Darla Deardorff:

Welcome, everyone to today's webinar on International Strategic Partnerships: What Leaders Should Know. My name is Darla Deardorff, and I am the Executive Director of the Association of International Education Administrators, and I am joined today by experts who will be sharing with us during this webinar and then we look forward to a discussion with you following their presentations and we encourage you to post the questions you may have using the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen, and we will be looking for your questions there.

At this time, though I would like to begin by introducing to you my colleague from the U.S. Department of State, Rebecca Johnson, who is the Program Officer for the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, who is here to give you a warm welcome and to share with you a little bit more about this U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative. Rebecca, thank you so much and over to you.

Rebecca Johnson:

Thank you so much, Darla, and welcome everyone. I guess I should be saying good morning. good evening, good afternoon, wherever you are, in whatever time zone, I'm very glad that you are able to join us today.

As mentioned, I work at the U.S. Department of State and I'm the primary Program Officer working on the U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative that is bringing this webinar to you today. This webinar is the third in a series that we have been doing with the goal of bringing together U.S. and Southeast Asian higher education leaders to discuss and connect on the best way to establish sustainable university and college partnerships.

If we go to the next slide--as we start, I just want to give a little bit of a background on the Department of State where I work, and on this initiative. If this is the third webinar, and you've joined all the previous two, please excuse me as this may be repeated information. I'll try to go through quickly, but I just want to lay the scene a little bit for the newcomers here.

So where I work within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the State Department, our entire goal is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. So if you think about U.S. scholars, students, professors, athletes, artists, we send all of those groups of people to countries around the world and we bring those same groups of people to the U.S. for educational and cultural exchanges, because we truly believe that when diverse people are coming together, sharing their viewpoints, connecting, learning from each other, we will find solutions to our global issues, and we will all thrive more than we would if we were all working towards things independently and universities and colleges are definitely a group of--a group that we want to work with a lot. You are hubs of innovation. You are driving economies. You are supporting your communities. You are pushing research forward, and we really want you to be able to connect with your colleagues around the world to drive those forward.

You'll see a few stats on the side there, those are our pre-COVID stats, but we are working back towards them vigorously, and we really look forward to a day when exchanges of all types are running in full again, and we really hope that this initiative will help that.

If we go to the next slide then, thank you.

Again, just to set the scene, specifically within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, we are hosting this special initiative, the U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative. This was a White House initiative, so from the very tops of U.S. government, there was support for this, that was announced earlier--I was about to say earlier this year, but it's 2023 now--in 2022 at a Special Summit, and it's being implemented through the IDEAS program out of ECA. Through a series of virtual and in-person trainings, we are hoping that we can bring together leaders from Southeast Asia, from United States to connect on college and university partnerships and exchanges, and really build sustainable connections that will benefit your students, your communities, our entire countries for years to come. So it's a big endeavor, but we think that it will make little sparks that will really make changes down the road.

I will turn it back to Darla and our expert panelists to dive in, but I really just want to express deep gratitude for all of you taking the time to join us today, also to AIEA for helping with this webinar or hosting this webinar, to our IDEAS Program staff at World Learning for helping to organize this initiative and to all of our panelists today for your expert remarks.

With that, I will turn it over to the experts and thank you everyone again. I hope you find this webinar helpful and inspiring as you think about university partnerships for your institution.

Darla Deardorff:

Thank you so much, Rebecca and AIEA is delighted to be able to be a partner on this very important U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative. So the outcomes, the learning outcomes for today's webinar, you'll see here on the screen, that we hope that through your participation today that you will gain a deeper understanding of best practices and international partnerships, that you will gain some key insights from U.S. and Southeast Asian practitioners about developing different university partnerships--particular partnership models between institutions in the U.S. and ASEAN countries, and to gain a deeper understanding about virtual exchange opportunities.

Before we continue though, AIEA would like to give a land acknowledgment. We find this is very important, so on this next slide you'll see here the land acknowledgment that we are--the AIEA Secretariat is located on the ancestral lands of the Shakori, Occaneechi, and Catawba peoples in what is now the State of North Carolina in the U.S. and we want to give gratitude to the stewards of this land, past, present, and future, and we also want to acknowledge the overlapping histories of this land, including the past violence and ongoing harm produced by the legacy of racialized slavery and oppression.

So just a few more words about AIEA. You've heard it mentioned quite a few times now and on the next slide you'll see a little bit more about the association. So this is the Association of International Education Administrators. AIEA is a professional organization, and its members are university leaders at universities around the world. Just last year in 2022, AIEA celebrated its' fortieth anniversary, and we are really thrilled to be welcoming ASEAN delegates along with 650 other colleagues plus or at least that many to our upcoming 2023 AIEA annual conference, which will be held very soon in Washington, DC, on February 19 through 22. So we're really looking forward to hopefully seeing many of you there in person at the conference coming up in just a couple of weeks. So that's a little bit about the association. You can find more information on AIEA's website and you see the website shown there on the slide at www.AIEAworld.org.

And again, we are very pleased to be a partner on this very important initiative, and as you heard, this is the last in a series of three webinars. So without further ado, I would like to introduce our first speaker this evening, and so we'd like to turn this over to Nopraenue Dhirathiti and so we invite you--she's a Senior International Officer in Thailand. If you see the next slide, we can--yes, continue with her presentation. Thank you so much for joining us this evening. We look forward to what you have to share with us.

Nopraenue Dhirathiti:

Thank you very much, Darla. Hi, everybody. Nopraenue Dhirathiti, Vice President for International Relations and Corporate Communication at Mahidol University, Thailand. I'm going to--well, not representing ASEAN as a whole, but I would like to share with you what I thought we are working towards in international partnership with institutions and also governments around the world.

So first off, I'd like to address that in ASEAN or in Southeast Asia we are very diverse, both in terms of national policies of the government and also policies of higher education institutions.
So as a region we do--we do have the so-called Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, but it's not a supranational organization which directs our dictates policies across the region, like the European Union. So although under the ASEAN, we do have policy recommended from time to time, or guidelines from time to time on higher education, through ministerial meeting. Application is not really harmonized, but reflects the differences of policy directions of each government and also probably in some countries, from each institutional--or each university. Well, for example, in Thailand we are very autonomous comparing to country--comparing to institutions in Indonesia or America.

So next slide, please.

Okay, so today, I'm going to highlight and discuss about what I think as a scenario or as a landscape of how universities and national governments are working together in promoting international partnership with people around the world, institutions around the world.

So as you can see from here, that I put three layers of points that we have to bear in mind when we think about how Southeast Asian universities are working towards international partnerships. So the

first level would be looking into the intra-regional cooperation or network, on a multilateral level. The second one we have to look into national policies and focus of each country and also the third level would be institutional policy--policy of each universities themselves.

So next slide, please.

The intra-regional networks, I would say that these multilateral platforms have been plenty important in providing opportunities for collaboration among higher education institutions in the 10 countries and also act as a gateway for international collaboration with partners outside of the region. So the role of multilateral platforms within ASEAN is very important. I'd like to stress that.

Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Yes, thank you.

Two main platforms that I'm going to introduce to you here. Go back, thank you.

The two platforms that I'd like to introduce here, the first one would be the ASEAN University Network which comprises of the top 30 higher education institutions across the region and this multilateral platform, as I said earlier, that all of these platforms they act as a gateway for international collaboration, and for this ASEAN University Network, they connect the top higher education institutions in the region with other partners in various discipline through a 17 subject-based thematic networks, including the European Union, Australian universities, universities in Europe, and also some university in the U.S.

Please.

Another platform that I like to talk about is the SEAMEO, the so-called SEAMEO, and its' 19 regional centers focus on fostering collaboration among higher education institutions and also specialists in several areas from science, social science, and also culture, and humanities.

The difference between the two platforms is that the AUN, the ASEAN University Network of higher education institutions, the membership, they're higher education institutions, and they promote research, academic collaboration, and staff exchange and quality assurance within the region, and also working towards ship with international collaborators.

The SEAMEO Secretariat, well, the SEAMEO itself, the organization itself, is a gathering of the mysteries of education and is more inclined towards giving out guidelines--some policy guidelines and policy directors--not really directors left say line in specific discipline within the 19 regional centers, within the 19 subset specific disciplines.

There are some other specific platforms, collaboration other than these two, but I'd like to highlight these two because they have been longstanding plots that higher education institutions are working

with. Actually, we have some others within the region expanding to Asia Pacific and also in East Asia, as well such as APRU, A-P-R-U for example.

Please.

And the second factor or the second layer that we have to take into account is to look into ASEAN in terms of each individual country having its own higher education policy. And across the region, especially in the past two or three decades, I think higher education reforms which have led to the redefining of value proposition in higher education, and also the realignment of the national policies and institutional missions have been evident in almost every higher education reform. We might have different details in terms of the reform, but I agree that in the past few decades we all--the 10 Southeast Asia countries, we have done in terms of higher education reforms, for example, Thailand.

Next, please.

For example, Thailand, we've been focusing on linking higher education to promote the industrial 4.0 and BCG economy. Vietnam might be focusing on quality assurance, professional force development, while Singapore may vouch for lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, and digitalization in higher education. These national policies have guided institutions--higher education institutions, through the redefining of how we are going to connect with the world, how we are going to connect with our partners. We have to look into the policy directions as well in terms of higher education and in terms of economic and social development as a whole.

Next, please.

Yes, I put in here the priorities of the higher education policy and focus in Southeast Asia, we could discuss about that later.

Next, please.

And the final dimensions, I think that the third layer of when looking into what is driving the international partnership within the region is to look into institutional policies and how they're in thinking about themselves working with international partners.

Next, please.

I think it--no matter--despite the fact that we are so diverse as a region and we are individually **[inaudible 17:59]**, but I sum up here as part of my portfolio as part of my work in international relations, and working both international affairs and in connecting with other people on these 10 years. I would say that people working in this portfolio or higher institution--higher education institutions with the region, they are focusing in these three or four areas that we have to look into our positioning which will

be evolving through time. For example, we have to ask why we are working towards internationalization, both abroad and at home, and why we are doing this as an institution.

So well basically, it could be useless, it could be something else, it could be global citizenship, it could be about inclusiveness, it could be about research excellence whatever, at the institutional level we have to address why we are working towards internationalization. What it is going to be answering to?

So I think value propositions at the institutional level needs to be there, and they should be aligned with the national government as well because it has to go together. And second, we have to think about resources, where we are going to put our resources into it, the mechanism under internationalization at home and internationalization abroad. And we also have to answer to stakeholders because we do have different stakeholders within the institutions and I think nowadays, after the higher education reform across the region, I think we take into account several stakeholders. It's not only about what executives, what they like to do, but also what the students like to do, what the industry would like to get from us in terms of internationalization, in terms of the exposure of our students to international collaboration. The community, what they want from us as we could couple--we could furnish our students with internationalization skills.

And lastly, how we are going to measure it. So it depends on how we set up this internationalization policy guideline--policies and guidelines, and also mechanisms that we are going to execute or implement.

So all in all, I would say that in ASEAN we have the playground, we have the playing field at an ontological level at the bilateral level, as individual collaboration with international partners bilaterally. We also have to take heed what the national government is doing moving forward, that we can actually align these things together and we can come up with more effective internationalization policies and policies towards international partnership.

Thank you very much.

Darla Deardorff:

Thank you so much to Nopraenue Dhirathiti. We are so grateful to you for sharing these insights, for providing the landscape of higher education in Southeast Asia, and also for sharing this very helpful model to look at a way in which to view these strategic institutional partnerships. Thank you so much for that. Again, to all of you, if you have questions on what you just heard from our colleague, please post those questions in the Q&A., you'll see the bottom of the screen and now we'll go from Southeast Asia to the U.S. and we look forward to hearing from William Brustein who has held Senior International Officer positions at numerous universities in the U.S. and is a past president of AIEA. So over to you, William, we look forward to hearing what you have to share with us.

William Brustein:

Well, thank you very much, Darla, and I'm honored to be part of this webinar.

Let me begin by saying that I have been fortunate to have been a Senior International Officer, Chief International Officer at 4 major universities, public research universities, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Illinois at Urbana Champagne, the Ohio State University, and West Virginia University. Currently, I'm serving as the acting Director of the Global Studies Center. So based on 20 years of serving in these various roles, I've thought much about what might be some principles for strategic and sustainable partnerships and so let me begin by stating what I feel is the first one, and that is alignment to the institution's strategic global priorities. And an example of this, when I was at the Ohio State University, during a two-year period, the President and the Provost of the University, put together a campus-wide council, it was called the President's and Provost's Council on Internationalization, to come up with what would be the global strategic priorities for the institution and what they were, were the following; to increase the percentage of international faculty and students, to promote scholarship on major global issues, to create international dual degree programs, to promote collaboration with Ohio's international business ventures, local communities, and international alumni, to develop international physical presence, and to increase the international experience of our undergraduates, professional students, and graduate students. Now, once this was enacted, it was vetted through all the different councils, the Dean's Council, Provost Council, the Board of Governors, Board of Trustees, so it became the guiding light for us in terms of thinking about partnerships. So when we thought about partnerships, we would think about how a partnership would address at least one of those strategic global goals.

So the first--again, the first key principle is alignment to the institution's strategic priorities. A second goal would be mutually beneficial as a priority, and what I mean here is that for a relationship, a partnership to be sustainable and viable, it needs to be mutually beneficial for all the parties involved. There are just too many relationships that are one-dimensional or are even predatory, that a university will look at a university, particularly in the global South, and look at it in terms of trying to attract the students or the faculty to come to that global North university without thinking about what damage that might do to that global South university. So mutual beneficial is a key, key principle.

A third is that partnerships that are going to be viable more than likely should be ground-up versus top-down, and what I mean, they have to come from the faculty. They have to come from those who are working in terms of the research, the teaching, and the service. Too often I've seen over my experience is that a President or a Provost, or somebody on a board will say, "Well, we should have a partnership with University X or University Y." But there's never the buy-in for that partnership from the faculty and so that one usually withers on the vine, it doesn't go anywhere.

The fourth principle I would suggest here for a viable and sustainable partnership is annual evaluations. We must continually analyze, evaluate the partnership, to tweak it to make sure that everything is working according to what was laid out and agreed upon. To make the kinds of changes that may be

necessary, but also at a certain point in time, in a partnership it may be time to sunset it, or to say, well, it's worked, it produced the outcomes we've desired, so allow us now let's put it to rest. So annual evaluations is my fourth principle.

Next slide, please.

As my last slide, I want to talk about just two examples of a pos--what I see in my experience as a positive partnership, and one that I would consider to be negative. When I was at the Ohio State University, the Ohio State University developed a partnership with the Aligarh Muslim University in Uttar Pradesh, and the purpose of it was to create dual degrees in STEM, education, and research.

Now, if you know India, you know they have phenomenal IITs, the Indian Institutes of Technology, but what's missing in India, particularly at the public universities, is a generation or cohort of STEM faculty, faculty who are trained in STEM research and STEM teaching. And so, with the help of the President of the university, we went to India, and we met with members of the United States India Educational Foundation, and there we proposed this project, and again, it was a project that had come from our faculty who had partnerships, relationships with faculty at the Aligarh Muslim University, and we developed this dual degree, a master's degree where the students would spend one year at Ohio State in one year at the AMU in Uttar Pradesh, and it was a partnership that brought in faculty from the arts and sciences to work on this from the College of Education and from the College of Engineering. So there was tremendous buy-in, and it received one of the few Obama--what was called then the Obama-Singh Innovation Initiative Awards for the 21st century. And so it was really one that has lived and has continued to grow.

The example of one that didn't work was when a relationship between the West Virginia University and the Chinese University of Mining and Technology in Xuzhou, China. And the reason that didn't work because a local legislature had said, "Oh, we should have a partnership with this University." But what happened is that there was never the buy-in from the faculty. It was going to be a dual degree in chemical engineering, but when we got down to do the work we realized that we couldn't come to agreement on what courses should count in terms of course equivalency and that agreement went nowhere. Basically, there wasn't the buy-in, and it was truly a top-down rather than bottom-up relationship.

So with that, let me conclude and say thank you for this opportunity to talk about principles of international partnerships.

Darla Deardorff:

Thank you so much, William, for sharing your insights and expertise, and experiences you've had, and building these international institutional partnerships, particularly through the key principles that you shared with us, and some examples of what can work and what can't work and why so that was very helpful. And to hear more about further examples around these institutional partnerships, we want to

turn now to Andy Sutton, who's the Senior International Officer at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa. So over to you, Andy.

Anderson Sutton:

I have to unmute, I should learn that. Thank you, Darla, for the introduction. Thank you to all the participants for taking the time to be a part of this webinar wherever you are in the world. I have attended lots of these global webinars and this is the first time that I presented, so it's an honor for me to be asked to do it and it's a particular pleasure for me because I've spent most of my career dealing with, first as a researcher and a professor, culture in Southeast Asia. So I particularly spent a lot of time in Indonesia, but I've been to many other places, and as Senior International Officer here at Hawai'i, visited quite a few and tried to establish and nurture partnerships, so I want to zoom way down to my experiences and the University of Hawai'i's experiences after the two broad and very informative presentations that preceded me today.

So let's go to the next slide.

Some of these are going to seem like a repetition of what--particularly what William said, because--and I think those of you that attended the previous webinar a couple of weeks ago, also on strategic partnerships, Jeff Riedinger also mentioned some of these. So, but being--in order to establish partnerships that are going to work, the content, what's going to be done needs to articulate with the priorities of the university and for University of Hawai'i, which is--it is officially in the eyes of the U.S. Government, a minority serving institution. It is located in the State of Hawai'i, and one of the strategic goals of the University, explicitly is that we become a native Hawaiian place of learning, and that's--I don't have time to explain all of what that entails, but we are cognizant and respect the culture of the people who originally inhabited this land and these articulate into many areas of study.

So one of the things that University of Hawai'i has been particularly pushing on the international front has been partnerships with other universities that serve a large indigenous population. But, on the other hand, in addition to serving indigenous populations, we also are intent on producing global citizens and also serving the work needs of the State of Hawai'i, because we are the flagship University of the State, and we are funded--blessed to be funded by the state government, so. How things actually work though, in my experience, doesn't always articulate or replicate the sort of grand scheme. The best of all possible approaches would be some sort of comprehensive strategic partnership where they're cooperations in multiple areas from faculty and student exchange to research collaborations to short-term programs that often are one way, bringing in students or sending students out.

But one thing I can say from my 10 years in this position is that, just as William said beforehand, the ones that succeed are definitely faculty-driven and/or department driven and not top-down, and I think we are blessed at our institution, leadership realizes that and gives us leeway to develop partnerships that are going to work rather than having a grand scheme that they want to impose from above. Certainly they--this would depend--so our collaborations depend on pervisos and reviews. I wish I could

say we reviewed all our partnerships every year, we simply don't have the staff or the bandwidth to do that, but we do review certainly before renewing, and along the way, the more there is two-way or multilateral communication, in order to adjust expectations and requirements, the better chance of the partnership surviving and thriving.

So next slide, please.

One example I'll bring up here actually is not an ASEAN university, but it does represent probably the most comprehensive kind of strategic partnership that we have because it involves research, it involves student exchange, it involves addressing strategic priorities to the University, and this had I, I want to be clear on this, it had support from the top levels of administration at both universities, the University of Hawaiʻi, Mānoa, and the University of Auckland, but it grew from faculty and often faculty, who individually had been already collaborating. So this is a work in progress. We're working towards a pretty comprehensive, set of areas where we cooperate, so.

But, on the other hand, if you measure success only by the broad--the breath of the type of partnership activities, it can be frustrating, and I think some of our--perhaps most of our very successful partnerships are really single focus that they are either research collaborations where faculty or small group of faculty from the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa are working with a small group at one where several other universities or student exchange, where there's clearly interest on the part of our students to go to the institution--the partner institute, and a more or less equal number of students from that partner institution want to come to us.

We have short-term programs, can be very successful. Some of them run year after year after year, where it's just one way, and we provide instruction and community engagement experiences for a group of students coming in from a university in--often in Asia, sometimes from the U.S. Mainland, sometimes from Canada, and staff development is something that we haven't done a lot of but we can and should.

So I just want to stress that some great partnerships are single-focus, they don't have to be comprehensive in their activities.

Okay. Next slide, please.

So I want to mention an exception that occurred before I started in my position, just one year before, our former administration decided that we should branch out in our attempt to develop partnerships in Southeast Asia, which as a former Southeast Asianist I thought would be great. So we targeted Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, but the way we did it was to try to stimulate faculty to engage and try to stimulate students to want to go on exchange to these countries.

I would say, this effort has not been overly successful. It hasn't failed, but one of the challenges, I think probably most of the people on this webinar are aware of is for student exchange, most American students, anyway, are not terribly advanced in foreign languages and rarely advanced far enough to take

university-level courses in a foreign language. So universities in Southeast Asia that don't have a reasonable number of offerings in English, it can be hard to do a student exchange so. But there are other ways of partnering and I will say that this choice of Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam, was built on sort of proven successes with Thailand and Singapore, where we had exchanges that were quite active, so. And I want to stress again that the faculty had to drive this and to know that they have students who would be interested in participating so, but varying results.

And I just want to be clear that because our business students often want to go overseas for a semester or a year, many of them have chosen to go to Singapore, that's sort of the destination of choice or has been in among ASEAN countries, so.

I think we are--you could just go to one more slide. Yeah.

Brief takeaways, top-down strategic planning may not yield a broad regional engagement. I think we all presenters would agree with that one. And the need to, if there's going to be student exchange were not likely to be able to send students from Hawai'i, and probably from most other American universities to a university in Southeast Asia, that doesn't offer some significant--have significant course offerings in English and research partnerships in particular, almost always are based on person-to-person contact and mutual interest, and they can thrive and develop and bloom, and then go away when the funding goes away, and be very successful, and maybe a new one will start when the interest is there.

Okay, I think I've probably taken more than my allotted time, but thank you all for your attention.

Darla Deardorff:

Thank you so much, Andy, for sharing some specific examples of what these institutional partnerships can look like, as well as some of the takeaways. I see lots of great questions popping up in the Q&A, thank you so much to our participants for posting those questions and our panelists are answering some in writing, and we'll get to some of these others in just a little bit. But we do have one more panelist we'd like to hear from who can actually provide a little bit more in terms of detail and specific examples and that is GianMario Besana. So we want to turn to him now. He's the Senior International Officer at DePaul, and he's going to share with us a bit about what virtual exchange can look like. So over to you, GianMario.

GianMario Besana:

Thank you, Darla. Good day, everybody. As Darla said, my name is GianMario Besana. I serve at DePaul University, in Chicago, as the Associate Provost for Global Engagement and Online Learning.

DePaul launched its virtual exchange initiative, that we call the Global Learning Experience over a decade ago in 2013, so almost a decade ago, and our program was honored with the NAFSA Senator Simon Spotlight award for campus internationalization in 2020. I'm happy to be here to discuss briefly

how virtual exchange can function as an affordable, sustainable opportunity for developing global partnerships. I skimmed the list of participants in the audience and there are plenty of navigated experts in virtual exchange, so the audience can also provide further clarification when we get to questions.

If you go to the next slide, it's probably a good idea to start by defining what we mean by virtual exchange. Virtual exchange is a broad umbrella term, that refers broadly to learning experiences that are always very intentionally designed by educators, typically professors who are teaching in higher education institutions, and they're not only designed by them but they're also implemented and supported by the same educator.

They're technology-mediated and they involve learners who are typically geographically separated or coming from different cultural settings. Key feature; they need to implement multiple opportunities for communication and collaboration among the learners and then they're required to have specific learning outcomes that needs to explicitly address intercultural awareness or intercultural competency.

So typically, a virtual exchange project consists--in one institution, in one country, students from one institution in one country work in groups, with institution--with students from another institution in a different country, on very, very concrete projects, interacting with a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous tools and the strength here, and this refers to something that the previous panelist that touched upon, you know, it depends what you want to do with internationalization. What are your goals, right? And if your goals are very focused on global citizenship and achievement of learning outcomes for students in the area of global citizenship, then virtual exchange has this tremendous set of assets because it allows students to achieve learning outcomes in intercultural competence, in a content area, because the project always takes place in a specific content area, and in virtual global collaboration skills which is a new emerging aspect of internationalization that is becoming more and more of interest to employers.

If we go to the next slide we can start looking at why we think that virtual exchange is a real opportunity for partnerships.

Typically, it allows us to establish partnership in broader geographic areas, then partnerships that are based, in one way or another, on physical mobility. It is significantly easier to develop a virtual exchange project with an institution that is an area where your students or your faculty may not have the opportunity or may not want necessarily to go physically for a number of reasons.

Because of their nature, virtual exchange projects are born organically, intrinsically, already embedded in existing academic programs without many disciplinary boundaries.
You've heard from William and Andy repeatedly, how partnerships don't work unless the faculty, the instructors, the professors, are the drivers, and in virtual exchange experiences they're intrinsically the drivers because they're the ones who design the experiences for the students so virtual exchange experiences are not special programs built on top or on the side of what you institution normally does, but they are integrated in existing academic programs. They directly involve instructors and students at

many levels, not just your top researchers, but we're talking about ordinary faculty members, professors who teach normal classes with your typical students at your institution.

There's no money exchange, no fees, typically no grants to manage. In some situations, you may have a grant involved, but typically there's no financial implication at all in establishing a virtual exchange-based partnership and no one moves. We can discuss if this is a positive or negative thing, but in this specific model of establishing a partnership, the fact that physical mobility is not necessarily involved eliminates a series of issues related to risk management the cost of travel and it also minimizes carbon footprint.

Often also the partnership that starts between two professors in a virtual exchange project extends to research projects. Whether the research is based on the content, on the disciplinary area of the professors, or we are seeing more and more focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning, looking at the impact of the virtual exchange project itself.

And then there's a potential for long-term sustainability because these projects are well integrated into the curriculum. One of your faculty members, one of your professors, develops a virtual exchange project and of course that they teach regularly the virtual exchange project becomes implemented regularly, repeatedly every time the course is offered, establishing a longevity for the partnership in a very natural way.

And if we move to the next slide we can address a little bit of the challenges of the virtual exchange model.

So really, to ensure the longevity of the partnership developed through virtual exchange, it has become clear among the practitioners that the institutions need an internal infrastructure. There needs to be a support structure to incentivize and support the faculty member. It cannot be improvised to be successful.

Both, William and Andy talked about the bottom-up and top-down approaches. Virtual exchange is an interesting case because the actual projects are always bottom-up, but sometimes the top-down comes in as offering opportunities for further development of projects because there's a larger scope partnership between two institutions that are both invested in creating support strategies for virtual exchange. So it's a delicate dance of the two approaches. And then the typical things that you can think about, time difference, there's synchronicity involved in virtual exchange projects, so working with the ASEAN countries is sometimes a little complicated, not impossible. Language, interesting dynamic here, students are collaborating, the two faculty members need to agree on what the language of the exchange will be with interesting opportunities for dialogue, and then the faculty needs to be trained, because as I said before, you can't improvise.

This is a really rapid panorama of what virtual exchange can do for you, but in the next slide that you will receive when you receive the materials, there's a series of resources for you. These are all organizations

or institutions that are deeply engaged in the practice and where you can find help to establish partnership to develop the infrastructure needed in your institution, and you can always, you know, reach out to me directly, always happy to talk to institutions who want to explore this model to establish new partnerships. Thank you. Happy to answer questions anytime.

Darla Deardorff:

Thank you so much, GianMario. We really appreciate you sharing more details and insights around virtual exchange, and as someone made a comment that really was, maybe the silver lining of the pandemic as to how institutions were able to utilize the virtual exchange.

So we're getting some wonderful questions in the Q&A and many thanks to our panelists for answering so many of them already. We want to come to at least get some of these answered live as well. So I think let's go ahead and answer some of the ones that were there, including some good examples of how faculty are incentivized to engage internationally or to partner internationally. So, if one or two of you would like to take that question and then there was also a question about factors that promote successful partnerships. So let's start with the faculty, incentivizing faculty. One or two of our panels could perhaps respond briefly to that.

William Brustein:

Yeah, Darla. I'll start off. First of all.

Darla Deardorff:

Super.

William Brustein:

It's very difficult to get a faculty member, particularly someone who's engaged in research to enter a partnership or a connection if she or he does not see how it fits into what their research is and so, you know, just it could be a very, you know, brief exchange of ideas, but you really have to have those shared interests to make it work.

Now there are ways you can incentivize it. I know from my experience is that we--I always work as the International Officer with the Head of the Research Office, and we developed grant programs, internal C grant programs, to put money out there and we would propose a general idea of what--let's say it was with a university we already had a partnership with, how we wanted to grow that relationship or it was on a specific issue, such as let's say, global health initiatives and so that they would apply for the money, the grant, and that would whet their appetite. So that was one way that I saw that incentivized faculty.

Darla Deardorff:

Great. Thank you so much for sharing that, William, and I see that Nopraenue would like to respond to that question also, and then we'll go to GianMario.

Nopraenue Dhirathiti:

Okay, thank you so much. At Mahidol University we are providing platforms answering to the core missions of the university research academic--I meant education and also staff mobilities. So these platforms will be divided into projects, and it will be open for staff numbers to plug in. We believe that the needs will be different. The role of the university administrator is to provide platforms plus financial support, partial financial support. So we can get--we can measure that they will--those faculty members will know that if they're interested in this kind of research collaboration, we have some partial funding for them. If they're interested in working with their partners in other ways, they will have platforms to plug in. So we have a variety. We have to create possibilities for them to choose from. So basically each year we will have about 30 sub-programs for them to shop around. This way if we get like this systematically and we are not forcing them to, we're providing them information and platforms and then I think that that will be one way of building the culture of internationalization within the university. Thank you.

Darla Deardorff:

Thank you so much for sharing your insights on that. GianMario and then Andy.

GianMario Besana:

Yeah, I mean, Nopraenue kind of went the way I wanted to go. I wanted to compliment what William said, keeping in mind the type of institutions where William has worked throughout his career, instead for institutions that may not have such a high research agenda, but more institutions like us for example, where the teachers scholar model is more the typical kind of faculty that you encounter, incentives are directed slightly differently, but at the end, what works is, even in my case, is mini-grants. Even if not necessarily at a bigger scale research focus but in our case to incentivize faculty to participate in virtual exchange projects, we have an opportunity for them to access to funds with which they can travel to the partner institution to familiarize themselves with the climate, with the culture of the institution, and the type of student. So eventually both, you know, all of us, Nopraenue, and William, and I are saying a little bit of money helps

Darla Deardorff:

Great. Thank you, GianMario. Andy, you wanted to--

Anderson Sutton:

I lowered my hand, but I was, going to say, essentially, I think, what has been collectively said by the other three who responded to this question, that we are members of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and with the approval of the Provost I have a--I mean I was allocated a fund that I could use to match participating costs like travel and hotel and registration for conferences within the APRU network. Thinking what I'm hearing just now, it might be nice to broaden that beyond just this club of APRU, so that more institutions in Southeast Asia would be eligible, and because support to go, I mean, I know from the ones that that I've been able to get engaged that way, it really stimulates them to be able to attend and participate in a conference with other top-level researchers and then things take off.

Darla Deardorff:

Absolutely, well thank you–

Anderson Sutton:

It's not going to help establish a student exchange that's a completely different kind of endeavor, so.

Darla Deardorff:

Sure, sure. And then, in fact, that was one of the questions in the Q&A, is how to establish contacts, and certainly through going to conferences is a really good way to do that. We are almost out of time, and we have so many more questions. The one kind of looking to the future, and we might not have time for all of you to respond, but are there a couple of thoughts about looking to the future what do you see in terms of international institutional partnerships and best ways to prepare for that?

Anyone want to take that? Yes, William.

William Brustein:

Yes, I think as GianMario has said, the digital is going to be a very important part. I see more hybrid that is, digital plus in person, and you know, I'm thinking of this in terms of where I see dual degrees, international dual degrees going in the future years. The main problem that we have in North America, as I see it, is that the cost for international students is too high for the international students in terms of tuition and fees. And I think, by being creative with respect to digital, matching that within in-person and that universities being able to realize that they can fill empty seats, but at a lower price point in terms that one could be net tuition positive. But we must do something about the cost of study in the U.S.

Darla Deardorff:

Yeah, thank you so much for sharing that, William and I see that we are almost at the top of the hours, so we will need to close out this webinar, for now. I would mention that AIEA has some resources including some chapters in the most recent *Handbook of International Higher Education,* talking about institutional partnerships, and also the dual degrees, that William just mentioned as well so that might be a resource for some of you.

Thanks again to all of our panelists today for their amazing insights they've shared with us around developing institutional partnerships. Thanks for sharing your time and expertise with all of us and for this rich discussion.

Thanks to all of you, our participants, for being part of this, and for the wonderful questions that you have raised, and we've done our best to answer as many of those as we could.

Thanks so much to the partners, all the partners including the U.S. Department of State for making this initiative possible, and I would say, on behalf of AIEA, we are looking forward again to seeing many of you in just a few short weeks in person at the 2023 AIEA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

For now huge gratitude to all of you for being part of this webinar. Thank you again so much.