

CHAPTER SIX: ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

6. Introduction

This chapter introduces us to the organizational issues of the programme of the Consortium through the discussion of management issues such as meetings with deans/faculty, coordination, monitoring and funding issues. The aim is to examine whether the programme of the Consortium is managed through a tightly controlled process. Reforms should ideally be preceded by analysis of institutional management structures and procedures to ensure that they are adequate (www.servicelearning.org/resources/facts, 2005). The benefits of this program arise from good effective management which is implied in the collaborative responsibility that is intrinsic to the seminar approach which helps in the professional development of staff, who themselves have various levels of experience and expertise (Malcolm, 2001).

6.1 The Spencer Research and Training (RTG) Network

International level coordination efforts happen at two levels: (i) the RTG Deans Group and (ii) the Faculty RTG network. The two networks meet once per year and members of the Consortium participate in these meetings. The RTG Deans group provided a forum for the deans to advise each other on strategies for postgraduate research training, including related improvement and assessment strategies, curriculum and degree issues, models for preparing the professoriate, and address quality control concerns within the programme of the Consortium. First, the group plays an important role in the induction of newly-appointed deans. Second, the group plays an advisory role to the Spencer Foundation. Third, the group is able to draw on its powerful institutional basis to play a critical lobbying role on major issues concerning education in the USA. Finally, its identity is based on quality concerns, high standards and best practice in research and graduate training, which makes exclusivity inevitable (Cross, 2003). In their meetings the RTG Deans concentrate on issues of continuity, change, role and name and they foster

conversations across disciplines and other institutional collectives that are constituted to speak out about education and postgraduate research training.

6.2 Coordination and Monitoring

At the national level, the Consortium has formal relationships with a number of institutions and scholars based in the US. This provides students with an opportunity for comparative reflection (Cross, 1999:7). There are two modules that are presented in a twenty hours contact and have one leader and several Assistant Convenors who incorporate other staff as part of the capacity building ethos. The presentation of these two modules is preceded by one day of orientation and team-building.

The program continues to be strictly monitored by the Programme Co-ordinator. It is the responsibility of the candidate to remain in constant contact with the supervisor and comply with the study programme. Students bring to both summer and winter schools a report of progress made in the programme. This feedback is used to monitor the student's progress and develop the programme to address even more closely their needs (Cross, 1999:7). These address issues such as: primary task for specified period; data collection, analysis and literature review; observation and interviews; research databases; outcomes/papers developed; goals for next quarter; difficulties encountered, summer/winter schools attended; participation in workshops/courses and general comments.

Moreover, candidates are expected to dedicate a substantial amount of work related scholarly activities such as: attending and participating in special meetings and programmes available to students at the faculty and the university; participating in special seminars, debating forums and meetings planned by, or for, staff and students; attending relevant conferences, symposia, workshops, and research seminars, nationally and internationally; working closely with faculty members and getting to know them well and

be known well by them; establishing close personal and professional relationships with other students within faculty, the university and the Consortium; making extensive use of the university's resources such as the Library, Computer Centre, Video-conferencing, e-mail and internet facilities; working closely with the supervisor or supervision committee in connection with thesis plans and development and completing thesis to satisfactory standard of research and argument (Cross, 2003).

6.3 Funding Issues

In South Africa, the programme has been funded by the Chairman's Fund now known as the Tshikululu, which contributes towards the expenses for winter and Summer schools. In the USA, the RTG group of Deans discusses assessment plans for the program and how Spencer grants serve different purposes in different institutions. They are used for different purposes such as either for fellowships for full-time and part-time students (only in South Africa) and in dissertation grants or as a mechanism for leveraging academic and scholarly practice among graduate students by facilitating conference presentations, attendance of academic enrichment workshops and seminars, publications and student networking. Second, while they have a particular weight, the Spencer grants are just one of the many important sources of funding that students have access to. Third, it is also difficult to pull a comparison because of the individuality of the programs: for instance the SA Consortium and Wisconsin have particular programs conducted under the Spencer grant and Wisconsin has also stopped granting fellowships. Emory uses the RTG grant for top-up funding (Cross, 2003:3). It is of note also, that the Spencer Fellows are also holders of other grants from other sources. As a result it is said to be difficult to assess the specific impact of the Spencer Grants. Instead, starting with the original goals and paying attention to possible new approaches, discourses and knowledge about doctoral and research training, the assessment plans focuses on changes within the programs of the Consortium, how the Spencer Program has changed the entire approach to doctoral studies and what the special mentoring relationships, pro-seminars, community of practice and grant proposal writing

initiatives have the members developed in order to enhance research training in higher learning institutions.

The programme has benefited immensely from the valuable financial support of the Spencer Foundation. The Spencer Fellowships are awarded by the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. The school of Education has introduced three categories of grants: (i) Fellowships for Full-time students; (ii) Fellowships for Part-time students; (iii) Dissertation grants and (iv) writing and publication grants. These fellowships are awarded under the following conditions: the recipient must be registered as a full-time doctoral student in Education Policy at the School of Education for the duration of the award; the recipient receives a fellowship of R80 000 per annum over a period of a maximum of three years; the fees for one academic year and the balance is paid to the student in quarterly instalments; as a full-time student the recipient undertakes his studies on a full-time basis, subject to approval of the Head of School of Education, he may take part-time work. Such approval may be withdrawn any time, if the student is not satisfactory; and the recipient must be a student in residence for a period of at least one year, preferably in the first year of study and for a period of six months at the end of the study, when drafting the thesis (Cross, 2003).

Part-time recipient must be registered as a part-time doctoral student in Educational Policy at the School of Education for the duration of the award; the recipient gets a fellowship of R80 000 over one year over two years provided he satisfies the following conditions: provides a statement of commitment from his employer declaring that a block time of six months over one year or two blocks of three months per year over two years will be made available for recipient's study during the period of award; he must also provide a brief outline showing how this time will be available for this purpose; the amount paid in one year is determined in proportion to the amount of full-time study pursued by the recipient in any one year; and the fees for one academic year are deducted from the fellowship at the beginning of that academic year and the balance is paid to the student in quarterly instalments.

Dissertation grants are up to (R175 000) for completion of a doctoral thesis and the Small Spencer Fellowship is meant for a postgraduate student to attend a conference/workshop, write and publish a paper. The recipient is registered as a full-time or part-time postgraduate student in Educational Policy at The School of Education for the duration of the award. The recipient receives an award of R4 000 per year to attend a residential programme (summer and winter schools, conference, workshop, etc) approved by the Consortium. This amount covers conference fees, accommodation and other expenses incurred during the conference/workshop. The recipient is expected to look for extra funding for any additional expenses and the recipient is only entitled to only one award per year. As a way of accountability, there must be receipts for all expenses incurred during the duration of the conference or workshop. The grants may also be used for editorial or publication expenses of a journal article. However, the fees structure differs in the various member institutions and a limited number of fellowships are available through individual organizations to which enquiries should be directed and these are some of the bodies that are included amongst the sponsors of the Consortium's programme: USIS, through Stanford University, The Tshikululu Foundation, The Ford Foundation and The Mellon Foundation which gives grants to the mentoring students.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the effects of the Spencer Foundation in promoting research in the program of the Consortium and has revealed the advantages to both full-time and part-time doctoral students. It shows that through the funding, students are able to focus their attention on their research and are able to complete their research timeously. Generally, the chapter has looked at the Spencer Research and Training (RTG) network by arguing that it provides a forum for the deans to advise one another on strategies for postgraduate research training. The chapter also focused on issues of coordination and monitoring, where it discussed the structures, processes and meetings that are planned at the national level for the smooth running of the programme. The programme is also tightly monitored by the Coordinator and students are expected to work closely with their supervisors in

order for their needs to be addressed. Finally the chapter explored issues of funding by describing each use of the Spencer grants and also pointed out that fees structure varies from each member institution.