

## **Scenario 4: Engaging supervisors in broadening the doctoral student experience**

Your Faculty has been successful in introducing a form of coursework, research seminars and other research activities for HDR students, including a two-day student research induction and a two-day student conference later in the year. Research students are enthusiastic and have high levels of participation, but very few supervisors have engaged with these activities.

Most supervisors perceive that they do a good job supervising their students and attend for their own students' presentations, but the students believe that they could learn more if they were exposed to other researchers. The students want opportunities to hear about other research being undertaken in the faculty, to hear about different research approaches and to discuss issues around good quality research. They particularly want more interaction with senior professors and other leading researchers in the Faculty.

You sense that there is tension because some of the successful supervisors don't think it's necessary for their students to experience a range of views. You think that people would want to show off their students and that candidates need to have the opportunity to shop around but you have come to realise that there's a group of supervisors who strongly believe that it is in the best interests of students to present to their own research group. They don't want their students to be influenced by other supervisors and so they stop them from attending anything else that the department/faculty puts on. These supervisors are protecting territory and are successful and represent a powerful faction in the department. On the other hand you know of one supervisor who only read one draft of a thesis and he's one of the best supervisors. He had coffee with students a lot of the time. If there's something working why would you want to change it?

Also you are aware that it's difficult to get the poor supervisors to attend anything as well.

You want to develop a proposal for a range of activities to help build a sense of a research community and broaden the research experience for HDR students.

1. What kinds of activities do you think would help build a research community?
2. How do you initiate engagement from supervisors? Do you need to issue personal invitations? How do you traverse different territories in the faculty?
3. Whose support do you need? Do you need the backing of somebody with authority, eg Dean/ Head of department, or do you need the most active researchers to support this initiative?
4. What will motivate supervisors to participate? How do you create value for supervisors?