



Association of International Education Administrators
Leaders in International Higher Education

Meeting Report
Dialogue of the Americas – San Luis Potosí, Mexico
October 31 - November 1, 2011

Monday, Oct. 31

11:00am Internationalization 101 – A group conversation

Today's Internationalization - A review of office structures, a glossary of terms, and relevant issues across regions as well as Pan-American higher education organization and degree offerings

The group compared organizational charts to learn of office composition and hierarchies, services provided, and responsibilities – who is driving internationalization, and who makes such decisions. Organization types were compared, from small liberal arts colleges, to technical schools, to large research universities, both public and private. Challenges, including staffing levels and office types, historical responsibilities, today's needs of administrations like rankings management, alumni relations, or degree program tuning, and coordination across all units of a university, were highlighted. Of particular help was the ability of the group to reflect on European approaches, US approaches, Mexican approaches, and approaches from Colombia, Ecuador, and other Latin American countries. One common thread among most institutions represented was the responsibility for strategic planning for internationalization, or at least several components of internationalization. The European approach seemed much more faculty-driven and integrated than in the Americas, though all organizations involve faculty and academic units. The role of technology was discussed, and its impact on how our offices, academic programs, and universities in general collaborate and communicate. Similarly, language as a barrier was discussed, and language seems to be an issue for many countries when working with partners around the globe. An interesting comparison was made on participants' backgrounds and the backgrounds of their staff. This diversity led to a discussion on needed training and professionalization within offices dealing with internationalization.

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1:30pm Making partnerships work – A group conversation

Facilitating and improving international linkages with bilateral and multilateral (multi-country) models

Economics, student flows, and degree programs – shared responsibilities among countries and partners

IIE Open Doors data was used to examine student mobility trends between the Americas. Several Latin American countries send significant numbers of students to the US. Such metrics are scarce for other parts of the Americas, but Mexico is making a concerted effort to collect such data. It desires to send more students abroad. Collaboration among the Americas can enhance student mobility as is seen in Europe. Language can be a significant barrier to mobility to the US and Canada, but not between most other countries of the Americas. Labor laws also impact flows between the Americas, and other parts of the world are taking advantage and drawing students from Latin America for study and work. There is interest and opportunity for closer collaboration among the international organizations and professional groups in the Latin American countries, and significant synergies can be created. A discussion was launched on security in Mexico, and the impacts of drug cartel violence and media reporting on partnerships and student flows. Our Mexican colleagues show that no incidents have involved international students over the past two years. Yet, International Offices in the US are constrained by liability concerns. It was hoped that partnerships could work together to restart student flows in specific cases and in controlled circumstances to build confidence for greater future collaborations. The European view of limiting travel is a bit different as the general treatment of students is more as adults, and parents provide less oversight. It was generally agreed that the best linkages are strong, multi-faceted linkages and that these are developed through a process that identifies strategic partnerships allied with the university's strategic vision for internationalization. And dual or double degrees can be useful if carefully constructed to meet accreditation and recognition standards.

3:30pm Connecting and building networks through research – A group needs-assessment

Research-led partnerships and Public-Private partnerships across borders

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This discussion highlighted the reasons we create collaborations and the qualities of partnerships we seek. Different budgeting processes were evident across the Americas for research and for international collaborations, and this sometimes drives partnerships and collaborations. Partnership funding opportunities within the US are becoming fewer for the moment because of the economic crisis, but the interest is still there among many of the funding agencies.

Tuesday, Nov. 1

9:00am Building sustainability within and among nations

Post HED/FIPSE/USDA/CAPES/CONACYT (etc.) Funding for institutional linkages

Building North-South multi-level, multi-faceted complex partnerships – best practices and metrics

National policies and directions were discussed in relation to government funding of partnership creation and student mobility schemes. The US doesn't have a strong central policy, and efforts within and among agencies are often conflicting. Europe and Australia have done a better job, with central policies and strategies, although they still maintain room for certain countries and individual universities to chart their own futures. U.S. efforts at higher ed internationalization are small and disjointed, Europe is strong and has a plan but will see dramatic funding cuts, Latin America is just beginning the dialogue.

Methods of funding partnerships were identified, including indirect cost charges on research contracts being re-tasked to focus on international activities, judicious use of existing government grant programs, and then institutional fund allocations to sustain strategic partnerships.

This topic led to a comparison of how universities are funded across the Americas, examining public and private support and institutional mission. The sources of funding help to explain the funds being allocated to international partnerships, and where these decisions are being made in the university hierarchy. Sustainability of international partnerships differs for all countries in the Dialogue – but all agree that it will take reallocation of financial resources. In the U.S. for example, some federal, some state, and some tuition dollars could be used to support international partnerships. But opportunities for the U.S. are limited in Latin America. The financial support structures are simply not there.

A NAFTA-Related articulation idea was discussed – but Canada lacks interest and the U.S. doesn't have a single system of higher education. However, it may be possible to assemble groups of

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institutions to collaborate with each other (consortia). Groupings may even be on a disciplinary basis.

Tuning was discussed at length: outcomes-based partnership and program development. It was proposed that AIEA, AMPEI, and EAIE put together a couple of sessions on tuning for the Conference of the Americas in Brazil in spring with European and Mexican tuning experts. This presentation might also bring in issues of accreditation and employment across borders.

1:00pm A view from Washington, DC

Videoconferencing with Tully Cornick and Jeanne-Marie Duval of Higher Education for Development, linking US higher education institutions to USAID

We learned the following:

USAID Reform Agenda:

- 1) monitoring and evaluation are to be revitalized with significant emphasis on tying funding to performance evaluation/assessment. Will also begin establishing baseline data.
- 2) Procurement Reform: USAID is implementing the spirit of the Paris Accords by working more directly on the ground with host institutions and doing host country contracts.
- 3) Increased emphasis on program management and having improved financial reporting and improved data reporting.

U.S. Dept of State Agenda:

- 1) Changed to include support for longer term partnership development.
- 2) Increased regional activities in Caribbean and Amazon Basin.
- 3) 10-13 RFAs are coming on Latin America and the Southern Hemisphere for development.

New partnership modalities are being established with USAID. For example, AID-Mexico is starting to engage directly in partnerships locally. The State Dept. is very interested in the development of a

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“brain trust.” And a tri-lateral approach is something new for USAID. USAID encourages us to work with them to develop communication pieces and convey information about their programs to our memberships.

USAID initiatives come out of strategies and agreements – these are in the preamble materials of each RFE. To the question of USAID’s matching requirement of partner countries – sometimes the match can be waived, sometimes it can be in-kind, and sometimes it can be reduced. It just depends.

Hot Topics from HED’s perspective include food security, HIV/AIDS, Violence and the Rule of Law, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainability.

An issue with past USAID support is that Mexican partners have felt used. Now USAID is saying we should engage in partnerships prior to seeking funding and use those partnerships to steer projects and funding usage.

Connecting and building networks through service – A group needs-assessment

The role of international offices in translating academic partnerships into global and local outreach, service, and impact

A quick discussion showed that Mexico has a requirement for students to perform social service to the community. 450 hours (about 6 months) are required in public service in order to graduate. This service must be independent of any internship requirements. The development of an international service learning exchange program was articulated as a Board priority for CONAHEC as well. Columbia has a service learning model with specific partner universities in which students get credit upon their return.

A book entitled *International Service Learning* came out last year. It talks about the model and how to support it. For example, to be service learning, the program must be credit bearing – and the tuition revenue can be used to support the projects. Partnerships can also be established with the agencies with whom universities do service learning – so that goals can be collaboratively developed by the various partners. There was a discussion on funding for university level projects in service learning. Many universities already have Centers for Civic Engagement that can help develop new partnerships.

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The Mexican Ministry of Education has a program with the U.S. Embassy to do community-based service. Currently 80% of the projects are on school bullying and this represents a trend toward in-school projects within Mexico. It's hard to get students to look beyond their schools. The European context is quite different – few programs focus on service learning since there are strong social safety nets.

3:30 Strengthening regional international higher education through pan-regional higher education associations

A discussion on how to cooperate, and at what level continued earlier conversations of the day. Interest around the room indicated a real possibility of follow-up in future efforts. From the discussions of the Dialogue, an outcome and next step was formulated: A proposal to the organizing committee for a series of three panels at the Conference of the Americas – bringing a variety of perspectives from different organizations. Foci would be:

- 1) Tuning
- 2) North-South Cooperation
- 3) The role of associations in contributing to higher ed internationalization

Meeting concluded and adjourned.

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