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Retreat for Professors: *Developing Strategies for Repositioning University Professors towards a Greater Future*. International Scholars Centre, FUNAAB, April 4, 2013



INTRODUCTION

- FUNAAB was established 25 yrs ago
 - Research achievements have been modest
 - Academic Staff in Colleges & Research Institute / Centre conduct research with varying time allocations
- Nigeria spends $\ll 0.1\%$ of GDP on research, so, research funds are scarce
- Need to examine structure and effectiveness of Research Teams in FUNAAB to ensure optimal use of resources for greater effectiveness



Research Team

- Types of Research Teams
 - Formal
 - Informal
 - Loose
 - Rigid
 - Single Project
 - Long-term



Research Team ...contd.

- Objective
 - Set by individual or group
 - Institutional
 - National
 - Short, Medium & Long-term



Research Team ...contd.

- Composition
 - Disciplinary
 - Multi-Disciplinary
 - Student/Junior Researcher/Mid-Career Researcher/Senior Researcher mix
 - Inclusion based on Academic Qualifications & Track Record



Research Team ...contd.

- Leadership
 - Principal Investigator (PI) or Research Team Leader
 - By appointment or by consensus or by the Research Initiator



Research Team ...contd.

- Career Development
 - Through Seminars, Workshops & Conferences
 - Through Training in Writing of Grant-winning Proposals
 - Through Short-term Attachment to other Research Laboratories
 - Through Publications
 - Through Registration of Patents where appropriate
 - Through Mentoring by Senior Colleagues



Research Team ...contd.

- Problem identification
 - By Principal Investigator (PI)
 - Through Discussion
 - Through Experimentation



Research Team ...contd.

- Task allocation
 - Based on Rank
 - Based on Area of Specialization
 - In line with requirements for undergraduate or postgraduate studies



Research Team ...contd.

- Sourcing funds
- Facilities sharing
- Evaluation
- Seminars, workshops & conferences
- Publications
- Creating enabling



Policy framework for research

- Goals
- Funding issues/Sustainability
- Assessment
- Recruitment issues
- Incentives/Motivation/Remuneration
- Competitiveness



Organizational/Administrative structure

- Funding bodies
 - Number
 - Level of funding
 - Frequency
- Regulatory bodies
 - Research Councils
 - Ministries
- Research Centres
 - Universities
 - Research Institutes



Research Performance Determinants

- Leadership ability of Team Leader
 - Qualifications
 - Experience
 - Managerial Skill
- Quality of Team Members
- Availability of Research Facilities
- Level of Funding for Research
- Motivation



Factors militating against formation or sustainability of vibrant research teams

- Inadequate research funding
- Inadequate research facilities
- Inadequate electricity and water supply
- Poor Research Team Leadership
- Inadequate incentives
- Limited training opportunities



FUNAAB Experience

- Research Teams usually formed for grant application purpose
- In some cases, the PI monopolises the application of funds without further reference to other 'Team Members' FUNAAB Experience
- In some other cases, the Team jointly carries out its assigned tasks to completion and every member is carried along and plays his or her role
 - (e.g. The Cassava Research Team instituted by IFSERAR)





RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

- AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION & ENERGY RESEARCH
- AQUACULTURE & FISHERIES RESEARCH
- BIOSCIENCES RESEARCH
- CROP PRODUCTION RESEARCH
- ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION RESEARCH
- FOOD & NUTRITION RESEARCH
- FOOD SECURITY & SOCIOECONOMIC RESEARCH

● STOCK PRODUCTION RESEARCH



VISION

"To be the foremost Research Institute working towards the sustainable attainment of food security in Nigeria."

MISSION

To act as change-agent for the transformation of Nigerian Agriculture through scientific research and the development of improved agricultural technologies.

To fast-track improvements in rural livelihoods.

To contribute significantly towards the actualization of the Federal Government of Nigeria's Vision 2020 and the attainment of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by the year 2015.

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FUNAABOR I

FUNAABOR II

FUNAABOR 2





FUNAAB Experience ... Contd.

- Some informal Research Teams have lasted for 10 years or more, e.g. The Snail Group and the Goat Research Group.
- Though their memberships keep changing as Student Members graduate and move away, the remaining Core Members ensure continuity and steady progress.
- The Snail Group has evolved into a Research Network while the Goat Group has the Kalahari Red Goat Project on-going at the IFSERAR Farm.
- Career-wise, members of both Groups have made steady progress.



1st INTERNATIONAL
Conference
on
GIANT African
Land Snails

THEME:
"Snail Production For Sustainable
Development and Good Health"

DATE:
12th - 15th February, 2012

VENUE:
Institute of Food Security, Environmental
Resources and Agricultural Research
Federal University of Agriculture,
Abeokuta, Nigeria

Deadline for Submission of papers - January 30th, 2012

CHIEF HOST
Professor Oluwafemi Olaiya Balogun, FASN
Vice-Chancellor
Federal University of Agriculture
Abeokuta, Nigeria

HOST
Professor O. A. Osinowo, FNSAP, FASAN
Director
Institute of Food Security, Environmental
Resources and Agricultural Research, FUNAAB

GUEST OF HONOUR
Professor A. O. Segun
Retired Professor of Zoology,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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FUNAAB Experience ... Contd.

- Several other informal Groups are either
 - in the formative stage (e.g. Cassava Group, Aquaculture Group, Biotechnology Group, Biochemistry Group, etc.) or
 - mature stage (e.g. Socio-economics Group, Food Science Group).
- The informal Groups often re-surface as formal Groups for Grant Application purposes but maintain their informal nature over the longer term.
- Successful Research Groups tend to have informal but knowledgeable, strong and well-respected leaders able to motivate others and actively engaged in mentoring younger colleagues.
 - They are also astute managers of human and material resources.





Recommendations

- Formal recognition of Research Team Leaders based on
 - Quality of Research
 - Long-term Research Achievements
 - No. & quality of higher degree graduates supervised
 - Mentoring ability
- Provide support with longer-term funding (3-5 yrs)
- Develop Research Infrastructure & provide research facilities



Recommendations ... Contd.

- Allow Team Leader greater say in recruitment
- Minimize bureaucratic bottlenecks
- Institute periodic review and evaluation process

Thank you.

