



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

# Doctoral and post-doctoral research and training: a comparison of European and African graduate school models

Presentation at Stellenbosch University Annual Library Symposium, 2011

Johann Groenewald :: Graduate School Project Coordinator,  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University  
17 November 2011

# Overview

- A comparison:
  - The Humboldt Graduate School, Berlin, Germany
  - The Graduate School and African Doctoral Academy, Stellenbosch
- Graduate schools: models and purposes
- Higher education under stress
- New modes of doctoral education & training



# Humboldt Graduate School (HGS)

- Established in 2006, in response to -
- DFG Excellence Initiative requires doctoral programmes to be accredited in Graduate School
- HGS purpose: Institution-wide coordination, QA, gender equity, support (soft skills), special accommodation
- HGS requirements for accreditation of PhD programmes: International, interdisciplinary, excellence, structured training (includes workshops in theory, methods), multiple supervision to enhance transparency & throughput for production of PhDs (human capital)
- Only third party funded programmes need apply
- Cut-off entry age: 28



## HGS (cont'd)

- Around 600 FT PhDs enrolled in sixty 'International PhD programmes'; Typically a three-year programme.
- Total no of PhDs enrolled: 5300; thus the majority still in traditional mode of training.
- HGS evaluated positively after five years; first full-time director appointed in 2011.
- Housed in renovated building



# Graduate School and African Doctoral Academy @ SU (FASS)

- Established in 2009 in FASS, in response to -
- Hope Project CFP to enhance excellence and relevance in Africa – to promote next generation of academics through world-class doctoral programmes
- Three entities managed as integrated project:
  - **Graduate School *coordinates*** full-time, partly structured, doctoral study programmes in eight multi-disciplinary research themes, provides scholarships, monitors progress and QA. Scholarships and themes funded by Hope project seed funding
  - **ADA** is the main **enabler** providing support through generic methodological and ‘soft skills’ short course training; first to ‘own’ FT PhDs, then to other faculties (institution wide) and then on partner campuses in Africa (i.e. portable and exportable)
  - **PANGeA shares in** student selection, supervision and working towards joint projects and joint degrees
- Cut-off entry age: 40



# Three interlocking structural components

## African Doctoral Academy

### Main enabler through -

- Generic & elective modular training
- Supervisor training
- Research on the doctorate in Africa

## Graduate School

### Umbrella body coordinating

- Doctoral support framework
- Multi-disciplinary research themes & Lecture series
- Scholarship support & monitoring of progress

## PANGeA

### Partners sharing -

- Sponsored research & staff exchanges
- Student recruitment & supervision
- Joint degrees



# A going concern - current numbers

- Implementation started academic year 2010
- Two intakes enrolling 31 (2010) and 25 (2011); current enrolment: 56 full-time PhD-students (out of more than 250 overall in faculty)
- New intake: 20 scholarships offered for 2012
- From 15 Sub-Saharan African countries
- In 8 research themes involving 15 departments
- A commitment of more than R27 million in scholarship-funding alone
- Plus (on a 70:30 basis) a further R11,6 million in programme support.



# 2011-cohort's reception





# Graduate schools: purpose & types

Graduate schools are created to focus on a particular “aspect” of higher education provision, usually at the higher or highest programme levels.

**Discipline/ discipline group**

Examples:

Graduate School of Business

Humanities Graduate School

**(single faculty)**

**Any / all disciplines**

Example:

Humboldt Graduate School

UFS Graduate School

**(across faculties)**



# Graduate schools: weak to strong

Weak

Coordination &  
Quality Assurance

UFS Graduate School

Support

Humanities Graduate  
School

Programmes  
accredited

Humboldt Graduate  
School

Strong

Academic staff  
appointed

Graduate School of  
Business



# Higher education under stress

- Massification
  - Elite to mass participation; Students' academic preparedness, ability to pay; Graduate employability
  - Shrinking support, increased accountability
  - financial burden shifting onto students and society
- Commodification (The knowledge economy)
  - Contracts and corporate sector involvement
  - Increased demand for high-level, application-oriented research output
- Inadequate academic staff replacement
  - World-wide shortage of human capital



# Changing structure of doctoral education

Traditional

Cohort

Alone	<b>Integration</b>	Teamwork
Part-time, irregular	<b>Schedule</b>	Full-time, regularised
Individual	<b>Topic</b>	Coordinated
Student-driven	<b>Initiative</b>	Supervisor-driven
Intermittent	<b>Contact</b>	Continuous
Minimal regulation	<b>Process</b>	Paced, monitored
Vague	<b>Product</b>	Shared standards
Unstructured	<b>Skills acquisition</b>	Structured

Low

High



# Some conclusions

- European GS model strength is concentrated in its member programmes; where expertise attracts the funding and where GS can concentrate on QA
- African Doctoral Academy responds to the perceived need for enhancement of individual and institutional capacity to participate in advanced research



# Thank you

More:

[www.thehopeproject.co.za](http://www.thehopeproject.co.za)

[www.sun.ac.za/graduateschool](http://www.sun.ac.za/graduateschool)

[www.sun.ac.za/lectureseries](http://www.sun.ac.za/lectureseries)

[www.sun.ac.za/ada](http://www.sun.ac.za/ada)

[www.pangeaonline.org](http://www.pangeaonline.org)

