Research in a South African faculty of education:
A transformative approach

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National and international developments in higher education and the resultant pressure on universities to demonstrate excellence, including excellence in research, had a far-reaching effect on faculties of education who had traditionally focused more on excellence in teaching than on research. In South Africa, as part of transformation policies after 1994, the South African government made a deliberate effort to restructure the higher education landscape, resulting in a number of enforced mergers between universities and teacher education colleges. These complex contextual issues had a profound effect on research development in education faculties. This paper focuses on a transformative approach to research development initiatives in a South African faculty of education over a period of three to four years.

Introduction

Current social and economic transitions, particularly those associated with the concept of "globalisation" and the shift to a "knowledge-based economy" have had a profound effect on higher education institutions, including on the ideals of quality assurance and excellence (Bitzer, 2010). The resultant escalation of policy concern with respect to accountability in higher education and the adoption of selective performance-related funding procedures have had a dramatic effect on research development (Light & Cox, 2001; Oancea, Engelbrecht & Hoffman, 2009).

These international developments also had an impact on higher education in South Africa in its transition from apartheid to an equal and democratic society, the most important challenge being redressing past inequalities and transforming the education system to serve a new social dispensation and respond to new realities and opportunities (DoE, 1997). Key policy initiatives over the past decade such as the Education White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997) and the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (DoE, 2000) emphasise the key role of research in affirming the production, acquisition and application of knowledge towards national growth, competitiveness and innovation (Buijnath, Christiansen & Ogude, 2007). In an analysis of the state of research commissioned by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1992, it was found that the science and technology system inherited from decades of apartheid was internationally isolated, fragmented, uncoordinated and not in the interest of all South Africans (Oancea *et al.*, 2009; Mouton, 2006). It was therefore important for the post-apartheid government to revive a culture of research in universities as a basic minimum requirement for claiming to be sites of knowledge generation and for them to be comparable with more research-intensive institutions in other parts of the world (Zeleza, Zeleza & Olukoshi, 2004). New initiatives to increase research output in universities were introduced and funding for universities by the National Department of Education was allocated for teaching inputs and outputs, and research production (measured by the number of master's and doctoral graduates and the number of research publications) (Inglesi & Pouris, 2008).

Simultaneously, however, faculties of education in South Africa faced additional challenges. As part of the government's initiative to improve the quality of teacher education, the majority of teacher training colleges were closed down in 2001, and the remaining colleges merged with faculties of education at universities, thereby reducing the number of teacher education facilities as well as the teacher education capacity of the country. Faculties of education, like other professional faculties (e.g. health sciences and

engineering), deal with a field of study rather than a discipline and, although faculties of education in South Africa vary considerably in size, composition and function, a result of the incorporation of teacher education colleges into universities has been the establishment of two relatively distinctive groups in most education faculties. In the first group, the orientation is to teacher education, and the background of the majority of this group is distinguished professional service in schools and teacher education colleges, with relatively little experience of educational research. The background of the second, much smaller group is likely to be in a foundation discipline, often without any practical experience as a school teacher. Members of this group view themselves as academics and researchers, and tend to justify their existence in terms of their scholarly achievements (OECD, 2000). The result has been that education faculties have had severe difficulties in increasing research output, and university managements have tended to refer rather disapprovingly to these faculties as traditional teaching faculties. Pressure to merge these groups in order to create a positive research culture with an emphasis on excellence now forms an integral part of the challenge to develop sustainable research cultures.

Literature on the development of research cultures and capacity development tends to focus, in general, on the development of research design and methodological skills, with the result that the social and organisational contexts within which individuals and groups of researchers function have been neglected (Dison, 2004; Engelbrecht, 2005). Dison (2004) as well as Balfour and Lenta (2009) point out that the complex and wide-ranging nature of research capacity means that the development of this capacity should be a long-term, multidimensional and multilayered process. This article thus focuses on the description and evaluation of the development of a multidimensional approach to research development within a transformative view of social justice in a faculty of education.

Development of research in a specific faculty of education

In this section the theoretical approach and the cultural-historical context within which this Faculty is placed will be briefly discussed, followed by a discussion of a transformative approach to research capacity development and the translation of vision for change into language and action.

Theoretical approach

This article is placed within a transformative view of social justice against the backdrop of the unique South African cultural and historical background. According to Christensen (1996), this view of social justice avoids the contradictions that may be created by multiple views of social justice, including the economic and political (distributive) or individualistic views of social justice. Individualistic views tend not to acknowledge the social context within which individuals function in society, and can therefore further disadvantage certain communities. Communitarian and distributive views often lack specificity in their prescriptions of community-based forms of governance and the recognition of power relationships that shape injustice. A transformative view of social justice, however, confronts individual as well as historical and structural forces. It can contribute to the development of a society in which working, living and learning together can lead to a more reasonable, unbiased and acceptable nation (Mahlomaholo & Francis, 2011). This research development programme is thus founded on a view of social justice that focuses on the distribution of resources, access and social cohesion, and embraces participatory strategies (Artiles, Harris-Muri & Rosenberg, 2006; Christensen, 1996).

A necessary connection in this article is made between a transformative view of social justice with its emphasis on the transformation of the identity of a group as well as its individual members (in this instance, a group of researchers) and leadership. Transformational leadership is defined, in this instance, as behaviour that originates in the deeply held personal values and beliefs of a specific leader who operates out of a personal value system that is based on integrity and justice in advancing human rights (Theodaris, 2007; Humphreys & Einstein, 2003).

Cultural-historical context

Understanding the cultural-historical context is a key step in the process of reframing faculty environments (Artiles, 2009; Williams, Berger & McClendon, 2005). This is even more important in the case of this specific faculty when its complex history is taken into account. This faculty of education, on one of three campuses of a semi-rural university in the North-West Province of South Africa, was established in 2001 when a large teacher education college was incorporated into a small research-oriented faculty of education at the local university. This university then merged in 2004 with a neighbouring university to form a new university with three distinct campuses. This institution experienced similar challenges arising out of merger activities to universities in other parts of the world (e.g. in the United Kingdom and Australia), and these are reflected elsewhere in its merger history (Geertsema & Van Niekerk, 2009; Harman & Meek, 2002). In line with the global emphasis on the research function of a university, the vision and mission of the new combined university now focus strongly on the establishment of a more balanced teaching-research culture within the institution, in contrast to the strong teaching focus of the individual pre-merger universities of the past. In addition, in 2006 the campus management decided to restructure the Faculty of Education in order to align its structural and organisational processes to those of the newly merged institution. This process also involved planning the physical removal of the majority of staff to other buildings and was concluded at the end of 2006. The dean at that time also unexpectedly resigned in July 2006.

As it is highly specialised, the Faculty is segmented into subject groups in three schools and a research section, and consists of 120 academic staff and over 80 support staff on campus. These discrete groups, in combination with the multiple strategic goals of the Faculty (excellence in teaching and research, adequate student support, diversification of student and staff profiles) have led to highly differentiated and, in some instances, conflicting interests.

The majority of the academic staff, in line with the general division in a faculty where a teacher education institution has been incorporated, made the transition from school teaching into academic life. Most of them still viewed themselves as teachers, with a strong sense of commitment to their students, and teaching as their main purpose in the academic setting (Griffiths, Thompson & Hryniewicz, 2010). As a result, research projects and the completion of doctoral degrees were not regarded as their top priorities.

Research in the Faculty was externally evaluated by peers in 2006, in accordance with the regulations of the University (ACU, 2006). The evaluation followed the format of an extensive self-evaluation, followed by an external review by peers (Geertsema & Van Niekerk, 2009). Although the effect of the mergers was taken into account, the evaluation report was still overwhelmingly negative. It was pointed out that, with limited exceptions, researchers in the Faculty did not enjoy national or international standing, and that the number of accredited publications had considerably declined between 2002 and 2005. The demographics at the time of the evaluation did not reflect the demographics of the country in any way and the Faculty was still dominated by white, male and middle-aged researchers. The report recommended that leadership provision, quality productivity and support for younger and less experienced researchers that would better reflect the demographics of the country should receive urgent attention (ACU, 2006; Mouton, 2006).

At the beginning of 2007, I was appointed as the new dean, the first woman to be appointed as dean and only the second to be appointed as full professor in this Faculty. As an established researcher with experience in research management, I was explicitly tasked by the University management with the development of research in the Faculty. It soon became clear to me that strategic choices had to be made in respect of the theoretical framework within which I wanted to place my own leadership style, the amount of planning required and the active involvement of interested parties (Van der Westhuizen, 2007). At the heart of the development of research in the Faculty was my view that transformative and participatory leadership within a transformative view of social justice would be particularly appropriate to the dynamic environment in which this Faculty was functioning. I view a participatory approach to research capacity development as a dynamic enabling process that occurs in a cultural-historical context; it is always "situational", strives to be pro-active rather than re-active, and includes my underlying personal view that fairness, justice and other human rights values are an integral part of the approach (Engelbrecht, 2011;

Ramsden, 1998). In the case of this Faculty, with its complex history of mergers and restructuring together with a more autocratic leadership approach, emphasising transparency, consensus-building, shared power and the identification of common commitments and aspiration had to form an integral part of the change process. This approach also involves creatively mediating opposing forces that include tensions such as tradition versus change in organisational behaviour, management versus leadership, and coping with often inflexible external forces. The strategic implementation of this approach therefore focused on challenging the traditional research process and who should be involved in research, inspiring shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way, and celebrating achievement (Ramsden, 1998). As dean and as researcher, I took a leading role in the development of a research capacity-building programme in the Faculty and carried on with my own research, despite a heavy workload. I also continuously emphasised that research and academic leadership should be viewed as multi-level and participatory in its operation, and that it exists at multiple levels: within the institution, campus, faculty, schools and subject groups. I therefore endeavoured to model a participatory approach to planning and implementation.

One of the first steps I took in order to plan and develop transformative change was to analyse, in collaboration with colleagues, the dynamic interaction between multiple layers of external factors that influenced the Faculty (as discussed earlier), as well as the organisational culture and behaviour within the faculty, wider campus and institution by using a systemic approach. The following dimensions (based on Williams *et al.*, 2005) were identified as important factors for future strategic planning for research within the Faculty: the dual administrative and collegial nature of higher education that distinguishes it from other types of organisations; the complex political nature not only of the Faculty itself but also of the institution that may influence organisational dynamics, and the symbolic dimension in which long-standing traditions in the Faculty could be called into question.

As a second step, an internationally renowned leader in educational research was contracted to analyse the focus of research in the Faculty and to consult with academics in order to provide input on the development of a stronger research culture. In his report the most common barriers to greater research activity were identified as lack of time, due to heavy teaching loads, and the traditional divide between teaching and research. A major recommendation was that the Faculty should focus its research effort on a limited number of priority areas in order to increase the body of knowledge and to make leading contributions in the chosen fields (Hegarty, 2007). A more focused approach would also bring the Faculty in line with the institution's overall research approach that advocates the formation of a small number of focus areas in which research and postgraduate education are integrated, and which are based on existing strengths aligned with national priorities (Geertsema & Van Niekerk, 2009).

Translating vision for change into language and action: a participatory approach

Against the above background, a multidimensional and integrated approach to research capacity development was initiated. The components included a transformative and participatory leadership style and a strong focus on a transformative view of social justice (access, resources and social cohesion), as discussed earlier. Organisational factors, clearly defined overall objectives, refined shorter term outcomes and collective ownership formed the basis of the strategy. These components were in continuous dynamic interaction with one another as well as with multiple contextual influences, and will now be discussed in more detail.

Transformative change cannot happen unless the necessary financial, human and symbolic resources are made available to drive the process (Williams *et al.*, 2005). The result was that the Faculty had to seriously reconsider the allocation of available resources on an organisational level in order to make the proposed changes. The challenge was therefore to know when and how to redistribute ever-diminishing resources and how to access additional resources in order to ensure a fair distribution. Despite the fact that senior administrators of the University supported the notion that change was necessary, convincing the Budget Committee of the University to provide increased funding for research proved to be a difficult task.

To some extent, increasing the research budget was successful and the development and implementation of the programme could proceed.

The overall long-term objective of the programme was the establishment of a productive, internationally connected, focused and self-producing community of scholars that would be more representative of the demographics of the country, and who would produce research of a quality comparative with peers anywhere in the world (e.g. Puryear, 2005). An integrated development approach was decided upon, focusing not only on the acquisition of knowledge in so-called basic research skills, but also on the development of the personal and professional research skills of researchers within a supporting transformative research climate, while also integrating these activities into the wider research community (Engelbrecht & Monteith, 2007). This implied that shorter term outcomes should not only focus on individual development strategies, but also include a research strategy which emphasises outcomes that are in the collective interest of all the research groups and the Faculty as a whole over a period of time (Rowley, 1999).

Within the Faculty, access to the programme was open and transparent. The following groups of researchers were collectively identified for specific individual support after a participatory consultation process: a group of academics who had not yet obtained a doctoral degree and who traditionally had no access to research resources; those who had recently (in the past four to five years) obtained a doctoral degree; so-called semi-established researchers (those who had published a few articles but who were not known outside their own circle of colleagues), and the already established researchers in the Faculty. Based on the individual and collective needs of all involved, the individualised and collective programmes shared the same overall goal: the development of clearly defined, focused research to which everyone in the Faculty would have access and that would enable participants to develop a long-term research identity (Jansen, 2006). In addition to these support programmes, a retired researcher, three full-time research professors, as well as three internationally renowned extraordinary professors were contracted and appointed in order to establish larger research groups in the Faculty, to increase the research image of the Faculty and to mentor less experienced researchers. A series of research training workshops based on needs analyses conducted in the Faculty were also planned and presented by international experts over a period of three years.

The development of a more focused approach to research development in the Faculty was also regarded as an opportunity to develop not only dynamic research groups within the Faculty but also social cohesion within this research community. The development of foci with the help of the external facilitators was therefore formulated as a priority, with an emphasis on the fact that the foci should be participatory and permissive rather than restrictive, that the foci would be allowed to emerge from the strengths of the various groups, and that they should have long-term validity within the South African education context (Hegarty, 2007; Rowley, 1999).

Outcomes were regarded as the specific building blocks necessary to achieve the overall objective of the programme over a period of six to seven years. Specific initial quantitative outcomes, to be evaluated over a period of three years, were formulated and based on the criteria set by the institution for research output (Geertsema & Van Niekerk, 2009). These included the development of a more focused research approach; an increase in the number of academic staff holding doctoral degrees; an increase in the number of publications in high-impact journals, preferably internationally accredited ones (Vaughn, 2008); significant growth in research funds obtained from outside the university; the development of the number of nationally and internationally known researchers in the Faculty, and the finalisation of international cooperation agreements with other universities in order to extend networks and achieve a wider research profile for the Faculty.

In order to encourage a shared vision and ownership in the Faculty, the draft research development programme was presented to colleagues after consultation, and discussed at a Faculty Forum meeting in 2007, and then again widely distributed for comments. Comments were, for example, solicited from senior management of the University, including the institutional research office, as well as international research partners and members of the Faculty. In addition, informal discussions were held with the various groups

identified in the programme, and open and frank discussions encouraged about the challenges being faced with research development. The feedback received from the various discussions was then incorporated into the programme. Many colleagues also accepted my open invitation to discuss their views on research with me individually, which contributed to my increasing awareness of the potential for research in the Faculty.

Research design and methodology

A mixed-method approach was used in the evaluation of progress, thereby enabling us to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that was needed to address the complex and potentially interrelated issues and concerns of this programme. The results also provided further insight into, and understanding of the factors that influenced the programme's effectiveness and the relationships between the general attainment of outcomes, participants' perceptions and the professional development of all involved (Mertens, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, research output with specific reference to journal articles, the number of academics with doctoral degrees, and research projects that received outside funding were measured in compliance with University regulations, over an initial period of three years. In order to enhance the quantitative data and allow for more probing and in-depth exploration of the particular views of participants in the programme, semi-structured individual interviews were also held with a wide range of researchers, both experienced and less experienced, over a period of six months in 2009/2010 (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Leech & Ongwuegbuzie, 2007). The interview schedule focused on their own personal views of the process, as well as possible reasons for the increase or decrease in their research output. In addition, a group of experienced and less experienced researchers (using simple random sampling) were asked to reflect on their own research experiences by answering the following open-ended question in writing: To what extent do you think you have been able to develop as scholar who is well known in your field over the past three years? (Jansen, 2006). Where further clarification was needed, these descriptions were followed up with individual interviews. Qualitative data were analysed using a constant comparison analysis (Leech & Ongwuegbuzie, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Membership checks were used as a strategy to ensure the validity of the qualitative data, and the reliability of the quantitative data was checked by comparing it with institutional data on research outputs. The evaluation of progress also took into account the complex environment in which the Faculty as a whole still found itself within the turbulent external higher education environment as it specifically relates to teacher training in South Africa.

Ethical principles for the evaluation of the programme included voluntary participation and guarding the privacy and confidentiality of all participants.

Results

A steady increase in the *number of publications in well-known journals* was apparent:

Table 1: Number of publications in well-known journals

Year	Number of publications (n)
2006	23
2007	27
2008	30
2009	42

The fact that a wider group of researchers had published in high-impact journals was encouraging. An analysis of the qualitative data indicated that the following factors played a role in the increase in quality publications: workshops that specifically addressed writing a scientific article and the fear of failure, and on a more individual level, the encouragement of more senior researchers to involve more inexperienced colleagues in co-authoring articles. The establishment of a stronger overall culture of research support also played a role.

The *number of academics with a doctoral degree* also increased (the number of academic staff remained constant for the period 2007-2009):

Table 2: Number of academics with doctoral degrees

Year	Number of degrees (n)
2006	29
2007	37
2008	47
2009	54

According to the qualitative data, the following factors played a role in the increase: the now clearly defined policy of leave of absence to complete the research and sufficient financial support to do so; the structured development of effective supervision skills in the Faculty since 2007, and the increased role of mentoring played by senior researchers. In addition, opportunities to develop a personalised approach to postdoctoral work also motivated academics to complete their initial research in order to take up some of these opportunities, which included research opportunities abroad.

Funding for larger research projects from outside the University, especially funding on an international level, increased if the following comparison is taken into account:

Table 3: Funding for larger research projects

Year	Amount
2007	R428,338.00
2009	R4,535,901.00

Better communication and support strategies in the Faculty for both occasional and regular funding opportunities played a role in this instance. However, if the funding is compared to those of more research-intensive faculties of education elsewhere, it is clear that a great deal of work still needs to be done in this area.

What also became clear during the evaluation of research output is that typical measurable outcomes that are required by the institution, for instance, should include a more in-depth analysis and additional criteria. These could include, for example, the number of keynote papers presented by invitation to national and international conferences; the number of international researchers as visitors to the Faculty; postgraduate student activities and performances, and the number of researchers who serve on the editorial boards of prestigious journals.

The analysis of the open-ended reflections of the researchers on their scholarship development and the interviews also proved to be illuminating. The following barriers to, and indicators of success in research development were identified in the qualitative data analyses.

The quest for a balance between research and teaching

The majority of the participants pointed out that finding a balance between teaching and research proved a challenge. Teacher education programmes are highly teaching-intensive and, as has been reported elsewhere (Griffiths *et al.*, 2010), lack of time for research is a universal challenge in education faculties. It became clear that, despite the input of senior Faculty management, funding for replacement staff, staff exchanges and the mentoring of researchers regarding time management, finding a balance between time for teaching and research remains problematic. As one emerging researcher put it: "My heavy teaching load means that I cannot see myself as a developing scholar but rather see myself as more of a survivor in trying to develop my own research …".

Encouraging the group of more inexperienced researchers to explore and understand their own conceptions of the relationship of research to other activities, including teaching, proved to be valuable. A strong research group, for example, consisting of members, some of whom had not traditionally been involved in research, emerged with a focus on the development of self-directed and problem-based learning in the Faculty. Their research activities are closely aligned with their classroom practices.

Low self-confidence

Lack of confidence was cited by some of the emerging researchers as an initial barrier, but it was also clearly defined as being part of the process of change. The positive role that senior researchers (including the research professors who were more representative of the demographics of the country) played in addressing this issue was clearly articulated. For example: *"I have been privileged to work with well-known researchers … I have made a 'pay [it] forward promise' to myself to always try my utmost best to provide academics-in-the-making with exactly the same opportunities that I have so abundantly received ….*" and "Knowing that the senior researchers really care about what is happening to me as a new researcher really helped me in becoming more self-confident…".

Development of an overall research focus in the Faculty

In accordance with the recommendation by Hegarty (2007), efforts to develop a more focused research approach that was in line with the institution's approach included Faculty discussions facilitated by external experts. This has enabled the Faculty to increasingly focus its research effort on a limited number of priority areas of national importance. In the data analysis it became clear that the emerging researchers, in particular, have taken ownership of this process, adapting their own emerging foci to the overall focus of the Faculty. However, despite these positive developments and that diverse views were accommodated in the more focused approach, a minority of senior researchers found this new direction disconcerting. For example: "I have had some success with my own individual research efforts so far, why should I now have to change my focus in order to satisfy research management in the Faculty and the university …" and "I find this emphasis on focused research rather patronizing …".

It became clear that, in the movement towards a more focused approach to research, the longstanding tradition of the Faculty that senior researchers were permitted to have a strongly individual approach to whatever they wanted to research has been called into question. Aligning the expectations of senior researchers to bring about deeper change therefore proved to be more difficult than anticipated.

Building and developing research networks

Understanding the systemic dimension enabled us to plan the development of new alliances with external parties, engage in intentional institution-based efforts to align research priorities and develop collegial relationships. It also prompted the development of marketing and dissemination strategies

(e.g., presentations at high-level conferences) to increase awareness of research in the Faculty. Three international cooperation agreements with faculties of education at three universities were finalised in the period 2007-2009. These agreements include the exchange of researchers and students. In addition, two prestigious research seminars held over a period of three years and led by internationally renowned researchers on relevant topics in educational research (e.g., issues regarding diversity in educational research) also exposed the Faculty to international views and opinions, and in this way also promoted research development and potential in the Faculty.

All the participants viewed these developments as invigorating and exciting. Some of these opportunities included the transparent identification of, and financial support for attendance at important international conferences, and the identification of role models and peers. They also helped to emphasise the importance of published work and the need for support to develop academic writing and publishing skills, as this quotation confirms: "The financial support to visit and work with two of the leading international researchers in my field has enabled me to develop the skills and self-confidence to present at an international conference and to submit an article to the leading journal in this field. The article was accepted …".

Summary and conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the research capacity development programme in this Faculty was, due to my own deeply held personal beliefs, based on a transformative approach to social justice and leadership, in which historical as well as structural forces were channelled in an effort to develop a positive research culture. The distribution of resources, access and social cohesion formed the basis of the development programme in the Faculty, with participatory strategies and clearly defined quantitative and qualitative outcomes guiding the process.

The development of supportive leadership styles by research professors and the then research manager in the Faculty played key role. Over time, however, it became obvious that I, as dean, however committed to leading research in the Faculty, had too many other responsibilities to be involved in the micro-management of research in the Faculty. As a result, an internationally known and established researcher was appointed in 2009 (following the retirement of the previous research director) to lead research management and organisational factors, including the day-to-day financial management, human resource management and profile and reputation enhancement of research in the Faculty. Key organisational issues pertaining to the establishment of a continuing research income stream and the stability of relationships with research councils and other research funding organisations could now be developed, along with a functioning research information system. Consequently, since 2009, the Faculty has benefited from a better research infrastructure that has a stronger focus on participatory, postgraduate student activities, an increase in the number of both research support staff and postdoctoral fellows in the Faculty.

As mentioned earlier, this Faculty has a history of an approach to leadership where Faculty ownership of developments, for example, was not explicitly addressed. My efforts as dean to develop a more transformative and participatory approach had some successes, notably in the improvement of the general understanding and acceptance that research participation is integral to the activities of the Faculty, and that the distribution of resources and access to research opportunities should be transparent. However, it is important to record that previous power relationships and structures continue to influence the complex collegial structure within the Faculty. Although the majority of Faculty members have enthusiastically taken part in the collaborative contribution to the increase in achievements, some participants still tend to view the programme as owned by senior Faculty management, especially where the issues are experienced as threatening by a small minority (e.g., the development of larger research groups and changing the demographic profile of the Faculty). It is thus important for senior research leadership in the Faculty to understand that remnants of previous interests and power issues may still play a major role in shaping the tangible and intangible aspects of the programme. Developing the content of the programme should therefore also continue to be participative and transparent, and research planning should become a central

and shared activity in strategic planning activities on all levels in order to establish sustainable social cohesion in this research community.

According to Puryear (2005), a strong research community should be self-sustaining and self-regenerating. It is also clear that the best environment for such development is a faculty that is strong, agile and committed to the participatory development of scholarship within a transformative milieu that embraces social cohesion and access. Developing research capacity in faculties of education requires a deliberate, intensive and sustained effort and, as has been illustrated, efforts that foster a transformative approach can contribute much towards the development of supportive research communities. Such an approach could give both established as well as new generations of scholars the support they need to enable all faculties of education in South Africa to take their rightful place as outstanding sites of knowledge generation.

Acknowledgements

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