Issues Related to Sustaining a Long-Term Research Interest in Tourism

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Abstract
The personal observations in this article are arranged under the topic headings of the training of researchers, establishing research programs and developing and managing research teams. The value of a standard PhD by itself is questioned as a preparation for a full research career with the role of publication experience and multi-faceted research participation in a program being more important. The value of building one or several research programs is emphasised. The impact of a research group is considered both within and beyond academic life. Personal approaches to managing a research team are identified.

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The editor invited me to offer some personal reflections on "a consideration of how to shape one's academic world to be a very productive researcher based on the experience of publishing over a sustained time span." The observations in this article expand upon those offered by the author in previous forums (1998, 2004). They are arranged under three main headings: (i) formal training; (ii) establishing a coherent research program; and (iii) developing a research team. Before launching into the discussion, however, the obvious personal prerequisite for sustaining a long-term research program should be acknowledged. There has to be a level of intellectual curiosity that finds research work enjoyable. We persist and excel at things which we enjoy doing (and *vice-versa*; excellence and enjoyment are mutually reinforcing). For me, writing and doing research are an avocation rather than a vocation. I am intellectually aroused and excited by the process. The adrenaline flows when I start to think or write about the next project. The "eureka" moments that occasionally occur from the insights that "pop out" of the thinking, research and writing processes are the elixir of academic life. If this passion, intrinsic excitement and consequent enthusiasm do not exist, then there can be no long term research program. Nothing great was ever accomplished without these attributes being present. They serve not only to drive personal accomplishment, but because they are contagious, they inspire those around the principal investigator.

Formal training

Much of one's academic world is shaped by the nature of the formative graduate student experience. The U.S. and Commonwealth models of Ph.D. training are different, with the former placing much more emphasis than the latter on course work (Pearce, 2004), but both models require a prolonged time period of four years or so when the focus of life is meeting the requirements to acquire a Ph.D.

However, the nature of the Ph.D. and the purposes for pursuing the degree have changed in the last two or three decades. It has become the "union card" needed to teach at the university level. I do not understand why it is necessary or desirable for individuals to invest four years in acquiring the research tools, acculturating into the research fraternity, and engaging in the practicum required of those pursuing a specialized research degree, when their career aspiration is to teach undergraduate students. Teaching is a noble profession, but it requires different skills from those associated with research. Excellent teachers and aspirant teachers are treasured resources whose strengths and aspirations should be nurtured by specialized training. Instead, they are required to dissipate their strengths and follow a course of advanced study that at best, is of tangential relevance to their goals. To teach tourism's fundamental principles and conventional practices to three undergraduate classes a semester with 100 students in each class requires sophisticated pedagogical skills, but it does not require the instructor to have advanced research skills. Indeed, given the volume of literature that has emerged in tourism, it is a full-time task to keep abreast of contemporary thinking pertinent to three or four different undergraduate classes and leaves no time to engage in useful research. University administrators persist in advocating that there is some osmosis between good research and good teaching. While this case may be at least partially supportable at graduate level, it is glaringly unsupportable at undergraduate level. Tertiary institutions whose proper and honorable mission is to teach undergraduates, insist on the Ph.D. "union card" and pressurize their faculty to engage in research because they believe this will raise an institution's prestige and status among its peers. The result is a proliferation of utterly useless "research," being published in literally dozens of tourism journals whose only *raison d'être* is to accommodate this plethora of useless material. It advances the field's knowledge not one whit, and represents a waste of the resources (both personal and institutional) that were used in such fatuous endeavor.

This fallible and incoherent logic has changed the nature of the Ph.D. degree. For the most part, acquiring the Ph.D. can be done by spending the requisite four years or so at an institution, meeting regularly with one's doctoral advisor, and following the guidance that he/she offers. Its attainment is within the capacity of perhaps the top 20% of undergraduate students at major universities. It is a fairly common currency denoting persistence rather than perspicacity; industry rather than intellectual curiosity or insight; and endurance rather than enlightenment. In short, it is anachronistic to believe that the conferring of a Ph.D. degree is indicative of an extraordinary intellect, a capacity for doing useful research, or an interest in pursuing a research career.

To complete a Ph.D. program, then, is not an adequate foundation for those who aspire for a career in research. For such people the goal of the four years should not be the conferring of the Ph.D. degree, but rather should be to acquire the in-depth knowledge needed to build a platform strong enough to launch a productive research career that will endure for the next two, three or four decades. This has been my goal as a doctoral student advisor over the past three decades.

As a marketer, I was taught the importance of segmentation and target marketing in efficient service delivery. I am very clear that my interest at the doctoral level is limited to people who have the aptitude and desire to do good research. This means such people must be good enough to be hired, and subsequently to get tenure, at the relatively few institutions in this field which have the resources, culture, and expectation that make good research possible.

What are the requirements for launching a successful career at a major research university? Those at Texas A&M are probably typical. The benchmark guidelines for tenure and promotion to associate professor state:

> *The expectation for most faculty is that the record will show a minimum of 12-15 papers in refereed publications by the end of the fifth year when documentation is submitted to initiate the tenure and promotion process. Of these a preponderance of publications should be in Tier 1 journals.*

With this in mind, I insist that my doctoral people have two or three refereed publications completed before starting their dissertation. This research practicum is a critical part of the acculturation process. It ensures they have multiple research experiences, not only their dissertation experience, which enhances self-confidence, excitement and understanding of what a research career involves. Their dissertation, or the data set from which it is derived, must be of sufficient quality to yield at least three more. This means that when they start a new position, they will have 5-7 refereed publications accepted or in review. Without this sort of foundation, they are unlikely to survive the brutal tenure process at major institutions. The disruption and pressure involved in physically relocating from the Ph.D. institution to a new city to take the first job; the responsibilities of teaching a number of classes and advising students for the first time; the building of professional support networks; the familiarization with administrative procedures; and the necessity of creating some minimal personal and social space, all make it challenging to find time and resources to think about and undertake research in the early years of a university career.

I have learned there are three keys to building this type of doctoral program. First, establishing a culture is critical. Everyone who works with me knows what the expectations are from the beginning. They are expected to immediately become involved in a research project - not just by me, but by all their peers who work with me.

A second key is that effective doctoral training takes time. Undertaking and then writing up research that is publishable in Tier 1 journals is hard work, time-consuming and intellectually difficult. That is why 95% of the folks in tourism in higher education don't do it. As a result, I have had only one of the 25 doctoral candidates whom I have guided complete in less than four years, and for most it has been closer to five years. There are no short cuts. An individual is unlikely to be successful in launching a research career without this investment of time and effort. If the field hires and supports people with lesser training in the major schools, then it will hasten the field's demise rather than enhance its status, at those institutions.

A third key is to require an in-depth minor area which is focused. Typically, I require 18-21 hours in marketing and social-psychology courses from my people, together with 15-18 hours of statistics, research methods and philosophy of science courses. (In the U.S. system, 3 hours typically represents one course taken for one semester.) Again, there are no short cuts. If we want to improve tourism's academic standing in the major institutions, then this is the kind of preparatory program our people must have.

Operating with standards lower than these, in my view, inflicts damage on the candidate as well as the field. In the present climate, refereed publications in major journals are about the only job security that exists in the major universities! They confer the power to change positions; they are what university administrators prioritize; so to train people, and award them a Ph.D. degree without ensuring they have the acculturation and tools that are necessary for their success in a research career is to my mind unconscionable.

The transition between course work and dissertation is a particularly crucial time. For two reasons. First, the candidate has the opportunity to review for comprehensive examinations. I am insistent that when course work is completed, doctoral candidates will use a full semester to read before taking the comprehensive preliminary exams. This is the last time in their careers they will have the opportunity to comprehensively review the literature. When they sign on with me, I give them a list of the 15 books I consider to be the classics in the field. This list gets revised, not lengthened, every few years and I seek input from colleagues at other institutions as to what should be on it. These must be read and absorbed before the comprehensive examinations.

The second reason this transition period is crucial is because it is the most likely time that momentum will erode and a sense of doubt begin to emerge. All their lives, the candidates have taken courses and passed exams. Always they have been given the hurdles and directed how to jump over them. But the dissertation is a different kind of challenge. The onus for the first time is on the candidate both to create the hurdle and to figure out how to jump over it - although there is support and advice from me. Too often, after the comprehensive exams there is a lull, and increased frustration with the seeming lack of progress that occurs in developing the problem and moving forward with the dissertation in response to this very different kind of challenge. To counter this, I do not let anyone sit the comprehensive examinations until they have written the first four chapters of their dissertation, i.e. Introduction, Conceptual Development, Literature Review and Research Methods. This means that when the comprehensive exams are completed, the candidate immediately moves back to the dissertation, is usually prepared to defend a proposal (which is done publicly before the faculty and graduate students), and move directly into data collection.

The dissertation should be the first stage of a longer term

Success in an academic career is most often equated with success and productivity in resarch - opportunities to learn how to be a successful researcher are essential in graduate training.

research program. This is another strategy which will ease a student's transition from doctoral candidate to assistant professor. It ensures students have a research game plan and road map when they commence a research career at a new institution.

The last time I did anything properly was when I did my dissertation in 1976-1977. Since then academic life has been characterized by compromise. Pareto principle, 20-80 law, governs my life. 20% of the effort gets me 80% of the results. With 10 to 15 projects and papers in some stage of active progress, from early conceptualization of a project to final reviews of a paper, and on-going book writing projects, there is no opportunity for me to do anything perfectly today. The dissertation, then, must be an unhustled, thorough experience; otherwise individuals are cheated of one of their life's peak experiences. They will never know what it is like to do good research if they do not first produce a good dissertation. Periodically someone has told me, he/she has to be done by date x in order to accept a job or whatever. Typically, my response has been, "Please petition me off your committee and go find a new chairman." Compromise at the dissertation stage is not acceptable, since it is probably the only time in an academic career when it can be avoided.

I find the term "mentor" embarrassing when it is applied to me because it does not embrace or acknowledge my many limitations or the extent of my ignorance. Nevertheless, the following definition does accurately describe my aspirations for the role I try to play:

> *Mentors are advisors, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge; supporters, people who give emotional and moral encouragement; tutors, people who give specific feedback on one's performance; masters, in the sense of employers to whom one is apprenticed; sponsors, sources of information about and in obtaining opportunities; models, of identity of the kind of person one should be to be an academic* (Zeldith 1990).

To sum up, my job is to keep a bi-focal vision. Keep morale high through structuring interim successes and achievements in the short term, but keep a firm eye on where they are going to be 5 years after graduation.

Establishing a coherent research program

A sustained interest in research requires conceptualizing a program of research which will be pursued over a long time period - say 10 years. Too few people in the tourism field have research programs. Most are opportunistic, jumping around from one unrelated project to another in response to the availability of collaborators, funding opportunities, graduate student interests, or personal eclectic curiosity. This is not how to make an impact since it leaves the researcher operating at a superficial, facile level of understanding.

Commitment to a long term research program focuses the effort. It builds a depth of knowledge which goes beyond mere awareness of an issue or information about a problem to a genuine insight in the original Gerard Manley Hopkins meaning of inscape from which that term is derived. This refers to understanding the unified complex of characteristics that give each thing its uniqueness and that differentiate it from other things, i.e. seeing into the inner character or underlying truth of a phenomenon. This is a level of penetration into understanding the nature of a phenomenon that few attain. Insight is the ultimate level of understanding for which all researchers strive. It comes only after long-term immersion and intellectual grappling with an issue.

Thus, the central task is to conceptualize a program of research in which effort will be invested over a long period of time. In my case, I have had five research programs in my thirty year academic career. Two of those have been in the tourism area, and the other three in the parks and recreation field. In conceptualizing my research program, three questions guide my thinking: (i) Is the issue important and meaningful? (ii) Will it make a difference to practice? (iii) Will it explain a dimension of tourism behavior?

I have defined more than one research program in my career because (i) funding is opportunistic and cyclical, and when it is not available at a particular point in time to support one program, then perhaps the other can move forward; (ii) my research partners, especially my graduate student colleagues, may have an interest in one area rather than another. Each project within the research program builds on the previous effort. Any graduate student who wishes to work with me has to be prepared to follow my research agenda and be part of my long-term research program. I do not respond to graduate students' interests, they have to respond to mine. I am not prepared to divert energies in research that is outside the parameters of my research program.

Developing a long-term, coherent research program requires investing substantial intellectual energy into conceptualization of the issue. Conceptualization addresses "why?" and "how?" and is the basis for generalization, whereas the task of empiricism is to verify or refute the conceptualization. There is a tendency for some to concentrate on empiricism but it is the ideas and their relationships that are central, not the numbers. Some years ago, one of our colleagues expressed the tendency to forget the critical role of conceptualization in these terms:

> *The crunch of numbers seems to come at us from all sides. We not only work more with numbers than with ideas, but we know the impact of numbers on our lives. How many students? How many publications? How many grants for how many dollars? How many signs of recognition? How many times have we been cited in the published literature? The crunch of numbers places us into a crunch of time. There is never enough time to do it all. We are meeting clear and quantified expectations, not thinking deep thoughts. We are responding to the pressures of numbered hours and minutes, not gaining a perspective on the meaning of it all* (Kelly, 1989, p. 245).

The seminal papers in the tourism literature are conceptual; they are not empirical. Conceptualization precedes empiricism, and it requires insight (in the Hopkins sense which was defined earlier). It defines excellent research programs and without it there cannot be any long-term effective research contribution.

When graduate students are initiated into the research process, this is the most difficult facet of the process for them to grasp. The quality of the "front-end" conceptualization of an issue is what determines the value of the empirical work which follows. The tourism literature is replete with examples of "mindless empiricism," "data mining" and "fishing expeditions." The downside of using sophisticated clustering algorithms to analyze data is that they always produce clusters. These can then be rationalized *ex post facto*, and yet one more meaningless "segmentation" study can be generated. Without strong *a priori* conceptualization, the subsequent empirical work is unlikely to make any contribution to better understanding the phenomenon of tourism.

It is important to discriminate between consulting work and an academic research program. They are not mutually exclusive, but their goals are different. The former usually focuses on mere empiricism and is devoid of conceptual underpinning. Further, it is sometimes driven by a desire to legitimize a position rather than by a search for truth (Notorious examples of this are economic impact studies). Accepting consulting work is a dangerous temptation because it can detract from a research program. My decision rule has been to accept such assignments only if they can be used to further my research agenda. This is likely to mean extending the client's brief to embrace a broader set of objectives that will contribute to my research program.

Research program focus

Figure 1 summarizes the broad topical areas within which a research program can be nested. At the "micro" level of an individual tourist, the options are to explore

(i) facets of the decision process leading to selection of a destination or itinerary;

(ii) the nature of individual host-guest interactions while tourists are at a destination; or

(iii) post-trip evaluations of a trip which may be in the form of service quality, satisfaction or experiential outcomes.

At the "macro" level of an aggregation of tourists: (i) the pre-trip option relates to forecasting tourism flows; (ii) at the destination focus it is on the aggregate nature of host-guest interactions; while (iii) post-trip research at the aggregate level relates to impacts.

Within each of these broad categories there are specialist areas in which a research program can be built. The specialist areas become more narrowly defined as the tourism field matures. Beware, however, of confusing specialization with the unfortunate trend towards fragmentation that has characterized the tourism field in

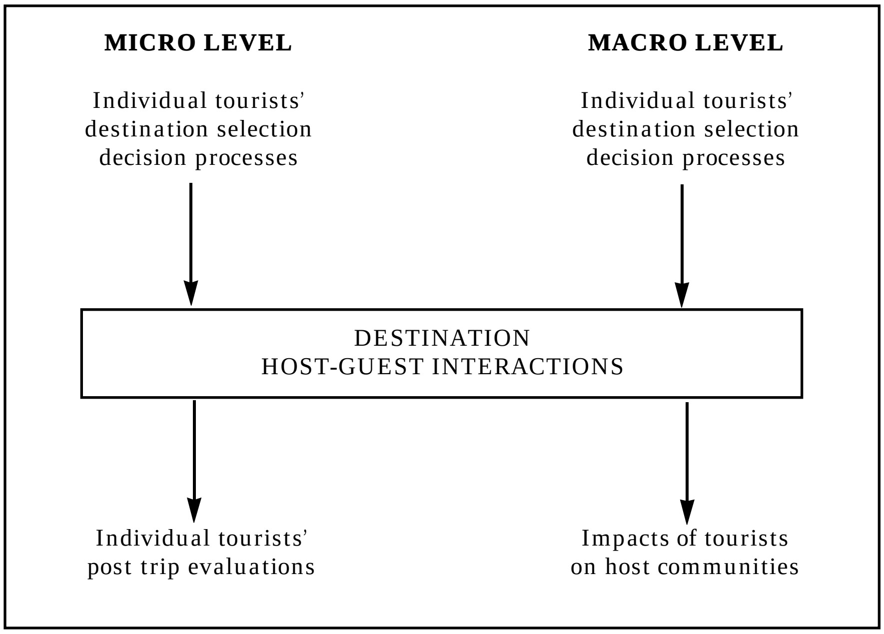

Figure 1: Tourism research areas

the past decade. The phenomenon being studied is tourism. Fragmentation has occurred because people have found a noun to place in front of the word tourism, and misled both themselves and others into believing they have created an area of specialism worthy of study. They have not. It does not matter if the word tourism is preceded by sports, arts, cultural, heritage, green, sex, industrial or tiddlywinks, the phenomenon of interest remains tourism not the preceding noun. These topic areas are merely vehicles for delivering tourism experiences. There is nothing intrinsically unique about any of them. Thus, for example, whatever set of motives are found to underpin sports tourism decisions are merely a sub-set of tourism motives. There is nothing unique to study and these fragmentation topics offer no basis for a long term research program.

The movement towards specialisms within the broad areas summarized in Figure 1 reinforces the importance of having a strong disciplinary background that was stressed in the previous section on formal training. A doctorate based on training in general tourism is unlikely to be adequate to effectively launch and sustain a research program in the emerging era of specialization.

Relevancy and dissemination

No approbation is deserved for publishing large quantities of material. Indeed, opprobrium may be a more appropriate evaluation, as my conscience periodically reminds me that clutter of material which has emanated from my pen over a 30 year career has resulted in the destruction of more than my fair share of forests! Oftentimes people have asked how many articles have I published; or they have informed me that somebody has counted number of articles or citations in a given set of journals over a given period and that my ranking was x. Such so-called measures of productivity and performance are irrelevancies. The only performance indicator that matters is impact, and number of publications is not an acceptable surrogate for impact.

Thus, the research program should address an issue which the researcher believes will have an impact. That is, it should be important either to improving the practice of tourism, or to better understanding the phenomenon of tourism. To sustain long term excitement and productivity there has to be conviction that when the time for reflection arrives at the end of a career, there is a positive, meaningful response to the self-asked question, “Did I invest my life in doing useful work?” other than “I filled x number of journal pages.” Important means people will care and it will make a difference either to the understanding of the tourism phenomenon and/or to practice.

One acid test of importance often comes when findings from a research program are disseminated to tourism professionals. Do they care? Too many papers have lame endings when it comes to discussing the implications for practice. Part of the conceptualization of the research program and the projects within it, involves ensuring the outcomes of the work will be valuable. We are obligated to do research that matters given the large salaries, substantial support and privileged lifestyle society confers on those working in major universities. I reject the legitimacy of the “knowledge for its own sake” school of thinking in tourism as an egocentric, self-serving rationale which fails to meet the *quid pro quo* exchange mandate for the public tax investments made in us.

Unfortunately, as tourism research has evolved it has tended to become increasingly remote from the world of practice, establishing its own written outlets, conferences, jargon and rationale. As a colleague observed to me some years ago, there has been a drift into a *modus operandi* wherein we all do research, but do not think; we all present, but do not listen; and we all publish, but do not read. It is my impression that most academics who do research have no contact with practitioners but merely talk to each other. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the ties with those working in the tourism field were much closer. This problem of losing relevancy is not unique to tourism (see, for example, results of the American Marketing Association Task Force which reported this challenge in the marketing field in *Journal of Marketing*, 1988).

In my view, the relevancy of a long-term research program cannot be verified without regular interaction with those who are expected to benefit from it. To establish research forums, comprised exclusively of academics independent of professional audiences is self-defeating. It reinforces the tendency of academics to create data rather than meaningful findings, and encourages a drift into the esoteric. Albert Einstein rewrote the laws of physics but he was not working in academia when he did it. Rather he worked in the patent office in Bern, Switzerland. In retrospect, Einstein believed this “was a veritable blessing for me.” He went on to observe that academia

> *places a young person under a kind of compulsion to produce impressive quantities of scientific publications - a temptation to superficiality* (Achenboch, 2005, p. 1).

Publication of research is not synonymous with making an impact on the tourism field. Early in my career after I had published what appeared to me to be an important contribution in the leading journal; I was bemoaning its lack of impact on the field a few years later to a professional colleague. His reaction was sobering: "How arrogant, Crompton! For you to publish one article in an academic journal and expect those of us in the field to find it, read it and act upon it is typical academic arrogance." He was right. Good research, publication and scientific credibility are the start of an academic's responsibilities, not the end. The research findings need to be disseminated. They need to be accompanied by a program of evangelism to "sell" them to those in professional practice. The analogy is with the development of a new product or invention. It has no impact on society unless its superior attributes are disseminated to those who are likely to benefit from using it.

Professional communities validate the utility not the quality of academic work.

The scientific community validates the quality of the science in my work, but, for the most part it is the professional community which validates the utility of my work. Each year I conduct 12-15 workshops for professionals across the U.S. and abroad, each half-day to two days in duration. Here is where the primary impact of a long-term research program is made - not in the academic journals. I believe that publication without follow-up evangelism is unproductive. The role of presentations to professional groups is to arouse the audience's interest and excitement about the implications of the research findings presented, and then to put the findings in their hands in a form (simple, actionable summaries) that they can use. Few academics do this. Without it, a reinforce-ment link which is key to sustaining a correct compass bearing and enthusiasm for a long-term research program is lost.

Publishing in the "wrong" journal can also retard the effectiveness of a research program's impact. For example, one of the most important contributions with which I was involved was redefining what constituted a tourism experience. Traditionally, this has been expressed in logistical rather than experiential terms. We defined it experimentally in experiential terms. In my judgment, it represented a quantum step forward in our understanding of the tourism phenomenon. However, it was published in the *Journal of Leisure Research* which is a Tier 1 journal, but which is not read by tourism researchers. Hence, it has remained outside the mainstream tourism literature and had little impact (Botterill & Crompton, 1996).

Addressing important issues requires courage. One of my graduate students recently balked at the project which I had directed him to pursue saying, "Nobody's done this before: it may not work out!" Cutting-edge work is risky. Sometimes we get it wrong and receive scathing reviews rather than approbation. That's part of the research process, and how we build both our own and the field's knowledge base.

A second acid test of the quality and relevance of the work, which complements the reaction of professionals in the field, comes via the peer review process. This process validates the quality of the science. This validation is central since it offers some reassurance that the findings are "legitimate." Without it, the opportunity to substantially impact professional practice is unlikely to endure over the long term. My own philosophy has been to submit work to the best journals only. These journals are likely to provide the most useful reviews, give most visibility to the work, and authenticate the work as being high quality. The review process is notoriously unreliable (which is ironic given that reliability is a criterion of good research) and so it has always been my policy to go to a second major journal if I am unconvinced of the legitimacy of the reviews which led to an initial rejection. However, if the initial judgment is confirmed by a second journal, the attempt to publish will likely be abandoned. Nothing is gained by publishing inferior work in inferior journals. It erodes the researcher's credibility; it is likely to retard rather than advance the field by disseminating doubtful findings; and few are likely to bother reading the inferior journals. In my view, publishing in Tier 2 and Tier 3 journals is not productive. We only have one life. To play "academic games," address the trivial or focus on esoteric and irrelevant issues, will lead to cynicism and disillusionment, and militate against sustaining long-term interest and productivity.

Partnering with others brings the advantages of assembling different skills and talents.

Developing a research team

As my career has progressed, I have become increasingly conscious of how little I know. There appear to be three reasons for this growing awareness of my inadequacies. First, it is a natural manifestation of the aphorism: The more you know, the better you understand what you don't know. Second, the exponential expansion in the number of those engaged in research in tourism and allied fields in the past three decades has made it increasingly difficult to keep abreast of this work as it relates to my research programs. Sixteen years ago it was noted that,

> *The explosion of publications and electronic information in most fields has made it difficult to feel confident of mastery outside a single theoretical paradigm and methodological attack on a designated problem* (Kelly, 1989, p. 249).

Since that time the difficulty has only been accentuated. The third factor is the evolution of competing technology and the more advanced statistical analysis techniques and research designs this has facilitated. The aggregate effect of these factors is a realization that my knowledge base is limited and the only way that I can sustain a viable research program is to partner with others whose skills and talents complement mine.

Early in my career, I wrestled with answers to the fundamental question: What business am I in? Recognizing my limitations, the conclusion reached was that I am not in the business of doing research; rather I am in the business of getting research done. My primary partners in this endeavor have been graduate students. The term "graduate student" bothers me, but it is a convenient "handle" that I have been unable to replace. Unfortunately, the term connotes a sort of modern day serf who serves his or her apprenticeship at the beck and call of the master, before emerging from the departmental chrysalis as a fully-fledged professional or professor. This is demeaning and entirely inappropriate. Many of the individuals pursuing graduate degrees with whom I have worked, have intellects, experience levels, skills and talents that exceed my own. They are students only in the classic sense that we are all, or all should be, students.

The professor-graduate student relationship is frequently perceived as being one-way, with knowledge flowing from the professor to the student. But that is a myth. Indeed, in my case the antithesis is the case - the unidirectional knowledge flow for the most part is directed from graduate student to professor.

The graduate students with whom I am privileged to work are my primary colleagues. My faculty peers at A&M are supportive of my research endeavors and they are my friends, but their particular professional interests are different from mine. My graduate students and I have sought each other out because we share common professional interests, have a mutual respect for each other's talents, and because the chemistry between us is good.

My primary role is to conceptualize and manage the research program, generate funds to implement it, and recruit good graduate students to do the actual project work. I am captain of the ship responsible for steering it safely to its destination and making sure the resources are deployed effectively, but I don't work the engines! This perception of my role emerged early in my career from a conversation with Dr. Albert Cotton, who is a distinguished professor of chemistry at A&M. He has published over 1500 refereed papers - his typical output is 50 per year. He told me, "I do not work at the bench with the test-tubes, if I did then my productivity and that of all the people who work with me, would plummet. My job is to facilitate the work of my doctoral candidates and post-doctoral associates, ensure they get good training, and ensure the total program is accomplished." He is right. Texas A&M does not pay me a distinguished professor's salary to collect data and work computers. My challenge is to leverage my resources to maximize output, not to do it myself.

Working collaboratively with my graduate student colleagues enables both sides of the partnership to focus on our strengths. We all need to retrain, but we are limited in the extent to which we can do it. I believe that if I invested the time, I could probably learn some of the things I do not know. But I have always believed in concentrating on my strengths and covering my weaknesses by collaborating with others who are strong in those areas. This seems to me to be a much more efficient and productive approach.

My graduate student colleagues are exposed to cutting-edge courses with excellent instructors from across the campus. My cutting-edge courses were done 30-35 years ago. The result, of course, is that they know more than I do about research methods, statistical tools and the current literature. I learn through them, secondhand-they take the courses. All my doctoral candidates who have graduated were technically more knowledgeable than I was. If they were not, then I would have screwed up badly as their advisor and facilitator.

Working collaboratively in this way means that almost all my publications are co-authored. The primary author will usually be a graduate student, reflecting that he or she did the nuts and bolts of the research. I will be second author, reflecting my conceptual and intellectual input, my provision of resources needed to do the work, and my contribution to actually writing the paper. I have been criticized for this - although not to my face! Some people have suggested that my reputation has been made on the backs of my students, and that my approach is exploitive. Of course, they are right. I do exploit the people who work with me by using their talents to complement my own and further my research program. That is the best way I know to provide them with opportunities to learn to do good research, and the best way I know to get the threshold volume of research done that moves a research program forward. If others do not approve of my *modus operandi*, then that is their problem. I am comfortable with the way I operate and to the best of my knowledge so are the 60 people with whom I have worked to this point. As far as I am concerned, nobody else's opinion matters!

My motives in working with graduate candidates are entirely selfish. In addition to constituting the engine that moves my research program forward, my partnership with them is the only way I know to institutionalize any impact I may have on the field. My own books, papers, speeches, workshops, *et al.* can have only a transitory influence at a point in time. However, if I can place in my career 30 well trained doctoral candidates in university positions and 50 well trained masters people in agencies, I believe it will make a difference; and that is what I have been seeking to do.

As my primary colleagues, I view my graduate students as being equal in stature to myself. The easiest part of encouraging them to recognize this equality is to listen and act upon their advice and input. To further reinforce it, I ensure their offices are close to mine and that we interact on most days. If there is no professional reason for them to come to my office, I go to theirs to make a social visit. In a conscious attempt to reverse the inherent power structure in our relationship, they have keys and access at all times to my office and laboratory, and to all the equipment within them such as phones, photocopying, postage, books, computer accounts and so on. I quite deliberately do not have access to their offices.

Since they are my primary colleagues, their work takes priority over everything else I do. Momentum and morale are everything. If graduate student colleagues want to visit, it happens immediately. I am not into appointments or office hours. If they want me to review something, it will get a one day turn around. My primary professional reason for being is to facilitate their work. Everything else I view as being of secondary importance.

To maximize the synergy among my graduate students for most of my career I have been committed to fostering a research team. This means encouraging and nurturing professional relationships among them. I believe social engineering is of prime importance in achieving this. They need to be either in offices together or in proximate offices, because they have much to learn from each other. Inter-peer learning develops from working together on joint projects; by toiling together on the same courses; at social events; and in meetings of research project groups. There is no single formula for developing inter-peer learning; it depends on the chemistry of the people, their particular interests and stage of their degree program.

Because learning from peers is critical, I believe it is imperative that a research team has a threshold number of individuals who frequently interact. Without this, the learning process is likely to be substantially impaired. The power of this bonding, of course, endures long after graduation. The bonds built between people working together in graduate school last forever. Indeed, one of the most exciting aspects of the process for me, is seeing the professional and social bonding continuing to build between the 60 or so people whose graduate committees I have chaired. Observing the respect, trust and support for each other which they exhibit is enormously gratifying. Of course, the bonding is not only between peers, it is also between them and me. What a privilege! The opportunity to develop and nurture friendships that last a lifetime and which span national boundaries and political ideologies. These friendships and networks remain supportive long after students have graduated and they provide reinforcement which contributes to sustaining a research program over the long term.

The other members of a research team are faculty colleagues at A&M both inside and outside the department. They have proved to be unfailingly generous in their responsiveness. A special word is appropriate about support from faculty outside the department. In my view, it is not possible to have a strong doctoral program in the tourism field unless support is forthcoming from strong faculty in outside departments. Without this, the depth and quality of research in a specialized area is compromised. Over time, I have made a directed effort to build networks with key faculty in other departments. This takes time and is one reason (there are others) why building a strong research program requires a locational stability.

Establishing a productive research team takes many years. As people graduate from it, others have to be recruited into it, so it is an organic process. Networks have to be nurtured and credibility established among graduate students, departmental colleagues, and faculty outside the department. Funding sources from state and local sources have to be courted which involves developing positive personal chemistry with gatekeepers and convincing them of professional competency. These take time to nourish and flourish. Each time a researcher moves from one institution to another the process has to be restarted from the ground-up and it is likely to take at least five years to restore the lost momentum. Thus, a productive long term research program is predicated on a long tenure at an institution.

Support from an institution is crucial. The major research universities are special and remarkable institutions. No matter how competent, passionate and enthusiastic individuals may be, they cannot engage in a productive research program without good institutional support. This support is manifested in release time from teaching responsibilities; adequate technical support staff; availability of project seed money; a pervasive research culture; and a facilitative administration. In past centuries, wealthy patrons sponsored creative work in music, literature and the performing arts. The major universities are the contemporary equivalent for those engaged in doing good research.

A Caveat

The careers and lives of each of us constitute an empirical experiment with an 'n' of one. The observations made in this paper merely reflect conclusions derived from my personal journey through the research landscape over the past thirty years. The conclusions from my experiment are willingly shared, but they come with the obvious caveat that they do not purport to be reflective of the experiences of others. They are biased by my personality, and by the institutional, social and professional milieus in which I have pursued my experiment.

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