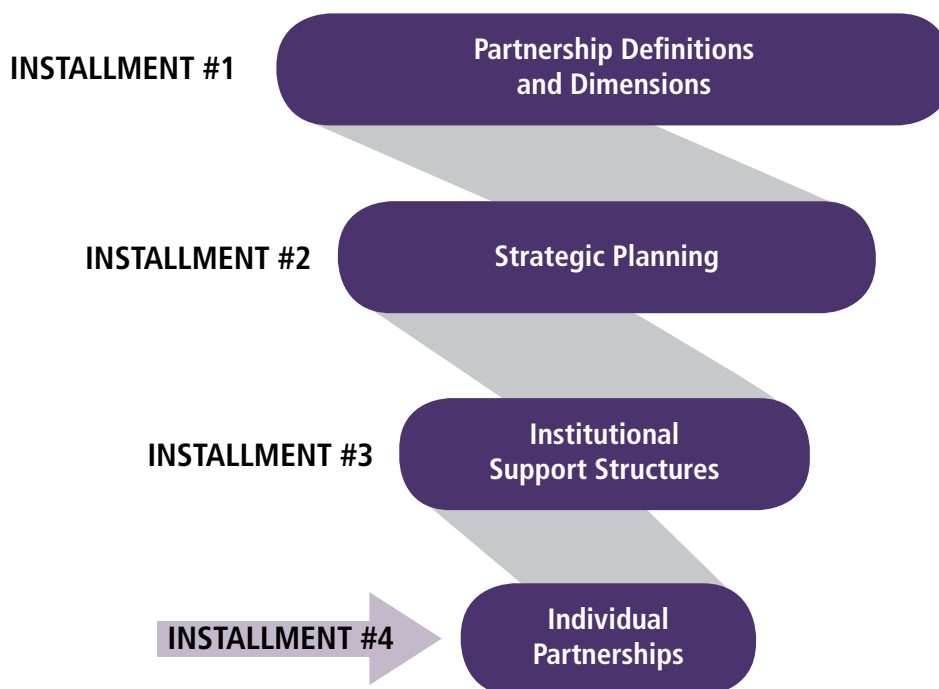


INTERNATIONALIZATION IN ACTION

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part Four: From Strategy to Implementation— Launching and Managing Individual Partnerships

This article is the **fourth installment** in a four-part series designed to offer preferred practices and ideas for managing international partnerships in higher education. Having addressed the overall landscape of these relationships in the **first installment in the series**, and institution-level planning and preparation for international partnership activity in the **second** and **third**, this edition focuses on the tip of the inverted pyramid: **individual partner relationships**.



Our starting point for this discussion is a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) between two partner institutions, which has resulted from a strategic planning process ([see Installment #2](#)), and is supported by key institutional stakeholders ([see Installment #3](#)).

Now that the ink is dry, **how to we get the partnership off the ground, and ensure that it reaches its full potential?** The following nine steps establish a foundation for collaboration, highlight key decision points in the partnership lifecycle, and promote a robust relationship that adapts to changing needs and expectations.

While the steps are presented in a specific order, it is important to keep in mind that **partnership development is rarely linear**. As the relationship evolves after initial launch, it is useful to keep all of these steps in mind, repeating and revisiting them as needed.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part Four: From Strategy to Implementation—Launching and Managing Individual Partnerships

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STEP #1: ASSEMBLE THE TEAM

MOUs originate from different people and places on campus. Perhaps the president has traveled abroad and signed an MOU on behalf of the institution, resulting in a top-down partnership. Or, a faculty member has engaged in a research collaboration with a colleague abroad, and now the department wants to build on the relationship, thus creating a bottom-up partnership.

Regardless of its origin, the first step in executing a partnership agreement is to **assemble an implementation team composed of the key stakeholders** whose input and effort are needed to move forward with the collaboration. Some of the campus units that might be represented on the implementation team include:

- Offices of the president and the provost
- Deans, department heads, and faculty members
- Offices of undergraduate affairs and the graduate school
- Office of research
- Office of student affairs
- Office of external affairs
- Office of enrollment management
- Intensive English language training program
- Online learning programs
- Offices of alumni engagement and development
- Office of general counsel
- Office of the registrar
- International office, including the senior international officer, international students and scholar services team, education abroad team, partnership management team, and others

Composition of the team will vary based on the nature of the activities undertaken, and some individuals will be involved only in certain aspects of the process. Including more members at the start will ensure that no key areas are overlooked; it is always possible to whittle down the team later, or ask some members to participate as needed.

A TEAM APPROACH TO DUAL DEGREES

At Colorado State University (CSU), international dual degrees are a key component of our internationalization strategy. We currently have 20 active programs with partner institutions in China, Vietnam, India, and Germany.

When establishing a new dual degree, right from the outset we seek to engage the key individuals who will be involved throughout the student experience. We convene this group for internal planning discussions, and also when our international partners are on campus. Bringing everyone together in the room fosters open communication and efficient decision making, and conveys the message that all of CSU supports the endeavor.

As an example, CSU recently hosted a delegation from a partner university in China to discuss new graduate-level dual degree opportunities in vocal and instrumental music performance. To ensure the program’s success and highlight the high level of service provided to students, CSU’s Office of International Programs organized an operational meeting with representatives from the dean’s office, the academic department, admissions, the registrar, housing, student affairs, and online learning.

Once the implementation team has been identified, a **primary “champion” should be appointed** and empowered to head the process. The champion is responsible for decision making and keeping things on track, and for organizing the input and contributions of other team members.

In bottom-up partnerships, the leadership role may be filled naturally and enthusiastically by the faculty member who instigated the relationship. For top-down initiatives, the institution-wide partnership director or another administrator may be the right choice, but a faculty member may step up in these cases as well. Those considering this role should be mindful of other time commitments and whether taking the lead will be manageable with their workload.

STEP #2: DIVE DEEP INTO THE DETAILS

As Jane Gatewood and Susan Sutton describe in the **first installment** in this series, MOUs come in an array of shapes and sizes, with varying degrees of detail about what activities will be undertaken, how and when they will occur, and their expected outcomes. Once the implementation team has been assembled, its first responsibility is to use whatever trail markers have been specified in the MOU to **chart a detailed path for the execution of the agreement**.

When the MOU falls into Gatewood and Sutton’s “agreements of intentionality” category, this will be a more formidable task than for “agreements of implementation.” (The latter type of agreement includes a greater level of detail about the project activities entailed.) Regardless of the starting point, the implementation team will need to work through the following:

- **WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN INITIALLY?** When working from an agreement of intentionality with a partner that is still somewhat unfamiliar, it is a good idea to start small and relatively easy, e.g., guest lectures or short-term faculty exchanges, or a technology-enabled collaboration between students in parallel courses at the two institutions. These types of low-investment activities are useful to test the waters of the relationship.

With agreements of implementation, in which activities are already specified, make sure everyone is on the same page about definitions. For example, does a dual degree program entail students coming from abroad only, or mobility in both directions? Does a faculty guest lecture need to be in person, or can it be done virtually?

- **WHAT ARE THE INTENDED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES?** Outputs are easy to measure: How many students or faculty will participate? How many courses will be impacted? Which departments will be involved?

Articulating outcomes is trickier; they go beyond counting to specifying what participants—the partner institutions, individual students and faculty—should gain from the activity. Outcomes statements include both big-picture goals (e.g., enhance student global learning, contribute to capacity building at the partner institution) and concrete achievements (e.g., students’ foreign language skills improve).

OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
What did you do?	What was the result?
• Number of participants • Number of programs • Number of articles produced • Effectiveness of processes	• Participant satisfaction • Participants learning • Changes in condition • Short and long term

As detailed in **Installment #2** in this series, broad goals for international partnerships should be linked to institutional strategy. The same principle applies when it comes to individual relationships and activities, and the implementation team should be able to articulate this connection for the particular partnership at hand.

Once partnership goals have been specified, the team should establish a timeframe for accomplishing each output and outcome, possibly with steps along the way (e.g., enrollment of five in year one, 15 in year two, and 20 in year three).

- **WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?** For one-off activities, put specific dates on the calendar, or at least establish a ballpark time frame for when the event should occur. For longer-term programs, a full schedule should be mapped out, with a specific start point and key milestone dates. Be realistic about the amount of time required for program planning and the execution of activities. Having the full implementation team at the table for these conversations will ensure that schedules and workloads are taken into account.
- **WHAT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED?** All partnership activities require some level of resource commitment, and these commitments should be clear to all stakeholders. The chart below highlights key constituents for whom support may be needed.

Dealing with resource requirements and activity planning can be a chicken-or-egg situation. In some cases, a finite budget (for money, but also time, e.g., a course release for a faculty leader) for activities may have been established prior to signing the MOU, so then planned activities must fit within the budget.

In other cases, particularly when the MOU is an agreement of intentionality, resource allocation may require lobbying. A realistic budget is needed for decision makers at the institutional and departmental levels. Being able to articulate how the partnership advances institutional strategy and goals (as described above) can strengthen the case, and help the implementation team secure needed resources.

CONSTITUENT	POSSIBLE SUPPORT NEEDS
Primary “champion”	Summer salary, course buy-out, supplemental pay for partnership administration
Departmental staff	Partnership support specifically designated as a job responsibility, travel funds to allow visits to partner institution
Inbound students and scholars	Tuition support, research assistantships, lodging
Outbound students	Travel and tuition support, lost tuition revenue if outbound mobility outweighs inbound
Faculty	Seed funding for research collaborations, support for short-term travel, coverage for on-campus courses abroad if faculty spend time on partner campus
Partner institution	Technical support for online and virtual connectivity

Ironing out all of these details entails discussion with stakeholders at the partner institution, in addition to the conversations among the home institution’s implementation team. Ideally, the partner institution will establish a similar team to think through these issues on their end. **Open communication and transparency about decision making** between the two teams is paramount.

Tempting as it may be to capitalize on enthusiasm for a new partnership and dive right into collaborative activities, taking time to work through the details will help ensure that the parties have shared expectations, and that they allocate adequate time and resources.

STEP #3: ANTICIPATE CHALLENGES AND ADDRESS THEM PROACTIVELY

All human relationships confront challenges, and challenges will undoubtedly emerge in partnerships established across borders, merging multiple cultures and systems, and including large and complex institutions. The goal should not be to avoid challenges, but to **acknowledge the current and potential challenges that exist** and address them in an open and honest way.

Although not every challenge can be anticipated, early in the partnership the implementation team should take time to think through what issues are likely to crop up. Many are simply inherent to international partnerships, but the nuances of how they play out may be specific to the relationship, and to the context and circumstances of the institutions involved. Team members should be encouraged to **brainstorm as many potential challenges as they can**, both small and more consequential.

Issues to consider include:

DIFFERING CULTURAL NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS	• Gender roles and interactions • Role of race, ethnicity, and historical context • Role of religion on campus and in the curriculum • Academic freedom • Institutional structures and how things get done
COMMUNICATION	• Language differences • Modes of communication • Expectations for speed of responses
POLICIES AND REGULATIONS	• Credit transfer and equivalencies • Changes in government policy that impact (positively or negatively) higher education • Export control, intellectual property, and FERPA
RISK MANAGEMENT	• Health and safety • Environmental concerns • Protection of institutional brand • Political and economic considerations
CHANGING COMMITMENT LEVELS	• Shifting institutional priorities • Leadership, administrator, and faculty turnover • Fluctuations in funding • Varying interest among students, faculty, and other constituents

Once the implementation team has identified potential challenges, it should **consider which can be addressed immediately**, either internally or through discussion with the partner institution. For example, working with the institution’s general counsel to put in place appropriate measures to protect intellectual property and adhere to export control regulations can head off problematic situations in research partnerships. Establishing a schedule for regular check-in calls with the point person at the partner institution can smooth communication challenges and provides opportunities to address cultural issues.

Not all potential challenges can be anticipated and/or addressed ahead of time. Some may need to **remain on the radar** until there are early warning signs. Addressing challenges early leaves time and energy for the implementation team to deal with the unexpected when it does occur.

STEP #4: OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE PARTNERSHIP

Beginnings are important. In some cases, the launch of a partnership may be low key, e.g., the first group of students gets on a plane, faculty involved in a research collaboration have a planning call, or a jointly taught course meets virtually for the first time. A **quiet launch** may fit the bill for a low-profile partnership, and/or when a test period is desirable to see how things go.

In other cases, particularly for multifaceted, institution-wide relationships, a bigger “bang” at the start is appropriate. While much of the nuts-and-bolts work required to prepare for partnership activities can be done virtually, **hosting a delegation** from the partner institution (or sending a delegation *to* the partner institution) can be a productive way to officially launch the relationship, reiterate mutual commitment, and generate enthusiasm. Ideally, delegations (and

the representatives involved in the visit at the host institution) will include a mix of “implementers” (e.g., faculty and departmental administrators) and higher-level institution leaders (e.g., president, provost, senior international officer).

In addition to the standard activities warranted by any international delegation (see box below), a visit to inaugurate a partnership may entail a **formal signing ceremony** to execute the MOU. Whether this is necessary depends on the scope of collaboration, the composition of the visiting delegation, and the expectations of the partner.

When a public launch is appropriate, it is **important to do it well**. Senior leaders from both institutions should do the actual signing, and should be briefed on the partner institution and collaborative activities ahead of time. It is also useful to engage campus units that are typically involved in high-profile events, such as:

- The campus-wide event management team
- External affairs and communications staff, including those involved in developing press releases, writing stories for campus publications, and managing the institution’s social media presence
- The campus photographer(s)
- Community leaders such as the mayor and city council, other local partners, key alumni, and special friends of the institution

HOSTING 101: GOOD PRACTICES FOR DELEGATION MANAGEMENT

Hosting delegations from partner institutions is a routine practice—both at the start of new relationships and periodically as they develop.

Delegation hospitality is a shining example of an area in which **U.S. institutions have much to learn from counterparts abroad**. Those who work in international education understand it is common for institutions around the world to provide airport greetings and ground transportation, cover hotel and other in-country travel costs, take gift protocol quite seriously, organize signing ceremonies, arrange for high-level meetings, and showcase the cultural assets of their community.

Reciprocation by U.S. institutions is an important way to build rapport with the partner institution and demonstrate respect for cultural norms. When partner representatives come to campus, the following steps can help ensure a successful and productive visit.

In collaboration with contacts at the partner institution, formulate a **detailed agenda**, and share it with the incoming delegation in advance of the visit.

Handle as many **logistical details** for the visitors as your institution allows. This may require some level of financial support to provide ground transportation and lodging.

Arrange a meeting with the **highest-ranking individual on your campus that seems appropriate** for the visit. As a general rule of thumb, it is appropriate for the head of a visiting delegation to meet with a peer. A visiting president, for example, should, if possible, meet with the president of the hosting institution.

Organize at least one **formal group meeting** during the visit. This might be a welcome meeting, a special reception or meal, or a concluding meeting to discuss the outcomes of the visit.

Provide a **campus tour**, taking care to include student housing, academic buildings, or labs that may not be squarely at the heart of your current collaboration, as a more thorough understanding of the campus by partner institution representatives may lead to expansion of the relationship.

Keep the **small touches** in mind, such as posting a welcome sign, flying the flag from the visitors' home country, creating bilingual business cards, and arranging photo opportunities for the delegation.

If time allows, consider including a **visit to a local attraction** or other ways to share something special about your institution or community. Meals and evening hours are great times for such activities.

Be prepared to **give a gift, and to receive a gift**. While the gift exchange may not happen 100 percent of the time, it is best to be prepared. Often, the size of the gift is less important than the care and thoughtfulness with which the gift is presented.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part Four: From Strategy to Implementation— Launching and Managing Individual Partnerships

INSPIRATION ABROAD, IMPROVEMENT AT HOME: INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The level of hospitality experienced by CSU President Anthony A. Frank while traveling abroad made such an impression that he personally convened a working group to figure out how our campus could improve in this area. The result was an amplification of “standard” services provided to international visitors, including ground transportation, well-organized campus tours, and trips to nearby cultural attractions. We have also devoted greater attention to gift protocol, and appropriate on-campus communication and coordination around visits. To facilitate these efforts, our International Office created an “international visitor hosting team,” which includes three professional staff members who allocate a portion of their time to delegation management.

During the academic year, we typically host four to eight international delegations per month. Some of these are high profile, involving top leadership from partner institutions and formal ceremonies, while others are smaller in scale and do not require major events. Even for small groups of faculty or research visitors from our international partner institutions, however, we typically host simple welcome celebrations organized by the hosting team. “Small touches” (noted above) include flying their home flag in our office lobby (we have every flag in the world), making a customized welcome message on a large display screen, taking a formal delegation photo, and providing the visitors with a gift.

STEP #5: GET A JUMP ON SUCCESSION PLANNING

As noted in **Step #1**, it is important to identify a leader of the implementation team—someone who is a clear champion for the relationship—but at the same time, the team should **consider who can take the reins if/when the leader steps down**. This individual (or individuals) can then serve as second-in-command to the leader, taking an active role in decision making and program development, and acquiring in-depth knowledge of the relationship.

Broadening the knowledge base even further, a useful way to ensure that the institutional memory of the partnership does not all rest with one person is to **keep the implementation team active**. Though meetings will likely be less frequent once the partnership is up and running, periodic meetings of the team will keep everyone up to date on activities and plans, and any challenges that may have arisen. A **written record of key issues and developments**—perhaps in the form of minutes from team meetings—can also serve as institutional memory, and a means by which a new leader can get up to speed.

If a leader announces the intention to step down, the implementation team should develop a **formal transition plan** to ensure that all tasks are handed off to a successor. It may be appropriate for the departing leader to be involved in an advisory capacity going forward, or to participate in discrete activities of the relationship as the leader’s interest and schedule warrant. Introducing the new leader to constituents at the partner institution, communicating with them about the transition plan, and providing them with an opportunity to say goodbye to the outgoing leader are also key to maintaining continuity.

During the process of succession planning, it is important to keep in mind that **leadership change, when done well, can be a positive development**. A new leader often brings new

energy and ideas to the partnership and its activities, which may ultimately enhance the relationship and contribute to its sustainability. Careful planning, knowledge sharing, and record keeping ensure that the positive potential of leadership change is maximized through a well-managed transition process.

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND SMOOTH TRANSITIONS AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

An ongoing collaboration between the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at the University of Maryland (a previous participant in ACE's Internationalization Laboratory program) and the Higher School of Economics (HSE) in St. Petersburg, Russia, illustrates the value of careful succession planning in ensuring the continuation of a successful partnership. First started as a curriculum development consultancy, an initial relationship involving just one UMD faculty member soon expanded to include a summer program that brought a group of UMD students to Russia each year to undertake a joint project with counterparts at HSE.

When UMD's Office of International Affairs announced a new program—the **Global Classrooms Initiative**—to develop courses jointly taught with international partner institutions, the original UMD faculty member involved in the HSE partnership applied to this program. The collaboration flourished further as a result so that, when the faculty member decided to retire, she was able to transition academic oversight to a graduate student with close ties to the program; now with that student's graduation imminent, a new faculty member has been identified to take the reins going forward.

According to Joseph Scholten, associate director in the Office of International Affairs, broad interest and investment by the departments involved at both institutions has been key to smooth leadership transitions. On both sides, the program has been integrated into the curriculum; students are "lined up to be involved," and plan their academic trajectories around participating. While the "champion" has always had an important role, the departments are frequently engaged in "collegial conversation" around the initiative, and clearly recognize its benefits.

STEP #6: ASSESS PROGRESS TOWARD PARTNERSHIP GOALS

As noted in **Step #2**, articulating the goals of a partnership is a key part of the planning process. Once activities are up and running, regular assessment against desired outputs and outcomes is needed to verify that the partnership is on track, and/or identify where changes may be required.

Assessment can seem like an onerous process, particularly for those without formal training in evaluation. In an era of increasing accountability in higher education, however, most institutions have a fairly robust assessment function on campus. **Tapping into existing resources and expertise** can jump start the process for partnerships. For example:

- **Research support offices** (e.g., the Office of the Vice President for Research) regularly monitor research funding and the impact of faculty publications. It can be beneficial to collaborate with this office to assess how international partnership activity contributes to the research enterprise of the institution.
- **Annual faculty activity reports**, which are often a part of the annual evaluation process, can highlight international activity not captured in other data sources, including sabbatical participation, consulting projects, service, and awards.

- **Academic departments regularly engage in programmatic reviews.** When possible, partnership activities should be included in overall reviews of the academic programs involved.
- If it exists on campus, a **Center for Teaching Excellence** or other entity that focuses on academic content may have assessment tools to gauge student learning that results from partnership activities. Or, they may have staff with the expertise to develop an instrument designed for a particular course or program.
- The **Office of Student Affairs** often uses assessment tools to measure campus climate and student learning outside the classroom. Their data may provide information on non-academic outcomes for students who have participated in partnership activities.
- Data collected by the **Alumni Office** as it tracks graduates (e.g., data on the career choices of students who participated in particular programs and activities) can shed light on the longer-term outcomes and impact of the partnership.
- **Individual faculty** who are engaged in partnership activities are also good sources of on-the-ground data about outcomes (e.g., jointly produced publications, artistic activities, and collaborative student projects).

MONEY MATTERS

In addition to assessments that address student learning, faculty research, and other outcomes, financial considerations often loom large when it comes to overall partnership assessment. This is sometimes the least pleasant factor to consider, but the reality is that international education often contributes to institutions' revenue and expense lines, and it is important to quantify these contributions.

As noted in **Step #2**, a clear mapping of resource requirements for the partnership is crucial at the start-up phase. Sometimes, partnerships generate new revenue that outweighs the initial investment right from the start. This may be the case for dual degree programs, for example, that immediately bring in tuition from students at the partner institution.

In other cases, it may take time for partnership activities to generate income. Maybe the relationship is starting with modest activities such as shared course lectures (no revenue generation), with an expectation that other financially beneficial activities (e.g., a research grant) will be introduced later. Or, the partnership is not expected to generate income at all, but is seen as a worthwhile investment based on the other value it adds to the institution.

Regardless, assessment of the partnership's finances is important. For partnerships that are not contributing to the institution's bottom line, assessments in the other categories noted above become all the more important to demonstrate the value of the relationship and make the case for continued investment. Linking the partnership's achieved (versus theoretical or potential) outcomes back to institutional strategy and goals (see Step #2) is paramount in making the case.

In addition to assessing outcomes of partnership activities, it is also important to periodically step back and **consider the overall health of the relationship**. Are key stakeholders at the two institutions satisfied with their interactions? Are everyone's expectations being met? Are the lines of communication open, allowing potential problems to be addressed in a timely fashion?

Finally, it is important that assessment not be undertaken for the sake of assessment. **Documentation of assessment results** is a first step toward “usability” of the results. This may take the form of a quarterly or annual report that compiles data from a variety of sources. Some institutions have aggregated partnership data into a single database in order to make information about outcomes available to the broader campus community.

Whatever the reporting structure, assessment data should be used to **drive decisions about programming**. If particular outcomes are not being achieved, what changes can be made?

This may require research into the “why” behind the data. If students are not achieving foreign language proficiency, for example, is it due to technology issues, teaching quality, a mismatch of the curriculum and the needs of the students, or some other issue? If faculty research collaborations are not resulting in joint publications or funded projects, would new resources or enhanced interdisciplinary participation make the proposals more attractive?

See Installment #3 in this series for examples of institution-level policies and procedures for partnership assessment.

In addition to making program improvements, assessment data is also a powerful tool for **“telling the story” of the relationship**. Data constitutes part of the “institutional memory” necessary for smooth transitions (see Step #5), can be used to generate interest and draw more participants into the relationship (see Step #7), and forms the basis for celebrating accomplishments and successes (see Step #8).

COLLABORATIVE EVALUATION: UNIVERSITY OF TULSA AND THE CHINA UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM

Excerpted from *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (ACE 2015)

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 consisted of two parts: a student assessment and an overall evaluation of the program that covered 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 had been involved with the program from the start, knew many of the participants, and was 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 gathered qualitative data from a variety of program constituents, including administrative staff, faculty teaching core program courses, and the president, provost, and other senior leaders at each institution. Topics included operational effectiveness, perceived value of the program, academic issues, and the contribution of the program to overall campus internationalization efforts. Results of the evaluation were used to identify administrative and academic aspects of the program that required attention and changes going forward, as well as to refine institutional messaging about the program to on- and off-campus stakeholders.

STEP #7: CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

After the documents are signed, the gifts are exchanged, the press releases are sent, and the partnership is up and running, it can be **challenging to sustain enthusiasm**. An important way to keep the momentum going is to find opportunities—even small ones—to celebrate the relationship.

One approach is to focus on the people directly involved in the partnership's activities, including students, visiting scholars, faculty, and staff members. When possible, seek out **opportunities to convene the affected individuals**. Often, it makes sense to plan around regular calendar happenings—a welcome celebration in the fall, a special graduation event in the spring, a Thanksgiving dinner, a Chinese Spring Festival party, etc.

If students or guests are visiting from the partner institution, consider providing them with **special invitations to attend regular campus events** during their stay. International visitors could be featured as part of a **departmental or campus-wide brown bag lunch series**, or another visible program. This type of engagement can enhance a partnership in little ways and acknowledge the people involved.

Another important way to recognize the partnership is through **media and other communication vehicles**. Campus media teams are often looking for compelling initiatives to feature in newsletters, alumni magazines, brochures, websites, social media and other outlets. International partnerships are an attractive subject, highlighting the global impact of the institution. Sometimes, the messages are even stronger once the hoopla of the launch is over and the partnership has a great story to tell.

As the partnership matures, other opportunities may emerge to acknowledge its success. For example, most institutions have a **distinguished service award** of some type. Nominating a partnership “champion” for such an award is an excellent way to draw attention to the partnership and its accomplishments. Some institutions offer **ceremonial appointments** to faculty or other representatives of the partner institution, or highlight a particular partnership as part of a “Year of” (e.g., “Year of China,” “Year of Mexico”) celebration. Looking beyond the campus, there are a growing number of opportunities in the field of international education to recognize international partnerships; even the act of **applying for an award**, along with a partner, can send a signal that you value the relationship.

For more information on “Year of...” programs and similar initiatives, see “**Blending Curricular and Co-curricular Global/Intercultural Education**” in the October 2015 installment of *Internationalization in Action*.

MODELS FROM THE FIELD: CAMPUS NEWS STORIES ON PARTNERSHIPS

- Kent State University (OH) and The Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (Brazil)
- Northwestern University (IL) and Bocconi University (Italy)
- University of California, San Diego and Universidad Autonoma de Baja California (Mexico)
- University of Georgia and University of Rijeka (Croatia)
- University of Southern California and London School of Economic and Political Science

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part Four: From Strategy to Implementation—Launching and Managing Individual Partnerships

STEP #8: CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND THE RELATIONSHIP—OR STAY THE COURSE

Ambitious global engagement goals and enthusiasm for new projects can make institutions prone to continually looking ahead to the next relationship. Once the partnership activities are up and running, it can be **tempting to focus on a new potential partner abroad**, or a new geographic area to target. While doing so may make sense given the institution's overall partnership strategy (see **Installment #2** in this series), it sometimes creates competition for attention and resources that pit old partnerships against new ones.

To keep attention, energy, and resources flowing to an established partnership, it can be useful to **channel the “dream, invent, and develop new ideas” impulse into expanding the relationship**. Dimensions for expansion and examples include:

SIZE	Increase the number of students going back and forth between the two institutions, or the number of faculty engaged in collaborative research.
SCOPE	Add new activities, e.g., by introducing faculty-led study abroad to a relationship that originated with a dual degree program.
DEPTH	One guest lecture becomes a co-taught course, or a single co-authored article by two faculty members becomes an ongoing research project.
BREADTH	A student exchange program or faculty research project between corresponding departments expands into an interdisciplinary collaboration among multiple departments at each institution.

Ideas for expansion should be **tied closely to assessment results**. Certainly, it is easier to make a case for expanding revenue-generating activities, though careful consideration of other value should always be part of the equation as well. Activities that are meeting expectations in terms of student learning, faculty research publication, and other measures are good candidates for expansion.

It is important to keep in mind that **expansion is not necessarily the right direction for every partnership**. Assessment data may point to the need to adjust existing activities; these should be the focus of attention and resources, rather than trying to build on an unstable foundation. Or, an **“if it ain't broke, don't fix it” approach** may be warranted, allowing the relationship to continue and thrive in its current format. Opportunities for expansion can always be revisited in the future.

STEP #9: KNOW WHEN TO END (GRACEFULLY)

Sometimes, the challenges of a partnership—whether initially anticipated or not (see Step #2)—prove insurmountable, and the collaboration must be **discontinued**. It can feel disappointing for a partnership to come to an end, especially for the “champion” and implementation team. Often, significant resources have been invested, personal relationships have been established, and students and faculty have greatly benefited from the partnership's activities.

However, even though a partnership made great sense and had great results in the past, it may not make sense to carry it forward. It may be that assessments (see Step #6) indicate the partnership is no longer producing the desired educational or financial outcomes. Or, institutional strategy may have shifted such that those outcomes no longer align with the goals of the institution. New government policies or regulations may hinder partnership activities, or an initial “champion” for this partnership is no longer involved at one of the partner institutions.

The financial investment community often uses the phrase “**past performance does not guarantee future results.**” That phrase is instructive here as well, and can help ameliorate difficult feelings that may emerge at the end of a partnership. It is ultimately more prudent to invest scarce resources in partnerships that stand a better chance of achieving desired outcomes in the future.

If a partnership must end, be sure to revisit **Step #7: celebrate the success of the relationship.** It can be reassuring to note the record of accomplishment (well-documented assessment outcomes can be helpful for this—see Step #6), highlight the experience of the affected students, develop a report on the faculty exchange that occurred, and feature additional areas of success. Acknowledge that the partnership created value and made a meaningful impact.

DECLARING SUCCESS: SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN AND MIT

When asked about the termination of Singapore University of Technology and Design’s (SUTD) academic partnership with MIT for a **news article**, the initiative’s program director stated that it was “not a divorce, but an ‘evolution’ of the relationship.” The partnership was declared a “major success,” that put SUTD on an “excellent trajectory.” Messages conveyed by SUTD officials throughout the article highlighted the positive accomplishments and impact of the collaboration, and underscored its lasting impact. SUTD staff also emphasized that while this particular initiative was coming to an end, the two institutions would still partner on research and other activities.

It is also wise to **formally clarify the ending of the partnership** with the partner institution. A natural time to make this statement is when the MOU is up for renewal, as this presents an opportunity to simply state that an institution cannot renew the agreement.

Partnerships sometimes end, but when doors close, other opportunities often present themselves. It is helpful in these moments to remain focused on the opportunities available in the future, and not on the challenges of the past. If appropriate, **remain in communication with the partner institution.** It is always possible that new opportunities for collaboration will emerge.

MODELS FROM THE FIELD: PROCEDURES FOR DISCONTINUING A PARTNERSHIP

Plymouth University (U.K.)—Procedures for the discontinuation of taught provision collaborative arrangements

RMIT University (Australia)—Program discontinuation and transition—Higher Education (Melbourne and RMIT partners) instruction

Manchester Metropolitan University (U.K.)—Guiding Principles for Non-renewal or Termination of Collaborative Partnerships

Newcastle University (U.K.)—Suspension and termination of an educational partnership (p. 10)

KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN: IUPUI AND MOI UNIVERSITY

Excerpted from *International Higher Education Partnerships:
A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (ACE 2015)

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Kenya’s Moi University began collaborating 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, with a focus on combating HIV/AIDS. Over the subsequent 25 years, AMPATH built a network of healthcare facilities that now serves over 2 million people in western Kenya.

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, had 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 had a robust one. The two institutions made a concerted effort develop research collaborations in these areas, as well as exchange programs to 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 to 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.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part Four: From Strategy to Implementation— Launching and Managing Individual Partnerships

FINAL THOUGHTS

Higher education is in a period of significant transformation. The transformation is being pushed by students worldwide, and their desire for a truly global education. It is being pushed by faculty worldwide, and their desire to address the great global challenges of our time through interdisciplinary and international collaboration. And it is being pushed by technology, with its ability to link people across the world in new and amazing ways.

International partnerships sit at the center of this transformation. The steps outlined here will help ensure that when colleges and universities embark on new relationships with their counterparts abroad, they are doing so in a carefully planned and coherent way that maximizes the likelihood of success. As high-quality, sustainable partnerships proliferate, they will in turn contribute to the many exciting transformations currently underway, and the increasing interconnectedness of higher education worldwide.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part Four: From Strategy to Implementation— Launching and Managing Individual Partnerships