

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Making International Collaboration Agreements Swift, Flexible and Open

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

UCSC international agreements, currently termed *Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements of Cooperation*, record and establish ground rules for faculty and university partnerships with overseas entities. At this turning point in UCSC's engagement with the cross-border world, there is occasion to reinvent our current (dysfunctional) system for making agreements.

We suggest that these two principles should guide that re-invention and that our recommendations follow from those principles:

1. *The process should be transparent to all, swift and flexible and with minimal paperwork.*
 - Update and clarify guidelines for agreements
 - Delegate signature authority to the lowest appropriate level by agreement type
 - Senior International Officer coordinates and facilitates quick processing
 - Summary descriptions of collaborations posted on a regularly updated web page

2. *Faculty should be centrally involved in the process for imagining and developing international agreements.*
 - Recognize two modes of agreement: top down and bottom up
 - Identify incentives for faculty to report collaboration

CIE Consultation and Research

The Committee on International Education engaged in multiple efforts to better understand faculty concerns, issues, and priorities. These included a faculty survey and department visits in 2013-14 and organizing and hosting the Senate forum on Internationalization and Social Justice (fall 2014). Through this intensive process, the Committee on International Education (CIE) has learned that international research collaborations are of great interest to faculty. However, the process of establishing collaborations on our campus is neither transparent nor clear to faculty members and it fails the simplest of recording requirements. At a time when the UCSC campus is focusing on internationalizing the campus through increased international enrollments and the establishment of international university partnerships, the lack of faculty involvement in the process inhibits faculty driven research collaborations, which should be at the core of the internationalizing mission of our campus.

In order to assess what gaps exist and how to make the process of establishing pipelines and collaborations more transparent, CIE set out to research the process for establishing agreements for international collaborations on our campus, and how our process compares to other UC campuses and institutions. This report presents the findings, including the current process for establishing international agreements at UCSC, best practices and principles from other

institutions, and recommendations for establishing a more transparent, flexible, and open process for international agreements.

Establishing International Agreements at UCSC

CIE researched the publicly available information on establishing international agreements at UCSC and consulted formally with relevant administrators on campus.¹ The “Guidelines for Agreements of Cooperation and Memoranda of Understanding with International Institutions” available on the International Education Office website, represents the clearest publicly available policy document on the subject.²

There are currently two kinds of working agreements with international institutions at UCSC: Agreements of Cooperation (AOCs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

Agreement of Cooperation: An AOC is a general agreement to collaborate or cooperate. It *does not commit resources* in support of the relationship. The AOC is signed by the Chancellor and is a required step before the MOU. It serves to formally recognize a desire to collaborate in the future.

Memorandum of Understanding: An MOU documents the terms of a specific working agreement between a unit of UCSC and another institution. An AOC with a particular international institution must exist prior to the signing of an MOU. An MOU is initiated by either by the Chancellor or a principal officer of a division, and is signed by the Chancellor. MOUs *provide the specifics, logistics, and other details of a particular collaborative effort.*

Currently our campus has two separate processes for establishing international agreements. The top down approach includes campus administrative efforts to establish broad ranging agreements with selected international universities. We also have a second, barely recognized, bottom-up approach, where members of the faculty establish a wide range of informal agreements around research, student exchanges, teaching and other activities. There is no formal process for establishing or even tracking “bottom-up” agreements, and we have no accurate sense as a campus how many exist.

A formal process to recognize, document, and publicize these faculty-led “bottom-up” collaborations is poised to benefit both faculty members and administration as we work together to create larger and more visible international projects and relations for the university. An official and public record of international collaboration could benefit faculty members as they continue to apply for grants and funding, as well as when they seek out new collaborations; it could also help connect faculty currently working on similar projects or in similar areas. A clearinghouse for existing collaborations could also aid university administration in finding appropriate faculty input and collaboration on larger, administration-led international projects.

¹ UCSC International Education/International Agreements page (<http://ieo.ucsc.edu/faculty-staff/intl-agreements/index.html>), UCSC Undergraduate Education website.

² This document also lists the details of what proposed AOCs and MOUs should include.

The office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE) currently serves as the responsible office for international agreements on behalf of the Chancellor and CP/EVC. Current policy calls for AOCs and MOUs to be submitted to the VPDUE office for review and approval, prior to signing. An AOC should use the approved campus template³. However, if the corresponding institution is providing the draft, it should be sent for review to the campus contracts analyst and University Counsel. AOCs and MOUs must be reviewed and approved by the Chancellor or EVC based upon analysis from VPDUE office. When signed, the original agreement should be deposited with Administrative Records office (now called Records and Information Management) and copies distributed to the offices of the VPDUE, the CP/EVC, and the primary contacts and sponsors for the agreement. The VPDUE office maintains records of all international AOCs and MOUs.

The committee's research has identified a few weaknesses in our campus process. First, although our campus has the guidelines for establishing faculty initiated international agreements, these guidelines are not kept up to date to reflect the new administrative structure related to internationalization.⁴ Second, the office to which AOCs and MOUs are to be recorded and deposited and the responsible office (Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education) does not have a complete record of AOCs and MOUs on the campus. Third, there is a lack of connection between the top-down and the bottom-up approach. Faculty members have not been consulted in the top-down process. The Chancellor and the EVC have, however, since the start of CIE's review, made initial steps to create consultative and other faculty connections.

Review of UCs and Comparator Institutions

The committee researched and compared the processes for establishing agreements for international cooperation among several universities, using data collected by the UC-wide International Activities Policy Working Group (IAPWG). The IAPWG inventoried the international activities policies of UC and selected "comparison institutions" and drafted a brief report on its findings. CIE reviewed both the report and the data collected by the group.⁵

After review of the materials, the committee ultimately focused on UC institutions and one comparator, Harvard University, due to the ease and flexibility of its policies. We found that no single model exists among these institutions. Some larger UC campuses, such as UCLA, have multiple agreements with many major international institutions around the world. However, the process of establishing international agreement is complicated, involving 4-5 levels of signatures.

At UCSF, there are multiple levels of agreements created to address specific areas of international cooperation. Different agreements require lower level signatures delegated by the Chancellor. This makes the process of developing international collaboration flexible and simple. UCR adopted a similar approach by setting up two levels of international agreements: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and International Exchange or Linkage Agreement (IE Agreement). Their MOU is a non-legally binding document that does not involve a commitment of University

³ Available online http://ieo.ucsc.edu/faculty-staff/intl-agreements/ucsc_aoc.doc.

⁴ Guidelines were last updated in 2010.

⁵ International Activities Working Group, "Draft Report on University International Activities Policy Inventory for the International Activities Policy Working Group," November 2014.

Resources, while an IE Agreement entails a commitment of one or more University Resources. Deans are authorized to approve and sign proposed MOUs that use the approved MOU template. IE Agreements need to be reviewed and approved by CP/EVC or the Chancellor.

Harvard University's procedure claims to be easy, simple and flexible by design. Harvard wishes to encourage collaboration. Only multi-year, more than one million dollar proposals need prior review by their Provost. Most proposals for international projects are approved routinely by Office of the Provost based on the analysis of the University Committee on International Projects and Sites (UCIPS). To facilitate coordination and cooperation, UCIPS makes summary information available throughout the University. Legal, finance, risk management, human resources and other administrative offices are informed and integrated into the approval process.

Summary

General observations from review of other institutions' policies elucidated a set of best practices for international agreements. The process of making agreements should encourage collaboration, and not put barriers in the way of faculty initiatives. A swift and easy process is the goal, with wide dissemination of information and sharing across constituencies, campus websites that provide updated information on activities of international engagement, and a responsible office that maintains basic information of all international agreements.

Recommendations

The recommendations developed by CIE draw on two fundamental principles: 1) the campus process and vision for developing international agreements should centrally involve the faculty, and 2) the process for making international research collaborations should be swift, flexible, and open.

- **Updated guidelines.** Campus guidelines need to be brought up to date to reflect the new administrative structure of the campus in regards to internationalization.
- **Openness.** To encourage interdisciplinary and divisional collaboration, the campus needs an up to date web-based summary of diverse collaborations from all parts of the campus.
- **SIO / OIE Hub.** The Senior International Officer and the proposed Office of International Engagement should be the position and office responsible for supporting and shepherding international agreements. The process for reviewing agreements should be made clear to faculty.
- **Archiving agreements.** All information on international agreements should be held centrally, and there should be a central website and responsible position that will act as a clearinghouse of information. This office should ensure the information about existing or proposed international agreements is shared throughout the campus to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure resources are integrated for all international activities.
- **Signature authority.** Following the examples of other UC campuses, the signature authority for specific categories of agreement, distinguished by purpose and level of

resource commitment, can be simplified and delegated to the lowest appropriate level. When collaborating with international institutions, it is often easier and more productive to gain access to lower level administrators when possible, so delegating signature authority should result in greater efficiency when setting up collaborations with our partner institutions abroad.

- **Top-down and bottom-up agreements.** There should be two modes for initiating international collaboration, a “top-down” mode that provides the Chancellor discretion to establish wide ranging agreements and partnerships that benefit the university and a “bottom-up” mode that provides ease and flexibility for faculty and divisional engagement. Further, organic connections between the two levels can be facilitated through the establishment, expansion and maintenance of Regional Faculty Work Groups.
- **Faculty incentive.** A faculty incentive is needed to give faculty encouragement to report ongoing collaborations, thus enabling others to know who is doing what and where. This could include recognition of international engagements during personnel reviews.
- **Risk management.** The campus should prioritize agreements that fit the mission of the university and protect the university from risk. But, risks cannot be avoided. It is essential that UCSC adopt *risk management* policies comparable to those of larger UC campuses with generic assessments of broad categories of agreement, rather than painstaking, time consuming and expensive evaluation of each potential agreement.

Respectfully submitted;

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