

# INTERNATIONALIZATION IN ACTION

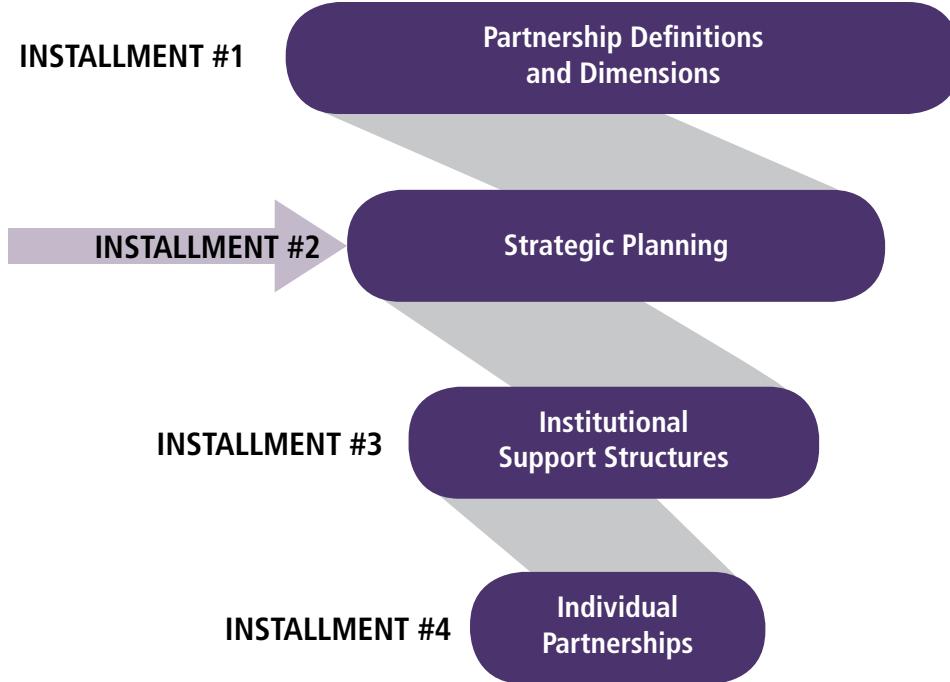
---

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

This installment of *Internationalization in Action* is the second in a four-part series on developing and implementing international partnerships. The first installment, *Definitions and Dimensions*, presented a broad overview of partnership types in order to set the stage for deeper discussion of how such relationships play out in practice. Here, we turn our attention to the campus level, and focus on **institution-level strategic planning for partnership activity**.



When done well, international partnerships are a powerful tool for advancing campus internationalization and achieving overall institutional strategic goals. Such relationships often require substantial time and resources to establish and maintain, however, and their execution can affect institutional reputation and brand. Careful strategic planning throughout the partnership development and implementation process helps **ensure that resources are used effectively and that international engagement activities positively impact the institution as a whole**.

The seven-step strategic planning process described in the following sections will guide institutions toward the **formulation of a concrete plan to effectively create and manage collaborative international partnerships** of strategic value. Although institutions are encouraged to assemble a steering committee or working group with diverse representation of academic and administrative staff, senior international officers or staff responsible for the administrative support of partnerships may choose to complete the planning exercise and make recommendations to relevant leadership.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

**Written by:** Shawn Conner-Rondot, Associate Director, International Partnerships, Indiana University

**With contributions by:** Lucia Brajkovic, Senior Research Specialist, ACE

**Edited by:** Robin Matross Helms, Director for Internationalization and Global Engagement, ACE

Strategic planning for partnerships can be a time-intensive exercise, requiring an institution to evaluate where it stands and define what it aspires to accomplish through its relationships abroad. Ultimately, however, the process provides a much-needed **roadmap to guide and inform decision making**, and establishes a solid foundation for productive, sustainable, and rewarding international collaborations.

- Step #1: Connect partnerships to institutional strategy**
- Step #2: Assess the current state of internationalization**
- Step #3: Take stock of existing collaborations**
- Step #4: Analyze the environment**
- Step #5: Formulate a plan**
- Step #6: Develop (or revise) procedures and policies**
- Step #7: Assess, update, and improve**

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

## STEP #1: CONNECT PARTNERSHIPS TO INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Strategic planning for international partnerships begins with—and must be fundamentally connected to—broader strategic planning for the institution as a whole. At some colleges and universities, internationalization is articulated as a specific institutional goal, or is clearly implicated in the objectives set forth (e.g., “prepare students for the globalized world of the twenty-first century”). Among these, some institutions have taken the further step of developing a separate, targeted strategic plan for internationalization that complements the overall institution plan and guides the internationalization process.

**ACE’s Internationalization Toolkit** includes examples of both overall strategic plans with an international component, and separate strategic internationalization plans.

Whatever the format, when internationalization is front and center in strategic planning documents, it is easy to see the potential for international partnerships to advance institutional strategy and goals. When this is not the case, however, the **connection between partnerships and institutional goals may be less immediately obvious—but very real nonetheless**. ACE’s 2015 paper *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* underscores this point, and provides some examples of common strategic goals—beyond internationalization—that can be supported by international partnerships:

Even when internationally focused goals are less explicit, however, international partnerships may still have a role to play in overall institutional strategy—for example, by advancing diversity initiatives, enhancing faculty research production, promoting community engagement, or increasing the visibility of the institution. (17)

**Different goals will be served by different types of partnerships and activities;** considering how partnerships can help achieve particular institutional objectives is an important first step in the partnerships planning process. A strategic goal of increasing the prominence and reach of faculty scholarship, for example, would suggest international partnerships that focus on research collaboration. A strategic imperative to promote community engagement, in contrast, might mean that working with counterpart institutions abroad to develop community service opportunities for students would be a more appropriate direction for partnership activities.

Because funding and resource allocation is often (and should be) tied closely to the stated strategy and goals of the institution, the extent to which internationalization is embedded in the strategic plan can be an **important indicator of likely resource availability for international partnerships**. An institution with a deep commitment to internationalization may be ready to devote substantial resources to partnerships, allowing for numerous relationships and activities. When the link between strategic goals and international partnerships is less direct, however, other priorities may prevail in terms of resource distribution, requiring fewer and more targeted international relationships.

Starting the partnerships planning process with a deep dive into the institution’s strategic plan will help ensure that the collaborations the institution ultimately decides to pursue are in line with its mission and priorities, are feasible and sustainable from a resource standpoint, and are likely to produce results that encourage ongoing commitment and further development going forward.

## STEP #2: ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

---

After looking at how partnerships fit into overall institutional strategy, the next step is to **home in on internationalization specifically**, and consider how international partnerships can enhance and advance the process. Understanding the current state of internationalization on campus will help institutions **identify specific areas**—e.g., curriculum, student and faculty mobility, teaching, and research—that might benefit from new or expanded partnerships. It will also inform practical aspects of partnership development and implementation, such as who on campus needs to be involved and in what areas new policies and procedures might be needed to support the process.

The following questions can be used to guide this analysis:

- What are the institution’s internationalization **objectives, goals, and metrics**? Which stakeholders are responsible for them?
- What is the established **timeframe**, if there is one, for implementation and evaluation?
- What are the **existing policies and procedures** for “all things international” at the institution? Do they reference, supplement, or otherwise intersect with other relevant academic, administrative, financial, and research policies and procedures?
- To what extent does the institution support internationalization efforts **administratively, operationally, and financially**?
- What are the known **outcomes** of current practices and their relationship to anticipated outcomes?

As noted in Step #1, some institutions have developed targeted internationalization strategic plans; when available, such documents are a great starting point for answering these questions. At many institutions, though, internationalization efforts are more diffuse, and the analysis suggested here may require more creative information gathering strategies.

If this is the case, a good place to start is by **collecting and analyzing what documents do exist**. Official communications to internal and external stakeholders about the institution’s internationalization efforts can offer telling insights into the perceived importance of specific international efforts, areas of concentrated activity within particular academic programs, frequency and emphasis of messages, and even collaborations that may not have been previously known. These include official emails, newsletters, press releases, magazines, web features and stories, and other publications.

In analyzing such documents, it is useful to consider communication types; from whom the communications are sent; the regularity of communication; featured courses, programs, initiatives, and activities; and the messages that are emphasized.

## MODELS FROM THE FIELD: INTERNATIONALIZATION COMMUNICATION

- **Boston College**
  - ♦ “International Education Week Focuses on Social Justice, Solidarity” (news article)
  - ♦ “World at Our Door” (news article)
  - ♦ *Kaleidoscope International Journal* (quarterly publication)
- **Howard University (DC)**
  - ♦ “Through an International Lens” (magazine article)
  - ♦ “Howard Hosts Girls from the White House’s ‘Let Girls Learn’ Initiative” (press release)
- **New York University**
  - ♦ “Study Away in the US and Around the World” (YouTube video)
  - ♦ *This is NYU Around the World* (Tumblr page)
- **North Hennepin Community College (MN)**
  - ♦ “On My Way to Success: Paolo Castelo’s College Journey” (magazine article)
  - ♦ *Realities* (annual nonfiction journal)
- **Princeton University (NJ)**
  - ♦ “Shaping the Curriculum” (alumni magazine article)
  - ♦ “Thinking Globally” (alumni magazine article)

After data on internationalization is collected, it is important to map it back onto the institutional strategy and priorities analysis conducted in Step #1. Do current internationalization activities, goals, and outcomes advance the institution’s overall strategy and goals? If yes, how can international partnerships further enhance and build upon these activities? If not, is there a role for partnerships in facilitating better alignment between existing internationalization efforts and institutional strategy? This analysis will help institutions clarify the appropriate path for future collaborative endeavors and establish some initial parameters for a partnerships plan.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

## STEP #3: TAKE STOCK OF EXISTING COLLABORATIONS

Although internationalization may already involve collaborations and partnerships abroad, the institution and its constituent units may not have a firm accounting of the formal and informal linkages already in place. Taking stock of existing international relationships is an important step in developing a partnership strategy going forward.

The central international office (also known as the office of the senior international officer)—if there is one on campus—may already have significant data on partnership activity throughout the institution. If not, or if data is incomplete, this unit is often well positioned to spearhead the effort to gather additional information. The best way to do so is to **survey all academic programs, centers and institutes, administrative offices, and other relevant units** regarding international collaborations and partnerships. The survey should ask about the following:

- Current **formalized agreements** (memoranda of understanding) with institutions abroad. Because such agreements may exist on paper only, it is important to ascertain the activities involved, and the extent to which the collaboration is actually active. A working definition of what constitutes “active” may need to be developed.

See **Installment #1** in this series for a typology of agreement types and a framework for determining activity level.

- Significant **informal collaborations** with institutions abroad. Faculty-to-faculty research partnerships and teaching collaborations are prime examples in this category.
- **Institutions of interest** for collaborative partnerships. These may include institutions with which a faculty member has a connection (e.g., her or his alma mater), or with which an informal collaboration already exists that the department can build upon to expand and formalize the relationship.

### SURVEYS AND INVENTORY INSTRUMENTS

*A Strategy for Global Engagement at the University of Nebraska* describes the process that the institution’s Office of the Vice Provost for Global Engagement followed to assess the institution’s global engagement efforts. An initial survey of websites and course listings, supplemented by communications with academic program administrators, revealed a lack of emphasis on international engagement and international partnerships. A top-line survey—focusing on “critical international engagement indicators”—distributed to the system’s four campuses identified both extant activities and the interests of survey respondents in particular countries. These findings ultimately informed the strategic plan for partnerships.

On a smaller scale, the College of Arts and Sciences on the Bloomington campus of Indiana University has developed an **international activities survey** to inventory existing activities—exchange and study abroad programs, dual degrees, collaborative research, courses with embedded overseas travel components, and internships or field studies. The College of Arts and Sciences will use the survey results to develop a partnerships plan that not only complements **Indiana University’s Bicentennial Strategic Plan**, but also advances the specific identified interests of its faculty and students.

For most institutions—particularly large ones—**email is often the most effective means of survey distribution**. It is helpful for the message to come from the chief academic officer in order to lend weight to its importance; the invitation email may be sent directly to faculty and staff, or to department leadership who can then either complete the survey themselves on behalf of their units, or forward it to their faculty and staff.

At smaller institutions—or when the senior international officer has a large enough staff and time available—it may be feasible and appropriate to **distribute the survey via in-person meetings** with department heads, or directly to faculty at departmental staff meetings or other gatherings. Depending on the organizational culture of the institution, doing so can generate dialogue and trust among administrators, faculty, and staff, and may improve survey response rates.

Whether the survey is distributed electronically or in person, it is important to **pay attention to the approach and tone of communications**. In this context, the senior international officer and her or his staff (or whoever is responsible for data collection) should reinforce their role as facilitators, explain how the information gathered will be used, and demonstrate through their interactions with stakeholders that everyone's involvement matters to the process. In essence, such interactions should minimize any potential perception that the central international office is taking over.

Once data are collected, the **reported affiliations can be mapped by country, institution name, nature of relationship, and specific collaborative activities**. At this point, it is time to return to Steps #1 and #2 described above, and consider the “map” of existing partnerships in light of institutional strategy and goals—for the institution as a whole, and for internationalization specifically. Are the activities and relationships in place in line with and furthering strategy and goals? Which relationships are particularly strong, perhaps meriting expansion and additional resources? What other types of partnerships and collaborations will help fill in any gaps and move the institution and its internationalization process forward?

With baseline information collected, this may be an opportune time to develop (or expand) a **database or other centralized repository** that the institution and/or its constituent units can use to track affiliations and guide decision making going forward. Readily available (and regularly updated) information about affiliations can minimize duplication of efforts, allow units to tap into and leverage existing connections with international institutions, and inform decisions about resource allocation.

**Sneak preview:** Installment #3 in this series will include more information on the role of the senior international officer in keeping track of partnership activity.

### **MODELS FROM THE FIELD: PARTNERSHIP DATABASES**

- Georgia State University: **Partnership Database**
- University of Delaware: **Global Projects Database/Map**
- University of Georgia: **Partnerships by Country**
- Texas A&M University: **International Partnership Database**
- The University of Sydney (Australia): **International Partnership Agreements Database**

## STEP #4: ANALYZE THE ENVIRONMENT

After examining the *potential* for international partnerships to advance institutional and internationalization strategies, the next step involves a deeper analysis of the **internal and external factors that could influence the reality of how these relationships play out**, and how successful they will be in terms of helping achieve institutional and internationalization goals.

The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) framework provides a useful structure for this analysis, which should incorporate and build on the data and insights gleaned from Steps #1 through #3. This exercise should focus specifically on the issues surrounding international partnerships—not the institution as a whole.

### SWOT ANALYSIS FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

INTERNAL		EXTERNAL	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organizational structure</li><li>Organizational culture</li><li>Human resources</li><li>Physical resources</li><li>Financial resources</li><li>Policies, procedures, and processes</li><li>Past experiences</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Trends in higher education nationally and internationally</li><li>Economy and politics (local, national, international, global)</li><li>Funding sources</li><li>Demographics</li><li>Physical environment</li><li>Laws, regulations, and compliance</li><li>Local, national, and international events</li></ul>	

For internal strengths and weaknesses (S and W), the following topics and questions can be used to guide the analysis:

#### INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- To what extent do administrators, faculty, and staff **support** your institution's internationalization efforts?
- Does your institution (or specific components of it) have **brand recognition** that will make it easy or difficult to develop partnerships in new markets?
- What are the institution's **academic strengths and weaknesses**, and how might these factor into partnerships? For example, strength in a particular academic discipline may attract partners with similar strengths to develop joint programming. Conversely, it may be possible to find a complementary partner with a strong program in an area where the institution is weaker, but would like to develop.
- How would you describe your institution's **risk appetite**? Is it willing to partner with new or less-known institutions? Is it an entrepreneurially oriented institution?

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

- Has the **person or office responsible for managing partnerships** been identified, and what expectations, if any, have been defined? In a decentralized organization, who are the people responsible across the constituent units?

- Does your institution have the **administrative capacity and financial resources** to manage all aspects of partnerships and related activities? In a decentralized organization, do the constituent units have adequate capacity and resources?
- Are current **institutional policies and procedures** adequate to ensure the relevant administrative offices (legal counsel, risk management, purchasing, insurance, tax, international students and scholars, study abroad, travel services, registrar, bursar, etc.) are involved in partnerships that rise to the level of a formal agreement?

## INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- In which countries or regions is there already a high level of partnership activity? Can **existing infrastructure** be used to support additional collaborations in those areas?
- If your institution maintains active collaborative academic programs such as joint certificates or dual degrees, what are the **characteristics of the successful programs**? Are there programs that are struggling or have failed, and can you determine why?
- Is there a **strong, engaged alumni base** in particular countries or cities? How might alumni be an asset to your institution in developing partnerships (e.g., by providing information about local institutions, or making initial in-person contact)?
- What are your institution's **international student enrollment trends** by country and city of origin over the past five-year period? Do these trends point to strengths or weaknesses in recruitment strategies, and the ability to engage students in new collaborative endeavors? How much of current international student enrollment results from partnerships involving student exchange?

## THE COST/RESOURCE EQUATION

Adequate support to develop and sustain partnerships is essential; resource availability, therefore, must be a key factor in formulating a partnership plan. The organization may need to, for example, invest in staffing, especially for time-intensive activities such as student exchanges; allocate funding for travel assistance to help faculty and staff foster relationships with partners; or develop new grants, fellowships, and scholarships that incentivize program development or participation in activities with partners.

It is important to consider not only the institution's existing investment, but also the level of commitment moving forward. Is the institution likely to increase or reallocate resources at a level sufficient to accomplish goals? Conversely, could the goals be met—wholly or partially—with additional resources?

In some cases, additional capacity and resources might be realized through a careful examination of current practices and reorientation of institutional priorities (e.g., reorganization of existing offices, or reallocation of internal funds). If fundraising or identification of other external funding sources are likely to be required, however, it is useful to investigate possible sources and determine initial target amounts during the strategic planning process.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

For **external opportunities and threats (O and T)**, areas to address and key questions within each include:

### EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

- Are any of your institution's current partnerships putting you at significant **legal or financial risk**, or causing you reputational harm? What is the rationale for maintaining them? What are the real or symbolic costs of severing ties, if necessary?
- Based on the strengths and weaknesses identified, are there any evident opportunities to **build upon existing affiliations** and connections in specific countries?
- Are there a small number of current or prospective partners with which the institution might pursue a **deeper relationship** and invest additional resources?

### POTENTIAL NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- To sufficiently advance your institution's overall strategic objectives and/or internationalization goals, will it be necessary to pursue new partners? Are there **new markets** where the institution has minimal connections but aspires to establish partnerships? Are there justifiable reasons for doing so—e.g., develop new exchange programs to meet student interests and demand, facilitate new research collaborations, access funding opportunities, or expand pathways for international students to transfer to your institution for a degree?
- Are there **new academic areas and disciplines** to target for collaborative activity—either because they are particularly strong or weak at your institution, or because there is significant interest in international partnership development within the corresponding department on campus?
- Are there **new types of partnership activities** that might help achieve strategic goals? For example, if the focus has been student exchange, is there value in establishing new partnerships focused on research?

See **Installment #1** in this series for more details about the various types of activities international partnerships might entail.

- What **specific countries** should be prioritized to meet your institution's internationalization objectives and goals? **What institutions**—peer and non-peer—in these priority countries might be targeted?
- How many other international partners do these institutions currently have? Do their partners appear to be peers, or do they represent a wide variety of types? What does this list of partners indicate about the **quality, capacity, and reputation of the institution**?
- Do prospective partners offer **something of unique value** that could benefit your institution, such as parallel academic programs, complementary academic programs that you do not currently offer, infrastructure for hosting exchange students and visiting faculty, or common interests for joint programs?

Before proceeding to Step #5, it is useful to revisit your institution's risk appetite and entrepreneurial orientation. Can you **rank the priority countries from low risk to high risk**, keeping in mind the types of activities that your institution is currently pursuing or aspires to pursue in those countries? Moving into the next phase of formulating a plan, this sorting and ranking exercise will help inform the appropriate mix of partnerships to achieve institutional goals within existing or projected financial and human resource constraints.

## COUNTRY CONSIDERATIONS: A PESTEL ANALYSIS

The PESTEL framework can extend the analysis of opportunities and threats by considering six additional factors for each of the priority partner countries identified:

- Political
- Economic
- Socioeconomic
- Technological
- Environmental
- Legal

This exercise can be time intensive and, depending on the expertise of those carrying out the analysis, may require research to arrive at a reasonable understanding. But for many institutions, it is of utmost importance to gauge whether their mission, values, or reputation might be compromised or harmed through certain types of partnerships in particular international settings. For example, if the institution takes a firm, uncompromising stance on equal opportunity, it may choose to exclude countries that do not guarantee adequate protections for all members of its academic community.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

## STEP #5: FORMULATE A PLAN

It is critical to explore how international linkages can contribute to the goals an institution already has. It is equally important to derive a strategic partnership plan from these goals, a plan that builds on existing strengths, identifies key locations and topics for partnership development, reflects on how many the institution can reasonably manage, values those that bubble up as well as down, builds synergies across the institution, and energizes faculty, staff, and students in partnership work.

—Susan Buck Sutton, “**Nine Principles for Achieving the Full Potential of Collaborative Partnerships**,” *International Educator* (January–February 2015)

After data collection and analysis comes its application; at this point, it is time to use the information and insights gleaned in Steps #1 through #4 to formulate a comprehensive plan to guide the institution’s partnership activity.

Broadly, such a plan addresses the “five Ws”—the who, what, when, where, and why of the institution’s international partnership activity. Specific areas to focus on include:

- **Overall goals and objectives for partnership activity.** As outlined in **Installment #1** in this series, goals may relate to academics and reputation, research and funding, or institutional development and service. Both short- and long-term goals should be addressed, and it is important to articulate the connection to institutional strategy and broader internationalization efforts.
- **Priorities for countries, academic areas, and activity types.** The rationale for prioritization in each of these areas should be articulated based on the **SWOT analysis conducted in Step #4** and the overall priorities of the institution. Plans to expand, maintain, or contract existing relationships based on these priorities should be outlined and explained.
- **Funding.** The plan should identify available funding sources for partnership activity, including those that involve reallocation of existing resources. Information about possible sources of external support—and how the institution will pursue them—are also key topics to address.
- **Key stakeholders and their roles.** These includes relevant offices, faculty, and staff, who will oversee existing relationships and develop new collaborations.

**Sneak preview:** Installment #3 in this series will include detailed information and guidance on stakeholder roles and engagement.

- **Timeframe for implementation.** It is important to be realistic about what can be accomplished and when, with given resource constraints.

While clarity and details are crucial, some level of **flexibility** is also needed in order to avoid stifling innovative or value-added proposals that bubble up across the institution. In day-to-day practice, the purpose of the plan is to provide sufficient guidance to inform decisions when proposals for partnerships are reviewed. However, rigid requirements—particularly when it comes to priority countries and academic areas—could result in overall goals not being met, forgone opportunities, or missed cues that aspects of the plan may need adjustment.

Finally, in preparing the plan, it is helpful to make a **value proposition** for international partnerships that can be leveraged to secure the support of institutional leadership. The value proposition is a promise statement that lies at the intersection of your international objectives/goals, the needs of your institution's stakeholders, and the opportunities in the international marketplace. The promise statement clearly articulates the wants and needs of the institution's stakeholders, and the key benefits, features, and experiences offered by the proposed partnerships.

### VALUE STATEMENT AND SAMPLE PLAN

Indiana University (IU) rolled out its first ambitious international strategic plan in 2008, with a section devoted specifically to international partnerships and agreements. The strategy was clear: IU must take an opportunistic, rather than ad hoc, approach to partnerships in order to make effective use of university resources and minimize risks and potential problems that can arise with overseas activities. In 2015, the vice president for international affairs published an **updated international strategic plan** that incorporates a particularly salient value statement on international partnerships:

Indiana University cannot achieve its international goals by working in isolation. New international initiatives that enhance IU education and research require long-term collaboration with institutions around the world. This is facilitated by agreements that establish a partnership between IU and foreign entities, mostly research universities, but also independent institutes, foundations and NGOs. These partnerships open up opportunities for collaborative research on a nearly infinite range of issues, provide exchange arrangements for advanced students and faculty, and support study abroad and internship programs for undergraduates.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

## **STEP #6: DEVELOP (OR REVISE) PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

Achieving strategic objectives and internationalization goals requires attention specifically to partnership procedures and policies. Partnerships can be challenging to track and evaluate because of the considerable diversity of activities and the idiosyncrasies of each relationship. Therefore, it is important to **articulate clear procedures and, as necessary, develop new policies or revise existing ones**. These should address the following issues:

- **Processes and guidelines** for proposing affiliations. For example, who can do it? Are approvals needed (e.g., from a department chair or dean)? To whom are proposals submitted? In what format?
- **Criteria** by which proposals will be reviewed. These should include the extent to which the partnership is aligned with institutional and internationalization goals, as well as specific goals for international partnerships as articulated in Step #4.
- **Who** will be involved in the proposal review process?
- What is the anticipated **timeframe** for the proposal review process?
- Once developed and implemented, when and how will individual partnerships be **reviewed**? A common timeframe is every three to five years.
- What is the process for **renewing (or terminating)** affiliation agreements?

### **MODELS FROM THE FIELD: PARTNERSHIP PROCEDURES**

- Georgia State University: **Guidelines and Procedures for International Partnership Agreements**
- Purdue University (IN): **Developing International Agreements**
- University of Delaware: **Institutional Agreements**
- Western Carolina University (NC): **Guidelines Governing International Partnerships**
- City University London (UK): **Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook**

Beyond nuts-and-bolts procedures, a further step is to develop a **broad institutional policy on partnerships**. While a formalized, coherent policy may be more difficult to adopt than a set of procedures, it can be an important tool in ensuring that the partnerships plan is carried out, and that the institution's international relationships align with strategic priorities. Building on (and referencing) the partnerships plan, such a policy on partnerships may, for example, define the parameters of permitted affiliations, the common types of activities that could be pursued with a partner, the procedures for review and approval, the authorized signatories for various types of agreements and contracts, and any restrictions (such as prohibiting agreements of indefinite duration).

If proposals will be evaluated based on whether or not the partnership is in a priority country or geographic area, the policy should directly reference this aspect of the plan. Because priority countries or geographic areas could change over the course of the plan's anticipated implementation timeframe, the policy itself might not list the specific countries or areas.

Whether or not a partnerships policy is feasible or desirable will depend on the support of leadership, as well as organizational structure and culture. It is important to understand the role of policies within the institution—how policies are perceived and the degree to which they are followed by leadership, faculty, and staff.

## MODELS FROM THE FIELD: INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP POLICIES

- University of California, Los Angeles: **University International and Exchange Agreements**
- University of Kentucky: **Policy and Procedures Developing, Maintaining, and Evaluating Consortial and Contractual Agreements for International Education Programs and Courses**
- University of California, Irvine: **Policy on International Academic MOUs and Agreements**
- Newcastle University (UK): **Educational Partnerships Policy**
- City University London (UK): **Partnerships Policy**
- University of Edinburgh (UK): **Global Partnerships Policy**

### SPECIAL PREVIEW: MAPPING INTERNATIONALIZATION ON U.S. CAMPUSES

The data are in! Forty-two percent of institutions that responded to ACE's **2016 Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses survey** have articulated a formal strategy for international partnerships (19 percent), or are in the process of developing such a strategy (23 percent).

About one-third (32 percent) of responding institutions have established campus-wide guidelines for developing and/or assessing partnerships, while 8 percent have such policies in place within some departments or programs.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

### Part Two: Strategic Planning

## **STEP #7: ASSESS, UPDATE, AND IMPROVE**

---

Institutional goals and priorities change. New institutional strategic plans are introduced. Individual partnerships succeed and fail. Institutional strengths and weaknesses evolve—new threats and opportunities emerge. Risk tolerance waxes and wanes. Resource availability is influenced by an array of internal and external factors.

In short, none of the factors that inform the development of a strategic plan for partnerships is static. To ensure that the plan resulting from the activities and analysis described above remains relevant and appropriate over time—and that it generates relationships that continue to serve the best interests of the institution—**Steps #1 through #6 should be repeated on a regular basis.**

Thus, the final step of the initial strategic planning process is to develop a **schedule and basic parameters for periodic review and updating** of the partnerships plan. Key questions include:

- Are existing collaborations still aligning with and contributing to institutional and internationalization strategies?
- Are established procedures and policies yielding the desired results?

As a rule, conducting such a review **every year** is an appropriate timeframe, though the review plan may specify that additional check-ins may be warranted by unexpected or significant changes and circumstances. The same stakeholders involved in initial development of the strategic plan may conduct the review each time, or it may be useful to engage others around campus to bring new perspectives and insights.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

---

A strategic plan—whether for an institution as a whole, for the internationalization process, or for international partnerships in particular—should be approached as a **living document that evolves and changes over time**. Colleges and universities all face both unexpected challenges and unanticipated opportunities; when it comes to global engagement, it is imperative that our institutions understand and respond to the myriad factors—political, economic, social, environmental, and legal—that can positively and negatively influence our international relationships.

The **circularity of this seven-step strategic planning process** is designed to help institutions develop a roadmap to guide and make informed strategic decisions about their international partnerships. Adjustments to the roadmap will, inevitably, be necessary over time, but its purpose will remain constant: a foundation for productive, sustainable, and rewarding international collaborations.