

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### **Rationale:**

Universities are today the principal providers of higher education, and, while there are substantial differences from one university to another, they are not fundamentally different in their basic mission. Once one strips away political, ideological, and economic considerations, the basic functions of today's universities are remarkably similar throughout the world, as evidenced in their catalogues and brochures. Whether in Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia or the Middle East, their stated goals are generally:

- The advancement of knowledge through research;
- The extension of knowledge through education and professional training; and
- The diffusion of knowledge, old and new, for the improvement of society.

International education is now an integral element of higher education and its natural extension in a rapidly changing world – where systems of knowledge, the allocation of resources, and the structures of authority transcend national and regional boundaries. The incontrovertible fact – that national technologies, corporations, industries and even national economies yield to international networks – now has its counterpart in university research, teaching, and outreach. Comprehensive universities are not self-sufficient and benefit from international strategic alliances that enhance their research, teaching, and extension mission while simultaneously strengthening their global reputation.

### **Institutional Partnerships:**

Successful institutional partnerships reflect in varying degrees the triple functions of the modern university, though not always simultaneously. Institutions may enter into partnerships for the purpose of advancing research, for teaching or for extending knowledge. Alliances may start by focusing on one of the core functions of the University and subsequently evolve to include others.

Partnerships abroad also help reduce the risks and uncertainties of new ventures, share financial costs, and tap local expertise and influence. How best to identify and select partners is key to our success in developing new sites and commitments.

These partnerships can be *academic*, where Boston University would establish ties with educational institutions in other countries; *corporate* where BU would connect with a local or multinational business; *investor*, where an individual or consortium provide funding for a new enterprise; or *governmental or institutional* where the tie would be with a public or non-profit organization whose goals were altruistic.

*International Academic Alliances:* Institutions enter into collaborations with partner institutions in order to sponsor student and faculty exchanges, joint research

projects, scholarly conferences, and the search for joint support from public and private sources for faculty development projects, research and the commercialization of research. These alliances are frequently bilateral, but in recent years they have become increasingly multilateral. Examples of multilateral alliances are:

- The International Alliance of Research Universities involving the National University of Singapore, Australian National University, Peking, Yale; the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), and the Universities of California, Berkeley, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Oxford and Tokyo.
- Washington University (St. Louis) in partnership with 15 Asian universities, including Fudan, Peking, Tsinghua and China Agricultural University in China; CUHK and U of HK in Hong Kong; IIT in Bombay; U. of Indonesia in Jakarta; U. of Tokyo; NSU in Singapore; Korea U., Seoul U. and Yonsei in S. Korea; NTU in Taipei; and Chulalongkorn in Bangkok, to create the McDonnell International Scholars Academy.
- ITESM (Technological Institute of Monterrey) partnering with University of British Columbia (UBC), Ritsumeikan, Fudan, University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and others. Ritsumeikan has built a facility on the campus of UBC; Alberta is building a facility on the ITESM campus of Guadalajara, where BU has an engineering program etc.

Separately and together these institutions apply for research grants, hold symposia and colloquia, exchange faculty and students, provide training workshops, and publish joint papers and books. Professor Selim Unlu's NSF proposal for graduate student training in Biophotonics submitted by Boston University in the summer of 2005 (on behalf of BU, Harvard, MIT, UMass, Northeastern with ETH Zurich, EPFLausanne, NCCR, CSEM Neuchatel and Basel) provided another example of potential strategic alliances among a select group of universities.

*Study Abroad Programs:* Alliances for study abroad purposes where programs are strengthened through collaborations with institutional partners that provide a variety of important services, including access to faculty, curriculum, facilities, and support staff.

- Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies (KCJS): BU joined the KCJS consortium in 1998 to give students an opportunity to study advanced Japanese Language and Culture with students from Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, and others. A BU faculty member serves on the governing board and occasionally teaches in the program.
- International Honors Program (IHP): to provide students with a study abroad experience in comparative education around specific themes, e.g. cities, health, globalization and indigenous perspectives.
- Other examples include St. Ann's College at Oxford University for International Relations and British History and the Engineering program at Dresden begun in 2001 with plans to expand to four other foreign universities.

*Student and Faculty Exchanges:* For students interested in total immersion into a foreign university a one-to-one (or an uneven) student exchange with an institutional partner provides an appropriate avenue. Examples include:

- Institut D'Etudes Politiques (Sciences PO) in Paris
- University of Paris Dauphine (for SMG students)
- Universidad Autonoma de Madrid
- Universidad de Burgos;
- Universita di Padova,
- Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ);
- Dublin City University (DCU);
- University of Sydney
- University of Auckland
- Auckland University of Technology

Institutions are continually approaching Boston University for memoranda of understanding (MOUs). These are often more symbolic – promising a vague, future cooperative relationship – and often designed to establish the growing credibility of the overseas institution through its association with a major American institution. The challenge is to take these beyond symbolism. Boston University should only engage in MOUs with established or emerging institutions that can assist us in developing a tangible presence in another country. Sometimes a more up-and-coming institution might be more nimble in providing tangible benefit to BU.

*Alliances with Governments:* Government agencies and nonprofit foundations – both in the United States and abroad – might sponsor programs for the social good of a particular region. These are often competitively determined based upon the credibility and cost structure of the proposals submitted. Their goal is not to make money but to impact a population. These too are hard to secure – and to turn into a self-perpetuating program.

BU recently signed an agreement with CONACYT of Mexico for the admission and support of graduate students to Boston University. Other examples include the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) with programs for NAFTA and European countries, and the Erasmus Mundus network involving institutions world-wide that share teaching programs (e.g. remote sensing).

*Alliances with For-Profit Organizations:* Corporation sponsorship provides contracts for Boston University to educate employees selected by their companies in a foreign setting – for either academic credit or on a noncredit basis. These custom business-to-business programs might be delivered in Boston, abroad, online – or in some combination of the three. The advantage is that the company assumes the costs and risks. BU is spared the recruiting effort, with few local logistical issues to manage. However, these partnerships are difficult to obtain and to sustain. The students are often taught in

cohorts – which makes their experience, and ours, somewhat insular. These, however, can provide an excellent first step towards working within a new international setting.

Metropolitan College's Actuarial Science program created a unique entrée into China through a corporate alliance with Tianan, one of China's major insurance companies. This program brought a cohort of mid-level staff to America for instruction, and provided the basis of ongoing communication for other student groups in the future.

*Investor Relationships:* Like corporate sponsorship, investors might organize their assets to invite an American institution to establish itself in a foreign country. These would be publicly accessible programs, rather than targeted in-house for a company's employees. These, however, present an inherent potential conflict between for-profit and academic goals. While the funding from corporate or investor relationship is appealing, the risk is that the benefactor will attempt to constrain the university and expect to profit as well.

We have been in discussion with an investor group in Kuwait for a BU branch campus in Kuwait City, only to fully appreciate the mammoth costs and risks of developing a full, comparable site, particularly when the investors expect to profit by this venture. (We will present a case study of the Kuwaiti experience separately.)

An example of corporate sponsorship is the European Study Abroad (EUSA) was formally established in 2002 as a joint venture limited company in London to allow Boston University to participate in financial opportunities from the increasing number of American colleges and universities whose students, or the institution itself, want study abroad options in Europe. In addition to providing internships for students enrolled in BU programs in London, Paris, Dublin, Madrid and Geneva, EUSA's partnership with International Programs enables Boston University to compete with other US study abroad providers.

Partnerships are essential for Boston University if we wish to establish programs abroad. Each has its advantages and limitations. Academic collaborations allow for scholarly exchange and alliances where the two institutions might have complementary programs. (Otherwise, it is rare for academic institutions to cooperate when they are otherwise competing for students.) Corporations rarely have the employee base to continue a program through many cycles. Investors generally want a return on their investment. Grants are challenging to secure and often require that the University find additional funds to continue an effort in perpetuity.

In short, a partnership should be seen as an essential means to an end, but rarely an end in itself. A partnership should not be expected to be self-sustaining, but simply an early, instrumental step in entering a new locale. One criterion for entering a partnership is whether the University can continue a program even beyond that relationship and perhaps beyond the involvement of those currently involved within BU.

## **Criteria for Engagement:**

To help Boston University explore and engage in partnerships, we need both a set of principles and a protocol. The goals should be to accumulate institutional wisdom, foster internal collaboration to bundle opportunities, ensure that the best interests of the University are protected, and stimulate, not impede, activity abroad. Our overarching objective is to encourage academic entrepreneurial efforts so that each of contributes, as broadly as possible, to the global outlook of faculty and students.

An overarching objective should be to mitigate risk – that is, to do no harm. The constellation of risks includes our reputation, the safety and security of our students and faculty, the political stability of the environment we are entering, the financial assets of the University, and the opportunity costs of the time we invest in cultivating, sustaining, and perhaps exiting a relationship. Without preventing new ventures, we must be conscious and sensitive to what might damage the University, its people, and its resources.

Second, we must assess the added benefits of a partnership abroad. These are academic, humanitarian, and financial. Deans and their faculty must be engaged in determining the academic value and integrity of a potential alliance and provide ongoing oversight. The mainstream benefits to Boston University's students and faculty in Boston should be a significant factor and it should be visible to faculty and students and perceived as an important part of BU's global mission. Impacting the local welfare of a people is an important independent goal, to be thoroughly assessed as well. A necessary but rarely sufficient goal should be the financial viability of a project. Ideally, we can do good *and* make money through a new venture.

Third, we need to put in place a process that allows for the thorough vetting of new opportunities, that makes each pursuit a learning experience useful the next time we explore a similar proposition, and that ensures that an official protocol is followed whenever the University is committing to a formal alliance. We need the internal structure in place for determining those possibilities worth even initial consideration, for managing the review processes and due diligence, and for then implementing and monitoring the alliance.

Each proposal for a venture abroad is an opportunity to engage BU's faculty, in dialogue – as a key resource and stakeholder. Especially those with subject matter expertise in the language, culture, and politics of a locale (for example, language departments and area studies programs) as well as faculty who have had international experience can be critical in assessing and evaluating new ventures. We need to use our faculty wisdom to recognize the often subtle implications of entering a foreign culture – and appreciate, with humility and sensitivity, how our involvement might be perceived. Faculty are also far more likely to support something they have helped to build. In short, engagements abroad provide an important opportunity for faculty learning, engagement, and profound, internal, intellectual discussion.

*Academic factors:* If, as a result of an international partnership, students will be receiving a Boston University degree, then it is essential that there be comparability in all academic facets of the program.

If students abroad will be receiving a BU degree, all academic standards should be comparable to those on the Charles River Campus – admissions criteria, English-language ability, curricular requirements, grading standards and course rigor, and academic regulations. Boston University should only teach where either the language of instruction is English or where course content can be verified and monitored by faculty working through appropriate units of BU schools and colleges. Likewise, any instructors teaching in a BU program abroad should either be fully enfranchised members of our faculty or approved and supervised by faculty on the home campus. The less connected the faculty are to Boston, the greater the responsibility on the main campus to provide oversight. Faculty teaching in a foreign country should be accorded the same independence in their pedagogy they would receive in the United States – we cannot compromise the academic integrity of a program on behalf of a client, partner, or local culture.

*Financial factors:* There may be times where tuition rates will need to be adjusted for a local market, either by lowering the published price or through individual scholarship support. Likewise, some ventures will be profitable, others less so. It is important to fully analyze the financial implications of a commitment abroad, and prepare accordingly. Once we commit to students to offer a degree, BU is committing to an ongoing presence to ensure that students will be able to receive their full academic program as promised. Thus, BU should only enter into a commitment where we can ensure that it will be financially and academically viable to continue, even if the improbable occurs. Some overseas programs are likely to be so academically and financially strong that these might then help to fund other initiatives –academically strong but less financially robust at first-- that serve other regions of the world.

*Risk factors:* To the extent possible, political, military, crime, and commercial factors should be anticipated in a sophisticated way before engaging in a commitment abroad. The context of a new venture needs to be thoroughly analyzed, along with the viability of the specific venture itself. Any engagement that could compromise BU values or academic freedom should be avoided by careful consideration of the recent history of academic practices in a country. Part of any new venture should be an exit strategy if circumstances warrant a change.

### **Protocol:**

We recommend that a process map be put in place so when a new possibility emerges we can benefit from what we have previously learned, involve others who might have an interest in that region or that relationship, and analyze the risk/reward factors systematically. We can then present the senior administration with a thoughtful recommendation, before any commitments are made or implied.

A standing committee of faculty and administrators can be sounding board on proposals for new ventures. We also recommend the creation of an International Advisory Board, composed primarily of alumni, who have the expertise, networks, and reputations to assist us in better understanding foreign opportunities. These alumni might include corporate leaders in multinational companies, senior state department, intelligence, and military officials; diplomats; and media figures who travel globally for their work. In Metropolitan College, as but one example, we have the former Assistant Secretary of State, the former head of Boeing Satellites, several current ambassadors, a global NBC correspondent, the head of the National Security Agency, the current minister of tourism in Greece, and several overseas executives who would be candidates for this Board. This would allow us to involve prominent alumni often overlooked by Development since their value is not necessarily as prospective donors.

We also recommend that we seek a major consulting project, ideally pro bono, to systematically explore opportunities abroad by region – to thoroughly examine each market locale where Boston University might consider a presence. This report should then be used as a basis for the BU academic community to discuss how best to formulate a plan for engagements abroad. Faculty discussion of the plan would form part of a major Conference on Global Education, to be staged at BU in Spring 2007. We propose that the President's Council on BU and the Global Future oversee this report and Conference. .