

# U.S.-ASEAN

## UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS INITIATIVE

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Higher Education Partnerships Toolkit



This higher education partnerships toolkit is a resource developed under the [U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative](#), a White House initiative announced during the U.S.-ASEAN Special Summit in May 2022 to build greater collaboration between U.S. and Southeast Asian higher education institutions. It is funded through the [IDEAS Program](#), a program of the [U.S. Department of State](#) with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by [World Learning](#). The U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative was implemented in partnership with the [Association of International Education Administrators \(AIEA\)](#), which has brought together higher education experts to share their knowledge and expertise in partnership development in this toolkit.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide an introductory, overarching view of higher education partnership development. It is divided into brief sections outlining key steps in the partnership development process with additional links incorporated throughout to provide more in-depth information on each topic. The resources provided and linked herein have been compiled by AIEA and its international education community members and represent a broad range of viewpoints and approaches to establishing and sustaining higher education partnerships.

All opinions, findings, and conclusions stated in this toolkit are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Department of State or World Learning. The resources provided are not endorsed by the U.S. Department of State or World Learning.

# U.S.-ASEAN

## UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS INITIATIVE

The U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative (UCI) brought together leaders from a range of colleges and universities in the United States and ASEAN member states for a series of virtual and in-person trainings, in partnership with AIEA. Spanning the 2022-2023 academic year, these professional development and networking opportunities were designed to foster sustainable international academic partnerships and the two-way exchange of students, scholars, and researchers between U.S. and Southeast Asian higher education institutions. This toolkit now aims to share some of the international academic partnerships best practices and resources explored in the U.S.-ASEAN UCI with the wider international higher education community.

# IDEAS

## PROGRAM

The IDEAS Program strengthens U.S. study abroad partnerships and programs in fields critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity. Through small grants, trainings, and resources, the IDEAS Program increases the number of U.S. students gaining international experiences and broadens the destinations where U.S. students study abroad, particularly to strategic locations where American engagement matters. The Program enables higher education institutions across the United States to develop and administer international programming that contributes to career readiness and supports American competitiveness, national security interests, and engagement with the world. The program also provides virtual and in-person capacity building initiatives to help expand U.S. study abroad programs, including to destinations overseas where American engagement is critical. Since its inception in 2016, the program has provided more than 215 small grants to U.S. higher education institutions in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, to develop programs and partnerships with higher education institutions in nearly 100 countries.

To learn more, visit the [program website](#) and follow the program on [LinkedIn](#) or email [IDEAS@worldlearning.org](mailto:IDEAS@worldlearning.org).



AIEA is a dynamic and influential professional organization dedicated to advancing internationalization within higher education. With a rich history spanning several decades, AIEA serves as a global hub for individuals and institutions committed to leading international education and provides a supportive network for members to connect, collaborate, and share insights on best practices, innovative strategies, and emerging trends.



*In February 2023, 50 UCI Fellows from higher education institutions in the United States and ASEAN member states met during the Annual AIEA Conference in Washington, D.C. for a week-long series of trainings, networking, and cultural exchange.*

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# Introduction

Fostering collaborative partnerships between higher education institutions is essential for promoting academic excellence and global innovation. This toolkit serves as a guide to facilitate meaningful and sustainable partnerships between educational establishments in the United States and around the world.

The ASEAN member states, comprising ten unique and vibrant countries, including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam are a hub of cultural richness and economic growth. With a collective population of over 650 million people, Southeast Asia offers an immense pool of talent, knowledge, and potential for academic collaboration.

At the same time, higher education institutions in the United States have long been recognized for their academic rigor, cutting-edge research, and global outreach. The American education system's reputation attracts students and scholars from all over the world, making it an ideal partner for institutions within the Southeast Asian community seeking to expand their global footprint and enrich their academic programs.

This toolkit provides resources for establishing and nurturing international educational partnerships between the United States and Southeast Asian countries. These resources may also be more widely applied or adapted to partnerships in all countries.

# Key Terminology & Definitions

**International Partnership:**

An agreement between two or more higher education institutions located in different countries, with the goal of collaboration in research, faculty/student/scholar mobility and exchange, joint degree programs, or cultural exchange. In practice, this can be a formal agreement at the institutional level; it can also often be a decentralized partnership between faculty members or researchers.

**Bilateral Partnership:**

A reciprocal agreement between two institutions from two different countries. Generally, these partnerships involve partners working to achieve a common goal such as student/faculty/scholar mobility, research collaborations, or other initiatives.

**Multilateral Partnership:**

A reciprocal agreement similar to a bilateral agreement involving three or more institutions from different countries.

**International Consortia or Networks:**

International consortia are collaborative networks created by higher education institutions from a variety of countries with the goal of sharing resources and facilitating international initiatives. Consortia often collaborate on research projects, student/faculty/scholar exchange, faculty development, virtual exchange, and more. Consortia allow institutions to share resources, expertise, and facilities, capitalizing on opportunities of collective and varied contributions. Examples include [The University Global Partnership Network](#) and the [Talloires Network](#).

**Memorandum of Understanding:**

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is a formal, signed agreement detailing the goals and structure of collaboration between higher education institutions. MoUs have often been the foundation for partnership activities. Templates and examples are included throughout this toolkit.

**Joint Degree Program:**

An initiative that two or more institutions offer collaboratively that leads to a single degree that is awarded by all involved institutions.

**Student/Faculty/Scholar Mobility:**

Mobility initiatives facilitate the movement of students, faculty, researchers, and staff to travel outside their home country. Mobility programs include traditional and short-term study abroad and service-learning; direct enrollment at an institution outside that student's home country; faculty or staff exchanges; or other programs where an individual affiliated with the higher education institution spends time in a formal capacity at an institution overseas.

**Research Collaboration:**

Cooperative efforts between institutions to conduct joint research projects, share resources, and advance scientific knowledge across borders.

**Virtual Collaboration or Virtual Exchange:**

Collaborative academic or research interactions facilitated through the use of digital technology, allowing partners from two or more countries to work together without necessitating travel. There are many resources available on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) from the [SUNY COIL Center](#) and the [Stephens Initiative](#), among other organizations.

**Internationalization:**

The most widely accepted definition of the internationalization of higher education is “the *intentional* process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.*” This definition was originally developed by [Jane Knight \(2008\)](#), with the edits italicized later proposed in further scholarship ([de Wit, et. al., 2015](#)).

**Comprehensive Internationalization:**

The American Council on Education (ACE) defines comprehensive internationalization as “a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected.” For more information on the ACE model of comprehensive internationalization, visit: <https://www.acenet.edu/Research-Insights/Pages/Internationalization/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx>.

**Senior International Officer:**

AIEA utilizes the term Senior International Officer (SIO) to describe individuals within an institution of higher education who are charged with leading and facilitating its comprehensive internationalization efforts. Depending on the institution, an SIO might be:

- The director or executive director of an office with full-time international responsibilities;
- The vice or assistant vice provost focused on international themes; or
- On smaller campuses, this may be a professor, dean, provost, or even the president.

Some institutions may have multiple SIOs, including within schools, and the primary distinction between the SIO and other international education leaders is that SIOs have multiple areas of responsibility at their institutions. SIOs are not the head of a singular functional area, but are those leading comprehensive internationalization.

[The Standards of Professional Practice](#) for international education leaders detail competencies for those in SIO roles.

Other terms may be used to reference these leaders, particularly outside the U.S. context. In Europe, for example, the International Relations Manager (IRM) is the equivalent to the SIO position. In Canada, a title often used is “International Liaison Officer” (ILO); in other parts of the world, it may be a “Vice-Rector, International,” “Director of Internationalization,” “Senior Internationalization Officer,” or “Deputy Vice-Chancellor, International.” For more information, visit: <https://www.aieaworld.org/sio.html>.

For an in-depth look at definitions, see the ACE’s publication: “[International Partnerships Part One: Definitions and Dimensions](#).”



# United States Higher Education Landscape

The U.S. Department of State's EducationUSA network has created the East Asia and the Pacific Partnerships Board, an online resource through which higher education institutions in the region and in the United States can share their partnership goals. This resource is publicly available, and higher education institutions can add their information for free by visiting <https://bit.ly/EAPPARTNERSHIP>.

## United States

The United States has nearly 4,000 higher education institutions, each with its own unique identity, structure, governance, and culture.

### Structure of Higher Education:

There is no ministry or department of education that oversees all higher education institutions in the United States, so understanding the complexities can be challenging. Governance of higher education is distributed among various entities, creating a complex landscape where decisions are influenced by a combination of federal and state policies, institutional autonomy, accreditation standards, student and market demands, and academic traditions.

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) sets policies, regulations, and standards for institutions that receive federal funding. However, this level of control and oversight is not as comprehensive as in many other countries.

State governments play a significant role in the governance of public institutions in their states, including allocation of funding, tuition policies, and academic standards.

Community colleges frequently receive financial support from local governments and are supervised by local school boards. These boards are responsible for managing various aspects of the colleges, such as curriculum, administration, and funding.

## Types of Higher Education Institutions

### Research Universities:

In the United States, research universities are known for their focus on advanced research and scholarly activities across a wide range of academic fields. They offer a range of undergraduate and graduate programs, with an emphasis on innovation and technological advancement. Research universities often have significant research funding, modern facilities, and well-known faculty members. While students benefit from abundant resources like labs, libraries, and research centers, these institutions often have larger class sizes and an academic environment that often prioritizes research over undergraduate teaching. Doctoral universities often have dedicated internationalization sections and global education offices within different schools or colleges.

**Liberal Arts Colleges:**

Liberal arts colleges champion learning and the classic “liberal arts” approach, with a focus on crucial skills like critical thinking, curiosity, and learning across different subjects. They provide a wide-ranging curriculum covering humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and arts subjects. These have small class sizes and value undergraduate teaching and learning. This focus allows students to build close connections with their professors and take part in lively classroom discussions and seminars. While they might not have as many specialized programs as larger universities, these colleges create a stimulating learning environment. Typically, in liberal arts colleges, teaching takes precedence over research, and they offer education that spans a broad range of subjects.

**Community Colleges:**

In the United States, community colleges are two-year institutions that offer a range of educational programs, including associate degrees, vocational training, and certificates. Renowned for their accessibility and affordability, they provide opportunities for affordable higher education. Offering flexible scheduling options to accommodate work and other commitments, community colleges focus on practical and career-oriented education. Graduates gain skills in demand in the job market, and these colleges often serve as pathways for students to transfer to four-year institutions and complete bachelor’s degrees. These colleges often have non-residential campuses and mixed funding sources, and enroll full-time and part-time students of all ages and backgrounds.

**Minority Serving Institutions:**

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in the United States enroll students of all backgrounds but receive federal funding to support higher education for minority populations. MSIs are accredited, post-secondary, higher educational institutions, and include two-year, four-year, public, and private institutions. Some of these colleges and universities are located in remote regions of the country, whereas others serve urban neighborhoods. They are unique both in their missions and in their day-to-day operations, which may influence how they approach international partnerships.

MSI categories are determined by the U.S. Department of Education:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) include over 100 institutions of higher education established prior to 1964 for the primary purpose of educating African Americans. The majority of HBCUs are located in the Southern United States, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. HBCUs comprise 3% of America’s institutions of higher education.
- Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) have at least 25% total full-time enrollment of Hispanic undergraduate students. As of 2024, there are over 500 institutions with this designation spread throughout the United States, with a high concentration in California and Texas. This is the fastest growing MSI category, with new institutions applying for the designation each year.
- Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) include over 30 educational institutions, most of which are operated by Native American tribes. They generally serve Native Americans and geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing education beyond the high school level. Most TCUs are located in the Mountain West and Midwest regions.
- Alaska Native-serving institutions enroll at least 20 percent Alaska Native students. The five institutions

*Continued on next page.*

that maintain this designation are all located in Alaska.

- Native Hawaiian-serving institutions enroll at least 10 percent Native Hawaiian students, with over a dozen institutions maintaining this designation in the state of Hawaii.
- Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) are mainly public two-year institutions with enrollment of at least 1000 undergraduates. They serve an undergraduate population which is at least half low-income and/or first-generation students and enroll a significant number of Black American students. Over 60 PBIs are designated throughout U.S. regions, with a majority in the Southern United States.
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPISIs) are institutions that enroll at least 10 percent of students from these backgrounds. Over 200 institutions spread across the United States maintain this designation, with large numbers of AANAPISIs on the West coast, Northeast, and in Hawaii.
- Native American-serving nontribal institutions (NASNTI) enroll at least 10 percent Native American students but are not operated by Native American tribes. They offer comprehensive support and a wide range of academic opportunities. Almost half of the more than 30 NASNTI are located in Oklahoma, with the remainder throughout the Southwest, Mountain West, and Midwest.

### **Land-Grant Universities:**

These public universities were initially established to provide education in critical areas such as agriculture, science, and engineering, and with the intent of bringing scholarship and research to the local populace of a given state. Over time, these institutions have broadened their academic offerings while maintaining a commitment to research initiatives, community involvement, and the facilitation of accessible education.

Often recognizable by the inclusion of terms like “Agricultural and Mechanical,” “Agricultural and Technical,” or “Polytechnic” in their names, land-grant universities have evolved into multifaceted entities. They serve as invaluable resources to their communities by offering practical education, engaging in cutting-edge research endeavors, and disseminating knowledge for the betterment of society at large. The legacy of these universities is rooted in their dedication to not only educating the next generation but also advancing the frontiers of understanding and contributing to the welfare of their local and global communities.

### **Specialized Higher Education Institutions:**

Specialized institutions are unique in the U.S. higher education landscape because they hone in on particular fields, vocations, or demographics of students. Their hallmark lies in their ability to customize their curriculum and resources to cater precisely to the unique requirements of their student body. A prime example is the array of art and design schools that curate programs tailored to the creative disciplines, nurturing the artistic talents of their attendees. Similarly, technical institutes emerge as vital players, equipping aspiring professionals with focused training tailored for technical careers that demand specific skill sets.

These institutions significantly enrich the landscape of higher education by offering a strategic approach. By narrowing their focus, they provide an education that is not just comprehensive but sharply focused, fostering expertise in their respective domains. Through their dedication to specialized fields, these institutions underscore the broad array of educational opportunities available to individuals pursuing distinctive paths.

### Public vs. Private Institutions in the United States:

	<b>PUBLIC</b>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
Sources of Funding	Primarily funded by state governments	Endowment funds, tuition fees, and individual donors
Cost of Tuition	Subsidized by state governments; less expensive	More expensive; may have more financial aid available
Religious Affiliation	Must be secular by law	May have religious affiliation
Size of Institution	Typically larger (not always)	Often smaller than public institutions

### Language(s) of Instruction:

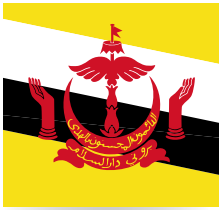
The primary language of instruction is English.

### Quality Assurance Structures:

In the United States, accreditation holds a crucial role in ensuring quality. The U.S Department of Education is authorized to “recognize” accrediting agencies, a list of which are found in the Department of Education’s [Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs](#). Regional accrediting agencies cover institutions within certain geographical zones, while specialized accrediting agencies concentrate on specific subjects or institution types (like engineering, business, or nursing). These evaluative bodies assess institutions and academic programs against well-defined benchmarks for excellence.

# Southeast Asian Higher Education Landscape

This section provides a brief outline of each ASEAN member state's higher education system. For additional detailed information on current student recruitment trends, country highlights, and government scholarships in all world regions, you can consult the [EducationUSA Global Guide](#), an annual publication from the U.S. Department of State's EducationUSA network.



## **Brunei**

### **Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Brunei follows a structured system that includes diploma, bachelor's, and postgraduate levels. Universities offer a variety of programs in disciplines such as arts, sciences, and professional fields. The country places a strong emphasis on Islamic studies and has institutions dedicated to this area.

### **Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Brunei has several public universities and colleges, including [Universiti Brunei Darussalam](#), [University of Technology Brunei](#), and [Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University](#), among others, which offer a wide range of programs. Additionally, there are institutions focused on technical and vocational education, such as [IBTE Sultan Saiful Rijal Campus](#).

### **Role of Ministry of Education:**

The [Ministry of Education \(MoE\) in Brunei](#) plays a central role in setting policies and regulations for higher education institutions. The ministry aims to enhance the quality of education, promote research, advance innovation, and ensure that programs align with the country's developmental goals.

### **Language(s) of Instruction:**

The primary language of instruction in higher education institutions in Brunei is English, with some discussions in Malay.

### **Quality Assurance Structures:**

The [Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council \(BDNAC\)](#) is responsible for ensuring the quality of higher education institutions and programs in Brunei. BDNAC assesses academic programs and promotes quality enhancement initiatives.



## **Burma**

### **Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Burma follows a structure that includes diploma programs, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral programs. The duration of undergraduate programs is four years, while master's programs take one to two years. Doctoral programs usually involve several years of research and study.

### **Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Burma's higher education system includes universities, degree colleges, and institutions that offer specialized training. Universities are the main higher education institutions offering a variety of programs in fields such as arts, sciences, and professional disciplines.

### **Role of Ministry of Education:**

The [MoE in Burma](#) oversees higher education policies, regulations, and development. It sets standards, approves curricula, and aims to ensure the quality and relevance of education across the country.

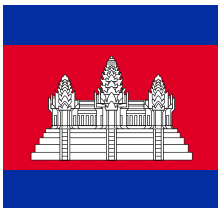
### **Language(s) of Instruction:**

The primary language of instruction in Burma's higher education institutions is Burmese (Burma language). However, English is also used in technical and scientific programs, and there is a growing emphasis on enhancing English language proficiency.

### **Quality Assurance Structures:**

The MoE in Burma oversees the quality assurance of higher education institutions and programs. The MoE sets policies, standards, and guidelines that institutions must follow to maintain quality education. While the country is working on developing broader quality assurance mechanisms, challenges remain in ensuring consistent quality across various disciplines.

The U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory system lists Burma as Level 4 – Do Not Travel due to civil unrest and armed conflict as of January 2024. Any U.S. institutions considering activities in Burma should review this advisory closely. Please refer to the [U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs](#) for up-to-date information.



## **Cambodia**

### **Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Cambodia is structured into various levels, including diploma programs, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral programs. Undergraduate programs usually span three to four years, while master's programs take one to two years. Doctoral programs generally require several years of research and study.

### **Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Cambodia has a range of higher education institutions, including universities and institutes. Public universities like the [Royal University of Phnom Penh](#) and private universities such as [Pannasastra University](#) offer programs in various disciplines.

### **Role of Ministry of Education:**

The [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport](#) oversees higher education policies, regulations, and the development of the education system in Cambodia. It sets standards, approves curricula, and promotes quality assurance in higher education.

**Language(s) of Instruction:**

Khmer is the primary language of instruction in Cambodian higher education institutions. However, to enhance internationalization and attract international students, some programs are offered in English, especially at the master's and doctoral levels.

**Quality Assurance Structures:**

The Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) is responsible for ensuring quality in higher education institutions. ACC assesses and accredits programs and institutions based on specific criteria, aiming to improve the quality of education provided in the country.

**Indonesia****Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Indonesia is structured with various levels, including diploma-granting programs, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral programs. The system follows a 4-4-2 model, which means four years of primary education, four years of secondary education, and two years of senior secondary education. Higher education typically includes three to four years for a bachelor's degree, while master's programs take one to two years, and doctoral programs require three to five years of study.

**Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Indonesia has a diverse range of higher education institutions, including universities, institutes, polytechnics, and colleges. Public and private institutions coexist, with public universities often receiving more government funding and recognition. Some prominent universities include the University of Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University, and Bandung Institute of Technology.

**Role of Ministry of Education:**

The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan) is responsible for overseeing higher education policies and regulations in Indonesia. It sets standards, coordinates curriculum development, and implements quality assurance measures to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of higher education institutions and programs.

**Language(s) of Instruction:**

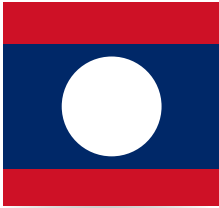
The primary language of instruction in most Indonesian higher education institutions is Bahasa Indonesia, the national language. However, as part of efforts to enhance internationalization, many universities offer programs taught in English, especially at the master's and doctoral levels, to attract international students and foster global competitiveness.

**Key Internationalization Trends:**

Indonesia has been actively working on internationalizing its higher education sector. This includes efforts to increase the number of English-taught programs, facilitate student and faculty mobility through exchange programs, and establish partnerships with universities worldwide. The "Study in Indonesia" program encourages international students to pursue higher education in the country.

**Quality Assurance Structures:**

Quality assurance in Indonesian higher education is managed by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi or BAN-PT). BAN-PT evaluates and accredits institutions and programs based on specific criteria, aiming to ensure quality and relevance.



## Laos

### Structure of Higher Education:

Higher education in Laos follows a structure that includes diploma programs, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral programs. The duration of undergraduate programs is typically three to four years, while master's programs usually take one to two years. Doctoral programs require several years of research and study.

### Types of Higher Education Institutions:

Laos has a variety of higher education institutions, including universities, institutes, colleges, and vocational schools. The [National University of Laos](#) is one of the main public institutions, offering programs across various disciplines.

### Role of Ministry of Education:

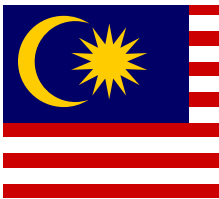
The [Ministry of Education and Sports \(MoES\)](#) in Laos plays a central role in shaping higher education policies and regulations. It sets standards, approves curricula, and aims to ensure the quality and relevance of education across the country.

### Language(s) of Instruction:

The primary language of instruction in higher education institutions in Laos is Lao. However, there has been an increasing emphasis on English language instruction, especially in technical and professional programs, to prepare students for global engagement.

### Quality Assurance Structures:

Quality assurance in Lao higher education is managed by the MoES, which monitors and evaluates institutions and programs to ensure compliance with established standards. This includes accreditation processes and assessments of academic quality.



## Malaysia

### Structure of Higher Education:

Higher education in Malaysia is structured to offer a wide range of programs, including diploma, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Undergraduate programs generally take three to four years, while master's programs typically last for one to two years. Doctoral programs involve advanced research and usually span three to five years.

### Types of Higher Education Institutions:

Malaysia has several types of higher education institutions, including public and private universities, polytechnics, and community colleges. Several public institutions include [Universiti Malaya](#), [Universiti Putra Malaysia](#), and [Universiti Teknologi Malaysia](#). Private universities like [Taylor's University](#) and [Sunway University](#) also offer a variety of programs. Examples of community colleges include [Selayang Community College](#) and [Kota Kinabalu Community College](#) – these institutions provide technical and vocational education.



**Role of Ministry of Education:**

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation oversees and shapes higher education policies in Malaysia. It sets standards, approves programs, allocates funding, and promotes the overall development of higher education institutions in the country.

**Language(s) of Instruction:**

Malaysia employs a bilingual approach to higher education, with English and Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) as the primary languages of instruction. English is particularly emphasized in technical, scientific, and professional fields to prepare graduates for global careers.

**Quality Assurance Structures:**

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) oversees quality assurance in higher education. MQA evaluates and accredits institutions and programs based on specified criteria. This ensures that educational offerings meet national and international standards.

**Philippines  
Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in the Philippines follows a structure that includes undergraduate and graduate levels. Undergraduate programs typically take four to five years to complete, while master's programs generally span one to two years. Doctoral programs involve advanced research and typically last for several years.

**Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

The Philippines has several types of higher education institutions, including universities, colleges, technical-vocational institutions, and specialized schools. Public and private institutions coexist, offering programs in various fields.

**Role of Ministry of Education:**

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) oversees higher education in the Philippines. CHED sets policies, approves programs, allocates funding, and ensures the quality and relevance of higher education institutions and programs.

**Language(s) of Instruction:**

English is the primary language of instruction in higher education institutions in the Philippines.

**Quality Assurance Structures:**

Quality assurance in Philippine higher education is managed by CHED. CHED evaluates and accredits institutions and programs to ensure compliance with national and international quality standards.



## **Singapore**

### **Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Singapore offers a wide range of programs, including diploma, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Undergraduate programs generally take three to four years, while master's programs usually span one to two years. Doctoral programs involve advanced research and usually span three to five years.

### **Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Singapore's higher education landscape includes public universities, private universities, and polytechnics. The [National University of Singapore](#), [Nanyang Technological University](#), and [Singapore Management University](#) are public institutions. Private universities like [Singapore University of Social Sciences](#) and [SIM Global Education](#) offer various programs.

### **Role of Ministry of Education:**

The [MoE in Singapore](#) oversees and shapes higher education policies. It sets standards, approves curricula, allocates funding, and promotes the overall development of higher education institutions in the country.

### **Language(s) of Instruction:**

English is the primary language of instruction in Singapore's higher education institutions. This promotes effective communication and prepares graduates for international careers.

### **Key Internationalization Trends:**

Internationalization is a significant aspect of Singapore's higher education system. The country attracts a diverse population of international students, offers programs with global relevance, and fosters collaborations with universities worldwide. Exchange programs, research partnerships, and joint-degree initiatives contribute to internationalization.

### **Quality Assurance Structures:**

The country's [autonomous universities](#) enjoy a remarkable degree of independence in managing both their academic and administrative functions. [The Higher Education Operations Division of the Ministry of Education](#) oversees quality assurance frameworks for post-secondary institutions funded by the state.

Overseeing the private education landscape is the [Committee for Private Education](#). It assumes the crucial role of regulating and safeguarding the quality of private education institutions within Singapore.



## **Thailand**

### **Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Thailand follows a structure that includes diploma programs, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral programs. Undergraduate programs generally take three to four years to complete, while master's programs usually span one to two years. Doctoral programs involve advanced research and typically last for several years.

**Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Thailand's higher education landscape encompasses universities, institutes, colleges, and vocational schools. Universities offer a wide range of programs in various fields, while specialized institutions focus on specific areas of study.

**Role of Ministry of Education:**

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation oversees higher education policies, regulations, and development in Thailand. It sets standards, approves curricula, allocates funding, and ensures the quality of higher education institutions and programs.

**Language(s) of Instruction:**

English is the primary language of instruction in higher education institutions in Thailand.

**Quality Assurance Structures:**

Quality assurance in Thai higher education is overseen by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA). ONESQA evaluates and accredits institutions and programs to ensure compliance with national and international quality standards.

**Vietnam****Structure of Higher Education:**

Higher education in Vietnam is structured to provide various levels of education, including diploma, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral programs. Undergraduate programs generally last for four years (three years for some programs at junior colleges), while master's programs span one to two years. Doctoral programs involve extensive research and typically require three to five years.

**Types of Higher Education Institutions:**

Vietnam's higher education landscape includes universities, institutes, colleges, and vocational schools. Universities offer a diverse range of programs across various disciplines, while specialized institutions focus on specific areas of study.

**Role of Ministry of Education:**

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is responsible for overseeing higher education policies, regulations, and development in Vietnam. MoET sets standards, approves curricula, allocates funding, and ensures the quality and relevance of higher education institutions and programs.

**Language(s) of Instruction:**

Vietnamese is the primary language of instruction in higher education institutions in Vietnam. However, efforts to internationalize education have led to the development of programs taught in English, especially at the master's and doctoral levels, to attract international students and promote global engagement.

**Quality Assurance Structures:**

Quality assurance in Vietnamese higher education is managed by the MoET. The Vietnam National University Quality Assurance Center also plays a role in evaluating and accrediting institutions and programs to ensure compliance with national and international quality standards.

# Key Considerations & Best Practices

## The Institute of International Education (IIE) Eight Stages for Developing Institutional International Partnerships

**Stage 1:** Assessment

**Stage 2:** Developing a Strategy

**Stage 3:** Identifying Potential Partners

**Stage 4:** Holding Face-to-Face Meetings

**Stage 5:** Signing an initial MoU or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

**Stage 6:** Engaging in Initial Collaboration

**Stage 7:** Periodic Assessment

**Stage 8:** Partnership Expansion

For more information on each of these areas, including the main elements of the stages and questions for consideration, see [IIE's Eight Stages for Developing Institutional International Partnerships](#).



### Key Resource

Key takeaways from [“A guide to the dos and don'ts of international partnerships”](#) by Jason E. Lane and Jessica D. Schueller.

#### Insights on building international partnerships:

- Acknowledge and adapt to foreign country regulations and rules.
- Prepare for the eventual end of partnerships, considering financial, legal, and academic aspects.
- Establish clear expectations and maintain consistent communication.
- Define institutional “red lines” that delineate issues that would be unacceptable to move forward with.
- Base partnerships on trust, shared goals, and mutual understanding, ideally allowing growth over time.

The article underscores the importance of clarifying roles, responsibilities, and risks to establish robust international partnerships that foster global engagement and understanding while safeguarding the interests of all parties. Read more, including examples from Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology's strategic research alliance shift, the Global Innovation Exchange between U.S. and Chinese universities, the University of North Carolina and Universidad San Francisco de Quito in the Galapagos Science Center, National University of Singapore's decision to end Yale-NUS College, and University of Aberdeen's withdrawal from a partnership in South Korea.

# Planning for International Partnerships

The establishment of collaborations between universities across borders has the potential to not only enhance the quality of education but also address global challenges through collaborative research and knowledge exchange. However, the road to successful international partnerships is intricate and demands meticulous planning. This section of resources delves into the critical role of planning in shaping effective partnerships between higher education institutions on the global stage.

## Top 5 things you should know for developing sustainable international partnerships

**Wing-kai To**, Assistant Provost for Global Engagement & Senior International Officer, Bridgewater State University

1. Identify mutually agreed upon areas of collaboration including but not limited to academic collaboration, joint teaching, joint research, student exchange, faculty exchange, short-term programs, COIL/virtual exchange, capacity building, etc.
2. Assign a designated person to implement and assess the partnership, whether it is a staff member in the international office, a faculty member in an academic department, or some combination of them.
3. Start with one or two projects to set up a goal for implementation within one to two years.
4. Identify financial resources to support programs relating to partnerships such as education abroad and/or student exchange, or begin with virtual exchange without allocating scholarships for these activities.
5. Keep campus stakeholders informed – ideas may come up in a spontaneous way if people are consulted and have the chance to contribute. Continue to work with campus stakeholders to promote the partnership for academic collaborations and exchanges.

## The Importance of the Planning Stage

Embarking on international partnerships without a robust plan is akin to setting sail without a navigational chart. A well-structured strategic plan serves as the cornerstone for establishing partnerships that are meaningful, sustainable, and aligned with the goals and aspirations of the participating institutions. It allows stakeholders to lay out a clear roadmap, identify potential challenges, allocate resources judiciously, and maximize the benefits of collaboration. By investing time and effort into the planning stage, institutions can mitigate risks, anticipate obstacles, and ensure that the partnership journey is productive and fulfilling for all parties.

## Basics of Strategic Planning

At its core, strategic planning is a systematic process that involves envisioning the desired future, setting overarching goals, and devising a coherent framework to achieve those objectives. When applied to international partnerships in higher education, strategic planning encompasses a multifaceted approach that considers academic, cultural, logistical, and financial dimensions. The process typically involves the following key steps:

- **Vision and Mission Definition:** Clearly articulate the purpose and aspirations of the partnership. What do the institutions aim to achieve through collaboration? How will the partnership contribute to each institution's broader goals?
- **Stakeholder Identification:** Identify the stakeholders within and outside the institutions who will be involved in or impacted by the partnership. These may include faculty members, administrators, students, local communities, industry partners, and more.
- **Needs Assessment:** Evaluate the specific needs and strengths of each institution. What unique resources, expertise, and opportunities can each partner bring to the table?
- **Goal Setting:** Establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals that align with the partnership's vision. These goals could pertain to research collaboration, student exchanges, joint academic programs, or community engagement.
- **Resource Allocation:** Determine the financial, human, and infrastructural resources required to execute the partnership effectively. Develop a plan for resource allocation and management.
- **Risk Analysis and Mitigation:** Identify potential challenges such as cultural differences, language barriers, regulatory issues, and funding uncertainties. Devise strategies to mitigate these risks and create contingency plans.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms to monitor the progress of the partnership and evaluate its outcomes against predefined metrics. This iterative process allows for adjustments and improvements over time.



## Key Resources

The following resources from ACE provide practical insights and best practices to guide higher education institutions through the intricacies of strategic planning for international partnerships.

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

**ACE International Partnership Toolkit:**  
Strategic Planning

**ACE International Partnership Toolkit:**  
A Hub and Spokes - Configuring Campus Stakeholders for Partnership Success

*Select boxes to see more.*

# Partnership Development Checklist

**Jill Blondin**, Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, Virginia Commonwealth University

These are some of the areas and specific questions that should be asked when a faculty member, a department, and/or an academic unit are considering a partnership. These questions provide an opportunity for reflection on the viability and sustainability of an international partnership.

## Faculty test

1. What is the current level of faculty activity with this partner?
2. Do a significant number of faculty in the particular department or college support this partnership?
3. Are faculty in other departments or colleges interested in this partnership?

## Overlap with existing partnerships

1. Does the proposed partnership compete with similar partnerships for students and faculty?
2. Does the proposed partnership address a gap in existing partnerships?
3. How does the proposed partnership leverage existing partnerships or institutional strengths?

## Partner institutional capacity


1. Does the proposed partner institution have a comparable reputation?
2. If not overall, are the reputations of specific programs compatible?
3. Is the partner's mission compatible with your institution?
4. Does the partner's curriculum match the institution's needs?
5. Is the partner's academic calendar compatible with the institution?
6. What is the language of instruction? Is there language support?
7. Does the partner have similar research interests/strengths?
8. Does the partner have an established administrative office to facilitate the agreement?
9. Are there significant safety concerns?
10. Is the planned activity legal for both partners to undertake?

## Resources

1. Will the department, college, or other participating party commit resources to the agreement?
2. What resources are the partner offering?
3. What external sources of support are available?
4. What are the cost advantages of developing this partnership?
5. Which of the following are available for support of this partnership: faculty release time; travel for site visits; accommodations for visiting scholars; aid for study abroad students; special projects or collaborations?

## Outcomes and expected level of activity

1. What are the first activities for this partnership that build understanding at lower cost and risk?
2. What is a reasonable level of activity for this fully developed partnership?



### **Institutional monitoring**

1. Which faculty member is willing to sponsor the partner agreement?
2. What is the term for review of the agreement?
3. What are the activity-based metrics that will be used to evaluate this partnership?

### **As a general rule, if any of the following elements is lacking, an agreement or MoU should not be signed**

1. Some previous faculty interaction between the proposed partner institutions;
2. Strong potential for mutual benefit;
3. Compliance with applicable legal restrictions and institutional regulations;
4. Committed financial and infrastructure support (as necessary);
5. Identified on-site coordinators or contact persons at each institution;
6. Stated support from all colleges, departments, and programs explicitly implicated in the contemplated agreement; and
7. A plan for regular program evaluation and renewal.



# Assessing & Sustaining Partnerships



**Key Resource:** [EVALUATE Program](#)

**Lessons Learned: Evaluate**

1. Know your stakeholders and their (naturally varied) interests.
2. Integrate evaluation with existing data and systems.
3. Get to know evaluation methods.
4. Expect change in ideas about evaluation - and to invest time and effort.

This comprehensive resource includes an evaluation framework, key take-aways, and several in-depth case studies with details about evaluating international partnerships and is ideal reading for a deep-dive into partnership assessment.

## Assessment Resources & Tools

- [Lehigh University: Criteria for initiating new partnerships and the procedures for proposing a new partnership and evaluating and renewing existing agreements](#)
- [University of California Berkeley: Partnership Assessment Rubric](#)
- [Millersville University: Assessment Rubric](#)

# Hot Topics in International Partnerships

## Partnerships & Funding

**Vivian Wang**, Vice Provost of Global Engagement, The University of Tulsa

Exploring funding opportunities is crucial for supporting global partnerships and maximizing their impact. Often, the global partnership office is seen as administrative facilitators of the agreement process. However, it is essential for the office to collaborate with internal units and external partners to seek external funding opportunities. By jointly leading grant applications through government grants, scholarship programs, and research funding schemes that encourage bilateral partnerships, resources can be leveraged effectively. It is important for the global partnership office to establish robust funding strategies to secure financial support for global partnership and knowledge exchange.

### Below are five funding opportunities you should know:

- 1. Government Grants and Programs:** Governments frequently offer grant programs dedicated to promoting cultural and educational exchange and international development. While some grants may provide a smaller amount of funding, they serve as a valuable platform for increasing cultural understanding and forming partnerships. For instance, the U.S. Embassy's Public Diplomacy Small Grants Program in many countries offer grants that support programs and activities that enhance mutual understanding and cultural dialogue between the United States and other countries. Collaborating with partner universities to jointly apply for this funding program can support academic lectures, visiting faculty research trips, student mobility programs, staff exchange or training, etc. [The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#) administers grants through the [IDEAS Program](#) and [Fulbright Program](#). Another government-related grant is [Erasmus+](#).
- 2. International Funding Organizations:** Various international organizations provide funding for collaborative projects that promote global partnerships. Examples include the World Bank, United Nations agencies, and regional development banks. These organizations often prioritize funding projects addressing specific global challenges, such as sustainable development goals. Such grants are ideal for supporting faculty research or student travel programs to partner institutions. Joint applications are often encouraged, as they demonstrate international collaboration and partnerships with institutions from multiple countries.
- 3. Philanthropic Foundations:** Philanthropic foundations also support international education and research collaborations, with many focusing on higher education, global engagement, cross-cultural understanding, or specific research fields internationally. For example, the Carnegie Corporation of New York provides grants for international peace and security, higher education, and global engagement. Such grants can support faculty jointly taught courses, international academic conferences, and more. The Korea Foundation offers support for language learning, cultural exchange, and visiting faculty programs. Additionally, there are numerous local community-focused foundations that can provide support for enhancing global connections.

- 4. Institutional Funding:** Many institutions establish internal funding mechanisms to support international collaborations. These internal funds can be allocated for various purposes, including faculty mobility grants, joint research projects, curriculum development, and student exchange programs. By tapping into these institutional resources, the global partnership office can provide financial support to facilitate partnership activities and ensure their long-term viability.
- 5. Networks and Consortia:** Institutions that are part of consortia or networks can also explore funding opportunities available through these networks. For example, Mid-America Universities International is a regional consortium promoting study abroad. It partners with a European network, the Utrecht Network, to offer funding to support staff from member institutions to visit partner universities in Europe.

By proactively exploring funding opportunities both internally and externally, the global partnership office can further leverage resources to lend credibility and recognition to the partnership, attracting further opportunities for collaboration and establishing a track record of success. Through a proactive and strategic approach to securing financial support, it is important for institutions to maximize resources, expand collaboration, and achieve sustainable outcomes that benefit both itself and its partners.

## Partnerships & Intercultural Competence

**Darla K. Deardorff**, Executive Director, AIEA

Intercultural competence is a key competence in partnering with colleagues and establishing strong institutional partnerships. (See [https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/ektron/files/underscore/theory\\_connections\\_intercultural\\_competence.pdf](https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/ektron/files/underscore/theory_connections_intercultural_competence.pdf) and [www.iccglobal.org](http://www.iccglobal.org) for more on intercultural competence.) Here is an excerpt from “*Leading Internationalization: A Handbook for International Education Leaders*” (edited by Deardorff and Charles) that explains more about this competence:

When communicating across differences, it is important to be mindful of the communication process itself. This means being more aware of one’s own communication patterns as well as others’ patterns in the interaction. Consider ways to adapt to others’ communication styles through delivery as well as use (or nonuse) of words and nonverbal communication. The goal in communication is to be both effective (meeting one’s own goals) and appropriate (communicating in ways that meet the other’s expectations). Throughout the communication process, openness, curiosity, and cultural humility are foundational to successful interactions. Listening for understanding (not listening for reply or judgment) becomes a key to adapting to others’ styles. In fact, the *Standards of Professional Practice for International Education Leaders and Senior International Officers* (AIEA, 2016) calls for SIOs to have strong empathic instincts, be a good listener, and be able to effectively navigate the ambiguities arising from cross-cultural encounters, “thereby modeling the attitudes and skills required for intercultural and international engagement” (p. 139-140).

## Partnerships & Research Integrity

Select boxes to see more.

The National Science Foundation (U.S.) has a list of resources for research integrity.

The University of California, Berkeley has a detailed set of principles and a list of resources and links regarding research integrity in partnerships.

## Partnership Pitfalls: Lessons from Research on Partnership Sustainability

Summarized from [Long-Term Sustainability in Global Higher Education Partnerships](#) by Michael Lanford

- Long-term sustainability of global education partnerships is often overlooked despite significant investments in time and resources.
- Several factors can negatively impact sustainability, including:
  - unequal commitment levels;
  - confusion about partnership goals; and
  - cultural misunderstandings.
- Leveraging expertise, resources, and human capital for partnerships is time-consuming and costly – but necessary.
- Four specific threats to long-term sustainability are:
  - divergent motivations and goals;
  - inadequate planning and funding volatility;
  - leadership turnover; and
  - poor staff morale.
- To enhance sustainability and avoid pitfalls, four suggestions are:
  - alignment of institutional cultures;
  - leveraging multiple funding sources;
  - shared leadership responsibilities; and
  - an environment promoting professional growth.
- Ethical considerations for global partnerships include fulfilling higher education's outreach, instructional, and research missions for society and conducting innovation and entrepreneurship activities transparently and for the public good.

## Partnerships & AI: Implications for Artificial Intelligence in International Partnerships

- **Communication and translation**

AI-driven language translation tools make it easier and more streamlined to communicate effectively with people at institutions who speak different languages. This technology facilitates collaboration and sharing of information and breaks down barriers that may have previously posed challenges.

- **Virtual exchange programs**

While virtual exchange is not new, AI and virtual reality can create immersive virtual exchange programs for workshops, classes, research collaborations, and other initiatives. Virtual exchange is often a relatively cost-effective tool for internationalization, and these new technologies can be an exciting way to promote these international exchanges.

- **Predicting trends in student mobility and preference**

AI-powered data analysis can help universities measure how partnerships are working and reaching goals. Particularly in larger institutions, being able to analyze data on student outcomes, research outcomes, and other identified goals is helpful to continuously improve partnership activities. In addition, AI has the ability to predict trends in student mobility and preferences, which can assist universities in international partner selection and strategies to attract students from different regions or backgrounds.

- **Improving research collaborations**

AI algorithms allow researchers from different institutions to become matched based on expertise and interest – making the process more productive. AI can also analyze massive data sets, simulate experiments, and spot patterns for researchers.

- **Personalized learning and joint degrees**

AI can help personalize the learning journey for students in joint degree programs and adapt the curriculum to suit learning styles, language ability, and student progress.

With all of these possible benefits, it is crucial to have an open conversation about AI during partnership development. Institutions should collaborate on discussions around AI ethics, data privacy, and fairness in its use, and ensure all students and researchers participating in partnership activities are aware of relevant policies.

# Partnerships between Higher Education Institutions in Southeast Asia + U.S. Community Colleges: Various Model Activities with Tested Strategies

**Rebekah de Wit**, Director, Global Education, Community College of Baltimore County

## ACTIVITY: FACULTY EXCHANGE

Faculty members teach or serve as guest speakers at the partner institution – ideally with activity in both directions, though not necessarily in identical ways.

### POSSIBLE COMPONENTS

#### VIRTUAL

- Using a speakers bureau-type model, **each institution can identify faculty members in one or more disciplines who will serve as one-off virtual guest speakers** in classes at the partner institution to provide an international perspective. Sending the partner institution a list of available faculty along with the topics in which they have expertise can be an excellent way to spur their requests for an international guest speaker.
- In a virtual teaching exchange, **one faculty member from each institution can teach for the other**. This might entail teaching or co-teaching one or more full classes for a semester or for an academic year.

#### IN-PERSON

- **Applying for external funding may enable sending a Southeast Asian faculty member in person to the U.S. partner college** for a semester or an academic year (e.g., via the [Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program](#) or a similar initiative) as many community colleges lack the funds, immigration authorization, and infrastructure needed to host visiting international faculty members for a long duration.
- Some community colleges without the ability to sponsor visiting international faculty members have worked with a nearby university to **collaboratively sponsor a scholar**, but this process can be complex.

### TIPS

#### Two-way virtual teaching exchange:

- Many partners interested in a teaching exchange with a U.S. community college may be unable to employ visiting international faculty members. As a result, a virtual teaching exchange may be a feasible way to accomplish similar goals - especially when structured so that no transfer of funds is involved.
- Co-teaching or COIL is a good first step to ensure that both faculty members understand their partner institutions' norms and expectations before taking on a full class as sole instructor of record.

## ACTIVITY: SHORT-TERM, NON-DEGREE STUDY

U.S. community college students study at the Southeast Asian higher education institution, and/or Southeast Asian students study at the U.S. community college, through short-term, non-degree, in-person study abroad. These programs provide an in-person international experience for students, and may offer them academic credits which are applied towards the degree at the home institution. There are many models of in-person non-degree study abroad, including faculty-led, semester, internship, and service-learning programs, which may occur during an academic term or during scheduled institutional breaks. The lengths of a non-degree program can vary from less than two weeks to a full academic year. Short-term in-person study abroad may also be combined with virtual exchange practices in hybrid models.

This opportunity benefits the student (via study abroad), the host institution (via more international students enrolling), and the home institution (via more students studying abroad and improving their intercultural competence skills for career success).

ACTIVITY: VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT	
Southeast Asian university classes, student organizations, and groups of faculty and staff engage virtually with their counterparts at the U.S. community college.	
POSSIBLE COMPONENTS	TIPS
<p>Class-to-class engagement can comprise <b>Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)</b>, which is an intensive, months-long pairing of classes at both partner institutions – or may comprise a reduced version of COIL with just occasional activities together.</p> <p><b>Virtual engagement</b> can include activities such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>occasional co-teaching</b> or taking turns teaching for a defined period</li> <li>• <b>common guest speaker</b> or other facilitator talking to both classes at once and available to the whole group for questions/discussion</li> <li>• <b>students working on one or more projects in small teams</b> (e.g., two students from each institution forming a project group of four)</li> <li>• <b>students interviewing each other across cultures</b> for one or more assignments, which can enable class-to-class activities even between non-aligning disciplines (useful when faculty interested in participating are from different departments at the two partner institutions)</li> <li>• <b>discussions/debates between students</b> from the partner institutions, including analysis of cultural differences in responses as these arise</li> </ul> <p><b>Faculty and staff members can engage virtually with their counterparts</b> at the partner institution regularly or occasionally for activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing or comparing instructional practices, materials, and curricula</li> <li>• discussing trends in their fields or office practices</li> <li>• organizing collaborative webinars for professional development (for a shared or wider audience) or for use with students</li> <li>• further developing the inter-institutional partnership</li> <li>• shared professional development offerings</li> </ul> <p><b>Student organizations from each institution can hold joint meetings/events</b> for international engagement and cultural exchange.</p> <p><b>Each institution can provide its partner a “virtual study abroad” opportunity</b> for students either in a single discipline or across a broader topic area (e.g., humanities, health sciences, etc.). These can be a multi-day series or comprise a single day. Virtual events included in the program might include a mix of live and pre-recorded events, with elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging talks by faculty followed by question-and-answer opportunities</li> <li>• narrated tours of special places or live happenings, or narrated videos</li> <li>• campus tour and other introductions to the institution</li> <li>• meetings with student ambassadors</li> <li>• culture quizzes and language mini-lessons</li> </ul>	<p><b>Faculty buy-in:</b></p> <p>Opportunities for class-to-class virtual engagement that use elements of COIL, but are less intensive than a full COIL experience, may encourage greater faculty participation. Consider a structure that permits faculty to opt to participate in just one or more of the virtual engagement concepts listed at left.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>Partner institutions must decide how to administer each shared activity, either centrally in an international office or within departments. Online request forms available to faculty, staff, and student organizations at each partner institution are useful.</p> <p><b>Time differences:</b></p> <p>If time zones do not align well between partner institutions, a good option is to have a guest speaker pre-record a customized talk and be available by email for student questions.</p> <p>Live virtual activities for students usually must be optional to accommodate schedules that fall outside regular class meeting times for at least one of the two parties. Student meetings to work on projects can often be a notable exception since small groups more readily can negotiate times that work for all their members.</p>

## ACTIVITY: TRANSFER AGREEMENT | ASIA TO U.S.

### VARIOUS MODELS

Southeast Asian university students spend a portion of their bachelor's degree studies at the U.S. community college.

This opportunity benefits the Southeast Asian student (via study abroad), the U.S. community college (via more international students enrolling), and the higher education institution in ASEAN member states (via more students studying abroad and improving their English language proficiency for career success).

### STEPS

#### Most U.S. community colleges offer the following types of instruction:

- General education and introductory course work similar to Southeast Asian preparatory and first-year study in many traditional university disciplines;
- Up to two years of specialized course work in disciplines that are often described using one or more of the following terms: applied, career, technical, or vocational; and
- English language training at all or most levels.

Consequently, pursuing a portion of the bachelor's degree studies at a U.S. community college can be most appropriate for Southeast Asian university students who wish to improve their English or who specialize in a field that is considered applied, career, technical, and vocational.

#### Transfer patterns that work well in the Asia-to-U.S. community college direction include the following:

- The Southeast Asian student pursuing a bachelor's degree at a Southeast Asian university spends one to four semesters studying English language at a U.S. community college at any point during the bachelor's program.
- The Southeast Asian student spends the first one or two years of bachelor's degree study at a U.S. community college pursuing a combination of English language studies, introductory studies in his/her major field of study, and/or specialized studies in a career/technical field, and then returns to the Southeast Asian university to complete the final two or three years of the bachelor's degree.
- The Southeast Asian student spends the first one to two years of bachelor's degree study at the Southeast Asian university and then pursues one or both of the following paths, either as a temporary study abroad arrangement or via a formalized joint degree program as articulated in an inter-institutional MoU:
  - Option A (Southeast Asian university to U.S. community college to Southeast Asian university): the next one to two years of bachelor's degree study at a U.S. community college for general education studies and/or studies in the major, and then returns to the Southeast Asian university to complete the bachelor's degree.
  - Option B (Southeast Asian university to U.S. community college to U.S. university): the next one to two years of bachelor's degree study at a U.S. community college for general education studies and/or studies in the major, and then remains in the U.S. to spend the last one to two years of bachelor's degree study at a four-year U.S. university.

**Review the U.S. institution's degree and certificate programs and/or available courses for study abroad to confirm alignment with the Southeast Asian university's programs,** ideally enabling an Southeast Asian student to make normal progress toward the bachelor's degree while abroad.

### TIPS

#### Advantageous pricing:

- Southeast Asian universities may consider partnering with a U.S. community college over a U.S. university so that Southeast Asian students can benefit from the community college's significantly lower costs, particularly for tuition and fees. Tuition at many U.S. community colleges is 85% less than that at U.S. universities. U.S. community colleges may also consider forming informal or formal consortia to pool resources and collaborate on programming together.
- Some U.S. community colleges may be able to offer scholarships or special programs such as honors and student ambassadorships to Southeast Asian students from partner universities to reduce the students' expenses and increase their chances of academic success in the U.S.

#### One Bachelor's diploma for all:

- Regardless of the path that students take to a U.S. bachelor's degree – whether they spend part of the four-year degree at a U.S. community college or at a home university abroad or neither – the U.S. bachelor's degree award is identical for all. Diplomas are issued by the degree-granting institution, and do not reference any coursework completed outside the institution. Transcripts, however, do note which courses were taken at the institution and which were transferred.



## ACTIVITY: TRANSFER AGREEMENT | U.S. TO ASIA

### 2+2 AGREEMENTS

U.S. community college students who graduate with their two-year U.S. associate degree travel to the Southeast Asian university to complete the final two years of a bachelor's degree program.

This opportunity benefits the U.S. student (via international education), the U.S. community college (via more students completing associate degrees and transferring to a university), and the higher education institution in ASEAN member states (via revenue from more international students pursuing degrees).

### STEPS

A U.S. community college associate degree equates to the first two years of a U.S. university's bachelor's degree and may align well with the first one to two years of many bachelor's degree programs in countries outside the United States. **Review the higher education institutions in Southeast Asia university's bachelor's degree options to identify those with initial course work that best aligns with the U.S. community college's available courses**, ideally enabling a U.S. student to pursue specific required courses at the community college and thereby to become eligible to complete just the last two years of the Southeast Asian university's bachelor's degree course work in residence at the Southeast Asian university partner university.

**Articulate courses carefully** with both partner institutions in full agreement to ensure that the U.S. community college student can gain, via the associate degree, the knowledge and skills needed to be eligible for advanced status (or admissions consideration for advanced status) at the Southeast Asian university and be able to complete a bachelor's degree in residence at the Southeast Asian university within two years.

**Establish a timeline for admissions** to ensure that the U.S. student can complete sufficient U.S. course work (typically two or three semesters) for the Southeast Asian university to conduct a thorough admissions review and for the U.S. student to have sufficient time to prepare for the two-year move abroad – with a final admissions decision in hand at least four or five months prior to Southeast Asian university enrollment. An abbreviated admissions process for students from the partner college can be beneficial once trust is established.

**Publicize the exchange** so that ideally U.S. students can begin their community college studies with the Southeast Asian university's bachelor's degree pathway already in mind, ensuring that the students have time to meet all pre-requisite and articulated course work within two years at the community college.

### TIPS

#### **Consortium partnership:**

Southeast Asian universities may consider partnering with a statewide community college consortium rather than a single U.S. college to broaden reach and ease administration (examples of consortia can be found on page 35). Advantages include group meetings, multi-institution U.S. visits within close proximity, virtual and in-person statewide student recruitment events, and in some cases shared MoUs and contracts.

#### **Strategic pricing:**

- Southeast Asian universities can advertise to students that this 2+2 model provides a U.S. education at an affordable price.
- Offering scholarships – even modest ones – for students from partner U.S. community colleges can strengthen the institutional partnership.

## Examples of U.S. Community College Consortia for International Education

Institutional consortia take a wide array of formats: they may be formal or informal; regional, state-wide, or very localized; and/or organized around a particular academic theme. A non-exhaustive list of U.S.-based consortia appears below.

- [California Colleges for International Education](#)
- [Maryland Community College International Education Consortium](#)
- [Midwest Institute for International-Intercultural Education](#)
- [Tennessee Consortium for International Studies](#)  
(Note: This consortium has many community college members but also includes universities.)
- [Washington State Community College Consortium for Study Abroad](#)

For more information about U.S. community colleges' international education activities, also see [Community Colleges for International Development](#) and [Center for Global Advancement of Community Colleges](#).

## Final Suggestions for Partnerships Between Southeast Asian Higher Education Institutions & U.S. Community Colleges

### Keep in mind differences between universities & community colleges:

- Community colleges often educate a wide-ranging group of students, offering international visitors the opportunity to interact with U.S. citizens. Community colleges also provide critical resources to their local communities, ensuring affordable access to technical and job skills training, while also preparing students to transition to a four-year institution if they choose to do so.
- Community colleges can often host short-term visiting international faculty members, but may lack the funds and immigration authorization to host for a long duration. Applying for external funding may be a strategy for maximizing community college partnerships.

### Maintain quality communication:

- Respond to all partner emails within 24 hours if possible. Even if a question will require more time for a thorough response, acknowledging receipt and, if possible, a rough timeline for responding can help to keep the partnership strong.
- Meet regularly with key stakeholders in the partnership at least once or twice a semester, even if the agenda is not heavy, to maintain a connection and foster good will. Solely corresponding by email can result in weaker inter-institutional ties.

### Foster depth of engagement:

- A partnership driven by one or two faculty members at each partner institution typically is not sustainable due to the frequency of changes in employment. A good partnership should involve at least three or four faculty or staff members at each partner institution – ideally spanning multiple departments or offices – to ensure a strong, sustained collaboration.

# Sample Resources

These examples are hosted by individual institutions and were available at the time of publication.

## **Exploratory Documents: Concept Statements, Primary Agreements, Letters of Intent**

- [University of Rhode Island: International Partnership Concept Statement Form](#)
- [The Ohio State University: Concept Statement Form](#)
- [Indiana University: Primary Agreement Template](#)
- [Indiana University: Other Templates for Different Types of Collaborations](#)
- [Purdue University: Letter of Intent](#)
- [King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi: Prospective Partner Form](#)
- [University of South Florida: Feasibility Report; General Agreement of Collaboration](#)
- [University of Wisconsin Stout: New International Agreement Request Form](#)
- [University of Wisconsin Stout: Institutional Partner Assessment](#)
- [Arizona State University: Proposing an International Exchange Program](#)

## **Memoranda of Understanding: Resources & Templates**

### **Emory University**

- [Guidelines for Developing MoUs](#)

### **King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi**

- [Agreement for Academic Cooperation/MoU](#)
- [Agreement on Staff and Student Exchange/ MoU](#)

### **University of California, Berkeley**

- [This page describes the process and purposes of international MoUs, including defining an MoU at your institution, the process for vetting and facilitating these agreements, steps for developing an MoU, including initiating support, drafting, internal review, obtaining signatures, and recording the MoU; and touches on matters like translations, logo use, and press releases in relation to these agreements.](#)
- [MoU Template](#)
- [Signing Ceremony Protocol](#)

## **University of California, San Diego**

[This page details the difference between an MoU and Agreement, an international agreement/MoU Decision Tree, and the process for MoUs. It also specifically includes first steps for interested faculty.](#)

## **University of Maryland, Baltimore**

[This page details the process of MoUs at the University of Maryland.](#)

[Process for developing an MoU](#)

[MoU Request form](#)

[UMB Global Program Guiding Principles](#)

## **University of Florida**

[Steps and process for developing an MoU](#)

## **Additional Templates**

[Xavier University of Louisiana: MoU Template](#)

[Miami University Ohio: MoU Template](#)

[Bridgewater State University: MoU Example](#)

## **Exchange Agreements**

[University of Florida: details on establishing exchange agreements as well as the renewal process. It includes several forms and documents.](#)

[University of South Florida: Sample Guidelines for Establishing a Reciprocal Student Semester Exchange Program and Student Exchange Partner Fact Form.](#)

[AIEA: Student Exchange Agreement Template \(note: this example has been shared with permission in an anonymized format\).](#)

# Resources: Annotated Bibliography

## **Cross-Border Partnerships in International Higher Education**

**Sakamoto, R., & Chapman, D. W. (Eds.).** (2012). *Cross-Border Partnerships in Higher Education: Strategies and Issues*. Routledge.

This collaborative work by Robin Sakamoto and David Chapman explores the intricacies of cross-border partnerships in international higher education. The authors examine various models and strategies used by institutions to establish and manage partnerships across borders. By analyzing case studies and highlighting effective practices, the paper contributes to the knowledge base of creating successful international collaborations.

## **Developing Effective International Institutional Partnerships for COIL Virtual Exchange**

**Rubin J.** (2022) "Developing Effective International Institutional Partnerships for COIL Virtual Exchange," in *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange*, ed. by Jon Rubin and Sarah Guth, pp. 111-133. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

In this new seminal collection of chapters about COIL Virtual Exchange by leading scholars and practitioners in the field, Jon Rubin includes one chapter about institutional partnerships for developing collaborative online international learning in his first two sections about international educational leadership and strategy. In this rich chapter, we learn about different pathways of Identifying COIL institutional partners, the role of COIL networks, geographic and institutional realities, as well as partnering activities and methodologies. This book is indispensable for those who focus on COIL and global classroom collaborations in international partnerships.

## **Establishing & Building Higher Educational International Partnerships**

**Wood, P.** (2018). *Establishing and Building Higher Educational International Partnerships*. In D. K. Deardorff & H. Charles (Eds.), *Leading Internationalization: A Handbook for International Education Leaders* (pp. 120-126). Stylus Publishing, LLC.

This brief book chapter specifically details an introduction to international partnerships for those leading internationalization at their institutions. It includes discussion of partnerships vs strategic partnerships; types of partnerships; selection of partners; the approval process; challenges; and implications for international education leaders. This chapter is a great primer with an overview of basic information and a quick go-to resource as administrators begin the partnership process.

## **Ethical Partnerships: A View from the South**

**Chasi, S. and Hagenmeier, C.** (2014) European Association for International Education (EAIE) blog post.

This EAIE blog post identifies ethical principles underlying North-South partnerships – built from a workshop at the August 2014 International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) conference. Authors note that partnerships with Global North institutions face challenges related to power, influence, and mutual benefit. Ethical partnerships require honest disclosure of expectations, motives, strengths, and challenges. Commitment to ethical principles is vital for North-South partnerships, even when accepting funding from the Global North. Authors identify a variety of key ethical principles to consider, including transparency, accountability, honesty, sensitivity, integrity, mutual benefit, self- and partner knowledge, flexibility, and equity.

### **Global Perspectives in International Joint & Double Degree Programs**

**Kuder M., Lemmens N.,** Obst D. (Eds.). (2014), *Global Perspectives on International Joint and Double Degree Programs*. New York, NY: German Academic Exchange Service and Institute for International Education.

The book provides helpful information about international collaboration in higher education. Considering joint and dual degree programs are one of the common partnership models, it is important to understand how those programs can be planned, developed, and implemented. The book also provides practical recommendations on main challenges, such as curriculum development, student recruitment, and sustainability of the program.

### **Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships: A Guide to Building Sustainable Linkages**

**Banks, C., Norton, K., Siebe-Herbig, B., & Kuder, M.** (Eds.) (2016). *Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships: A Guide to Building Sustainable Linkages*. New York: Institute for International Education and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

The book provides a collection of global perspectives on how to build and sustain strategic partnerships. The book also provides many case studies to deepen the understanding of the challenges and benefits of developing strategic partnerships.

### **Guidelines for Good Business Partnerships in Education Abroad, Second Edition**

The Forum on Education Abroad. (2023). *Guidelines for good business partnerships*.

These Guidelines are intended to guide the legal, ethical, professional, contractual, and business aspects involved in delivering high-quality education abroad programming. They can inform the establishment of new partnerships, the renewal of existing partnerships, or the renegotiation of existing agreements. Their primary purpose does not pertain to agreements (MoUs) between higher education institutions, though certainly some of them may apply. Use the Guidelines together with the [Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Education Abroad](#) to develop strong, sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships between partners.

### **How to Develop International Partnerships with U.S. Institutions**

**Aw, F. & Dunsmore, L.** (2011). How to develop international partnerships with U.S. institutions: Moving from feel-good agreements to real agreements. in S. B. Sutton, S. B. & D. Obst (Eds.), *Developing Strategic International Partnerships: Models for Initiating and Sustaining Innovative Institutional Linkages* (pp. 137-144). Institute of International Education, NY.

Anchored in sharing common vision, the authors outline three critical dimensions for creating successful international partnerships: Evaluating, Operationalizing, and Assessing. The chapter includes a list of associated reflection questions and preparation statements for consideration when pursuing an agreement, especially from the U.S.-perspective. The authors conclude by sharing a quick-reference chart: "Stages of Institutional Partnership/Linkages."

### **International Partnerships: A Broadened View of Benefit & Impact**

**Sutton, S., & Brandenburg, U.** (2022). "International Partnerships: A Broadened View of Benefit and Impact." In *The Handbook of International Higher Education, Second Edition*, ed., by Darla K. Deardorff, Hans de Wit, Betty Leask and Harvey Chales. pp. 203-219. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

This chapter delves into the multifaceted benefits and impacts of international partnerships in higher education. The authors advocate for a comprehensive understanding of the advantages that these collaborations bring to all involved parties. By broadening the perspective on partnership benefits, the chapter encourages institutions to engage in collaborations that extend beyond traditional academic realms.

### **NAFSA's Guide to International Partnerships**

**Gatewood, J.**, ed. (2020) *NAFSA's Guide to International Partnerships: Developing Sustainable Academic Collaborations*. NAFSA.

Global partnerships are essential to internationalization efforts, and this book addresses these relationships from a North American perspective. The focus is on how to sustain and deepen partnerships, but also how to develop, assess, and measure the success of partnership activities. This book is a “how-to” from different perspectives including how to be methodical in one’s approach to international partnerships..

### **Partner Positioning: Examining International Higher Education Partnerships through a Mutuality Lens**

**Mwangi, C.A.G.** (2017). Partner Positioning: Examining International Higher Education Partnerships through a Mutuality Lens. *The Review of Higher Education* 41(1), 33-60. doi:10.1353/rhe.2017.0032.

Scholarship on international higher education partnerships is often framed by strategic management and organization theories. These approaches are useful, but can minimize how power dynamics and positioning of partners impact engagement and outcomes. This study uses qualitative inquiry to examine 60 international higher education partnerships through the lens of mutuality in order to emphasize how partners negotiate and navigate power. Partnerships were comprised of a university in the United States and in the Majority World with the goal of addressing international development challenges. Findings emphasize the process of partnership creation, navigating cross-cultural contexts, partner positioning and partnership dynamics, and stakeholder engagement.

### **Partnering for a Global Future: Expanding the Impact of International Linkages**

**Sutton, Susan Buck & U Brandenburg** (2022) “Partnering for a Global Future: Expanding the Impact of International Linkages”, in *The Handbook of International Higher Education, Second Edition*, ed., by Darla K. Deardorff, Hans de Wit, Betty Leask and Harvey Chales. pp. 203-219. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Written by a well-known authority on international partnerships and a researcher in Europe about new trends of internationalization in this seminal new edition of the Handbook of International Higher Education, this chapter explores the context, shape, and ever-widening functions of international partnerships. Through specific recommendations of crucial elements of developing an institutional partnership strategy and identification of factors for effective partnerships, the authors also introduce ethics of partnership and the need for internationalization for society and equity.

### **Rethinking International Fees & Global Partnerships**

**Habib, A.** (2023). Rethinking International Fees and Global Partnerships. *International Higher Education*, (113), 3-4.

Adam Habib’s paper critically explores the connection between international student fees and global academic partnerships. By examining the financial dynamics of such collaborations, the author proposes a rethinking of fee structures to foster more equitable and inclusive partnerships. The paper prompts readers to consider how financial aspects can influence the nature and outcomes of international academic collaborations.

### **SIO: Essential Roles & Responsibilities**

Di Maria, D., ed. (2019). *Senior International Officers: Essential Roles and Responsibilities*. NAFSA.

While this book focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the SIO at academic institutions, a key part of the job is partnerships and outreach. Partnerships and outreach are addressed as one of four major aspects of the SIO's role, and one that is integral to advancing internationalization. The discussion centers on fostering partnerships via the operational and practical aspects.

### **Strategic Benefits, Symbolic Commitments: How Canadian Colleges & Universities Frame Internationalization**

Buckner, E., Clerk, S., Marroquin, A., & Zhang, Y. (2020). Strategic Benefits, Symbolic Commitments: How Canadian Colleges and Universities Frame Internationalization. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 50(4), 20-36.

This article examines how Canadian colleges and universities formally articulate their priority activities for internationalization, and what discursive rationales justify their approaches. Data come from 32 publicly-available internationalization strategies published in English by Canadian colleges and universities. In terms of practices, we find that institutions are adopting a largely similar set of activities, focused on partnerships and student and scholarly mobility. In terms of their justifications, we find that most institutions combine the strategic benefits of revenue generation and reputational prestige with symbolic commitments to global citizenship and excellence. By drawing on multiple rationales, internationalization strategies imbue the same generic activities with many meanings, which helps the internationalization project garner acceptance from an institution's diverse stakeholders. In concluding, the article points to a number of noticeably absent ideas, including equity, empathy, humility, and civic responsibility.

### **Successful Global Collaborations in Higher Education Institutions**

Al-Youbi, A., Zahe, A.H., & Tierney, W.G. (Eds.) (2020). *Successful Global Collaborations in Higher Education Institutions*. Springer.

This open access book presents deep investigation to the manifold topics pertaining to global university collaboration. It outlines the strategies King Abdulaziz University has employed to rise in global rankings, and the reasons chosen to collaborate with other academic and research institutes. The environment in which universities currently exist is considered, and subsequently how an innovative culture might be established and maintained to enable global partnerships to be implemented and to succeed is discussed. The book provides an intense focus on why collaboration is a necessary ingredient for knowledge transfer and explains how to do it. The last part of the book considers how to sustain partnerships. This is because one of the challenges of global partnerships is not just setting them up, but also sustaining them.

### **The EAIE Barometer: International Strategic Partnerships**

Sandstrom, A, & Weimer, L. (2015) *The EAIE Barometer: International Strategic Partnerships*. EAIE Barometer, EAIE.

Sandstrom and Weimer's study, presented in "*The EAIE Barometer*," focuses on international strategic partnerships in higher education. The paper discusses key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the field of academic partnerships. Through survey data and analysis, the authors provide insights into the evolving landscape of global academic collaborations and shed light on the factors influencing their development.



### **The Life Cycle of Transnational Partnerships in Higher Education**

**Lafleur D.** (2021) "The Life Cycle of Transnational Partnerships in Higher Education", in *U.S. Power in International Higher Education*, ed., by Jenny J. Lee, pp. 131-147. Rutgers University Press.

In this collection of essays critiquing U.S. power in international higher education, this chapter introduces the concept of the transnational partnership life cycle which includes three phases of development, operation, and assessment. The author argues that "the transnational partnership cycle framework can set a new course for transnational partnership development that neutralizes power dynamics and establishes terms of engagement for mutual benefits and longer-term program sustainability."

### **Vetting Partnerships to Ensure Compliance with U.S. Export Controls (n.d.).**

Consolidated Screening List. International Trade Administration.

Prior to engaging in partnerships with overseas entities, it is good practice to make sure there are not any restrictions placed by the U.S. Government that would prevent institutional objectives from being achieved. The Departments of Commerce, State, and the Treasury have developed a "Consolidated Screening List Search Engine" that can be used to conduct electronic screens of potential parties subject to regulated transactions. Additional screening should be performed if/when there are matches.

### **"What Can I Offer America?" A Postcolonial Analysis of Faculty Motivations & Perceptions in North-South University Partnerships**

**Mlambo, Y. A., & Baxter, A.** (2018). "What Can I Offer America?" A Postcolonial Analysis of Faculty Motivations and Perceptions in North-South University Partnerships. *FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education*, 9(4), 33-55.

International university partnerships are a prevalent internationalization strategy for both North American and African higher education institutions, yet the predominance of discourses that reflect the inequities of the global knowledge economy among participants perpetuate the very challenges that they are designed to address. Using a postcolonial framework, this study provides a critical analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with faculty members from one West African and one U.S. university participating in an international higher education partnership. The paper examines the motivations and perceived benefits of the partnership among participants at both institutions. It argues that the history of inequitable relationships perpetuated by globalization continues to shape understandings and pose challenges to achieving mutuality in North-South university partnerships. Findings show, for both institutions, motivations for partnership participation are based on the expectations and anticipated benefits to their institution as well as an alignment with the individual's personal goals and objectives. Furthermore, perceptions of power imbalances between participants at the two institutions are evident. Despite the partnership's intent for mutuality and reciprocity, the narratives of both West African and U.S. participants reinforce inequitable hierarchies. However, they also highlight opportunities for working toward greater mutuality and intercultural learning through North-South partnerships. Recommendations for cultivating reciprocity in North-South university partnerships are provided.