

## Sigma's 29th International Nursing Research Congress

### Boosting Research Performance: Lessons Learned From External Scrutiny of Faculty Research, Culture, Strategies, and Approaches

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#### **Introduction:**

Worldwide, the ground of higher education and the nature of the health services, universities and schools where we do our research, are shifting sands beneath our feet. The landscape of nursing and midwifery education and research and the academy that many of us entered, possibly many years ago, is scarcely recognisable in today's globalised university and 'knowledge economy' (Girod 2010). Unless we are prepared to acquiesce with some deeply uncomfortable ideas such as the creation of 'teaching-only' institutions or the tolerance of cultures where "a lack of scholarly vision, strategy and urgency in individuals and departments" (Clark and Thompson 2015, p.3) is the norm, then the obligation on nursing schools and academics to meaningfully and productively engage with, develop and be actively involved in research and scholarship is inescapable.

One major incentive driving (the external research review that is being presented and discussed) was the need to increase external research grant funding. Research funding in Sweden mirrors what most universities have experienced. Government funding for research is reducing while academics are expected to win more external grants. (This external review) was however, also determined to improve our school's research culture and performance for a broader good than simply funding and money.

Following the review and with ongoing support and involvement from our external reviewer and consultant the school continues to help staff appreciate and respond to the mercurial realities of the 'world' of research within Higher Education. This participatory presentation will help attendees understand and respond to changing funding mechanisms, growing research performance imperatives and emerging scholarship metrics that directly impact on the everyday work of academic and clinical researchers and how a School and its research efforts must operate.

#### **Purpose:**

The aim of this presentation is to highlight the importance of external faculty research review for our schools of nursing, midwifery and allied health, for our universities and for research units in our major hospitals.

It would be fair to say that few schools or researchers currently welcome the prospect of any external review or scrutiny of their research activities. There is a view that such external scrutiny may constitute unwanted and unwarranted 'audit intrusion' at best and a hugely expensive waste of time, resources and energy at worst.

In this session we counter this perception and offer a view and model of external research review that is enabling, catalytic and beneficial for researchers and for their organisations.

#### **Methods:**

Expected learning outcomes: Session participants will: gain insights into the mechanisms and benefits of external scrutiny of research culture; develop a deeper understanding of the need for faculty research development and appreciate the barriers that schools face and the enabling mechanisms likely to help both staff and school to succeed.

### **Results:**

We will present some of the key review findings from the major European university reviewed and focus especially on the lessons for the "school of nursing and allied health"

### **Conclusion:**

We will share processes and key lessons from a large European university's Evaluation of research culture and performance. Leaders of the school of nursing and health care involved, together with one of the external reviewers will reveal and discuss key lessons for the School, its nursing and health care researchers and for the global community of nursing and health care researchers. The presentation will also involve participants in challenging conversations regarding the need for external scrutiny, improving faculty research culture and enabling faculty adaption to the changing university world.

The external peer review process was determined to improve the university and school research culture for a broader good than merely 'money'; involving; improved education, greater research involvement, increased community engagement and more meaningful research co-production.

This presentation will help participants respond to research performance imperatives directly impacting on the everyday work of nurse educators and school leaders. We can no longer assume that as academics or researchers, that we will be 'left alone' to pursue whatever ideas take our fancy. Our research and its potential results, impacts and influence will be under even closer scrutiny in future.

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### **Title:**

Boosting Research Performance: Lessons Learned From External Scrutiny of Faculty Research, Culture, Strategies, and Approaches

### **Keywords:**

External research review, Research culture and Research scrutiny

### **References:**

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### **Abstract Summary:**

We will share key lessons from a major University's Evaluation of research culture and performance. "School of Nursing & Health" leaders and external reviewer will reveal and discuss salient learnings for researchers and schools. We will stimulate challenging conversations regarding the need for external scrutiny and how schools should respond.

### **Content Outline:**

#### Content Outline

#### Introduction

Boosting research performance is an expectation in every university school of nursing, midwifery and/or health care. This presentation details one University's experiences of such an external peer review. We highlight the process, advantages and outcomes from such a review and propose a universal application, based on the growing impetus for greater entrepreneurialism in nursing and research, that such an external review process should be the 'norm' for every school.

Main Point: The need for external peer review of research culture is now an imperative

1. Supporting point #1: This cannot be 'done internally'
  - a) Benefits of external peer review
  - b) Ideal process(s) of external review
2. Supporting point #2: Contemporary criteria of a 'good' research culture are changing
  - a) Moving beyond grants and publications
  - b) Altmetrics, impact and influence in 2018 and beyond

#### III. Conclusion

- A. Why external research review should be welcomed and celebrated
- B. The 'show me' imperative will never go away. Universities and schools are going to demonstrate, not merely claim, research excellence.

First Primary Presenting Author

#### **Primary Presenting Author**

Philip Darbyshire, PhD  
Philip Darbyshire Consulting Ltd  
Director  
Highbury  
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**Professional Experience:** Clinical roles in children's nursing and disability 1977-1982. Diploma, Masters and PhD in Nursing 1981-1992. Academic positions and professorships at 4 Universities 1989-present. I am currently a Director of Philip Darbyshire Consulting Ltd, the consulting company that I established in

2008 on leaving my last full-time Professorial 'Joint Chair' position after 13 years. In my current Independent Consultant role, my main areas of expertise are; health service and university sector evaluation and redesign while enabling organisations to 'change how they change'; nursing entrepreneurialism, and enhancing the image and profile of nurses and nursing.

**Author Summary:** Philip Darbyshire has been a children's nurse, educator, writer, researcher and educator for over 40 years. He is internationally recognized as a leader in nursing research and service development. For 13 years he led one of Australia's most successful practice-based research departments at Women's & Children's Hospital in Adelaide, described by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards as, "an example of excellence in research leadership". His consultancy helps organisations 'change how they change'.

**Any relevant financial relationships?** Yes

Relationship	Description of Potential Conflict
Consultant	I was one of the external reviewers involved in this university-wide external peer review.

Signed on 12/10/2017 by *Philip Darbyshire*

Second Secondary Presenting Author

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**Professional Experience:** Maria Müllersdorf, PhD OTR, Associate Professor, is a highly experienced and published Occupational Therapist who is also the Head of the School of Health, Care and Social Welfare at Mälardalen University, Eskilstuna, Sweden

**Author Summary:** Maria Müllersdorf, PhD OTR, Associate Professor, is a highly experienced and published Occupational Therapist who is also the Head of the School of Health, Care and Social Welfare at Mälardalen University, Eskilstuna, Sweden

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**Professional Experience:** Dr Gustafsson is director of research for the School of Health, Care and Social Welfare at MDH. She has a keen interest in developing health care technologies that will benefit patient care. After more than 10 years as a practicing RN and university studies, I started my academic career at Mälardalen University in 2000. In spring 2004, I was accepted as a PhD student at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. In November 2009, I was awarded my PhD in gerontology nursing.

**Author Summary:** Dr Gustafsson has a PhD, is a Registered Nurse Teacher, Associate professor and R&D coordinator at the Social Contract, Mälardalen Competence Center of Health and Social Welfare. Her research interests are: older people's health and social welfare, health and welfare technology,

everyday life for adults and older people with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities and one of the creators of the interactive robot pet, JustoCat®.