Principles for Supporting Interdisciplinarity
in (Post)graduate[1] Education and Research

Interdisciplinarity is an important feature of (post)graduate education. Established academic disciplines inform and are informed by interdisciplinary scholarship. With a firm basis in principles of interdisciplinarity, students will be poised to succeed as the researchers, teachers, and leaders of the future. Diverse understandings exist, however, as to the definitions, practices, and purposes of interdisciplinarity--and these definitions themselves, along with the borders of academic disciplines, continue to change. Practices of interdisciplinarity vary, and may include extracurricular offerings and events, interdisciplinary programs or degrees, incentives for interdepartmental collaboration or co-mentoring, and problem-based research teams and curricula.

Many stakeholders stand to gain from an increased commitment to interdisciplinarity, including university administrators, academic staff, students, and faculty, as well as regions, nations, and societies at large. Documenting the impact of interdisciplinary research and programs is important for accountability to these stakeholders, as well as for facilitating assessment and improvement of any offerings. *Interdisciplinarity* is not, however, an end in and of itself. Interdisciplinarity in graduate education and research must answer specific, identifiable needs.

Representing 14 countries, the participants in the 2014 Strategic Leaders Global Summit recommend that (post)graduate institutions consider the following principles when making decisions about interdisciplinarity in (post)graduate education and research.

1. **Articulate the added value of interdisciplinary approaches and initiatives within institutional contexts.**

2. **Communicate and advocate for the value of interdisciplinary research and learning to the broader community.** Education efforts should include not only the broad value of interdisciplinary research and learning, but also the specific relevance and benefits to each stakeholder group.

3. **Identify and develop the skills** (post)graduate students will need engage effectively in interdisciplinary research collaborations or research projects throughout their careers.

4. **Provide opportunities and spaces** for (post)graduate students and faculty to meet colleagues in other disciplines, work on interdisciplinary research teams or on interdisciplinary research projects.

5. **Build administrative bridges** to encourage interdisciplinary research and learning. Where existing structures inhibit cross-disciplinary collaborations, find ways to remove barriers and provide incentives.

6. **Value interdisciplinary mentoring or research in faculty tenure and promotion procedures**.

7. **Encourage funding agencies to support** interdisciplinary research projects and training.

[1] The term "(post)graduate" designates here both master's and doctoral education. The term has been created to reflect the fact that both "graduate" and "postgraduate" are accepted terms for referring to master's and doctoral education and that the dominant use varies by country.