



How to manage University Partnerships? **A contribution from Ulm University's Experiences in the Region**

Basic information about the University of Ulm

- Founded in 1967 as the 9th public U in the State of Baden-Württemberg (The Sunny German Southwest)
 - Medicine, Sciences, Computer Sciences, Math&Economics, Electrical Engineering
 - Research University, 250 professors, 1,500 academic staff
 - 9,000 students, 13% international (focus China, Turkey, Near East, South Asia)
 - Campus University, several Institutes of applied research and two science parks
 - Strengths: Life Sciences/Molecular Medicine, Information Technology, Materials Sciences and New Materials, Sustainable Energy and Electromobility, Finance
 - Third party research money 75 mill € per year, many industry cooperations
 - Several successful English taught masters programs
 - Excellent services for International students,
 - Students exchange programs with partners in all continents
 - Cooperation agreements with partners in all continents -> strategic partners
 - Hub for cooperation of the German U in Cairo with German Universities
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What is the Problem? 1. Definition

A definition problem: university partnership: an often wrongly used term

- a. In the 1980's very often a personal project of a single professor for very diverse reasons and aims
- b. The attempt of a university leader to enforce cooperations by signing respective agreements (almost always in vain)
- c. If some projects survived and spread out we differentiate between
 - i. faculty to faculty exchange (Faculty agreements)
 - ii. (inter-) university exchange/partnership (University Agreement) in the sense of the term „transnational exchange“

Inter-university exchange needs an institutional framework and clearly defined lasting interests, the involvement of several professors or Institutes and the availability of at least a small specific budget for mobility purposes

What is the Problem? 2. Strategy

Inter-University Exchanges must be understood in the context of an internationalisation concept

- a. In the 80's we find a lot of cooperations which have a paternalistic background under the policy of help to underdeveloped countries
 - b. The globalization process after 1990 forced German universities to develop an internationalisation strategy in order to stand the growing global competition and to offer attractive international and intercultural experiences to their students: preparation for attractive global employments
 - c. Thus only recently inter-university cooperations are conceived, furthered and evaluated according to an objective partnership approach creating effective win-win situations
 - d. The new strategic approaches are very much supported by a large range of incentives and support programs by the DAAD and others, ranging from small cultural exchange programs to off-shore campuses
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3. Management of Partnerships

- a. Need of a legal framework in the University
 - i. Process of starting and legalisation of partnerships
 - ii. Decisions about responsibilities, academic and administrative
 - b. Who are the drivers of the further development of a given partnership
 - c. Which are the service providers for exchange activities
 - d. Is there a basic funding available through the University? If not, who will apply for external funding?
 - e. Who is doing the quality control?
 - f. Communication styles
 - i. Best if a yearly personal meeting is held with the partners and the setting up a working program
 - ii. Scype conferences, email messaging, phone calling
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4. Challenges - experiences from cooperations in the Near East and Egypt

- a. Sustainability I: How can we guarantee a lasting cooperation when we face repeated changes in university leaderships and administration with the partners ?
 - b. Sustainability II: How can we guarantee a lasting cooperation when we face changes with academics involved
 - c. How can we continuously evaluate the progress and how to push forward the practical win-win situations?
 - d. How can we guarantee a constant small budget from university resources on both sides ?
 - e. How can we reach external funds to finance larger portions of mobility of students, PhD students and postdocs and research projects?
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5. How is a sustainable partnership structured

- a. The core activity is the joint training of young researchers
 - I. Sandwich PhD's
 - II. Full PhD's
 - III. Short term training of young researchers, staff exchange
 - IV. Stay of postdocs
- b. Second core activity is students exchange, e.g. masters thesis
- c. Involvement of several Institutes
- d. Strong support by University leadership on both sides, based upon a vision and strategic thinking
- e. Steering/coordination by an International Cooperations Office or International Office
- f. Availability of a small budget specifically for this partnership on both sides
- g. Additional funding through foundations, DAAD, industry and others

6. What do our Jordan partners expect from partnerships

Topics taken from discussions

- Contribution to quality assurance
- Valuable experiences for students doing study abroad periods, receiving more German incoming students
- Short term stay of staff abroad getting exposed to a different university structure and getting involved in a research project; chance to get a publication out of this
- Joint research, rising the number of relevant publications and subsequently the international ranking