Normal University Faculty
Involvement/Participation in Research Fora and Conferences**

Research Project	2000	2001	2002	Total	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
1. Research Fora / Symposia Organized by the College or Department	6	5	11	22	<u>14</u>	20	40	37	97
2. Research Conferences Organized by the College / Department	5	4	7	16	<u>11</u>	12	57	41	110
3. Research Conferences Attended in the University or at the National/Internation al Levels	13	17	14	44	<u>24</u>	17	47	43	107
4. Attendance in Research Seminar, Workshop, Fora, Lecture	13	17	32	62	<u>34</u>	38	69	57	164
Total	37	43	64	144	83	87	213	178	478

**Matrix No. 2 Philippine Normal University Faculty
Involvement/Participation in Research Mentorship and Planning**

Research Project	2000	2001	2002	Total	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
1. Research Mentorship (Senior-Junior) Tandem	3	2	3	8	5	7	20	15	42
2. Research Project by Teamwork	3	2	2	7	7	13	30	23	66
3. Planning and Implementing for a Research Project	2	2	4	8	7	10	54	21	85
Total	8	8	9	23	19	30	104	59	193

Matrix number 2 is on faculty involvement or participation in research mentorship and planning. Three items were included as participation in mentorship and planning. The item on “Research Mentorship (Senior-Junior) Tandem” included only eight (8) faculty participants from 2000 to 2002. During the intervention year of 2003 there were five (5), and during the post intervention year or subsequent years there was a total of 42 mentorships from 2004 to 2006. Across the three (3) items a total

of 23 and 193 for the pre and post 2003 intervention faculty participation came to pass.

Matrix No. 3 Philippine Normal University Faculty Involvement/Participation in Research Projects/Activities

Research Project	2000	2001	2002	Total	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
1. Citing a Research Finding in Writing, Discussion or Lecture	14	17	20	51	<u>20</u>	46	54	35	135
2. Awareness of Faculty Research Incentive	5	5	5	15	<u>6</u>	7	55	67	129
3. Research Awards Participation/Entry	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	2	2	4	8
4. Sharing of Research Progress/Findings	11	12	13	36	<u>15</u>	41	37	36	114
Total	30	34	38	102	<u>41</u>	96	148	142	386

Matrix number 3 is on faculty involvement and participation in Research Projects and Activities. The years 2000 to 2002 saw a total of 102 participations. The year 2003 had 41 participations while years 2004, 2005 and 2006 has a total of 386.

The frequency numbers are hard facts on faculty involvement in research before and after intervention.

These numbers speak very unequivocally the growing, if not exponential increase of, faculty involvement in research activities.

Post Scripts

1. The development of the **Research Culture** at PNU came on gradually, after a Vice President for Research was designated. While there are signs of its birth and nurturance, it is still a work in progress.
2. The year 2003 may be considered the initial year of intervention, although during the last quarter of the preceding year 2002 the management of this innovation had its initial stirrings.
3. Structure, organization and rituals like fora, symposia and awarding ceremonies contributed significantly to the nurturance of a **Research Culture** just as funding allocation is important for most research activities.
4. This paper includes only the core and visible research-related activities. Other research activities like commissioned studies and faculty initiated research without official imprimatur will be included in future write-ups.

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5. Materials for research are not limited to the Research Agenda. There are many indeterminacies in the classroom, in the university and in the community that call for research and evaluation.
 6. A theory on Development of Research Culture may be drawn to pre-empt marginalizing other equally important functions of the university.
 7. Copies of the research-related documents are attached. These provide an appreciation of what have been done this far on research as a university function, and the potential power research has in influencing the direction of university activities in the future.
 8. Finally the issue on sustainability of **Research Culture** in the university may be partly resolved by embracing a philosophy of Research for Social Service. Underneath is a four-quadrant figure that calls for the sustainability of research.

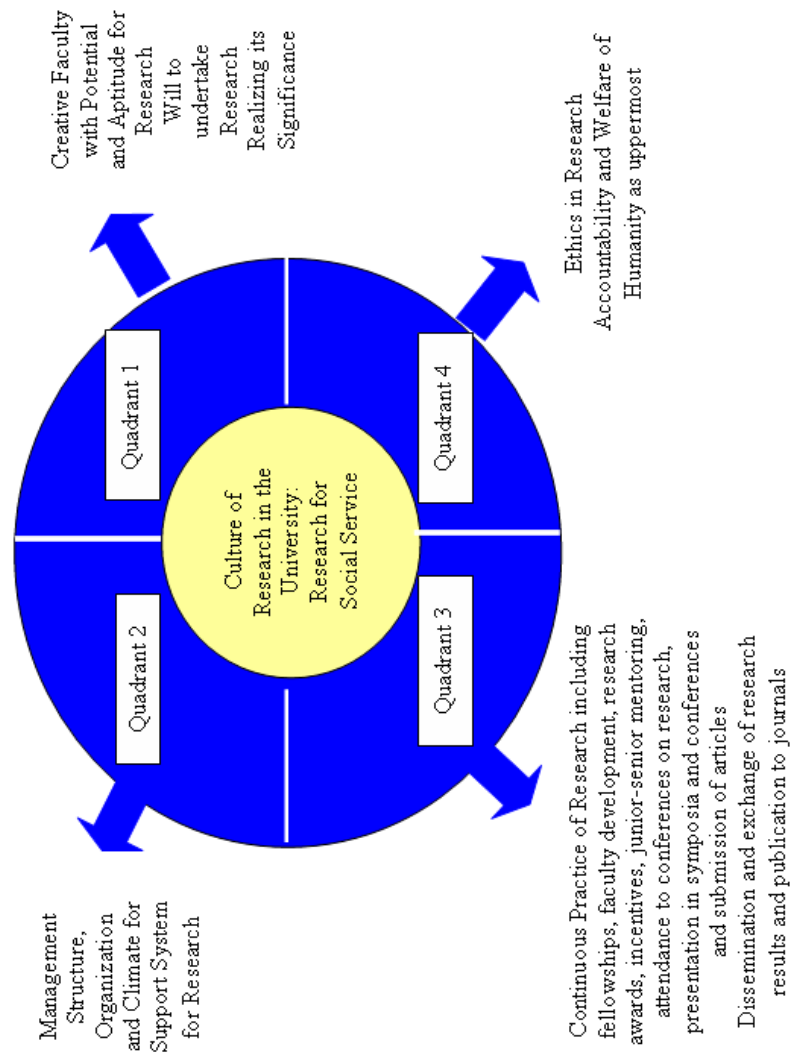


Figure 2: Research Sustainability

References and Appendices

- to be provided upon request