

## Enhancing a quality ethos/culture in research support and development: UJ



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

**Council on Higher Education:**  
Higher Education Quality Committee


Challenges in developing a quality  
ethos/culture in merged  
institutions in South Africa

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## Introduction

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- Quality
- Ethos/Culture
  
- Focus on the UJ

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2

## Quality ..



- Quality in higher education linked to reputation.
- Can't market quality; can market reputation.
- Reputation a proxy measure of quality (Coates, 2005).

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3

## What is quality?



- ... is conformance to the set requirement (Crosby, 1979).
- ... is fitness for use (Juran & Gryna, 1980).
- ... is assessed by whether or not and how well certain contracted duties were performed (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993).
- ... is a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability (Deming, 1986).

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4

## BUT ...



- Quality is the *degree of conformance to a standard* → too narrow.
- Now defined in terms of **customer focus**.

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5

## What is quality?



- ... is meeting or exceeding customer needs and expectations (McNealy, 1993; Oakland, 1995) **and**
- applies to products, services, people, processes and environment (Goetsch & Davis, 1994) **and**
- demands a process of continuous improvement to meet the needs of the customers (De Jager & Nieuwenhuis, 2005).

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6

## Quality ...



- ... has a variety and range of meanings ... may cause confusion ... perceptions of quality differ (Shields, 1999).
- ... has a dynamic nature
  - the emotional and moral force which quality possesses makes it difficult to be tied down to one particular meaning (Sallis, 1993).

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7

## Quality in a HE context



- Due to quality's intangible nature ... various the notions of educational quality (Green, 1994; Harvey, 1995).
- Quality perspectives have evolved in HE (Fincher, 1994).

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8

## Quality as fitness for purpose



- Quality is ... fulfilling a customer's requirements, needs or desires (Harvey, 1995).
  - In HE, fitness for purpose based on the ability of an institution to fulfil its mission.
- UJ →
  - Leading, challenging, creating and exploring knowledge
  - Supporting access to a wide spectrum of ... learning and research

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9

## What is ethos?



- Oxford Dictionary of English
  - The characteristic spirit of a ... community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations.
- Aristotle
  - The characteristic spirit, prevalent tone of sentiment, of a people or community.
- HE?

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10

## Further ...



- Sustaining a quality ethos may be resource-intensive undertaking (Jones, 2006).
- Focus of ethos in HE (Weatherald & Mosely, 2003)
  - Teaching and learning
  - Symbolic aspects of HE (e.g. graduation ceremonies)
  - Infrastructure
  - Engagement

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## Now ...




- *Ethos links to **reputation!***
- Quality ← → Reputation!!!

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12

## Enhancing a quality ethos/culture at the UJ ...



Research  
development  
*(strategic)*


- the **policy** environment; and
- the **postgraduate degree programme** environment.

Research  
support  
*(operational)*

- the **supervision process and development of professional activities** environment;
- the **institutional research culture** environment.

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## The policy environment




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- Policies and codes of good practice
- Support structures
- Approval and implementation processes

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## The postgraduate degree programme environment



- **STUDENT** focus
- Research development
  - Process of independent research
  - Postgraduate student's development
- Completions → throughput
- Planning, review and report of student's progress

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## The supervision process/professional development activities environment



- **SUPERVISOR** focus
- Supervision process
- Professional development of supervisors

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## The institutional research culture environment



- Allocation of resources and facilities
- Supporting the postgraduate student to completion
  - Provision of adequate physical and financial resources
- Review of postgraduate education

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17

## Questions / Queries / Comments / Concerns ...



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18