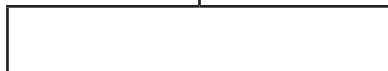


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# Introduction and Overview

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CHAPTER ONE

In the decade since this book was first published, no other event on the world stage has influenced the field of international education more than the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent war in Iraq. The consequences for both student exchanges and institutional linkages have been far reaching. Yet despite the ongoing global political tensions, heightened concerns arising from terrorism, and radical alterations in visa regulations, there has, nevertheless, been a marked rise in the number of U.S. students studying abroad and the flow of international students studying in the United States has increased.

At the same time, interest in interuniversity linkage agreements worldwide shows no sign of waning. In the United States, shifting national priorities, coupled with the powerful impact of globalization on local and state economies, have increasingly emphasized the importance of "internationalizing" colleges and universities. As emerging economies have strengthened, interest has widened at academic institutions throughout the developing world that could not consider such arrangements a decade ago. In particular, the rise of China and India as economic and political powers, together with their large university communities and talented students, has the potential to vastly alter the flow of students and enhance the diversity of linkages in the coming decades.

Most would argue that there is little question about the national obligation of colleges and universities—in any nation—to educate students who can effectively work in fields as diverse as international trade, diplomacy, development, business, and security; who, as citizens, understand the increasingly complex global environment in which they live and work. Interuniversity linkages play a major part in realizing this goal.

NAFSA has increasingly focused attention on the importance of internationalization of U.S. academic institutions who must prepare their students for the twenty-first century global workforce. A compilation of important articles, policy papers, and analyses of this topic can be found online at [www.nafsa.org/partners.sec/global\\_workforce\\_development](http://www.nafsa.org/partners.sec/global_workforce_development).

One purpose of this NAFSA book is to provide institutions in other countries with a better understanding of the U.S. higher education system so they may know what to expect when reaching out to U.S. institutions to explore prospects for developing linkage agreements.

The U.S. system of higher education differs markedly from most other national systems in its organization and structure and in its scale and diversity. This guide will assist university administrators, educators, and government officials in other countries to consider critical issues and acquire necessary information before initiating contact with prospective U.S. partners. Similarly, the guide can help overseas educators to more effectively shape their response to initiatives from potential U.S. partners.

A second purpose is to provide a set of basic guidelines for non-U.S. institutions that have had little or no experience in developing linkages with U.S. institutions. In the absence of careful planning, eagerness to reach an agreement and the desire for immediate success on the part of inexperienced linkage partners (in the United States as elsewhere) may lead to disappointing results. Institutional representatives too often begin the search process—indeed often begin negotiating—before developing a clear idea of what they wish to gain from a linkage and what a given U.S. partner might reasonably be expected to offer.

And last, this guide is designed to assist educators in other countries to determine their institutional readiness to begin the process of developing a linkage agreement. It emphasizes the information necessary to move through the early preparatory stages in this process. It will help faculty and administrators answer several basic questions, including:

- Why do we want to develop a linkage with a particular U.S. university?
- What do we need to know about the U.S. system of higher education and U.S. colleges and universities before we initiate contact?
- How should we make contact? With whom?
- What kinds of agreements are appropriate to realize different educational objectives and outcomes?

Chapter 2, Understanding the U.S. Higher Education System, provides basic information about the U.S. higher education system and about the structure and organization of colleges and universities, emphasizing the diversity that exists within the system. The distinctly U.S. system of institutional “accreditation” is also discussed in some depth.

Chapter 3, *Developing a Successful Linkage*, discusses the development process of a linkage agreement. We do not attempt to catalog everything needed to finalize an agreement; rather, we identify the main features of common types of agreements and guide the reader to further information. We also encourage institutional decisionmakers to assess their readiness for a linkage agreement. A series of questions helps the reader begin the necessary self-assessment.

And last, Chapter 4, *Interuniversity Linkage Agreements*, outlines several sample linkage agreements that are derived from successful linkages undertaken by Purdue University and reprinted with their permission. Their models contain basic elements used by universities in many countries that have had extensive experience with international linkages.