Council of Graduate Schools

Advocacy, Research, and Innovation

U.S. Perspectives on Graduate International Collaborations

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Overview

I. Nature and Scope of Graduate International Collaborations

II. Challenges and Hurdles in Ensuring Success

III. Implications for Students, Faculty, and Institutions

IV. Emerging National Needs

Graduate International Collaborations Project

- Two-year, NSF-funded project to identify policies and practices that foster, or inhibit, successful international collaborations in graduate education, including informal research and formal (e.g. joint and dual) degree collaborations.
- Activities:
  - Focus Group Research
  - Survey (valid responses from 43 institutions, reported on 168 programs)
  - Workshops and Meetings
  - White Paper and Publication (expected January 2010)

I. The Nature and Scope of Graduate International Collaborations among US institutions

Interest and Engagement in International Joint & Dual Degrees is Growing

	Degree Type	2007*	2008**	Change (%)
Established Programs with International Universities	Dual/Double Degree Programs	32%	51%	+19
	Joint Degree Programs	3%	14%	+11
Plans to Establish New Programs with International Universities	Dual/Double Degree Programs	3%	33%	+30
	Joint Degree Programs	9%	11%	+2

*Data represents largest 50 institutions with respect to international student enrollment. For data on largest 10, 25, 50, and all universities, see *source, Council of Graduate Schools, 2007 Graduate Admissions Survey II: Final Applications and Initial Offers of Admissions. August 2007 and **source: Council of Graduate Schools, 2008 Graduate Admissions Survey II: Final Applications and Initial Offers of Admissions. August 2008.* www.cgsnet.org

Why the Heightened Interest? A "Perfect Storm"

- Declining US domestic student interest in S&E doctoral degrees
- Increased dependence on international students for growth in S&E graduate degrees
- Unforeseeable political and economic events (post 9/11) in the US that impact global student mobility
- Signs that international student applications to US graduate programs can no longer be taken for granted
- International recognition that graduate education is a crucial part of economic competitiveness strategy

CGS Definitions

- **Dual (or Double) Degree**
  - Students study at two or more institutions and upon completion of the program receive a separate diploma from each of the participating institutions
- **Joint Degree**
  - Students study at two or more institutions and upon completion of the program receive a single diploma representing work completed at two or more institutions.
    - "Double-seal" (award contains names or "seals" of each)
    - Home institution's "seal," with transcript notation of participation
    - Home institution's seal, with certificate signifying participation in collaboration

How many collaborative degree programs of each type [do you] have with an international partner institution?

Total = 119	Business	Engineering	Other Research Degree	*Total*
Joint Degree	16	17	20	*53*
Dual Degree	19	23	24	*66*

II. Challenges and Hurdles in Ensuring Success

Biggest Challenges in Establishing and Maintaining Joint and Dual Degrees with International Partners

1. Ensuring sustainability
2. Securing adequate funding
3. Deciding fee structure
4. *Dual degrees:* Recruiting students
5. *Joint degrees:*
    1. Getting program accredited
    2. Mentoring and advising, plus…
    3. Securing faculty buy-in; negotiating an MOU; determining duration of degree in each country

How are Your Programs Funded?

(% = percentage of respondents)

1. • **Retention of student fees** generated by the program (67.4%)
2. • **Internal university budget** (60.5%)
   • **International sources** (partner's institution or government) (60.5%)
3. • **State or U.S. federal government** (e.g. FIPSE) (18.6%)
4. • **Employer industry funding** (9.3%)
   • **Private funding** (e.g. foundation) (9.3%)
   • **Other** (9.3%)

Student Mobility

Which of the following best describes overall student mobility in your programs?

More international students travel to our US institution than vice versa	64.1%
More US students travel to international partner institution than vice versa	10.3%
Domestic & international student travel in program is about even	10.3%
N/A (program still in development)	15.4%

Faculty Mobility

Do your faculty travel between institutions for the purpose of teaching and/or research?

Yes, typically	51.2
Yes, occasionally or in some programs	39
No	9.8

Who has been involved in accreditation or external approval?

(check all that apply)

	Joint Degrees	Dual Degrees
Regional accreditors	25.6%	25.6%
State board(s)	9.3%	14%
International accrediting bodies	7%	2.3%
Professional accrediting bodies	18.6%	11.6%
Other	9.3%	4.7%
None (N/A)	9.3%	32.6%

"Double Credit" Concerns?

51% = YES; 49% NO

- "We have decided not to explore dual degrees": will only use single-diploma model
- "We are considering the added value of resulting thesis; for coursework, a transfer credit policy solves the issue"
- "We asked students to sign a form that they are receiving dual degrees for a single curriculum and dissertation"
- "It has not yet been solved"

Selection Criteria

- Evidence of research cooperation between the involved institutions
- Evidence of faculty interest
- The overall quality of the partner institution and its faculty
- The partner's experience creating international collaborative programs
- Satisfaction of strategic interests
- Availability of adequate funding
- Certainty about the partner's investments of time and funding

The Role of the Graduate Dean and the Graduate School

- Degrees are evolving from mainly faculty-instigated to strategic institutional partnerships with faculty and graduate school in collaboration
- Graduate deans provide "institutional good will," troubleshooting, technical support, and sustainability strategies
- Graduate deans also play a lead role in articulating the value of collaborative degrees for students and institutions on issues such as:
  - Collaboration as a public good
  - "Value added" beyond what either could offer alone
  - Future of the institution and research
  - The "what is a thesis" question?
  - Reconciling institutions' commitment to domestic students and internationalization of campus

Initially, it was a matter of identifying faculty linkages with colleagues overseas and then matching curricula for the degree program. These partnerships were initially based on personalism. We have worked to involve new faculty in the process through orientation, information at the opening convocation and by bringing highly qualified students from abroad to study on our campus. Exposure to exceptional students in graduate courses does a lot to convince faculty of their potential as researchers and industry leaders. Faculty begin to gravitate toward and encourage the international exchange programs.

III. Implications for Students, Faculty, and Institutions

Implications

- "Are universities becoming the new multinationals? Is that a good thing"? Should the US invest public funds in the internationalization of its higher education infrastructure?
- If the the research enterprise is becoming more global, does the US face a future disadvantage if::
  - US students are not taking advantage of these opportunities in proportion to international students? (see also IIE's "Open Doors" study).
- Do we have evidence that collaborative degrees make US students more employable? Or is this a gamble?
- If other countries and regions become better networked, will the US be at a disadvantage:
  - To recruit top students?
  - In research productivity?
- Does networking imply compromises on: quality, responsible conduct of research oversight?
- Are students and faculty fully prepared for the risks when there is no international consensus on responsible and ethical conduct of research issues (e.g. intellectual property, data ownership and management, collaboration)

Implications (continued)

- Do institutions have sufficient US national guidance (incentives, programs) to enable them to target priority areas where strategic partnerships most sense?
  - Are there funds adequate to stimulate or support those efforts?
  - Does the greater proportion of foreign government investment in such collaborations imply greater leverage in setting priorities?

Emerging National Needs

- Real outcomes data on the efficacy and value of international collaboration for students, research faculty, and institutions
- Harmonization or crosswalk, if not standardization, for Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Integrity
- National guidelines on best practices in program development
- *National guidance and incentives to align faculty research collaborations, institutional strategic interests, and national strategic interests?*

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