

#4: Faculty Participation in North-South Student Mobility

The Voice of Canada's Universities



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Bringing faculty along

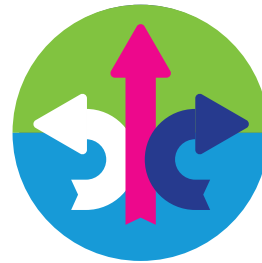
5 ways Canadian universities are encouraging faculty participation in mobility programs:



Training



Formal recognition



**Allowances
and flexibility**



**Recruiting faculty
from "non-traditional"
disciplines**



**Curriculum
development funds**



Encouraging Faculty Participation in North-South Student Mobility

Target audience: Canadian university faculty and administrators

Faculty members are actively involved in the design and execution of many student mobility options available at Canadian universities. Whether as instructors, program administrators, field school leads, research supervisors or principal investigators, they ensure that students are well-prepared before going abroad, well-supported during their time there, and able to make the most of their experience after returning to campus. However, little is known about the current strategies employed by universities for encouraging faculty participation in these programs. This is an important information gap given that the lack of incentives for the participation of diverse actors, including university faculty and staff, was recently identified as one of the main institutional barriers limiting the growth of mobility programs in Canada.

The benefits of increased faculty involvement include strengthening institutional partnerships and North-South collaboration. Collaborative research projects between Northern and Southern-based researchers are highly valued by faculty members around the world. Better collaboration between institutions can lead to: strengthened partnership relations, improved collaborations so that more students take advantage of mobility opportunities, expanded research opportunities for and between faculty members, and improved access to scholarly publication opportunities for Global South partners.

Why Faculty Choose to Participate in North-South Mobility Programs

Many Canadian-based faculty members devote significant time and energy to student mobility programs. They may do so out of a sense of obligation to the profession of teaching, to enhance research partnerships and/or to pursue institutional recognition, promotion or tenure. The most significant reasons identified by faculty interviewed for this research is a deep personal commitment to and passion for education and cross-cultural learning. Other motivations that ranked highly include the opportunity to mentor students, the chance to reconnect with international partners or communities, and the ability to build opportunities for independent research while abroad.

This document is part of a series of papers that were researched and written by consultants Dr. Rebecca Tiessen and Dr. Kate Grantham from February to August 2016. 20 administrators and faculty members at 14 Canadian universities were interviewed for this project. This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors.



How Canadian Universities are Encouraging Faculty Participation

Training

Most Canadian universities now actively support faculty efforts to incorporate an international dimension to their work and teaching by offering training workshops on areas related to internationalization. A national survey conducted by Universities Canada found that over the past five years, “42% of universities have offered workshops on internationalizing the curriculum, 27% offered opportunities for faculty to improve their foreign language skills, [and] 26% offered workshops on using technology to enhance international dimensions in teaching” (Universities Canada 2014: 30). Other types of training can include workshops on rooting out funding opportunities to undertake international projects, guidance on how to develop successful field courses and risk-management training for first-time supervisors of graduate students conducting international fieldwork.

Faculty promotion and tenure

This research indicates that the majority of institutions have no official policies on rewarding faculty for international work or experience. This is reflective of the Universities Canada finding that 87% of institutions lack formal guidelines in this matter (Universities Canada 2014: 30). It also found that at 7% of universities surveyed, some faculties or departments do consider international work and experience in such decisions, while only 6% of universities have institution-wide policies. Only 21% of universities offered specific recognition awards (30). These numbers are lower than for universities in the United States, where 25% of doctoral institutions, 12% of masters and 11% of baccalaureate institutions have relevant guidelines (30).

Formal recognition for mobility work

Mobility participation is not about remuneration, but recognition. Mobility work—which is often considered to be a type of “outreach service”—must instead come under the umbrella of “research” or “teaching”, which hold far greater weight by administration deciding on faculty promotion and tenure. This viewpoint is captured by one administrator interviewed for this research: “If you want faculty to go abroad, they need this task to be recognized by the university... Incentives are not always about money—and money is not really the incentive that we have available to use—but about recognizing the importance of that work.”

When asked what types of benefits might result from formal recognition of international work by the university, our research identified course allowances or release from other (administrative) obligations, increased weight for international work and experience in promotion or tenure decisions, and the flexibility to build in opportunities for independent research while abroad.



Recruit faculty from non-traditional disciplines

It is not likely that all faculties would equally express interest in mobility program participation. In acknowledgement of this, Thompson Rivers University launched a program in 2013 designed to recruit faculty members from non-traditional disciplines to develop international field school courses. The Director of Global Engagement at Thompson Rivers described the outcomes of this pilot program, which has had particular success with generating participation from faculty working in trade schools: “We had faculty teaching future electricians, and they basically put on a field course to Mexico in a small village and installed solar power grids to bring electricity to the village. They did that three years in a row, but my role was to pilot the first year because they had never had any experience taking their students out of the city.”

Curriculum development funds

Increasingly, universities are establishing internal curriculum-development funds to support faculty in developing innovative course offerings. Some such funds are specifically devoted to support international or intercultural learning opportunities for students. See, for example, Western University’s International Curriculum Fund: https://www.uwo.ca/international/staff/curriculum_fund/ICFguidelines.html

Additional Resources

- Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA). 2015. “Managing from the Middle: Eight Tips for New International Education Administrators for Working with Faculty.” Durham: AIEA. Accessed on July 25, 2016 at http://www.aieaworld.org/assets/docs/Issue_Briefs/gozik_issue_brief_2015.pdf

Endnotes

Universities Canada. 2014. “Canada’s Universities and the World: AUCC Internationalization Survey.” Ottawa: Universities Canada. Accessed on July 25, 2016 at <https://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/internationalization-survey-2014.pdf>

Photo courtesy of The University of Lethbridge (2012).