



Consortia and Partnerships: Allies in International Collaboration

Susan Buck Sutton and Sylvia Jons

Both this morning and tomorrow morning, we will focus on
KUUC as a CONSORTIUM

Using this first face-to-face meeting to:

- [reflect](#) on what we have learned from 10 months of webinars, posting materials on the KUUC portal, and exploring seed grant possibilities
- better [define](#) what KUUC can add to U.S.-Kazakh collaboration
- bring the deep expertise of KUUC members into extended, [free-flowing dialogue](#)
- [amplify the connections](#) emerging among KUUC members
- put KUUC to work by [sharing insights](#) on issues that overarch the specific topics of this year's seed grants



As stated at the beginning of this program,

The **goal** of the Kazakhstan-U.S. University Consortium (KUUC) Partnership Program is to **strengthen existing ties and foster new strategic partnerships** between U.S. and Kazakh institutions **through the development of an innovative consortium** and community of practice.

KUUC is a **coalition** for stimulating, supporting and enhancing bi-national partnerships.

- In [exploratory phase](#), much depends on how useful it is; how it connects to other U.S.-Kazakh initiatives and players; if it has capacity for growth
- Being approached in a [flexible way](#) – providing enough structure to get it started and then seeing what organically arises that is of value
- [for this year](#), KUUC’s goal is to share information and build relationships that foster impactful Kazakh-U.S. partnerships tied to certain [priority areas](#)



For 2024, KUUC is focusing on partnership development in these key areas:

- Increasing understanding of university financial systems and entrepreneurial models
- Increasing adoption of best practices in university management, research and commercialization
- Increasing production of quality research publications that address private sector needs in agriculture, food security, environmental science, renewable energy, IT, and STEM-related fields

KUUC

- Members selected through an application process
- 31 Kazakh HEIs and 36 U.S. HEIs
most of which already have a partner in the other country
- Institutional Profiles posted on the KUUC Portal
<https://www.iie.org/programs/kazakhstan-u-s-university-consortium-partnership-program/>
- Webinar Series on the priority areas, as well as other topics
- Seed Grant application process under way,
which will fund up to 3 new or enhanced partnerships

AGENDA

Monday, September 30

1. What can a consortium add to U.S.-Kazakh collaboration?

- International consortia in general
- Consortia and partnership development in specific

2. Putting KUUC to work:

- What challenges do U.S.-Kazakh partnerships face?
- How can these be managed?

Tuesday, October 1

3. Putting KUUC to work:

- What are the fundamentals of effective partnerships?
- How might these fundamentals be applied to U.S.-Kazakh partnerships?

4. What initiatives and actions should KUUC pursue this coming year?

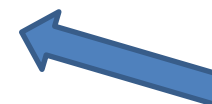


PART 1. International Consortia in General

(in Higher Education)

2024 International Association of Universities *Global Survey*

TOP 3 most important benefits of internationalization	World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia & Pacific	Europe	Latin America & Caribbean	Middle East/North Africa	North America
Enhanced international cooperation & capacity building	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Increased global, international & intercultural knowledge, skills & competence for students & staff	2		2	2	1		1
Improved quality of teaching & learning	3	2	3		3	3	
Enhanced prestige/profile for the institution			3	3	3		
Improved quality of research		3				2	
Increased/diversified revenue generation							2



In 2005, international collaboration did not make the list except for Africa.

Based on Table 10 (p. 65) of IAU 6th Global Survey: *Internationalization of Higher Education (2024)*

* North America = Canada, USA

Such cooperation comes in many forms, all part of a
COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM

- One-on-one faculty projects
- HEIs and provider or support organizations
- Co-taught online courses
- Linkages between HEIs and businesses, governments, organizations
- Institutional partnerships, which connect an HEI with another HEI
(how we will use the word partnership in these sessions)
- Consortia of multiple HEIs
- And more

These forms intersect,
generating new
collaborations in all
directions.

Our focus is on the last two.



partnership

a formal collaboration between two or more institutions from different countries to work together for mutual goals, generally inscribed by a written agreement

NAFSA's Guide to International Partnerships

consortium (plural *consortia, consortiums*)

Beerkens 2018: multi-point groupings of organisations ... where membership is restricted to particular organisations that are allowed by the other partners to enter the arrangement

Tadaki & Tremewan 2013: organizational networks of three or more universities that aim to affiliate, converse and interact with each other for mutual benefit

Lamie & Hill 2021: a formal organization, comprised of three or more members, which exists independently of its member institutions, but which has a set of goals and objectives that have been set out and agreed by the representatives

Partnerships are the most common form of institution-to-institution collaboration in higher ed.

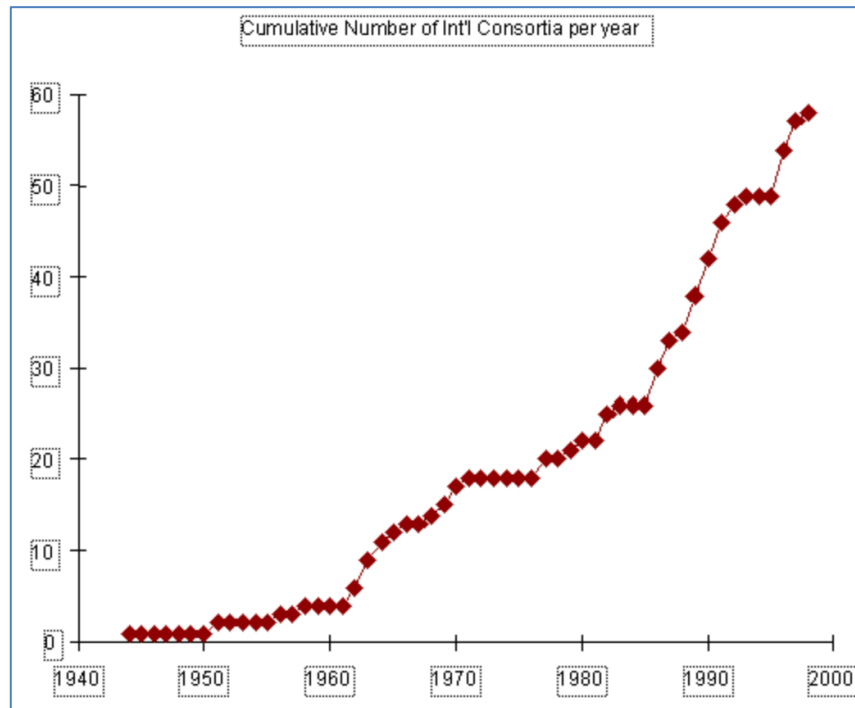
- Exploding in types, goals, geographical reach
- Approached in increasingly strategic ways to sustain and broaden their impact
- With IT and internet communications opening new possibilities
- And with an emerging goal of enabling more students, HEIs, countries to participate in such linkages



More on the nature of partnerships tomorrow...

Consortia are not as numerous as partnerships
but have been steadily growing, especially recently

Eric Beerkens
2018



Brian Denman
2002

Why are consortia increasing? What can they offer HEIs?

- Forum to share experiences and practices
- Economies of scale
- Clout in applying for external funding together
- Resource sharing
- Reputational increase
- Collective representation with governments, international organizations
- Connecting with a wide range of HEIs
- The critical mass of scholars needed to pursue Grand Challenges and other issues
- Collaborative action and advocacy
- Visibility for issues and initiatives of concern
- Connection to countries or regions where they have had few connections in the past

Lamie & Hill 2021:

tangible demonstration of the willingness for countries to work together

Consortia – Key Characteristics

- At least 3 members; generally 25 -150
- Indefinite time span
- Cooperation across many different activities and topics
- Wide-ranging collection of projects done by subgroups
- Horizontal, rather than hierarchical, relationships among members
- Engagement levels vary among members, according to time and topic
- Usually have a small administrative unit to coordinate and communicate
- Formed from a “collective identity proposition” (Tredaki & Tremewan 2013)
Such as region, institutional type, topical focus, academic discipline, or international initiative

In short, compared to partnerships, consortia are:

- ❖ larger
- ❖ a network than rather than a one-on-one arrangement
- ❖ concerned with broad, overarching collaboration issues
- ❖ flexible in focus and levels of engagement by their members

Consortia come in many shapes and sizes

They can have differing:

- goals and focuses
- membership requirements
- levels and types of activities

They can arise from faculty or institutional initiatives,
but also from international, intra-regional, or national policies

KUUC is on the simple side:

Two nations only

Funded by the U.S. Embassy

Managed by IIE, at least at the start

Selection process for membership

Aims at:

- generating immediate projects for collaboration on 3 key topics
- providing the conversations, information-sharing, and introductions needed to advance U.S.-Kazakh partnership in the future



International University Consortia on the New Silk Road
Zhuolin Feng & Luyang Gao. 2020

<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Z5r9DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA100&dq=international+consortia+in+higher+education&ots=izOGmdSose&sig=1Wu6zee9JDEi6GzFZ7OG4B9XUYw#v=onepage&q=international%20consortia%20in%20higher%20education&f=false>

Growth of university consortia along the Silk Road is
“a dynamic response to the Belt and Road project”

Feng and Gao found 71 consortia that involved Silk Road countries
surveyed a sample of 17

2/3 of these consortia arose in the 21st century
Half the member HEIs are from non-Road countries

University Alliance of the Silk Road
Founded 2015

Based at Xi'an Jiaotong University

150 HEI members (6 Kazakhstan)

From 37 countries

Mission: “to build collaborative platforms in higher education and foster regional openness and synergies”



Activities:

- conferences, webinars
- student writing competition
- virtual summer courses on advanced topics, co-taught by members
- alerting members to relevant grants

Pacific Asian Consortium for International
Business Education & Research

Founded 1988

Based at University of Hawaii



Membership: 27 “leading universities”

Mission: establishing linkages to promote international business education, research and exchange of information among faculty and students.

Activities:

- Annual conference that moves from one member HEI to another
- PACIBER Diploma to member students who complete a combo of courses, study abroad, internships

of HEIs that belong to one or more of the sample consortia



Figure 6.1 The map of sample alliances along the Road

While consortia do some very interesting things, they also present some distinctive challenges

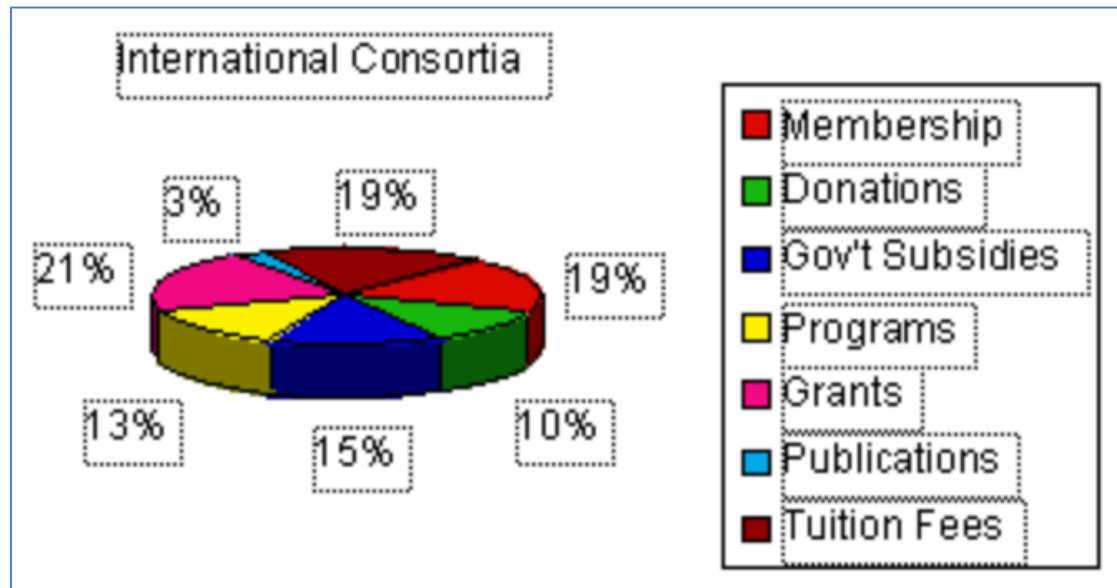
- There are many moving parts to coordinate
- Operating as a “coalition of the willing” (Lamie & Hill 2021) can only take consortia so far in coordinating these parts
- HEIs may not feel as obligated to them as they do to one-on-one partnerships
- HEI resource and prestige differentials are common and can cause issues
- Tension between collaboration and desire to compete among members
- Lines of authority and intellectual property credit between consortium and individual members can be unclear or contested
- Rarely have steady funding, other than occasional membership fees

Good practices that make for good consortia

- Member-centric, collaborative managerial system to organize events, communicate, make decisions, track activities, assess outcomes, resolve problems, etc.
- Avoid top-down initiatives and decisions
- Incremental planning with realistic projects, rather than large-scale schemes
- Strategies for overcoming inequities and cultural differences among members
- Frequent and good communication
- Incentivize members through seed grants and other opportunities
- Adapt consortium to interests of its members, as well as relevant national, regional, and international priorities
- Develop an effective business model *
- Establish standards for academic integrity and ethical practice
- Continuity in personnel
- Flexibility in adapting to changing environments
- Create environment in which new possibilities and linkages arise organically

How do consortia fund themselves?

Brian Denman 2002

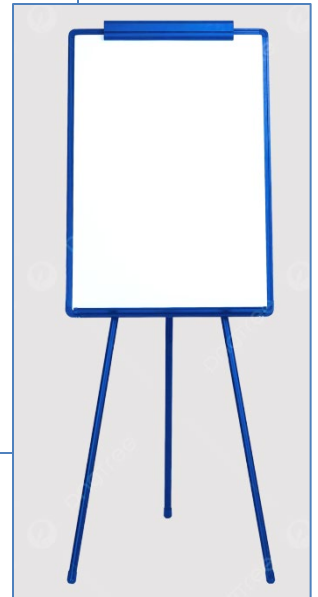


DISCUSSION

Consortia and Partnership Development

Based on your experiences with international consortia in general and KUUC in specific...

- What can consortia add to partnership development?
- What is gained by approaching U.S.-Kazakh partnership-building through a consortium?
- What is best done by partnerships?
- What can consortia do that would be difficult for partnerships to do? And how can this be helpful to partnerships?



Some answers from the literature on consortia:

To foster the broad, multi-perspective dialogue needed when HEIs that do not have many partnerships in a particular part of the world start to develop them.

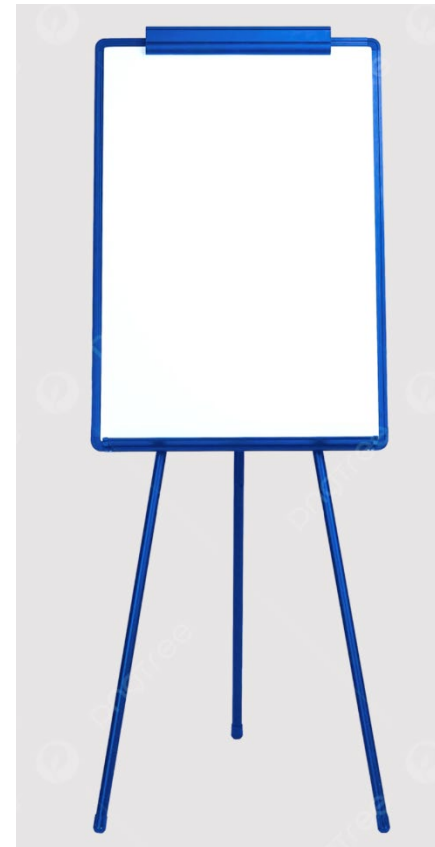
- Brings more than the “usual suspects” together – in terms of HEIs, academic disciplines
- Focuses on mutual learning about each other’s higher ed systems, resources, practices – as a group process
- Enables specific collaborations to emerge organically from these conversations
- Assembles the critical mass of faculty, staff, students needed for certain projects
- Enables less well-resourced or prestigious HEIs to participate
- Articulates what HEIs in each country can offer each other
- Fosters interdisciplinarity
- Stimulates thinking

“international consortia should be understood and approached as spaces where the values-foundations of international institutional relationships are established”

Marc Tadaki & Christopher Tremewan 2013

PART 2. Putting KUUC to work:
What challenges do U.S.-Kazakh partnerships face?

Let's compose a list.
Then vote on the 3 most important
challenges.





iiie

PART 2. Putting KUUC to work: How can these challenges be managed?

- Divide into small, bi-national groups
- Each group discuss just one of the 3 challenges
 - Introduce yourselves to each other
 - Share your experiences with this challenge
 - Brainstorm on ways to manage the challenge
 - Be prepared to report what you discussed



Breakout Groups

Group 1

Gonzalo R. Bruce
Louisa Ehrlich
Nagima Manasbayeva
Beibit Dyussyupov
Diana Amirbekova

Group 3

Cheryl Matherly
Sue Macchiarella
Vlad Likholetov
Nurlan Turgenbayev
Saniya Kenzhebekova

Group 5

Joanna Regulska
Gillian Ice
Nurgul Nalgozhina
Bakit Urazova
Gulnaz Yergeshkyzy

Group 7

John Bradford
Yesbol Omirzhanov
Laura Dushayeva
Bakhytzhhan Yelikbayev
Aizhan Samambayeva

Group 2

Jaime Bachmeier
Virginia Martin
Marina B. Aleixo
Almagul Turdagaliyeva
Akmaral Kairbayeva

Group 4

Becky Challenger
Peter M. Hirst
Sabina Manapova
Dariya Imadiyeva
Tolga Turker

Group 6

Sarah Olson
Cath Kleier
Kevin Fitzsimmons
Karlygash Ashirkhanova
Roza Jumabekova

Group 8

Doug Hartman
Stacy L. Burger
Sholpan Yessimova
Maigul Nugmanova
Zhailagul Sagyndykova





Consortia and Partnerships: Allies in International Collaboration (Day Two)

Susan Buck Sutton and Sylvia Jons

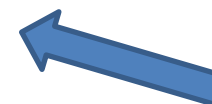
3.Putting KUUC to work:

What are the fundamentals of effective partnerships?



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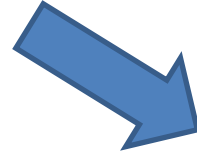
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The U.S. is no exception to this growth in partnerships in this century.

1923 U of Delaware & Sorbonne started the first Junior Year Abroad program

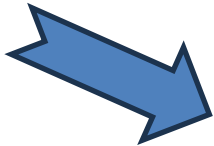


1984 ACE Handbook: most HEIs had no IPs

2022 ACE Mapping Internationalization on U.S.

Campuses

	All	Doctoral	Master's	Baccalau- reate	Assoc -iates
Starting for 1 st time	7%	2%	6%	5%	6%
Expanding	28	42	41	35	13
Holding steady	38	53	45	44	24
Do not have	28	2	9	16	56



This increased attention to international collaboration & partnerships reflects their power in doing the following:

1. Entering HEIs into [emerging global networks](#) of higher education
2. [Preparing students](#) for globalized lives by offering opportunity to interact with individuals/HEIs from other nations
3. Attracting [international students](#) from partners
4. Pursuing the international collaboration that [cutting-edge research](#) now demands
5. Improve [ranking and reputation](#) by being better known internationally and connecting to highly ranked HEIs
6. Expanding [curricular offerings](#), sharing faculty resources, transforming course content through international dialogue
7. Improving [institutional and national capacity](#) by connecting to centers of excellence elsewhere
8. Supporting international [connections of community and nation](#)
9. Taking the multinational approach needed for [addressing global issues](#) and [building a better world](#)

This growth also reflects the **transformational** qualities of partnerships. *Participating in them can change how we understand ourselves, what goals we consider worth pursuing, & the structures of higher education itself.*



International partnerships can be both:

1. Transactional/Instrumental

(exchanging people, services, resources of equivalent value)

2. Generative/Transformational

(combining resources, creating platforms for mutual growth, transforming each HEI , human knowledge, and higher ed more generally)

Internationalization can be

“a way of encountering difference *differently* ... [thereby] deconstructing assumed knowledge and opening up new possibilities for relating to ourselves and the world in ways that account for our differences *and* interdependencies”

Elizabeth Buckner & Sharon Stein

2019



The last 4 years only increased our recognition of the importance of partnerships and opened our eyes to still more ways of approaching them.

- Strong partnerships rose to the pandemic’s challenges, unleashing new partnership forms in [a burst of collaborative creativity](#)
- Being “locked down” both demanded and gave [more time to communicate](#)
- [Global nature](#) of COVID: we had much to learn from each other
- Partnerships dramatically increased use of [online collaboration/VE/COIL](#)
- Increased use of [VE flattened resource differentials](#) between partners, giving greater voice to those in the Global South
- It also [enabled more](#) faculty, staff, students to engage with partners
- DEI and decolonizing efforts exposed the [skewed distribution](#) of partnerships across regions, nations, institutional types, academic disciplines, and students

In sum, the last 4 years have made clear that partnerships:

- Should be seen as **more than physical mobility**
- Can **withstand time and turmoil**, if well-constructed and supported
- Are key to the **collaboratively-built knowledge** needed for the 21st century
- Should be expanded to include **more students at more HEIs in more nations**
- Come in **many more forms** than we have historically been using
- Are possible even for **HEIs with few financial resources**
- Are witnessing a moment of **great expansion, reformulation**, and **creativity**
- Are leading us to measure institutional impact not only in terms of what benefits our own institutions, but **what moves us all forward together**

Unfortunately, too many partnerships end up:



(ceremonial)

Paper-only (signed agreements, no activity)

Dormant (once had activity, but no longer)

Lop-sided (sometimes in exploitative way)

Good intentions are necessary, but they are not enough.

Top 15 Nations for U.S. HEI Partnerships

(% of HEIs reporting IPs)

2022 ACE Mapping Survey

	All	Doctoral	Master's	Baccalaureate	Associates
China	36%	72%	53%	38%	11%
U.K.	33	63	45	46	17
Japan	32	61	46	46	13
France	27	60	40	36	9
Germany	25	60	36	30	8
Spain	24	54	36	32	8
South Korea	22	54	38	25	4
Italy	22	54	33	28	6
India	20	54	26	17	7
Australia	17	50	25	19	2
Ireland	18	39	23	20	11
South Africa	12	30	8	17	14
Vietnam	11	25	13	7	6
Canada	10	27	11	5	7
Hong Kong SAR	10	28	10	13	2



Why are they so precarious and so badly distributed?

- This is fundamentally *new territory* for HEIs
- Partnerships have long been viewed as a *minor tactic* – little attention and few resources directed toward them
- Little understanding of their full *potential and impact*
- Little understanding of *how to plan, initiate, manage, harness* them
- *Left to* individual initiatives, the occasional research or development project, and the study abroad or student recruitment offices
- Continuing *residue of colonialism* and the *systemic inequalities and assumptions* of current global relations
- Our *existing connections, selection criteria, and concern for ranking* have led us to certain partners and not others

Fortunately, we are also learning much about the fundamentals of good partnership development.

- ❖ Enhanced institutional strategy and support for partnerships
- ❖ Taking the time to start new partnerships properly
- ❖ Close attention to managing and nurturing them over time
- ❖ Conducting them in an ethical, inclusive, and mutually beneficial manner



Take the time to start partnerships properly
- an evolving, collaborative, creative, iterative process
in which you:

- Define your own HEI's goals for the partnership and come to understand those of the potential partner
- Build knowledge, trust, and relationships
- Identify compelling, viable arenas for cooperation
- Marshal resources and support
- Obtain necessary approvals
- Engage many individuals and units
- Plan further activities and projects



Fundamentals for sustaining partnerships over time:

- Engage in frequent communication and sustained relationship building
- Track, assess, rework, and renegotiate them regularly
- Spread beyond the individuals who started them
- Build in bilateral processes for resolving difficulties and making decisions
- Brainstorm new possibilities on a regular basis, unleashing the transformative, generative side of partnerships
- Articulate what meaningful dialogue, commitment, mutuality, and equity should look like for all partners

These fundamentals work best when embedded within an
International Partnership Strategy
at each partner HEI

- Articulates the *value and importance* of partnerships to the HEI
- Provides a *framework, support, and guidance* for participants
- Uses institutional *resources effectively*
- Establishes *priorities* for partnership selection & decision-making
- Opens partnership work to a *range* of faculty, staff, and students across the institution
- Sets institutional *standards of ethical engagement*
- Insures attention to *health, safety, and compliance* issues
- Gets everyone at the HEI *on the same page*; more focused, less haphazard
- *Unlocks the full potential* of partnerships

Good partnership strategies bring top-down and bottom-up approaches together in ways viewed as legitimate by all sides.

- They are co-designed by faculty, staff, and institutional leaders.
- They establish an atmosphere in which small-scale partnerships and institutionally strategic ones can both flourish.
- They recognize that partnerships are sometimes started and always carried out by faculty and staff.
- They enable HEIs to allocate resources in fair and reasonable way.
- They enable institutional mission and goals to be integrated into partnerships.
- They enable partnership work to spread beyond those who have historically engaged in it.

Funding Partnerships: A holistic approach

- Start small and **build up over time**
- Make use of existing **general institutional grants** (seed grants, curriculum development **grants, etc.**)
- Identify where your HEI has **concentrations** of staff & resources; engage them in partnership work
- Convince your HEI that baseline funding, staffing, & IT support for partnerships will bring a **good ROI**
- Work with your **development (fund-raising)** department
- Dedicate percentage of **“indirect costs”** from international grants to partnership development
- **Split costs** across various units and departments within your HEI
- Connect to interests of **local businesses and organizations**
- Creatively **balance exchanges** to match needs/resources of each partner
- Establish **“gateways”** for particular regions or nations
- Participate in **networks or consortia**; work with **provider organizations**
- Substitute **online interactions** for some in-person ones
- Recognize that some **transaction costs lessen** over time



Think
beyond
grants

Managing partnerships between HEIs (and nations) with unequal financial resources

- **Articulate assets** that each partner brings, tangible & intangible –
 - To those involved with the partnership
 - To each institution as a whole
- Recognize that the benefit each partner receives does not have to be *identical*, but rather *meaningful*
- Establish how **benefit** to the less wealthy partner can benefit the more wealthy partner as well
- Frame discussions with an understanding of global history and economics that acknowledges **how current inequities** have arisen
- Do not leave **decision-making** only to the wealthy partner
- When possible, **transfer funds & equipment** to the less wealthy partner

For HEIs from the Global North, this also means:

- Asking their researchers to take capacity-building as seriously as research
- Spelling out responsibilities/roles for all sides, so there can be no confusion: project management & decision-making, data control, publication authorship, working with local officials and communities, seeking and managing grants, etc.
- Involving and managing impact on local communities
- Acknowledging, navigating, and growing from understanding different approaches, cultural contexts
- Providing training and guidance on grant and project management, scholarly publishing, etc.

3. Putting KUUC to work:

How might these fundamentals be applied to U.S.-Kazakh partnerships?

- Divide into small, bi-national groups
- Each group will discuss a different question
 - Introduce yourselves to each other
 - Share your experiences with this topic
 - Brainstorm answers
 - Be prepared to report what you discussed





Table questions: Each table gets only one of these questions.

1. What do Kazakh and U.S. HEIs need to know about each other as they begin to explore partnerships? What do potential partners need to know about you? What do you want to learn about potential partners in return?
2. How can you expand a partnership beyond its original participants within your HEI? For example, how might a one-on-one faculty collaboration be expanded to include more people, departments, etc.?
3. How can more HEIs be brought into partnership work? What can they do themselves? What can HEIs that are already involved in partnerships do to expand such work to others?
4. In general, how do Kazakh and U.S. HEIs plan, manage, track, and assess their international partnerships? How does this vary from HEI to HEI? Country to country?
5. What assets can HEIs with low resources or poor name-recognition offer to partners that are well-resourced and well-known? What strategies can partnerships between two such different HEIs use to acknowledge but mitigate their financial differences?
6. Write a set of ethical standards for equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships.
7. What communication strategies have you found to be most effective in maintaining contact with partner HEIs?
8. Make a list of innovative models for using online apps and e-communication to facilitate partnership activities? How can high-quality interaction, dialogue, and relationship building be built into these models?



Part 4. What initiatives & actions should KUUC pursue this coming year?

