



Council of Graduate Schools

*Advocacy, Research, and Innovation*

# U.S. Perspectives on Graduate International Collaborations

October 21, 2009

Committee for Science, Technology, and Law  
National Academies, Washington, DC

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# Overview

- I. The Nature and Scope of Graduate International Collaborations
- II. Challenges and Hurdles Encountered and Ensuring Success
- III. Emerging Needs and Broader Implications



# 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:
  - Literature Review
  - 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

	<i>Degree Type</i>	2007*	2008**	Change (%)
<b>Established</b> Programs with International Universities	Dual/Double Degree Programs	32%	51%	+19
	Joint Degree Programs	3%	14%	+11
<b>Plans to Establish New</b> 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](http://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? (by field, degree level)

<i>Total = 163</i> <i>(data set</i> <i>also included 5</i> <i>“non-research</i> <i>degrees”)</i>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Other Research Degree</b>	<i>Total # of programs</i>
<b>Joint Masters Degrees</b>	18	8	4	<i>30</i>
<b>Dual Master’s Degrees</b>	48	32	27	<i>107</i>
<b>Joint Doctoral Degrees</b>	0	3	4	<i>7</i>
<b>Dual Doctoral Degree</b>	2	9	8	<i>19</i>

**N = 43 institutions**



# II. Challenges and Hurdles Encountered and Ensuring Success



# How are partners typically chosen in your joint and dual degree programs?

Known contacts among faculty/existing faculty partnerships	58.1%
Existing partner through an already established program	23.3%
Strategic decision to pick a new partner	16.3%
Other	2.3% (“Approached by foreign institution”)



# 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
  - “Collaboration is seen as a public good. It satisfies strategic concerns by adding value to degrees.”
- Availability of adequate funding
- Certainty about the partner's investments of time and funding



# What are the primary motivations for your institution to partner with an international institution on joint or dual degree programs?

- Attract international students (84%)
- Faculty Interest (81%)
- Strengthen Academic Research Quality (77%)
- Administrative Interest in Internationalizing the Institution (77%)
- Increase Prestige (51%)
- Increase Revenue (44%)
- Employer/Industry Demand (35%)
- Other (16%)
  - Provide International Experience for Students (N=2)
  - International Relations/Outreach (N=2)



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

1. Ensuring sustainability
2. Negotiating an MOU
3. Securing adequate funding
4. *Dual degrees*: Recruiting students
5. *Joint degrees*:
  1. Resolving differences in degree requirements
  2. Determining the duration of degrees 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?

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



# 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?

(Survey Responses)

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”



# Double Credit Concerns (cont.)

## (Follow up Focus Group)

- Theses and Dissertations (incl. master's):
  - **View 1:** thesis viewed as a single piece of work and represents the same value/amount of work as a thesis completed at a single institution. Additional administrative requirements do not augment the work or value.
  - **View 2:** thesis viewed as a single piece of work, but represents more value than a thesis at a single institution. Student must work with twice as many advisors or, in some cases, committees, with separate defenses and requirements.



# 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



# From “personalism” to strategic program development

*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. Emerging Needs and Broader Implications



# Emerging National Needs

- Real outcomes data on the efficacy and value of international collaboration for students, research faculty, and institutions
  - **Do motivations/objectives and outcomes match?**
- 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?*



# Implications

- 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?
- Do we have evidence that collaborative degrees make US students more employable? Or is this a gamble?:
- If 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).



# Implications (continued)

- 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)
- Do institutions have sufficient US national resources (incentives, programs, guidance) 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?
- “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?





# Thank You

The Council of Graduate Schools

[www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org)

Published results in: CGS Communicator, October 2009 and a forthcoming 2010 monograph

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