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International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices

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International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices

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Most importantly, the author would like to thank the many practitioners who provided case examples and expert advice to illustrate the practical applications of the concepts presented in this paper. Their contributions enrich the understanding of the complexity of the issues involved in international partnerships, and highlight important lessons for others involved in such collaborations at their institutions.

Executive Summary

ACE was a pioneer in research on international higher education partnerships. As global engagement activity has increased among ACE member institutions in recent years, senior international officers and other leaders have continued to seek ACE's guidance in this area. Indeed, our work with colleges and universities through the Internationalization Laboratory and other programs has provided us with a **solid foundation of experience** upon which we might develop a set of partnership guidelines or standards.

However, our discussions with institutional leaders have suggested that given the breadth of ACE's membership in terms of institution type and level of internationalization, as well as the ever-growing range of global partnerships and activities available, a one-size-fits-all set of standards would not adequately address the nuances and realities of international partnership development by U.S. institutions. Rather, it would be more valuable for us to **delve deeper into existing standards** developed by other organizations, and leverage our institution network and collective experience to explore their practical application in a variety of institutional, cultural, and programmatic contexts.

This project was designed to address this need. We **analyzed standards of good practice** for international higher education partnerships set forth by a variety of organizations (in the United States and around the world) to identify areas of convergence, as well as gaps (i.e., important issues that are not adequately addressed by the standards, but that require attention). Here, we synthesize these areas thematically, and provide examples and advice from institutions whose experiences illustrate key concepts. The themes include:

Program administration and management:

- Transparency and accountability
- Faculty and staff engagement
- Quality assurance
- Strategic planning and the role of institutional leadership

Cultural and contextual issues:

- Cultural awareness
- Access and equity
- Institutional and human capacity building
- Ethical dilemmas and “negotiated space”

By identifying these themes and considering their practical implications, our intent is to build on previous work in these areas, and advance the conversation around these important issues. Ultimately, we hope to **inform the actions of higher education leaders and other stakeholders** who endeavor to create robust, sustainable international partnerships that further the mission and goals of all institutions involved, and positively impact participants and the communities of which they are all a part.

“As evidenced by the advent of the printed book, the global migration of scholars, and the widespread sharing of research internationally, the world of higher education and knowledge development has always been networked.

What is different today is that international networking has become inculcated as a key factor in the fabric of higher education. . . . Active engagement with the rest of the world has become fundamental to a high quality education, one that prepares students and their communities for the larger world in which they will live and work.”

(American Council on Education 2011)

Introduction

Colleges and universities worldwide—of all types and serving the full spectrum of student populations—are grappling with how best to equip their graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the globalized world of the twenty-first century, and ensure their own relevance and standing in the global higher education community. When done carefully, in accordance with overall institutional mission and goals, building relationships with counterparts abroad can be a key aspect of strategies to address these issues. **Increasingly, the question is not whether to engage globally, but how.**

For many institutions, there is no **shortage of options**. Around the world, governments are implementing policies to fund study abroad, attract international students, and encourage innovative institutional collaborations. A diverse array of institutions are eager to establish joint and dual degree programs and other types of partnerships. And in many fields, the very nature of knowledge is changing; as disciplines themselves become more international in scope, opportunities for faculty research collaboration around critical global issues are likely to increase.

Various **data indicate that institutions are indeed forging partnerships** with their counterparts abroad. For example, nearly half (45 percent) of the institutions that responded to ACE's 2011 Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses survey reported that they offered one or more international collaborative programs (joint degrees, dual degrees, and/or certificates) arranged with non-U.S. institutions overseas to their "home campus" students, or were in the process of developing such programs (ACE 2012). Along similar lines, a 2013 survey by the International Association of Universities (IAU) found that among 782 institutions worldwide that reported data on international collaborative degree programs, 64 percent offered joint degree programs with partners abroad, and 80 percent offered dual degree programs (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014).

Certainly, the prospects are exciting. But along with all the opportunities comes a **multitude of challenges**, ranging from identifying appropriate models for collaboration, finding partners, and negotiating agreements, to managing cultural differences and expectations, to evaluation and assessment. And as high-profile cases that appear in the media illustrate, missteps at any part of the process can create significant ethical, logistical, and reputational problems.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

ACE was a pioneer in research on how institutions can navigate these complexities and successfully expand their global reach. As international partnership activity has increased among ACE member institutions in recent years, senior international officers and other leaders have continued to seek ACE's guidance on how to establish successful collaborations. Reflecting these requests, ACE's 2011 Blue Ribbon Panel Report, *Strength Through Global Leadership and Engagement: U.S. Higher Education in the 21st Century*, identified **international partnerships as a key priority for ACE's internationally focused research and programming** going forward.

The question was how ACE could best advance knowledge in the field and serve the needs of its members in this area. **One possibility was for ACE to develop a set of good practices or standards** for international partnerships based on our work with colleges and universities through the ACE Internationalization Laboratory and other programs. A variety of university associations, government bodies, professional groups, and other entities (both in the United

States and abroad) have developed such guidelines, a number of which are cited as examples in ACE's Blue Ribbon Panel report.

While the Blue Ribbon Panel acknowledged the importance of these statements, it also noted that individually, they do not “deal adequately with the complexities of cross-cultural academic partnerships, and are not sufficiently nuanced to account for distinctions of principle or discrepancies in academic practice shaped by different standards and resources.” Our discussions with institution leaders suggest that given the breadth of ACE's membership in terms of institution type and level of internationalization, as well as the ever-expanding range of global partnerships and activities available, it is **unlikely that a one-size-fits-all set of standards could (or even should) be achieved** that would address the needs and circumstances of all institutions.

Rather than developing a new statement or code of practice, therefore, we determined that it would be more valuable for us to **delve deeper into the existing standards** set forth by other organizations, **analyze their content and comprehensiveness**, and **provide insights into their practical application** in a variety of institutional, cultural, and programmatic contexts. Using the codes of good practice cited in the Blue Ribbon Panel report as a starting point, we took an in-depth look at five such statements, which are summarized in **Table 1**. Further details about the content of each are included in the Appendix.

COMMON THEMES

As indicated by the information in **Table 1**, different statements are intended to address different types of partnerships and activities, and different stakeholders involved. By examining them collectively, however, we identified a set of common themes that are widely applicable across a range of relationships and activities. A number of these themes address **practical strategies and good practices for program administration**, i.e., how to develop and operate responsible, sound relationships and programs. Examples include transparency and accountability, faculty and staff engagement, and quality assurance. Certainly, challenges still arise in these areas, but as more institutions have established successful partnerships, the field has matured and broad consensus on good practices has largely been achieved. As a result, the guidance set forth is fairly clear and consistent among the standards.

As partnership management becomes increasingly routinized, however, there is an opportunity for program leaders to look beyond operational issues to the impact of their activities on students, faculty, and the participating institutions and educational systems, as well as the larger communities of which they are a part. In this vein, the standards also address **broader cultural and contextual considerations** surrounding partnerships, including cultural awareness, access and equity, and capacity building. Compared with management issues, these themes are generally more complex; good practices are emerging, but there is greater variation among the standards in terms of how they are addressed, and more outstanding questions about practical applications.

In the remainder of this report, we **synthesize and explore these common themes**, and use real-world examples to illustrate how institutions and programs are applying the guidelines, as well as the challenges they face in doing so. In addition, we **identify important gaps**—e.g., issues such as strategic planning and dealing with ethical dilemmas that are critical to partnership development but are not detailed in the existing standards—and suggest good practices in these areas.

Throughout the project, our analysis often led to **additional questions**, particularly in terms of practical application and programmatic realities in varied contexts. In many cases, what initially seemed like straightforward guidance in the standards proved much more complicated, giving rise to a host of interrelated issues and challenges. Rather than trying to provide all the answers here, **we raise these issues as topics for further discussion and research**, and for **reflection on campus** as institutions chart their own paths toward productive and sustainable global partnerships.

METHODOLOGY

Before turning to an in-depth discussion of the themes, a few notes on **methodology** are warranted:

- While some of the standards include advice for governments, students, and other audiences, here we focus specifically on guidance for institutions, and the administrators and faculty who oversee the development and implementation of international partnerships. We recognize that there are issues addressed in individual statements that we do not explore in depth in this report.
- A variety of partnership activities are addressed, including student exchanges, teaching collaborations, delivery of academic courses to overseas participants, and faculty research; mirroring the standards themselves, we often use the term “program” in this report to encapsulate these activities.
- Finally, many of the standards are global in scope, and the themes identified are applicable regardless of the countries involved in the partnership. However because ACE’s membership—the primary intended audience for this paper—consists mainly of institutions in the United States, many of the examples and guidance provided are geared particularly toward U.S. institutions as they pursue partnerships abroad.

Table 1. Statements of Principles and Good Practice

	Title and Year of Statement	Scope
Council of Europe	<i>Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education</i> (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions and programs • Teaching staff • Students • Agents (i.e., third parties) • Other stakeholders (e.g., employers, public)
The Forum on Education Abroad	<i>Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad</i> , 4th ed. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education abroad practitioners and program • Higher education institutions (HEIs) offering education abroad • Students
International Association of Universities (with ACE, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation)	<i>Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide</i> (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEIs and their non-governmental associations worldwide • National governments and intergovernmental organizations
New England Association of Schools and Colleges	<i>Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals</i> (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEIs
OECD (with UNESCO)	<i>Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education</i> (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Higher education institutions/providers including academic staff • Student bodies • Quality assurance and accreditation bodies • Academic recognition bodies • Professional bodies

Program Administration and Management

THEME 1: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Cross-border higher education should be accountable to the public, students and governments. . . . Higher education institutions and other providers of cross-border higher education should provide clear and full information to students and external stakeholders about the education they provide.

(International Association of Universities 2005)

Transparency refers to **accessibility of clear, accurate, and timely information** across all levels of global engagement for all stakeholders. It presumes disclosure of relevant documents, procedures, and policies, and requires **well-designed systems for organizing, managing, and distributing information** to appropriate audiences. **Language considerations** are important as well; translation of materials may be necessary to ensure they can be fully understood by all constituents.

Transparency is a **precondition for accountability**; without access to transparent information, it is impossible for accrediting agencies, funders, potential students, and other interested parties to assess the quality of programs, and determine whether they are delivering on their stated objectives. Mechanisms by which partnerships and programs should hold themselves accountable to their various stakeholders include **adhering to legal requirements** and procedures surrounding program operation, reporting, and auditing; responding quickly and completely to **requests for information**; and **participating in accreditation** and other external quality review processes (see more details in the “Quality Assurance” section).

Though specifics will vary based on activity type, the standards point to a number of key areas for which consistent, up-to-date information should be readily accessible.

Program Parameters and Procedures

A well-defined **description of the partnership** is a key foundational document; among other elements, it may include a mission statement, program goals and objectives, and the competencies students, faculty, and staff should expect to gain through participation. Details about the educational services provided and specific program activities should also be available.

Building on the program description, various policies and procedures related to **operations** should be delineated clearly. Memoranda of understanding and documents pertaining to governance, management structures, and staffing (e.g., organization charts and job descriptions) should be maintained and revised as needed, along with records related to educational facilities and physical plants. Safety and quality assurance standards and practices should be clear, as should the criteria and procedures for terminating or modifying the partnership. Crisis management plans should be devised, with key components communicated to participants. Conflict resolution methods should be articulated in case of disputes among the collaborating parties.

Financial records for all activities of the partnership must be maintained and reports issued in accordance with applicable laws and accepted accounting practices; U.S. institutions should ensure they have adequate information from partners abroad to fulfill their U.S. record-keeping and reporting obligations. Contractual and other financial relationships should be defined and disclosed.

Participant Policies

For student programs, **criteria or standards for registration and enrollment** should be clearly defined, and made available to potential applicants, along with information about the selection process (e.g., Who is involved? How are decisions made? Is there an appeals process?). This also applies to competitive grants and scholarships for students or faculty. Information about **tuition, fees, and other expenses** should be provided to all applicants.

Transparency is also needed when it comes to **expectations for participants** (students, faculty, staff, and others). Policies governing academic credit, field work, student assessment, and conduct (academic, behavioral, employment, etc.) should be provided to participants, along with procedures for enforcement of the latter. Information about advising, student support services, and other resources for academic and career planning should also be readily available, as should details about how academic programs and services are evaluated (see the “Quality Assurance” section for additional discussion).

A Template for Transparency: University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota (UMN) recently developed a new **template for international affiliation agreements** that maps out in detail the administrative structure for faculty and student exchanges, admissions criteria (when applicable), and the academic and financial responsibilities of each institution. It is intended as a **discussion guide** for the faculty and administrators spearheading the collaboration on both ends, and a way to **ensure that they think through all the operational details** of the faculty and/or student exchange—and that they comply with UMN policies and procedures.

According to Molly Portz, chief of staff for UMN’s Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, previous iterations of the template provided the **standard legal language** (e.g., language related to liability issues) required for partnership agreements, but did not address the **“nuts and bolts”** of how the program or activities would actually play out. In the past, for example, despite a signed agreement, partner institutions (as well as UMN faculty and departments themselves) often did not have a clear understanding of the academic and administrative requirements of exchanging students. This led to difficult discussions down the road, and in some cases, a realization that the partnership was not actually viable.

Portz notes that the new template, which includes both the standard legal language and operational details, is intended to serve as an **“educational tool”** to apprise leaders—within UMN, as well as at the institution abroad—of admission criteria, communications plans, and other institution-wide policies that must be reflected in agreements. She is optimistic that it will help inform decision making about the viability of relationships well before an agreement is signed, and ensure that all parties are aware of and comfortable with the terms of engagement.

Table 2. Sample Standards: Transparency and Accountability

Topic	Source	Guidance
Program description and goals	OECD	Institutions should “provide complete descriptions of programmes and qualifications, preferably with descriptions of the knowledge, understanding and skills that a successful student should acquire.”
Participant selection policies	The Forum on Education Abroad	“The organization maintains, and makes publicly accessible, its commitment to fair and appropriate policies regarding student selection and code of conduct.”
Academic policies	The Forum on Education Abroad	“The organization maintains clearly stated and publicly available policies on academic matters related to education abroad; regularly reviews them for relevance and effectiveness; and implements appropriate changes as needed.”
Financial records	NEASC	“The U.S. institution provides financial information that describes its total financial income and direct expenditures and overhead costs for the international site.”

THEME 2: FACULTY AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Commitment to quality by all higher education institutions/providers is essential. To this end, the active and constructive contributions of academic staff are indispensable.

(OECD 2005)

Well-qualified academic and administrative staff are fundamental to the success of international partnerships and programs. Given the challenges inherent in cross-border collaboration, a deep commitment to the goals of global engagement—along with a willingness to take a long view of the benefits—is important for all personnel. To this end, a number of the standards address ways to ensure the involvement and ongoing development of enthusiastic, engaged faculty and staff.

Organization and Administration

From the outset of the partnership, a well-defined **organizational structure** is needed. The scope of responsibility for all positions should be specified, including reporting lines and performance benchmarks. Review procedures and other mechanisms for faculty and staff accountability should be delineated. For all collaborations, appropriate administrative staffing on the home campus is needed; for program sites abroad, a full-time resident director from the home institution who oversees daily operations may play an important role in the administrative structure of the program. Some institutions have also established administrative offices in countries where they have significant partnership activity as an on-the-ground support and advocate for engagement.

Emerging Trend: International Partnership Directors

ACE's *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* study found that as of 2011, just over one-third (37 percent) of responding institutions had one or more professional staff or faculty members dedicated at least half time to the development/monitoring of international partnerships; at doctoral institutions, the percentage (78 percent) was more than twice that of the overall pool of respondents.

At large institutions with a high level of international engagement, keeping track of and managing all the moving parts of international partnerships is in fact becoming a full-time job. In recent years, a number have created positions such as "**director of international partnerships**," which focus specifically on **developing and carrying out a strategy for international partnerships**, **facilitating relationships** and collaborations, ensuring regulatory compliance and quality, and **championing global engagement** throughout the institution.

A panel on partnership strategies at ACE's Leadership Network for International Education (<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Leadership-Network-for-International-Education.aspx>) meeting in November 2014 addressed the emergence of such director positions. Participants noted the need for partnership directors to "**wear many hats**," and serve as a "**nexus and point of internal cohesion**" around institutional global engagement. Because of the multifaceted nature of partnerships, directors need to be attuned to teaching, research, outreach, financial, and legal matters, and must be **well connected** to their institution's staff in those areas.

Balance was also a key theme; partnership directors must balance the strategic goals of the institution with the interests and activities of faculty members, and facilitate connections between "top down" and "bottom up" initiatives. Other terms used to describe their role included **matchmaker** (between the institution and partners abroad, and between faculty and appropriate collaborations), **police officer** (enforcing institution-wide policies around partnerships), **diplomat** (negotiating among key stakeholders whose views may be contradictory), **archivist** (serving as a repository of institutional knowledge and expertise on partnerships), and **philosopher** (being able to keep the bigger picture—and broader strategy—in mind while managing partnership details).

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Emerging Trend: International Partnership Directors *(continued)*

Although not every institution has or will have a designated partnership director, the same set of skills, activities, and characteristics are needed by senior international officers or other international programs staff whose jobs entail a substantial (and often increasing) component of partnership management. Because of their direct tie to academics, positions with a focus on partnerships often report (directly, or with a step or two in between) to the **provost or chief academic officer**, though reporting lines in other units (e.g., the president's office or economic development office) appear as well.

Hiring and Employment Policies

In tandem with administrative structures, **faculty and staff qualifications** should be addressed. Whether already employed by the participating institutions or hired specifically for a new collaborative venture, personnel should possess the knowledge, skills, academic degrees, and/or professional certifications needed to perform the work required by their positions. All parties should ensure that faculty meet the qualification standards and expectations of their respective institutions and education systems. In line with the “Transparency and Accountability” theme outlined previously, hiring procedures should be transparent, and should consider the ability of candidates to work in an international context.

In order to attract and retain faculty and staff who possess the desired qualifications, issues of **compensation and career tracks** require attention. Policies for promotion, advancement, and termination should be clear. Institutions should consider whether any of their existing policies (e.g., tenure standards) pose barriers to faculty mobility and other international activities, and whether modifications should be made to support greater overall global engagement by faculty and staff. The standards also stipulate that fair salary levels should be carefully established and maintained, taking into account scope of responsibilities and personal expenses; the challenges that arise in determining what constitutes “fair” in different economic contexts are explored in the “Ethical Dilemmas and ‘Negotiated Space’” section.

Forthcoming Research: Tenure and Promotion Policies

ACE's *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* study found that as of 2011, **just 8 percent of responding institutions had guidelines in place that specified international work or experience as a consideration in faculty promotion and tenure decisions**. The same percentage reported such guidelines in the 2006 iteration of the survey, indicating no movement in this area during the subsequent five-year period.

In order to inform institutional decisions and policymaking, ACE is taking a **closer look at those tenure and promotion policies—at the institution, college, and department levels—that do include international engagement** as a consideration. Our analysis includes the aspects of faculty work that are addressed (e.g., teaching, research, and service), the particular activities that are encouraged, discipline-specific variations, and the effectiveness and impact of such policies. The report will be released in fall 2015.

Ongoing Support and Engagement

Particularly for partnerships that entail faculty mobility, **working conditions** may be a concern. A safe environment with adequate access to resources is necessary for faculty and staff to perform their duties. The standards stipulate that sufficient office/lab space should be provided, along with access to the Internet, libraries, and other resources. While they acknowledge that it is necessary to recognize local constraints in these areas, however, the standards do not address in detail what is considered acceptable, and what should be done when what

is considered “sufficient” by one partner institution (or what is available) does not meet the expectations of the other. These and related issues are discussed in the “Ethical Dilemmas and ‘Negotiated Space’” section.

While favorable policies and working conditions lay the groundwork for ongoing engagement by faculty and staff, it is their programmatic activities and experiences that will likely determine whether they remain involved long-term. Active **participation by faculty in decision making**—particularly on academic matters—is important not only to gain their buy-in and support, but to tap their expertise and ensure the program remains on track. **Professional development opportunities**, such as grants for teaching and research collaborations or travel to program sites, can help retain the faculty already involved in the activities of the partnership, as well as draw new faculty and staff into the collaboration.

Strategies for Faculty Engagement

Internationalization in Action (<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Internationalization-in-Action.aspx>), ACE’s online series that takes an in-depth look at particular aspects of the internationalization process, recently featured two installments on faculty engagement (<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Internationalization-in-Action-Previous-Installments.aspx>).

Strategies specific to international partnerships included:

Capitalize on the enthusiasm of faculty “champions.” A single faculty member or group of faculty members who are already heavily involved in international partnerships can serve as key catalysts for expanding and strengthening strategic partnerships. It is often these “champions” who are most familiar with the ins and outs of the relationship and how their colleagues might get involved.

When the Stanford Center for Professional Development (CA) (SCPD) created four new professional programs in China, Chinese faculty in Stanford’s School of Engineering and other departments were instrumental in the development process. These faculty took on the role of “ambassador” among their colleagues, encouraging their participation in the venture and acting as advisors to SCPD as the programs were developed.

Create programs and policies to engage more faculty in existing relationships abroad. Institutions with existing partnerships abroad can deepen those connections by purposefully exposing more faculty to the partner institution, publicizing those relationships broadly, and encouraging additional linkages.

Grand Valley State University’s (GVSU) “partnership delegations” are composed of both faculty and staff who visit existing partner institutions to engage in cultural and professional activities, and spend time with their career counterparts. One delegation travels each year, and the partner institution for the visit is selected strategically based on GVSU’s geographic and relationship priorities.

Find opportunities for long-term engagement, but short-term stays. Teaching a course abroad, for example, may not require a faculty member to actually be there in person for the entire term. She or he might go for three weeks at the beginning of the course, then conduct the course via video conference using online tools for course management.

Emphasize networking and multifunctional relationships. Any faculty travel abroad, whether for teaching, research, or conference attendance, should include time for meeting and building relationships with international colleagues. Faculty should be encouraged to consider how existing relationships can be repurposed or expanded.

Facilitating Faculty Research

While the standards discuss the desirability of faculty **research collaborations**, they do not address in detail good practices in this realm. Key challenges for U.S. faculty working with counterparts abroad may include obtaining grants and other funding from agencies and organizations that are primarily geared toward domestic projects, navigating the intricacies of institutional review board policies that were designed for the U.S. context, and working with partners whose institutions do not have the infrastructure, policies, and/or resources to support

a fully developed research enterprise. Cultural norms and expectations around authorship and intellectual property may also vary, leading to ethical dilemmas in some cases. (See the “Capacity Building” and “Ethical Dilemmas and ‘Negotiated Space’” sections for additional discussion of these issues.)

More work is needed to establish good practice guidelines in these areas. As a starting point for institutions to manage these and other potential challenges in the research arena, however, **communication and collaboration among faculty support units on campus is needed.** The senior international officer (and/or partnership director, if that position exists) should work with senior research officers to identify and promote grant opportunities for internationally collaborative work, and figure out how institutional review board policies might be adapted to other cultural contexts without losing their integrity and core principles. Also engaging financial officers regarding grant management logistics, legal counsel for intellectual property matters, area studies faculty to advise on context-specific research considerations, and other experts around campus can help pave the way for productive, enduring international research endeavors.

Supporting Faculty Endeavors Abroad: “Global Operations” Initiatives

In 2007, the University of Minnesota (UMN) introduced a new strategic plan that identified global engagement as a top priority. The Global Programs and Strategy (GPS) Alliance, an umbrella unit comprising UMN's various internationally focused offices, was tasked with **increasing faculty participation in international research collaborations and other activities abroad.**

With an eye toward this goal, as well as the **risk management issues** entailed in sending faculty overseas, the GPS Alliance and the UMN Office of Human Resources convened an **ad hoc committee** to address needs related to employees located outside the United States. The committee was composed of **staff from five units:** Office of Human Resources, Tax Management Office, the Office of General Counsel, GPS Alliance, and Office of Risk Management. Together, they worked to identify the primary challenges, internal process barriers, and key trouble spots faced by faculty in pursuing opportunities abroad.

Once these issues were identified, the UMN turned its attention to helping faculty navigate them successfully. The ad hoc committee was dissolved in 2012, and replaced by a standing committee: the **Global Operations Advisory Team (the A team)**, which provides guidance and advice to faculty on matters of potential risk entailed in their planned work overseas. Global Operations was granted institutional support for operations, project funding, and evaluation for an initial period of three years. Representatives from each of the five original areas still participate, along with a number of additional expert units; in instances where an issue comes up that is beyond the scope of the A team's expertise, outside consultants are brought in to provide advice.

Along similar lines, the University of Washington's Global Operations Support web page (<http://f2.washington.edu/fm/globalsupport/home>) provides a variety of **online resources** for faculty planning international projects, including information about tax issues, insurance, and budget development. Boston University's Global Programs office supplies a list of key contacts throughout the university that provide support for international activity, as well as a web page (<http://www.bu.edu/globalprograms/manage/health-and-safety/assessment/>) that walks faculty through the process of conducting a risk assessment for their proposed activities abroad.

Table 3. Sample Standards: Faculty and Staff Engagement

Topic	Source	Guidance
Qualifications	Council of Europe	"Staff members of the institutions or those teaching on the programmes established through transnational arrangements should be proficient in terms of qualifications, teaching, research and other professional experience."
Organizational structures	NEASC	"The teaching and administrative staff abroad responsible for the educational quality of the international program are accountable to a full-time resident administrator from the U.S. institution who is qualified by education and experience to represent the U.S. institution internationally."
Working conditions	The Forum on Education Abroad	"Each program has facilities adequate to realize program mission, recognizing that amenities might vary according to the host environment and culture. . . .The organization ensures continuous attention to the safety of students, faculty and staff at all locations."

THEME 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE

The organization has established, and regularly utilizes, formal review and evaluation processes of its policies and procedures and applies the results to continuously improve them.

(The Forum on Education Abroad 2011)

Development and operation of international education partnerships and programs should be guided by a **multifaceted quality assurance framework**. The standards highlight the need for ongoing assessment and evaluation, both formal and informal, conducted by both internal and external parties.

Preliminary Assessments

Assessment should begin at the very start of partnership development. Prior to committing to a collaboration, it is important for all parties to **assess their programmatic needs and goals**, and determine what joint programs and activities are appropriate. The "fit" of the proposed activities with overall institutional mission, strategy, and priorities should be considered, as well as alignment with academic needs and resource availability (see the "Strategic Planning and the Role of Institutional Leadership" section for further exploration of this theme). A comprehensive **risk assessment** of the potential program and activities is also needed, both in terms of physical or other risks to participants, as well as the financial and reputational risks entailed for the institution. Once a decision is made to pursue a collaboration, internal and external evaluation procedures should be developed to monitor program effectiveness over time, and make improvements based on the information gathered.

Accreditation

For many programs, accreditation is a **cornerstone of the quality assurance process**. The 2012 iteration of ACE's *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* study found that among programs arranged by U.S. institutions with overseas partners, a large majority were accredited in the United States and/or in the partner country; just over half (51 percent) of such programs were accredited in *both* countries. From the outset of any collaboration, all partners should ensure that proposed programs and activities adhere to requirements set forth by their respective accrediting bodies, and should follow specified procedures for periodic reviews in order to maintain institutional and/or program accreditation.

Certainly accreditation is important; however, **meeting the requirements of accrediting bodies may not be sufficient to ensure overall program quality.** In some contexts, accreditation procedures may be lacking; in others, existing procedures may not adequately address international partnerships and activities. Along these lines, the OECD (2005) *Guidelines for Quality Provision* state:

While in some countries the national frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications take into account cross-border higher education, in many countries they are still not geared to addressing the challenges of cross-border provision.

Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive frameworks for coordinating various initiatives at the international level, together with the diversity and unevenness of the quality assurance and accreditation systems at the national level, create gaps in the quality assurance of cross-border higher education, leaving some cross-border higher education provision outside any framework of quality assurance and accreditation.

The OECD statement goes on to provide guidelines specifically for quality assurance and accrediting bodies to help them address these gaps.

Deepening Partnerships Through Accreditation: CETYS Universidad

Since 2012, **Mexico's Center for Higher and Technical Education (CETYS Universidad)** has been accredited by the **Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)**, one of the six regional accreditation agencies in the United States. According to Fernando León García, president of CETYS:

While planning and self-studies had been an integral part of the institution's commitment to excellence since the 1960s, and it had received local and national recognition, CETYS decided that in the advent and spirit of NAFTA in the 1990s it was necessary to explore quality and institutional improvement from a cross-border perspective.

Accordingly, CETYS approached the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) to inquire about possible WASC accreditation. The assumption then, which is still valid now, is that engaging in cross-border institutional accreditation will lead to better prepared and more globally competitive students.

León García notes that while having U.S. accreditation has increased CETYS's appeal as a potential partner for new bilateral and multilateral collaborations, one of the most important outcomes of the process was a **deepening of existing relationships** with institutions in the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems. For example, as part of the internal review process, CETYS engaged with faculty experts from UCLA and CSU San Marcos to improve its library and information access systems. California faculty also served on the external review committee for CETYS's accreditation, and the relationships between CETYS and its California counterparts continue to flourish in other areas such as periodic review of academic programs and assessment of student learning.

CETYS's accreditation journey, León García observes, has been a **learning experience not only for his institution, but for its partners in the California systems, as well as for WASC**, as it has received an increasing number of applications from institutions outside the United States in recent years. With its emphasis on continuous improvement, the WASC process has helped CETYS **"not only meet but exceed similar standards being used in the Mexican context,"** which León García notes, potential U.S. partner institutions must also be cognizant of as they seek to establish collaborations with his and other Mexican institutions.

Ongoing Review and Continual Improvement

In conjunction with and/or in addition to accreditation procedures, a comprehensive quality assurance plan for partnership activities should include monitoring academic and administrative effectiveness through **student course and program evaluations** and gathering regular **input from faculty and administrators**, as well as **assessments of student learning** and **fac-**

ulty/staff performance reviews. External reviews by faculty from the home institution, members of governing boards, disciplinary association representatives, and other experts can also provide valuable input and perspectives. All assessment and evaluation should be **tied closely to the stated goals of the program**, and should aim to measure the extent to which these objectives are being met.

Key stakeholders in the collaboration should continually monitor the **overall health of the relationship**. Factors to consider include effectiveness of communication between partners, the extent to which all parties are “pulling their weight” and are sufficiently engaged in program activities, and any changes in respective commitment level to the collaboration.

Importantly, **assessment and evaluation should not be considered an end in themselves**. The results of these activities should be used to facilitate decision making and program planning, guide program enhancement, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders. Quality assurance plans should include procedures for sharing assessment and evaluation data, and discussing its application to make improvements. Partnerships should strive to create a **culture of continual improvement**, and a commitment by all parties involved to delivering the best possible programs to all participants.

Collaborative Evaluation: University of Tulsa and the China University of Petroleum

In the fall of 2014, the University of Tulsa (OK) (TU) and the China University of Petroleum Beijing (CUPB) launched a **comprehensive evaluation of their jointly administered dual degree program**, which allows Chinese students in the fields of petroleum engineering, chemical engineering, economics, finance, and accounting to obtain a bachelor’s degree from each of the two institutions. The project consists of **two parts: a student assessment and an overall evaluation of the program** that cover institutional impact as well as administrative and academic issues.

For the **student assessment**, a survey was developed by TU staff, including a visiting scholar from CUPB’s English department who has been involved with the program from the start, knows many of the participants, and is attuned to their expectations and experiences. The survey was administered to both current students and program alumni, for a total of 67 potential respondents. Students’ CUPB and/or TU email addresses, as well as Facebook and LinkedIn, were used to distribute the electronic survey.

In terms of **content**, respondents were asked about the English language instruction they received, orientation activities, support services, classroom experiences, and campus engagement, as well as the impact of the program on their post-graduation plans. The questions were presented in both English and Chinese, and respondents could choose to answer in either language.

For the **broader program evaluation**, TU and CUPB are in the process of gathering **qualitative data** from a variety of program constituents, including administrative staff, faculty who teach core program courses, and the president, provost, and other senior leaders at each institution. Topics include operational effectiveness, perceived value of the program, academic issues, and the contribution of the program to overall campus internationalization efforts.

According to Cheryl Matherly, TU’s vice provost for global education, **collaboration with CUPB is a key element of the evaluation project**, and reflects the overall nature of the program as a truly joint effort by both institutions. With the MOU coming up for renewal next year, Matherly and her colleagues at TU and CUPB intend to use the evaluation results **to identify administrative and academic aspects of the program that may require attention and changes going forward**, as well as to **refine their messaging** about the program to on- and off-campus stakeholders.

Table 4. Sample Standards: Quality Assurance

Topic	Source	Guidance
Risk assessment	The Forum on Education Abroad	"The organization considers health, safety, security and risk management in program development. . . . Risk assessments are conducted as part of the development process for new programs to evaluate and mitigate potential risks prior to the commencement of the activity."
Accreditation	OECD	Institutions should "consult competent quality assurance and accreditation bodies and respect the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving country when delivering higher education across borders, including distance education."
Faculty and staff performance	NEASC	"The U.S. institution formally and regularly reviews the performance of all faculty and staff associated with its international program."
Student learning	The Forum on Education Abroad	"The organization has stated educational objectives that foster student learning and development; has an established process for regularly collecting and analyzing data to assess the degree to which it is accomplishing each; and utilizes these findings to monitor, maintain, support, and continuously improve student success."

THEME 4: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The international program is rooted in the U.S. institution's stated mission and purposes and reflects any special social, religious, and ethical elements of that mission.

(New England Association of Schools and Colleges 2003)

While the standards provide detailed guidance on the development and operation of individual collaborations and programs, it is also important for colleges and universities to consider more broadly how these endeavors **align with and contribute to institutional strategic planning**. ACE's work with institutions has provided good practices in terms of overall institutional strategy, internationalization strategy, the role of institutional leadership, and strategies for selecting which partnerships to pursue.

Overall Institutional Strategy

Data from ACE's Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses study indicate that over the past decade, an increasing percentage of U.S. institutions have incorporated global education or other aspects of internationalization into their mission statements and strategic plans. When such documents include goals related to preparing students for a globalized world, forging connections with the global community, and the like, it is clear how international partnerships potentially contribute.

Even when internationally focused goals are **less explicit**, however, international partnerships may still have a role to play in overall institutional strategy—for example, by advancing diversity initiatives, enhancing faculty research production, promoting community engagement, or increasing the visibility of the institution. Regardless of how direct or indirect the link to stated strategic objectives, institutions should think carefully about international partnerships (collectively, and as particular opportunities arise) in light of competing priorities and focus areas, realistically assessing available resources and the extent to which such collaborations are likely to provide the desired return on investment in terms of mission, strategy, and goals.

Internationalization Strategy

In addition to their role in overall mission and strategy, institutions should consider how international partnerships fit into **existing campus internationalization efforts**. As indicated in **Figure 1**, ACE’s **Model for Comprehensive Internationalization** identifies six areas that require attention as institutions seek to achieve integrated, campus-wide internationalization.

Figure 1: CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization



Given their complexity and the commitment of time and resources required, international partnerships are **most likely to succeed when the institutional internationalization process is already underway**, and progress has been made in other areas. Having in place offices and staff that focus on international matters, a curriculum that is infused with global elements, and faculty policies that promote international engagement, for example, creates a solid framework for broader global engagement—a jumping-off point for partnerships. In making decisions about how to engage with counterparts abroad, institutions should **consider the extent to which the overall institutional environment is ready for international partnerships**, what other aspects of internationalization might require attention in order to support such relationships, and how partnerships can further advance efforts in other areas.

Role of Institutional Leadership

The **role of institutional leadership** in promoting and advancing international partnerships is also an important consideration. The 2012 edition of ACE’s *Mapping* study found that institution presidents are seen as a primary catalyst for campus internationalization efforts; in terms of partnerships in particular, a stated commitment by top institutional leaders can send a powerful message to the campus community about the priority placed on such collaborations. This in turn can influence decisions about resource allocation, academic policies, and other matters that impact the ease with which relationships and programs are established.

While the “nuts and bolts” of building partnerships and programs will likely be handled by faculty and administrative staff, **engagement of institutional leaders at key points** in the process (e.g., formal meetings with counterparts at the partner institution) can be important from a cross-cultural standpoint, and may also help reinforce their interest and commitment. The extent of the role of top institutional leaders, and their influence in terms of building momen-

tum for partnerships throughout the institution, will likely vary somewhat based on institutional structure and organizational culture; faculty and staff who work directly on international partnerships should bear these nuances in mind as they consider how best to engage top leadership in their endeavors.

Advancing Strategic Goals Through Partnerships: University of Arizona

As is the case for many new presidents, when Ann Weaver Hart took the reins at the University of Arizona (UA) in 2012, one of her first priorities was to develop a **new strategic plan** for her institution. The result, *Never Settle* (<http://neversettle.arizona.edu/Never-Settle-Strategic-Plan.pdf>), sets forth four main strategic priorities for 2014-19: “**engaging**,” “**innovating**,” “**partnering**,” and “**synergy**.” These are intended to support the broader strategic plan for Arizona’s public university system as a whole, which is developed and overseen by the Arizona Board of Regents.

The third pillar of the plan, **partnering**, states that UA will “create novel, substantive, and entrepreneurial partnerships with businesses, community groups, and governments to support and enhance our impact on the local and global community.” Additional details are provided about the activities entailed in meeting this objective, many of which involve international collaboration.

Examples include:

Expand opportunities to collaborate with schools, agencies, and industry on professional development and certificate programs statewide, nationally, and abroad.

Determine the best use of technology and other modes of delivering educational and informational content to best engage learners and communities locally and abroad.

Position the UA to serve as a preferred consultant in innovating, developing, executing, and assessing critical knowledge-based and capacity-development projects worldwide.

Once the institution-wide strategic plan was in place, **individual colleges and units were asked to review their own strategic plans** to ensure that they align with and support both the institutional and board of regents’ plans. As part of the process, the **Office of Global Initiatives**, which oversees UA’s global engagement activities, revised its own strategic plan to incorporate a particular focus on collaborations with higher education institutions and other organizations abroad—a natural fit with the third pillar of the institutional plan. In addition, new goals for increasing study abroad participation (including through partnerships) addressed the “engaging” pillar. A call for new types of collaborations—for example, to develop experiential, non-credit programs for UA students abroad and for international students coming to the UA—addressed the “innovating” pillar.

According to Dale LaFleur, director of institutional relations and a member of the Office of Global Initiatives staff, her unit’s strategic plan was, in turn, **used as a model by a number of colleges** as they sought to identify activities and objectives that would help them address the pillars of the institutional plan. As a result, developing more collaborations abroad, creating innovative international programs, and engaging more students in these activities became strategic goals for academic units throughout campus—some of which had significant experience in these areas, and some of which were entering new territory.

For LaFleur, all of this new activity means that now is both “**an exciting and challenging time**” as she and her colleagues work with colleges across the UA to carry out their new strategic goals around international engagement. Increasingly, LaFleur notes, she needs to “**think outside the box**” to develop innovative program models that fit the particular needs of the college and academic discipline involved. While the new strategic plan has meant “a lot of changes and adjustment,” LaFleur is optimistic that her institution will succeed in broadening and deepening its global engagement activities as a result.

Partnership Strategies

In the face of increasing opportunities for collaboration, the question now facing many colleges and universities is which partnerships to pursue, and how to manage their global engagement activities in a planned, coherent way. In some cases, institutions are identifying particular geographic or academic priority areas for new collaborations; others are seeking to deepen and expand existing relationships, or cull out inactive partnerships and those that no longer align with institutional goals. Many are implementing policies and procedures to guide program development and implementation across the institution.

In a recent ACE study on international joint and dual degree programs, administrators noted that in designing strategies and policies around international partnerships, it is important to **balance top-down and bottom-up approaches** (ACE 2014). Centralization of some aspects of international partnership development is needed; institutional policies surrounding the signing of memoranda of understanding, academic requirements, and legal considerations, for example, ensure that partnerships are consistent with institutional standards. Initiatives to promote collaboration (funding and other mechanisms) with partners in certain countries, or endeavors with a specific academic or research focus, may make sense given the institution's overall strategic goals.

As noted previously, however, faculty engagement is critical to the success of international partnerships. The administrators interviewed for ACE's joint and dual degree study concurred that any policies implemented at the institution level should **allow for—and capitalize upon—faculty interests and initiative**. One approach is to craft partnership strategies that delineate different “levels” of engagement; while some partnerships may be deemed “strategic” and targeted for expansion at the institution level, informal faculty-to-faculty collaborations outside of these relationships may also be encouraged. A key role for staff involved in the development of international partnerships is to help identify the matches between faculty and institutional priorities, and facilitate relationships and program development at the appropriate level of engagement.

Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Virginia Commonwealth University's Evolving Partnership Strategy

Like many institutions that begin actively cultivating international partnerships as part of an internationalization strategy, in 2003 Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) found itself with **hundreds of memoranda of understanding (MOUs)** with institutions abroad, many—if not most—of which were inactive or outdated. The solution? A presidential initiative **targeting 15 institutions around the world as partners for strategic collaborations**. By concentrating efforts and resources, VCU aimed to establish broad and deep relationships fostering student and faculty exchange, collaborative academic programs, and joint research involving academic units across the institution.

In 2011, from a new strategic plan emerged three internationalization goals: improve recruitment and retention of international students and scholars; increase global engagement of student and faculty; and expand VCU's global research footprint. By these criteria **only a small number of the 15 partnerships had flourished as anticipated**. R. McKenna Brown, executive director of VCU's Global Education Office, described the situation:

In the early phase, the partnership itself was the goal, and academic units were charged to find ways to support it. We had to rethink the very notion of partnership, to recognize it as a means, not an end; to put the cart before the horse, so to speak. A “one-size-fits-all” model was not working. We needed a strategy flexible enough to meet the evolving priorities of our very diverse academic units. We needed **both strategic, institution-wide partnerships, and academic unit-based collaborations that are more focused in scope**.

The criteria-based assessment of the original 15 identified three robust, multifaceted partnerships that firmly reflect the priorities of the university. Now known as “**University Strategic Partners**,” Fudan University (China), University of Córdoba (Spain), and University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) fulfill VCU's three strategic internationalization goals.

In addition, however, individual academic units are encouraged to develop their own strategies to pursue one or more of the internationalization goals, and are assisted in seeking out those partnerships that will best advance them. These partner agreements are called “**Academic Unit Strategic Partners**” and, according to Brown, are “scaled down from the ‘University Strategic Partners’ in order to support, specifically, what academic units are doing and help them contribute to VCU's overall internationalization and global engagement strategies.”

An example of an Academic Unit Strategic Partner, Brown noted, is an articulated transfer agreement with Christ University in Bangalore, India, which brings approximately 60 international students per year to complete an MS in business (before coming to VCU, the students earn 25 percent of their credits in India, then finish their degree in Virginia). The program helps VCU achieve one of its primary internationalization goals—increasing the number of international students on campus—but does not require an agreement that spreads across the institution and across disciplines.

Cultural and Contextual Issues

THEME 1: CULTURAL AWARENESS

[Institutions should] strive to ensure that higher education across borders . . . is culturally sensitive in its approach and content.

(International Association of Universities 2005)

Regardless of specific type or activity, all forms of global engagement involve **interactions of multiple cultures**. An awareness of the cultures involved—and the understanding that cultural differences present both **challenges and opportunities**—should underpin international education collaborations. The standards address a number of issues in this realm.

Managing Cultural Differences

Broadly, the standards stipulate that the **cultural contexts of all parties** should be taken into account at all stages, from initial negotiations among potential partners, to program design and implementation, to monitoring and maintenance of the relationship. Faculty and staff should possess **intercultural communication skills**, as well as a shared knowledge of the specific cultures represented; training and development opportunities may be needed to ensure a high level of cultural competence among program personnel, particularly in terms of working with—and ensuring the success of—students of varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Even for faculty and staff with a high level of cultural competence, it can take years to develop an in-depth understanding of the partner institution’s cultural context, which includes not only national/regional culture, but institutional culture as well. **Candid discussions among stakeholders** on both ends of the partnership—both before the program is launched, and on an ongoing basis—about key aspects of their respective cultures can help identify possible points of tension, and smooth the way for mutually acceptable solutions. In terms of **administration**, issues to address may include partners’ cultural mores surrounding reporting structures, the role of institutional leadership, decision-making processes, communication of information, negotiating styles, relationship management, and dealing with crises.

In the **academic** realm, there are often cultural differences in pedagogy (e.g., lecture versus discussion format), grading and evaluation practices (e.g., what counts toward a student’s grade), the use of technology in the classroom, and expectations surrounding the role of faculty and the faculty-student relationship. Processes for determining content and curriculum (e.g., the extent to which faculty have autonomy in these areas) may also differ. And, as noted in the “Faculty and Staff Engagement” section, there may be differences in research culture (e.g., surrounding authorship, participant consent procedures, and methodology).

Given their pivotal role in this realm, it is **critical for faculty to be involved** in all discussions around academic issues. Together, faculty from both partner institutions should work together to find “common ground” and **set the tone for the program’s own academic culture**, which will likely entail elements from the cultures of all partners. For some institutions, adopting the pedagogical practices of the partner institution may in fact be a goal of the collaboration, which should be taken into account in establishing the program’s academic policies and practices.

In some cases, the cultural mores and practices of one partner may directly conflict with those of the other, raising questions about how to find a mutual acceptable solution and move forward with the relationship. These issues are explored in the “Ethical Dilemmas and ‘Negotiated Space’” section.

Faculty Face-to-Face: Appalachian State University and Universidad de las Américas

ACE's 2014 study, *Mapping International Joint and Dual Degrees: U.S. Program Profiles and Perspectives*, found that academic issues such as course equivalences, differences in teaching and grading methodologies, and expectations about the role of faculty posed challenges for a majority of the joint and dual degree programs surveyed. To manage these issues, some respondents cited **exchanges and in-person meetings** between faculty at the two collaborating institutions as a key strategy.

Prior to the launch of their dual degree program in communications, for example, Appalachian State University (NC) and Mexico's Universidad de las Américas sent key program faculty back and forth so that they could not only discuss curriculum, course content, teaching styles, and other academic issues, but **see how the program would actually play out on each other's campuses**. Faculty were able to get to know their counterparts, and get a head start on developing the unique cultural norms and practices of the new joint program.

Importantly, these initial face-to-face meetings also gave program faculty the opportunity to work through their own cultural differences, **build relationships, and establish open lines of communication**. As a result, they have since been able to quickly and effectively address unforeseen academic challenges that have arisen during implementation, such as the need to incorporate additional courses into the curriculum in order for students to fulfill both institutions' general education requirements. Strong faculty-to-faculty relationships have also **facilitated the involvement of others on both campuses** in the management of academic issues, including staff in the international offices, admissions, Office of Transfer Articulation, academic advisors, and Office of the Registrar.

Language Considerations

Language issues are also an important consideration for many programs. Conscious decisions should be made about the language of operation—both in terms of program management and in the classroom—taking into account the respective proficiency levels of faculty, staff, and students. Admission policies should be clear about language testing and proficiency requirements. When needed, **language training** should be provided to ensure that participants are able to function successfully; as noted in the “Transparency and Accountability” section, **translation** of administrative documents should be undertaken when necessary to ensure full comprehension by all parties, particularly for legally binding documents such as memoranda of understanding and other contracts.

Even when one official program language (often English) is identified, partners should respect the **linguistic diversity** of participants, and acknowledge the challenges of operating outside one's own native language. All parties should **exercise patience in managing miscommunications**, and be willing to allot extra time for conversations and correspondence. Applying cultural knowledge when communicating with partners is also important; for example, in cultures where discussion of problems is typically less direct, learning to **read between the lines** of what is written or said may be necessary in order to grasp the intended meaning.

American Content, Chinese Language: Colorado State University

In the fall of 2015, Colorado State University (CSU) will launch a new master's in tourism management (MTM) program, which will be **offered to Chinese students, and taught in Mandarin**. Students will have the option to study at CSU's campus in Colorado, or pending final approval by the Ministry of Education of China, they may complete the program at China Central Normal University (CCNU), which will partner with CSU in delivering the CSU degree.

CSU has offered an English-language MTM program on its Colorado campus since 2011, with strong international enrollment. According to Michael Manfredo, department head of human dimensions of natural resources at CSU, development of a program specifically for Chinese students was spurred by the rapid growth of the tourism industry in China and the need for well-trained graduates in the field—as well as the strong potential for joint tourism endeavors between the United States and China. The decision to offer the program in Mandarin was based on visits to Chinese academic institutions like CCNU, where CSU faculty heard repeatedly that there were many Chinese students who wanted and needed an MTM education, but English language ability—and the TOEFL scores required for the English-language program—presented a barrier.

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American Content, Chinese Language: Colorado State University *(continued)*

While there is no TOEFL requirement for admission to MTM China, **building English language proficiency is a key learning goal**; the curriculum includes required English courses, and all materials for “content” courses will be presented in both Mandarin and English. Courses will be **taught by bilingual CSU faculty** who will be onsite in Colorado and in China, with supplemental online content provided in some cases. CSU is currently working with the program’s advisory board, composed of U.S. tourism industry professionals, to offer graduates a year of employment in the United States upon graduation, so that they can apply their new skills and knowledge in a real-world setting and further develop their English ability.

Manfredo notes that development of the new program has been a “**community effort**,” involving a range of offices and individuals at CSU. The Office of International Programs, for example, has facilitated outreach to Chinese universities for student recruiting, while the Distance Education unit has provided key expertise and resources in building the program’s online materials.

Learning Outcomes

In addition to its role in successful program operation, cultural awareness is a key **learning outcome** of global engagement activities. The standards suggest that international education programs should help students and other participants develop the knowledge and skills they need to exercise cultural awareness and sensitivity in their own personal and professional interactions. These include knowledge of host country culture(s) and customs, as well as more general attitudes and competencies such as an appreciation for diversity and the ability to navigate unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environments.

It is important that international partnership activities intentionally help participants acquire this knowledge and skill base. **Orientation programs** and other pre-program activities should prepare participants for the cultural issues and differences they are likely to encounter, and set the stage for learning in these areas. Program curriculum, course content, and co-curriculum should promote **meaningful, substantive engagement** between students and faculty of different cultures, and direct discussion of key cultural concepts. Faculty and staff should also be attuned to cultural differences that arise organically in the classroom and through co-curricular activities, and how they can be used as “**teachable moments**” to further promote student learning and development.

Building Cultural Competence: Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw State University (GA) takes a multifaceted approach to cultivating campus-wide cultural knowledge and awareness through its “**Year of**” **Program**, which was launched in 1984. The program’s website (http://dga.kennesaw.edu/content/year_of_program) states:

The Year of Program takes a wide-ranging look at a specific country or region over the course of a full academic year with a series of lectures, performances, exhibits, and films, using a multidisciplinary approach to examine the country or region from its earliest history through present-day.

The program offers a unique opportunity for our campus and community to develop a rich, complex understanding of the area under study, to break down stereotypes and build connections across cultures, with an emphasis on student learning, faculty development, and community engagement.

Focus countries or regions are selected based on proposals by faculty and staff, with **partnership activity as a key criterion**. According to Dan Paracka, director of academic initiatives in Kennesaw’s Division of Global Affairs, for some years, the selection committee has targeted areas of the world with existing partnerships that could be expanded, while in other years it has chosen a particular country in which Kennesaw was not yet active, but wanted to be. Geographic diversity is also considered so that over their four years at Kennesaw, students will learn about four distinct parts of the world.

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Building Cultural Competence: Kennesaw State University *(continued)*

Paracka notes that fostering “**interdisciplinary intercultural competence**” and preparing faculty, staff, and students from all academic fields for global engagement are primary goals of the Year of Program. A planning committee composed of 40–50 faculty, staff, and students from a wide range of disciplines develops an initial schedule of activities, while a smaller “faculty learning community” receives funding for travel to the target country or region to further develop cultural expertise and international perspectives on their disciplines. Committee members serve as expert advisors for colleagues who are seeking to build their knowledge of other countries and cultures, and internationalize their teaching and research activities.

Over time, the program has **resulted in many new faculty-to-faculty and institutional collaborations** with a variety of partners abroad. As part of this year’s “**Year of the Arabian Peninsula**” activities, for example, the faculty learning committee has established a relationship with the government of Oman, which helped fund a conference on the role of women in Oman on the Kennesaw campus. Oman’s ambassador to the United States and minister of higher education were keynote speakers, and continue to maintain ties with the institution. Later this year, members of the faculty committee—and for the first time, a small group of students—will travel to Oman in order to explore possible partnerships with higher education institutions and industry for study abroad and other collaborative activities.

Table 5. Sample Standards: Cultural Awareness

Topic	Source	Guidance
Language	OECD	“Higher education institutions/providers . . . [should] ensure that the programmes they deliver across borders . . . take into account the cultural and linguistic sensitivities of the receiving country.”
Academic culture	NEASC	“The international educational program where possible and appropriate is adapted to the culture of the host country, while reflecting American educational values and practice.”
Learning outcomes	Council of Europe	“Transnational education arrangements should encourage the awareness and knowledge of the culture and customs of both the awarding institutions and receiving country among the students and staff.”

THEME 2: ACCESS AND EQUITY

Transnational arrangements should be so elaborated, enforced and monitored as to widen the access to higher education studies.

(Council of Europe 2001)

Access and equity are key considerations—and in many contexts, challenges—for higher education as a whole, so it is not surprising that they would arise as an important theme when it comes to international partnerships and programs. Indeed, the IAU’s recent study of colleges and universities worldwide found that among 10 potential “risks” of internationalization to institutions, “international opportunities accessible only to students with financial resources,” was the top-ranked concern for survey respondents. “Unequal sharing of benefits of internationalization” was ranked among the top three societal risks of higher education internationalization (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014).

Reflecting these concerns, the standards address the need for attention to access and equity in a number of aspects of international partnerships and program operation.

Admissions and Financial Aid

Policies and procedures for participant selection (student admissions, faculty/staff hiring, etc.) should be consistent and fair, and should result in a diverse group of participants. Efforts should be made to publicize programs to populations who typically may not be aware of international opportunities, but would potentially benefit from participation. As noted previously,

transparency about policies and procedures is important, and helps ensure their equitable application.

In order to increase access for students of limited financial means, the standards also stipulate that to the extent possible, collaborative programs should provide **financial aid** to participants, and/or help them locate and obtain additional funding. However, availability of funds, as well as mechanisms for distribution to students, and staff with expertise in this area, are likely to be limited at partner institutions in many parts of the world. In addition, questions remain about which students should receive aid for what activities, and how to determine students' financial need.

To address these issues, partners should work together to identify all possible funding sources (internal and external), provide guidance to students, and develop systems to ensure equitable allocation of whatever aid is available. Tuition-related policies, such as student exchange models that allow participants to pay their home institution tuition while studying at a partner institution and/or carry their financial aid with them, may also allow for greater participation by students at all collaborating institutions.

Promoting Access and Building Partnerships: University of Alaska

Tuition agreements between individual partner institutions are an important means of promoting access and economic diversity among program participants. Since 1991, however, the University of Alaska (UA) system has leveraged another type of partnership for this purpose: sister city agreements between Alaska and communities abroad.

UA offers **in-state tuition rates** to international students “from foreign cities and provinces that establish sister city or sister province relationships with the state of Alaska, or Alaska municipalities.” According to Susan Kalina, vice provost for undergraduate academic affairs at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), approximately 40 percent of the international students at her institution benefit from this policy, representing Russia, Canada, South Korea, Japan, and as a recent addition, China. She notes that a UAA education would be financially out of reach for most of these students if they were required to pay out-of-state tuition rates, so the policy's impact on access for students in partner cities is considerable. (University of Alaska 2001).

Although questions have been raised about the policy during tight budgetary times, Kalina believes that UA's commitment will remain strong. Given Alaska's many international ties, she observes, there is a **strong desire to maintain goodwill and solid relationships** around the globe. And, she notes, the policy has “opened the door” for institution-level partnerships between UA and universities located in the sister cities; examples include dual degree programs, study abroad agreements, and faculty research collaborations. This **“ripple effect” on UA's broader internationalization efforts and global engagement** is, according to Kalina, a key benefit and important outcome of the policy, and a compelling argument for its continuation.

Access to Resources

In addition to funding, the standards note that it is important for international programs to ensure participants' access to other key resources, including **housing, co-curricular activities, student services, and technology**. The latter, in particular, is often seen as a means to increase access to and student participation in collaborative courses and programs, as well as facilitate research and teaching cooperation among faculty. However in some environments, capacity building may be necessary first; for collaborations that entail the use of technology, one institution may need to **invest in physical equipment and/or training for staff and students** at the partner institution in order for joint programs to succeed.

As was noted in the “Faculty and Staff Engagement” section, what constitutes “adequate” in terms of access to resources may vary substantially by institution and country context. Housing arrangements that are standard in one country, for example, may be considered unacceptable in another; expectations for Internet speed, or more significantly, accessibility of

uncensored information also vary. These issues are explored in greater detail in the “Ethical Dilemmas and ‘Negotiated Space’” section below.

Equity Among Partners

While the standards primarily address access and equity for program participants, more broadly, **equity is also important in terms of the collaborating partners.** According to Susan Buck Sutton, senior advisor for international initiatives at Bryn Mawr College (PA), international partnerships should be viewed as “**alliances among equals.**” Although the contributions of each partner—and the benefits each realizes as a result of the collaboration—may not be the same, they should be balanced, with mutual respect and recognition given to each party for its role. Sutton (2015) elaborates:

Successful partnerships live up to the name; they are alliances among co-principals, with shared rights, responsibilities, and commitment. Joint decision-making, mutual benefit, and collaborative determination of goals and projects are foundational. Trust is developed through integrity, fairness, and honoring commitments. Opportunistic activity is downplayed.

What is to be provided by each side is clarified in a manner that addresses, rather than perpetuates, inequalities of resources and imbalances in exchanges. Intangible contributions are valued alongside monetary ones. There is respect for independence as well as partnership, and procedures for managing the disagreements, misunderstandings, and crises that inevitably arise.

When partnerships entail an explicit capacity-building component, the benefits to one partner may initially appear to outweigh the benefits to the other. In such cases it is particularly important for both partners to carefully consider what they will gain from collaboration, and take into account intangible benefits and contributions to longer-term institutional goals.

Table 6. Sample Standards: Access and Equity

Topic	Source	Guidance
Admissions	The Forum on Education Abroad	<p>“The recruitment and selection process is transparent and fair.” Organizations should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Encourage students from traditionally underrepresented groups to participate.” • “Encourage students from a wide variety of majors and fields of study to participate.” • Specify what measures are taken “to provide equal opportunity to students with disabilities.”
Financial aid	IAU	<p>“Cross-border higher education should be accessible not only to students who can afford to pay, but also to qualified students with financial need . . . [Institutions should] improve access to programs and courses by providing support to qualified students from other countries with financial need.”</p>
Access to technology	NEASC	<p>Programs abroad should “provide access to technology that will allow students to attain the same learning outcomes as students on the U.S. campus.”</p>

THEME 3: INSTITUTIONAL AND HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING

Cross-border higher education should strive to instill in learners the critical thinking which underpins responsible citizenship at the local, national and global levels; should strengthen developing countries' higher education capacity; [and] should contribute to the broader economic, social and cultural well-being of communities.

(International Association of Universities 2005)

The standards address the potential for higher education partnerships to contribute to capacity building at a number of levels: individual program participants; higher education institutions and systems; and most broadly, communities and society.

Individuals

At the level of individuals, higher education partnerships should foster **new skills and knowledge among students, faculty, staff, and other participants**. Certainly this includes **disciplinary knowledge**, particularly international perspectives on course and research material, and key global issues in the field. As noted in the “Cultural Awareness” section, regardless of academic focus, all cross-border programs should foster **cultural awareness** and the ability to communicate and work effectively with people from different backgrounds.

Beyond disciplinary knowledge and cross-cultural skills, the standards highlight the potential for international partnerships to help participants develop the broader skills and attitudes needed to succeed in the complex, globalized world of the twenty-first century. These may include **leadership skills, tolerance for ambiguity, critical thinking**, and the ability to **synthesize—and reconcile—information** from multiple, and sometimes conflicting, sources. These skills, in turn, can enhance participants' capacity for informed, reflective, and respectful **civic participation** in local, national, and international arenas. While not necessarily a direct goal of all programs, opportunities for participants to develop these broader “life skills” should be cultivated.

Higher Education Institutions and Systems

In terms of developing higher education capacity, the standards note that transnational education ventures should complement and **cooperate with, rather than compete with, local institutions**. While some level of competition may be inevitable in countries with large, well-developed higher education systems, establishing programs in academic areas that are not currently available, or building on existing programs to deliver higher-level content, can expand the breadth and depth of academic offerings, and allow local institutions and systems to meet the needs and interests of a greater number and diversity of students.

In addition to academics, the standards identify **research** and **quality assurance** as areas in which international partnerships can play an important capacity building role for local higher education institutions and systems. Cross-border research collaborations among faculty can help local academics plug into and establish **regional and international research networks**, further develop their research skills, publish in venues that bring attention to their work, and identify possible funding sources. Building the research capacity of individual faculty members ultimately expands the research capacity of institutions and the higher education systems of which they are a part.

In terms of quality assurance, as noted previously, collaborative programs should include robust internal and external quality control mechanisms; in some cases it may be possible for these mea-

tures to be expanded and adapted to cover programs outside the scope of the partnership, or to provide a basis for broader institutional or system-wide quality assurance mechanisms.

Training Social Workers in Afghanistan: Boston College, Hunter College, and Kabul University

In 2011-12, Hunter College's Silberman School of Social Work (NY) and the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work partnered with Afghanistan's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Ministry of Higher Education to develop **National Professional Standards** for the social work profession in that country, as well as **associate, bachelor's, and master's level curricula** to train practitioners. The project was funded by UNICEF through a grant administered by the Afghan government.

According to Martha Bragin, associate professor at Hunter and her institution's lead on the Afghanistan project, a **participatory research exercise to "define what social work is for Afghanistan"** was a critical first step in developing the professional standards and curricula. She and her colleagues talked to practicing social workers in Afghanistan about the knowledge, practical skills, attitudes, and values that are needed for their current work. This informed a curriculum that is suited to the needs of the profession in Afghanistan's unique cultural and political context.

Originally, the project was designed to include **two phases** of involvement by Hunter and Boston College: development of the standards and curricula, then implementation of Afghanistan's first bachelor's level social work program at Kabul University, the flagship public university in the nation's system of campuses located throughout the country. The Hunter and Boston College team planned to use the second phase to support program implementation, emphasizing development of a field based training component and, later, to support the development of the master's program.

Funding for the second phase did not come through, however; while those involved in the program on the U.S. end were able to meet with some of the faculty members who would eventually make up Kabul University's new Department of Social Work (many of whom were drawn from the institution's education psychology program), these interactions were much more limited than the ongoing relationship that was envisioned at the project outset.

Nonetheless, the organizers are pleased with the outcomes of the project. Eileen Ihrig, director of international programs for the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, notes that the University of Kabul has "**made the program its own,**" successfully delivering the new curriculum to its first cohort of students, who enrolled in April 2014. A second cohort will enter the program in April 2015.

Prior to the conclusion of their direct involvement, Bragin and Ihrig helped establish a **partnership between the Kabul University program and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)**, whose current president is dean emerita of the School of Social Work at India's Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Kabul University faculty have traveled to the Tata Institute for professional development, networking with colleagues in the field, and sharing good practices. Bragin notes that the IASSW remains interested in the partnership and she is optimistic that it will flourish going forward.

Communities and Society

Finally, at the level of communities and society, all parties engaged in international higher education collaborations should be mindful of the **impact of their programs and activities on the surrounding community**. With some programs, capacity development at this level may be direct—for example, through student service projects, faculty consultations for local government or industry, and other activities designed specifically to serve this purpose. In other cases, the impact is indirect—through building capacity among individuals who then contribute to the economic and social development of their communities via their work and civic participation, and by building the capacity of higher education institutions and systems to produce well educated, informed, and productive citizens.

Mutuality and Commitment

In considering the capacity-building potential of international higher education partnerships, two additional points are important. First, capacity building should be a **mutual learning process** by which context-appropriate enhancements are developed collaboratively. As noted in the "Access and Equity" section, partnerships should be approached as "alliances among equals,"

with recognition given to the contributions of and benefits to both parties. The **role of foreign partners is not to fix problems** for local higher education and communities, but to contribute knowledge, expertise, and effort that will complement and build upon existing resources. At the level of program participants, when students and others are engaged in service projects or other direct capacity-building activities, it is important that they are guided to approach their activities from this perspective, rather than from a “we have all the solutions” standpoint.

Second, **capacity building takes time**. Jamil Salmi, global tertiary education expert and former tertiary education coordinator at the World Bank, encourages the use of the term “capacity development” rather than “capacity building,” to emphasize the ongoing nature of the process (2014). Because the potential for capacity building increases as collaborations mature and relationships among parties deepen, a long-term commitment to engagement with partners and communities is needed in order to have a meaningful, enduring impact. Institutions should bear this time horizon in mind as they establish capacity-building objectives and assess the success of their partnerships and activities.

Capacity Building and Sustainability: Higher Education for Development

Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Higher Education for Development (HED) manages partnerships that join U.S. colleges and universities with higher education institutions in developing countries to address global development challenges in diverse sectors such as agriculture, health, and education, among others.

Jessica Bagdonis, director of program quality and impact at HED, notes that HED partnerships are designed to build capacity at multiple levels. Individual capacity building for institutional leaders, faculty, and staff, she asserts, is necessary in order to strengthen higher education institutions and systems, which in turn contribute to broader capacity development at the community and societal levels. Using higher education as the vehicle to address development challenges, HED partnerships carry out a range of activities to promote educational effectiveness (e.g., teaching, curriculum design, and research), strengthen institutional systems and organizational development, and facilitate strategic alliances among higher education institutions, government, and other entities. Enhancing these aspects of higher education results in shared knowledge and a competent workforce that can lead to innovation and policy change to advance broader human and social-development goals in society.

Given that HED partnership are funded for a limited time period, sustainability is an important concern. From the outset of each partnership, HED staff work with participating institutions to develop strategic plans, create management structures and monitoring processes, and leverage additional funding sources that will allow the partnership projects to continue beyond the end of the grant, thereby maximizing capacity development over time. Bagdonis and her colleagues recently developed a new “sustainability tool” to help partnering institutions assess their readiness for long-term operations and identify areas in which additional preparation may be needed.

An ongoing partnership between the University of Florida (UF) and Paraguay’s National University of Asunción (UNA) illustrates the potential of USAID-funded HED partnerships to build capacity at multiple levels. Since 2012, the two institutions have collaborated to promote opportunities for Paraguayan women in agriculture and education, and to “support national and local development goals aimed at fostering the advancement of women and girls.” A primary goal of the partnership is to increase women’s access to UNA’s agriculture programs, with a focus on developing leadership skills as well as field-specific expertise. Initiatives on this front include offering new gender and leadership training sessions for students and faculty, incorporating gender-inclusive materials into the existing curriculum, implementing institutional policies that encourage enrollment by women from indigenous and rural communities, and providing targeted academic and social support for women students.

Beyond the students who benefit directly from UNA’s academic offerings, the project seeks to build capacity in the broader community through workshops on self-esteem and leadership delivered to women and girls, as well as through strategic alliances with public and private organizations such as Paraguay’s Ministry of Women, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Federation of Production Cooperatives, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. Recently, for example, 66 women from three agricultural cooperatives and agricultural high schools in the San Pedro region participated in the second Forum for Women Leaders and Farmers, which aimed to develop leadership attitudes, increase gender awareness, improve administrative skills, and promote the exchange of experiences among different groups of women to enrich the learning process.

Table 7. Sample Standards: Capacity Building

Topic	Source	Guidance
Individuals	Council of Europe	"Transnational [education] arrangements should . . . contribute to [learners'] cognitive, cultural, social, personal and professional development."
Higher education	IAU	"Institutions should "strive to ensure that higher education across borders . . . strengthens local higher education capacity by, for example, cooperating, when appropriate, with local institutions."
Communities and society	NEASC	"Consistent with its own mission, the U.S. institution enhances the international community in which it operates."

THEME 4: ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND "NEGOTIATED SPACE"

The guidance provided by the standards is, in theory, hard to argue with. Certainly, sound management practices, including transparency, faculty engagement, quality assurance, and strategic planning are desirable for international partnerships, and collaborative programs should, to the extent possible, promote cultural awareness, access, equity, and capacity building. The examples provided throughout this paper illustrate how institutions and partnerships are successfully applying these standards in the development and operation of their programs and activities.

However, in the course of a partnership—particularly one that endures over time—it is likely that **situations and issues will arise for which the "good practice" is not so clear**. What happens when one partner's cultural customs or operating procedures conflict with practices, values, ethical principles, and/or laws of the other?

Resource Imbalances

A number of the potential ethical dilemmas faced by institutions as they pursue international partnerships stem from resource imbalances. As noted previously, the standards stipulate that program participants (faculty, staff, and students) should have access to adequate housing, libraries, technology, support services, and other resources to facilitate research, teaching, learning. Faculty should be fairly compensated, and financial aid should be provided to students in need. The level of access institutions can provide to these and other resources, however, is **highly dependent on their economic circumstances**; providing resources equivalent to those in the United States is not a possibility for institutions in many parts of the world.

In some cases, **capacity building** is a possible and desirable way to address these imbalances. As noted previously, for example, U.S. partners may have a role to play in helping build technology capacity (in terms of both equipment and personnel) that will facilitate joint activity. Student services staff on the home campus may work collectively with staff on the partner campus to ensure that students receive the support they need before, during, and after participation; staff at both institutions will likely benefit in terms of their professional expertise and development. Obtaining grants to supplement faculty salaries or fund student participation may be a possibility for some programs; experienced grant-writers on one campus can help less-experienced faculty and staff on the other campus build capacity in this area.

When addressing resource imbalances through capacity building, however, it is important for partners to be mindful of **creating imbalances of a different type—those between program participants and the rest of the campus community**. For example, if a visiting professor from abroad is given a higher salary and new lab equipment while the institution's own faculty make

do with outdated resources, is this fair? What are the implications in terms of the visiting faculty member's integration into the campus community, and relationships with colleagues? If students in a collaborative program receive special advising services, does the rest of the institution benefit in any way?

Institutions should also consider whether **“adequate” resources means “equivalent to the United States.”** If a partner institution abroad does not have a state-of-the-art fitness facility, does that mean student amenities are inadequate? If faculty salaries at the partner institution allow for a comfortable lifestyle, but are lower than in the United States, is this still fair compensation? In some cases, imbalances may also go in the other direction; faculty in other countries, for example, may be eligible for more vacation time than is granted in the United States, or may be expected to teach fewer courses; U.S. standards may seem unfair or inadequate.

Academic Freedom

For U.S. institutions (and those in many other countries), one of the most crucial and potentially controversial issues that can lead to ethical dilemmas in international partnerships is **academic freedom**. As a core value of American higher education, academic freedom underpins U.S. teaching and research, and is considered to be absolutely fundamental to the scholarly enterprise. Of the standards analyzed in this project, the OECD statement most directly addresses academic freedom, stating, “quality teaching and research is made possible by the quality of faculty and the quality of their working conditions that foster independent and critical inquiry.”

The standards also point to additional documents that address academic freedom in higher education more broadly, noting that the principles outlined should be applied in international partnerships. These include the IAU's statement, *Academic Freedom, University Autonomy and Social Responsibility* (<http://archive.www.iau-aiu.net/he/af/>), and UNESCO's 1997 *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel* (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), which outlines norms and standards for the employment of educators working in institutions of higher education worldwide. Recently, the American Association of Universities developed new *Principles and Guidelines for Establishing Joint Academic Programs and Campuses Abroad* (<https://www.aau.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=15673>), which directly address academic freedom in international partnerships:

Academic freedom is the freedom of university faculty members and students to produce and disseminate knowledge through research, teaching and service without undue constraint. When establishing campuses abroad or joint academic programs, agreements between universities and foreign partners should strive to include a commitment to commonly accepted principles of academic freedom.

Members of the academic community should be able to ask questions and engage in discussion, and write and publish without the fear of punishment or intrusion by governments or authorities holding public, private, or institutional power. In addition, the academic environment should provide a safe haven where there is a tolerance for different opinions, and a willingness to hear competing views and perspectives. Within this environment, all students, faculty, and staff should have access to the full range of ideas of others, including complete access to information through the Internet.

The guidance is clear, but complications arise when it comes to operationalizing these recommendations in **contexts where academic freedom is not typically expected, or is interpreted differently**. In some countries, government policy does not allow for free speech or open expression in general; such policies apply in the classroom as well as other public spaces, and violations can carry significant consequences. Even if a partner institution is supportive of academic freedom in theory, encouraging or allowing discussion of certain topics could lead to considerable problems for the institution, as well as for the individual faculty and students involved.

When no such overt regulations exist, some subjects may still be especially controversial or uncomfortable from a cultural standpoint; raising these issues in the classroom or through research may offend partners and jeopardize the collaboration. As a number of high-profile examples have illustrated in recent years, however, not allowing for complete academic freedom may be unacceptable to students and faculty on the U.S. end, also placing the partnership in jeopardy.

“Negotiated Space”

Along with issues of resource imbalances and academic freedom, a wide variety of other cultural and practical conflicts are possible. If one partner believes that women should not be admitted to a joint program, or that certain ethnic groups should not have access, should local customs be honored? In contexts where personal relationships are typically taken into account in decisions about student admissions, hiring, vendor selection, and other areas of program operation, what are the potential implications for equity and transparency? Should a faculty member involved in an international research collaboration be expected to adhere to the intellectual property laws of the partner country, if such regulations are less stringent (by law or in practice) in her or his home country? Such questions abound.

In dealing with these and other ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of partnership development and implementation, there are no easy answers; the most problematic course of action, though, is inaction, or underestimating the importance of these matters. When entering partnerships, institutions should perform **due diligence** to determine what ethical dilemmas are likely to arise in working with a potential partner. Analyzing the overall political and academic context of the partner country is an important first step; the history and policies of the potential partner institution should also be considered, along with the nature of the proposed collaboration (e.g., the activities and subject matter entailed).

Ultimately, individual institutions must determine where they need to draw the line on controversial issues, and what compromises they are willing (and unwilling) to make in order to move a relationship forward. In terms of academic freedom, for example, is the institution concerned primarily with what happens within the confines of the collaborative program, or should it decline to partner with an institution (or even a whole country) abroad that in general does not adhere to U.S. standards in this area? **Institution leaders, faculty, and administrators on the home campus need to be at the table for these discussions**. Taking into account the priorities and opinions of all stakeholders will help ensure buy-in for those collaborations that move forward. As a result, faculty and staff may be more willing to work through controversial issues that arise down the road, rather than advocating that the relationship be abandoned.

In addition to internal discussion, open, ongoing communication, rooted in an attitude of mutual respect, is needed in directly addressing potentially controversial issues with the partner institution, and finding solutions that are ethically, culturally, and legally acceptable to

all parties. Partners should be **upfront about what they can offer** in terms of resources, and should become familiar with the policies, conditions, and constraints of the other institution. Collaboratively designed orientation programs and advising should include candid conversations with participants to ensure they understand the terms of their participation, and are realistic in their expectations.

To characterize the process by which international partnerships can work through potential conflicts and find common ground to move forward, Patti McGill Peterson, ACE's presidential advisor for global initiatives, uses the term **"negotiated space."** Underscoring the need for open communication and joint solutions in order to achieve this goal, she elaborates:

When institutional partners come together to engage in academic cooperation, it is imperative that all parties lay out their expectations for ethical behavior and good practice. To be silent or hope for the best will not form the foundation of an effective partnership. International partnerships are ultimately a matter of negotiated space, hopefully between honorable and well-intended parties. If partners take this seriously and mutually develop their ethical frameworks for collaboration, they plant the seeds of long-term sustainability for the partnership.

(Peterson 2014)

Open for Debate: Wellesley College's Partnership Procedures

After concerns about academic freedom at a partner institution in China sparked a campus-wide controversy and debate in 2013, Wellesley College (MA) **developed new processes and procedures** for establishing international collaborations (Wilhelm 2013). The primary goal was to **engage faculty in decision making** about proposed relationships, and create a **mechanism by which concerns could be discussed openly** and a consensus reached about whether and how to proceed.

According to Andrew Shennan, Wellesley's provost and dean of the college, a first step was to examine the institution's faculty governance structures and determine if such a mechanism was already in place, or if it would be necessary to start from scratch. An existing **international study committee**, a subgroup of the college's Academic Council (Wellesley's governing body, composed of faculty, administrators, and students), was identified as a good match. Though in the past it had dealt primarily with study abroad issues and exchanges, its scope was increased to include review of partnerships more broadly. The committee is now made up of faculty from a variety of disciplines, plus Shennan and the director of study abroad.

The committee's first task was to create **templates for partnership agreements**—one for institution-level memoranda of understanding, and one for "international activity agreements" between departments or individual faculty and counterparts abroad. Both include language in the preamble—modeled on a statement used by Cornell University (NY) in its partnership agreements—stating that all parties agree to adhere to commonly observed standards for academic freedom in all educational and research activities entailed in the agreement.

Now, the committee **reviews all institution-level memoranda of understanding** before they are signed. In the event that they have concerns about academic freedom or any other aspects of the collaboration, the committee is charged with bringing these forward to the faculty as a whole for discussion and, ultimately, a decision about whether to proceed with the agreement.

While no such situations have arisen yet, and Shennan does not foresee many going forward, he is confident that the new process will bring about a successful resolution when they do come up. "While there will always be disagreements and diverging opinions about controversial issues," he notes, **"it is much better to have the conversation about them in advance of the program than after the fact."**

Putting It All Together: IUPUI and Moi University

The long-standing relationship between Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Kenya’s Moi University illustrates how many of the good practices set forth in the standards come together to produce robust, multifaceted partnerships with a far-reaching, sustained impact on individuals, institutions, communities, and beyond.

The relationship between IUPUI and Moi began in 1989. With support from and involvement by a variety of universities and government agencies in the United States and Kenya, the two institutions’ medical schools established the **Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH) project, which focuses on combating HIV/AIDS**—one of the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals. Over the past 25 years, AMPATH has built a network of health-care facilities that oversees the health needs of over 2 million people in western Kenya. Countless faculty research collaborations, student exchanges, and other joint activities have resulted from—and contributed to—AMPATH’s success.

Recognizing the importance of international partnerships to overall campus internationalization efforts, in 2004 IUPUI created a **director of international partnerships position** to oversee this area and develop a global engagement strategy. Ian McIntosh—the inaugural director, who still holds the position today—notes that his first task was to review all of IUPUI’s many existing MOUs and identify a handful with substantial activity that could be expanded even further. The Moi collaboration rose to the top, and was targeted as a **core partnership**—one that IUPUI as a whole could “really get behind in a significant way.”

McIntosh estimates that in the early years of his job, **50 percent of his time and effort was devoted exclusively to deepening IUPUI’s relationship with Moi**. First, he and his Kenyan colleagues continued to focus on the HIV/AIDS arena, and in particular, addressing the social stigma faced by AMPATH patients. For example, IUPUI worked with Moi to establish a social work program at the institution, and build an **academic network of social scientists** throughout Kenya to collaborate on research. IUPUI and Moi faculty in an array of fields were tapped to **provide expertise and education for patients** who had lost their previous livelihoods due to social stigmatization—examples include business faculty to advise on micro-financing opportunities, and art faculty to teach craft-making.

While both institutions remained committed to their HIV/AIDS work, they soon recognized the **potential for collaborations in other academic areas as well, particularly those that were strong at one institution but not the other**. Moi, for example, has a world-class program in tourism management—a growth area on the IUPUI campus. Conversely, although Kenya produces some of the world’s top athletes, Moi did not have a physical education program, while IUPUI has a robust one. The two institutions have made a concerted effort in recent years to develop research collaborations in these areas, as well as exchange programs that allow students and faculty to take advantage of opportunities and expertise not available on their home campus.

The IUPUI-Moi partnership continued to flourish until the end of 2007, when a federal election in Kenya led to **significant civic unrest**, and a dangerous climate for academics. Moi was shut down for about six months, and many faculty members fled due to threats to their safety. IUPUI

did its best to support Moi through the crisis. The Scholars at Risk Network (<http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/>) helped bring one professor from Moi to IUPUI in a joint funding arrangement with IUPUI's School of Liberal Arts, while the IUPUI Schools of Nursing and Engineering facilitated the continuing PhD and undergraduate studies of one Moi faculty member and one student who were deeply impacted by the violence in their home country. **Most of the activities of the partnership came to a halt**, however, and prospects for its continuation looked bleak.

In the years since then, however, the IUPUI-Moi relationship has **rebounded**. Since 2009 the two institutions have held three **international peace conferences** in Kenya, and AMPATH and other activities have gradually resumed. Together, IUPUI and Moi have received a number of grants to fund various collaborations, all of which involve principle investigators from both campuses and specify that overhead money will be split between the two institutions. A 2009 Fulbright-Hays grant funded visits by IUPUI staff and faculty to Moi to develop a **study abroad platform** that will allow more IUPUI students to be involved in AMPATH programs. Service-learning-focused student exchanges are also underway, as are a range of **evaluation and assessment activities** that focus on both student- and community-level impacts of the partnership.

For McIntosh and others who have weathered the ups and downs of the IUPUI-Moi relationship, one of the most exciting developments of the collaboration has been a joint effort to establish a **Peace and Reconciliation Centre** at Moi, which opened in 2012. Last year the center sponsored a **Peace Race**, in which over 5,000 runners participated to raise money for Kenyan development projects. Building on the success of the center at Moi, **IUPUI is now planning to establish its own peace center**, with substantial contributions from and collaboration with colleagues at Moi.

Conclusion

Now is the time for all institutions of higher learning to collaborate and cooperate towards common goals that capitalize fully on the rich possibilities of global engagement and that, ultimately, will help build a better world for all.

(American Council on Education 2011)

The landscape of global higher education partnerships is continually evolving. New **programmatic models** are emerging, including consortia agreements and other forms of multilateral degree collaboration, interdisciplinary research ventures involving teams of faculty and students, and the incorporation of internships and service learning. The role of technology in these endeavors runs the gamut from a useful communication tool to the primary basis for the partnership, and undoubtedly will continue to shift as new technologies become available. The pool of potential partners is expanding as well, as institutions seek to engage with government agencies, private companies, and other organizations outside of academia.

Given this array of variables, it is **impossible to anticipate every issue and challenge** that will arise in the development and implementation of international partnerships. And, as illustrated throughout this report, even for issues that may seem straightforward, there are often nuances and questions that arise when it comes to practical application in programmatic settings.

For these reasons, it is important to understand not only the explicit guidance set forth in standards of good practice developed by various organizations, but also the **spirit of the recommendations**, and the broader, underlying principles that cut across program types and particular cultural contexts. The themes identified in this paper are intended to **serve as guideposts** to help all those involved in international partnerships to not only ensure the efficacy of existing collaborations, but also successfully navigate the uncharted waters of future endeavors. Our hope is that discussion of these issues will continue, and good practices and additional guidance will continue to emerge to build upon the existing standards.

FROM TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL

In characterizing international partnerships, Bryn Mawr College's Susan Buck Sutton identifies two types: "**transactional**" and "**transformational.**" Transactional partnerships, she asserts, "exchange resources in a clearly specified fashion: resources are traded, they are focused, and product-oriented. . . . Transactional partnerships establish a fluid, easily changed network that supports individual faculty and departmental interests. Transactional partnerships constitute a simple give-and-take in which students and faculty go back and forth between institutions."

Transformational partnerships, in contrast, "develop common goals and projects over time in which resources are combined and the partnerships are expansive, ever-growing, and relationship-oriented." Sutton (2010) elaborates:

In transactional partnerships individual faculty or students may be transformed, but institutions generally are not. In transformational partnerships, all parties change as they work together. Resources are shared; collaborative curricula developed; students, faculty, and staff drawn into dialogue; joint research undertaken; and common understandings reached. . . . Transformational partnerships expand the capacity of each institution for educating students, conducting research, and serving communities. . . . They create an awareness of an emerging global system of higher education, and they operate as multinational units within this system.

With their focus on program planning and operation, the good practices for management and administration outlined in this report provide a solid basis for transactional partnerships, and for the transactional nuts-and-bolts aspects of partnerships of all stripes. As Sutton notes, transactional relationships serve important purposes, and their impact on individual participants should not be discounted. Often, **transactional collaborations are a good first step** for institutions that are just entering the international partnership arena, and may continue to play an ongoing role in overall institutional global engagement strategies.

It is in turning to broader cultural and contextual considerations, however, that institutions can take **their global engagement activities from the transactional level to the transformational**. Certainly, time, effort, and resources are required to develop truly reciprocal relationships that promote access and equity, build capacity, and establish “negotiated space” around cultural differences. Though not every partner relationship will achieve this ideal, for those that make strides in this direction, the benefits are potentially great—not only for the individuals, institutions, and communities directly involved, but for the global higher education enterprise, and for our global community as a whole.

A worthy endeavor, to be sure.

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Appendix: Statements of Principles and Good Practice

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was developed in 1997 by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Referred to as the Lisbon Convention, most Council of Europe member states have since ratified this Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention. The Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee was established in 1999 to oversee the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education was one outcome, which the committee adopted in 2001.

The Code of Good Practice, which has 11 principles, is designed to consider perspectives of both sending and receiving institutions concerning transnational education. Specifically, it is intended to protect stakeholders concerned with qualifications awarded through transnational arrangements; facilitate recognition of qualifications awarded through transnational arrangements in higher education; and provide a source of reference on quality assurance, program evaluation, and qualification issues. The code is framed by a preamble that identifies assumptions underpinning the 11 principles promoting good practice for transnational education and complements the Recommendation on Procedures and Criteria for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications.

THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad, 4th ed. (2011)

The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad grew from a membership model and therefore reflect the input and shared vision of education abroad professionals from around the world. The standards are anchored in the belief that despite the diversity in education abroad, there are certain basic principles that ought to be accepted and implemented by education abroad practitioners and programs, and by higher educational institutions offering education abroad opportunities for their students. These include providing students with clear information about program goals; non-discrimination; academic oversight; a commitment to accurate advising; attention to safety in program planning and management; observance of home and host country laws; consideration given to local environmental and social impact of programs; and commitment to professional, ethical behavior as defined by an organization's own code of ethics and/or to the ethical principles of The Forum's Code of Ethics for Education Abroad. The nine standards are designed to ensure the quality of education abroad programs. Introduced in 2004, the standards are updated to reflect changes in the field and include information on their implementation and evaluation. Accompanying each standard in the 2011 edition is a set of queries through which organizations and programs can test themselves against the standards.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES (WITH ACE, THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF CANADA, AND THE COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION)

Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide (2005)

Prepared by the International Association of Universities, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the American Council on Education, and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders* is a framework for higher education membership associations worldwide that outlines principles for managing higher education across borders.

The 10 principles, according to the statement, “aim to create a focused dialogue among stakeholders which will result in an international consensus on a fair and transparent framework for managing higher education across borders. Such a framework should address the challenges faced in developing quality higher education across borders for the benefit of all and ensure that cross-border higher education’s contribution to the broader public interest is not sacrificed to commercial interests. Toward this end, the statement outlines principles that the signatories believe should underpin institutional initiatives in cross-border education and government policies and positions in trade negotiations, as well as specific actions that reinforce these principles.” Recommendations for governments and higher education institutions implementing the principles for cross-border education supplement the principles.

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-US Nationals (2003)

First developed by the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation and endorsed by all U.S. regional accrediting commissions in 1990, the principles were reviewed and amended by the regional accrediting commissions in 1997 and again in 2003 by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The principles reflect national consensus among regional accrediting associations on good practices for accredited institutions of higher education engaged in or planning to engage in developing campuses or moving educational programs abroad. Guiding the principles are six assumptions that broadly outline fundamental roles and responsibilities of institutions and accrediting commissions. The principles center on good practices in the following areas: institutional mission, authorization, instructional program, resources, admissions and records, students, control and administration, ethics and public disclosure, contractual arrangements, and distance education.

OECD (WITH UNESCO)

Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education (2005)

The *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* aim to provide an international framework for quality provision in cross-border higher education that addresses human, social, economic, and cultural needs of stakeholders. Based on the principle of mutual trust and respect among countries and on the recognition of the importance of international collaboration in higher education, the underlying purpose is to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers. Capacity building is another fundamental component of the guidelines as some countries lack frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation, and recognition of qualifications. The guidelines recommend actions for six stakeholder groups: governments, higher education institutions/providers including academic staff, student bodies, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, academic recognition bodies, and professional bodies. They further aim to encourage the strengthening and co-ordination of existing initiatives such as *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education and Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders*.



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