

FOREWORD

Collaboration initiatives to build research capacity: FCHS (UWC)

The University of the Western Cape has an explicit commitment to the development of historically disadvantaged communities in South Africa from which it draws most of its students. It aims to play a particular role in this development by making its education accessible to students from these communities and from the rest of Africa. The Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, one of seven faculties, is a multi-disciplinary team committed to the promotion of a vision of Health and Welfare Services which aims to develop and play a role in global transformation. Both in the training and education it offers and in the professionals it produces it aims to advance the transformation of existing Health and Welfare Services in Southern Africa. The Faculty's commitment to excellence in education, research and community service positively contributes to the University's overall mission to become "a place of quality, a place to grow from hope to action through knowledge".

Over the last six years the UWC with the leadership of the rector developed a research programme called The Dynamics of Building a Better Society (DBBS) funded by Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Rood (VLIR) a part of the University Development Cooperation in Belgium. This involved partnership with the Flemish Universities in Belgium. Six projects emerged lead by different deans. The faculty developed a project of research in Youth Wellness and Development, which is briefly described below.

Youth Wellness in Community Development: A Review of the first 5 years (2003 – 2007)

The aim of project was to develop research capacity within the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences. At the start of the project, the faculty had less academics with PhD's than any of the other faculties in the University (15 in 2002). The project identified youth wellness as an area of research and aimed to include all the departments in the faculty in the project. This broad research topic fitted our purpose and was truly interdisciplinary. In order to facilitate capacity building, scholarships were offered to seven masters' students and 6 PhD students. In addition staff relief was offered to 11 academics. The outcomes of the scholarships are reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Level	Outcomes
Masters	6 graduated 1 defaulted
PhD	2 graduated 1 submitted for examination 2 final draft 1 in progress
Staff Relief	5 graduated 1 submitted for examination 5 in progress

All the doctoral students were supervised by both the north and the south partners while all the masters' students were supervised by academics from UWC only, for we had the capacity. Staff relief was offered at two stages namely they either had to have reached a stage of both analyzing data and writing up or they were at the beginning and needed assistance with choosing a topic and to write a proposal. Each staff relief recipient was given six months. The spinoff was that another six staff sponsored differently also had the impetus to complete their PhDs following the success of the VLIR sponsored graduates.

This ultimately led to the number of academics with PhD's increasing from 15 in 2002 to bringing the number of PhDs in the faculty to 26 through the project and finally 48 in 2008. In addition the project was able to allow most of the successful candidates and their supervisors to attend and present papers at national and international conferences. Several publications in local and international journals have been realised and the faculty has dedicated this current journal to the work of some of these scholars.

It is thus evident that collaborative projects can effectively be used to develop research capacity within a faculty. Following a review of the work of the five years the following areas were identified as key areas of research within the faculty:

- Risk, resilience and health promotion
- HIV risk and reproductive health promotion

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