

Norwegian Higher Education & Research: Bilateral Partnerships with the United States and Canada

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1. Background and Purpose

In October 2001, the Norwegian Government adopted a Strategy Document entitled "Strong Bonds across the Atlantic" to strengthen co-operation in a variety of areas between Norway and the US. Higher education and research were listed among central priorities in the Strategy where it is stated that "Greater emphasis should be given to exchange agreements between institutions to encourage more American students and teachers to come to Norwegian educational institutions". To effectively enable the promotion of its Strategy, the Norwegian Embassy in Washington D.C. launched a survey to obtain some additional information, as well as advice and suggestions from a selected group of institutions of higher learning in the USA, Norway, as well as Canada, probing why existing agreements are successful or not as successful as originally anticipated. While this is not meant to be an exhaustive scientific survey, it is a hands-on reality check reporting feedback regarding partnerships with varying degrees of success.

2. The Survey

A sample of central stakeholders was selected from the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU)'s list of Norwegian university agreements in 2002. Eleven Norwegian higher education institutions were chosen specifically because they reported in the latest NIFU surveys that they already had a number of exchange agreements in place with US and Canadian institutions and it was therefore assumed that there are lessons to learn here.

The surveyed institutions included:

- University of Oslo (UiO), Oslo
- University of Bergen (UiB), Bergen
- Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim
- University of Tromsø (UiT), Tromsø
- Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), Bergen
- Agricultural University of Norway (NLH), Ås
- Norwegian School of Veterinary Science (NVH), Oslo*
- Stavanger University College (HiS), Stavanger
- Agder University College (HiA), Kristiansand
- Telemark University College (HiT), Bø
- Norwegian School of Management (BI), Oslo/Sandvika, the only private institution included in this survey.

An attempt was made to record all the existing agreements; some allowed for exchanges in one direction (unilateral), others in both directions (bilateral) which by far were in the majority, while a few institutions reported partnerships with several institutions (multilateral). In this report, all existing agreements will be referred to from now on as **bilateral agreements** as two transatlantic partners were involved in every negotiated agreement. Successful agreements meant that reciprocity was achieved in those agreements where exchanges were involved; in unilateral and multilateral agreements, success meant reaching the targeted numbers for mobility, as well as a general satisfaction over the contracted agreement.

* The Norwegian School of Veterinary Science (NVH) reported that it did not have any formal exchange agreements with US/Canada even though some informal exchange agreements may exist. With no results to report, NVH was not included in the statistical information below.

In the **US**, a letter explaining the survey was sent to a wide variety of institutions having exchange agreements with the above Norwegian institutions in June 2003, and about a half of the contacted institutions responded to the survey.

The surveyed institutions included (alphabetically):

- Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan
- Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana
- Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
- Purdue University, W. Lafayette, Indiana
- St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska
- University of California, Berkeley, California
- University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota
- University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
- University of Texas, Austin, Texas
- University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

The University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, and Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, both reported that they were not aware of any formal agreements at the time of the survey; they mentioned that these could exist with other units at their respective universities.

In **Canada**, institutions having exchange partnerships with the selected Norwegian institutions were surveyed in June 2003 and about half of the contacted institutions responded to the survey.

These were (alphabetically):

- McGill University, Montreal, Quebec
- Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario
- University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
- University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta
- University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

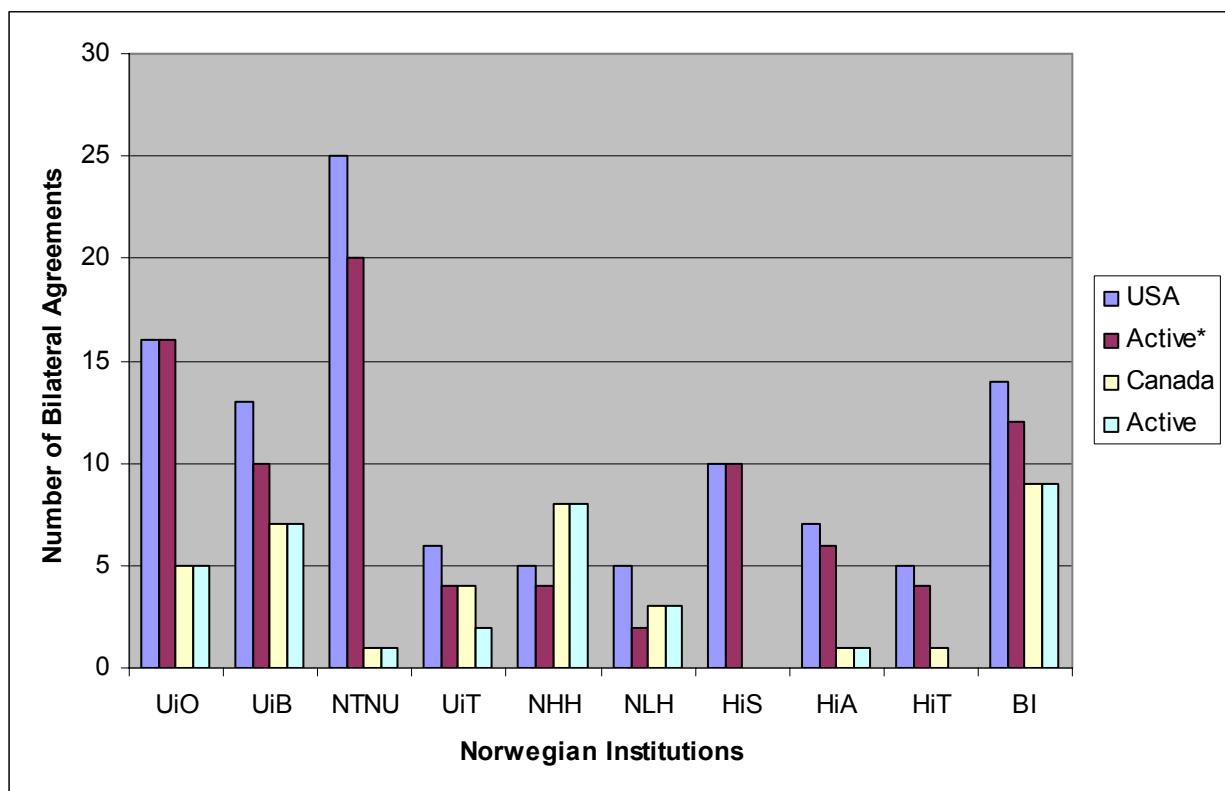
The survey attempted to register existing agreements that are generally negotiated contracts between two or more institutions. They are general in nature with varying provisions for mobility among students/faculty/researchers limited to certain academic fields. The contract may be financed in different ways. The survey (see attachment) requested information regarding:

- 1) validation dates for existing agreements,
- 2) contracted academic fields,
- 3) level at which the contract was signed,
- 4) details regarding student/faculty/researcher/administrator exchanges, internships
- 5) type of exchange (uni-, bi-, multi-lateral),
- 6) mobility figures,
- 7) active/passive/other, and
- 8) a contact person for the various agreements.

The survey was sent out electronically to International Offices at the selected institutions and copied to one or two other key persons at the universities, with an explanation of the project. A fair amount of difficulty was experienced in trying to get results and at times the responses left room for speculation. Certain institutions indicated that their comments were made on the condition that the sources not be disclosed, mainly to protect their own institutions and their partners. The results reported in the attached charts on each institution are based on reports from the surveyed institutions themselves and are not subject to editing by the author.

A total of 144 agreements were reported by the Norwegian institutions, encompassing 105 bilateral agreements with USA and 39 bilateral agreements with Canada. Five Norwegian institutions have more than the average 10.5 agreements per institution between Norway and USA; and five Norwegian institutions have more than the average 3.9 exchange agreements per institution with Canada.

Some institutions however have more than one agreement with an institution, e.g. the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, has two agreements with Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan: one encompassing 'All Fields' and the other with 'Light Metals'. The University of Oslo has more than one agreement with the University of North Dakota, one with the School of Law and the other with Media and Communications.



Bilateral Agreements between Norwegian Universities and USA/Canada

*Active: in use during the past two years (i.e. since summer 2001). Important: "Active" was understood by some institutions that the agreement was enforced but there was no mobility. Non-active agreements were reported as "passive", "expected to be active", or left blank. Note that "passive" was reported in some cases where an agreement existed but no mobility was registered during the past year. "Passive" was also reported regarding new agreements.

A couple of remarks regarding the above graph are necessary here:

1. Aiming at profiling the transatlantic cooperation, the graph above shows all reported bilateral agreements by the surveyed Norwegian institutions with regard to US/Canada. These take into account informal agreements, but do not include those marked "cancelled agreements". It is clear that all the Norwegian institutions surveyed have bilateral agreements with the US, some to a larger extent than others, partly because some institutions were active early while others have increased activity in the past few years.

Agreements with Canada have become common in the more recent past and all the Norwegian institutions surveyed, with the exception of Stavanger University College, have agreements with Canadian institutions today. Two institutions that stand out are the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) and the Norwegian School of Management (BI) that have very many agreements with Canada, some older than five years. As can be expected, all are in Economic and Business Management.

2. The graph also shows those agreements that were reported as "active" and it is necessary here to say something about the gap between these and the total number of reported agreements. In the survey, "active" was defined as agreements that were in use during the past two years (i.e. since the summer of 2001).

The results could however suggest that there have been different interpretations by the institutions. In some cases, cancelled or informal agreements are reported as "active". Again, it seems that even if the agreement was renewed in 2001 or later, in certain instances it is still considered as "active". In addition, some agreements were marked "passive" because there was no activity registered over the past year even though an agreement was in place. Other factors mentioned instead of "active" were "expected to be active", "passive" or left blank.

Finally, most agreements signed in 2003 were marked "active" even though some are too new to register any activity. In other words, because of the seeming confusion around this particular issue, one has to read the graph and refer to the attached charts with these possible interpretations in mind.

3. Main features about the bilateral agreements

The survey asked about formal signed agreements, requesting information on the month and year in order to compare older with more recent agreements. To standardize the replies, the year only was used in the final results. These results were strictly limited to the information on bilateral agreements reported by the institutions themselves. Many institutions, however, pointed to the fact that they were aware of informal, unsigned exchanges taking place between faculty members and researchers abroad, and that their universities were making a real attempt to record and formalize these exchanges, without too much success.

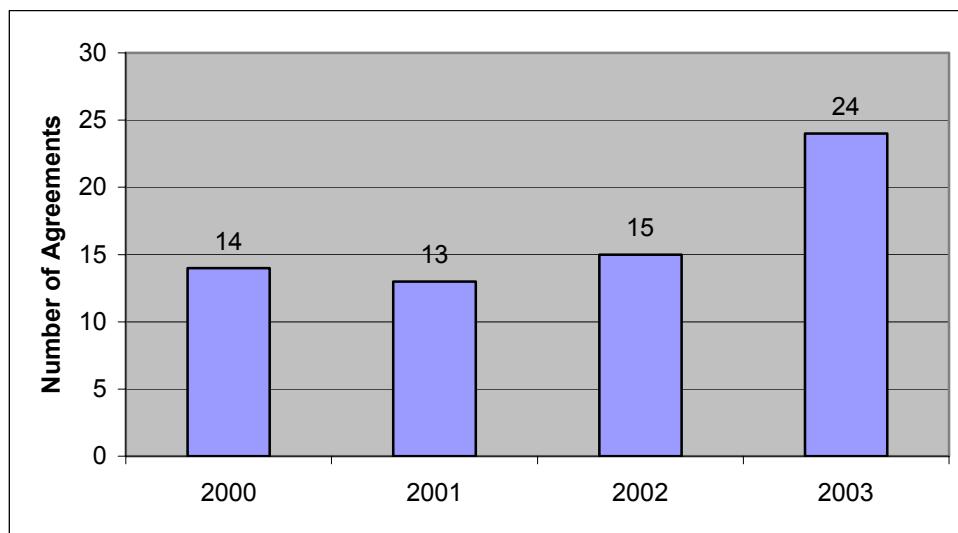
3.1 Dates for Signing of Agreements

Regarding the specific institutions surveyed, about half the total number of registered agreements were signed between Norway and USA/Canada prior to 2000. Three Norwegian institutions that stand out regarding these earlier agreements are the Norwegian School of Management (BI), the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). The Norwegian School of Management (BI) was very active on the international front among the institutions surveyed with almost 21% of all the existing signed agreements by the end of 1999. The wide range of US and Canadian partners was also quite extensive. All these

bilateral agreements were exclusively in Economics and Business Administration (Marketing, Travel and Tourism, IT-Management).

BI was followed closely by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) with a share of 17% of all agreements signed by the end of 1999, these mainly linking up to US partners in a wide variety of academic fields. NTNU stands out among the four universities as the one institution with very many agreements with US institutions. An impressive range of academic fields include areas from technology and health science to ocean engineering, geography, medicine, education and student teaching. Unlike the other Norwegian universities, however, NTNU has only one agreement with a Canadian institution, i.e. Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) ranked third



with The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) ranked third with about 13% of all agreements, all exclusively in Business Administration. What characterizes this institution, however, unlike any of the other surveyed Norwegian institutions, is the fact that a striking majority of its bilateral partnerships are with Canadian institutions and not with the US.

Bilateral Agreements after 2000

Regarding partnership agreements over time, the above figure shows that there has been an increase in bilateral partnership activities since 2001, this accelerating in the past couple of years. 10% of all new and renewed agreements for the selected Norwegian higher educational institutions were signed in 2000, 9% in 2001, 10% in 2002 and 16% in 2003.

A clear trend of increased international marketing activity was displayed by all institutions in 2002 resulting in agreements signed in 2003. Canadian institutions in particular were actively targeted. Half of all partnerships signed at this time between Norway and North American institutions were with Canada. For example, the University of Bergen reported that it planned a delegation visit to several institutions in Canada in 2003 that resulted in several agreements signed in the late summer of 2003.

3.2 Academic fields covered by the Agreements

The Norwegian universities, as expected, cover academic fields in the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Mathematics and Natural Sciences (including Technology and Engineering), as well as professional studies including Medicine, Dentistry, Law, and Education. Please refer to the attached attachments for details regarding academic areas. Niches or special fields of competence however do exist, as for example, the University of

Tromsø (UiT) has an agreement covering fisheries (Economics and Management of Fisheries) with the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and Aquatic Biology with Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador. The University of Oslo recently signed an agreement opening for faculty and graduate bilateral exchanges in medicine with Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. The Agricultural University of Norway (NLH) has partnerships mainly in the fields of agriculture and landscape architecture. Telemark University College (HiT) has most of its partnerships in Scandinavian Studies. Stavanger University College (HiS) has exchanges in petroleum engineering and offshore technology and hotel management. The University of Science and Technology (NTNU) has, as expected, a wide variety of fields within science and technology.

Observation/Recommendation: *In general, "niches" of reputed academic strengths stand out as areas that should be used as a base for linking up to other institutions. These present added value to studying/researching at particular institutions. Achieving an academic fit seems to be another key to a successful agreement.*

3.3 Level of partnerships

The survey tried to find out if contracts signed at different levels (university/faculty/institutional or departmental) would play a role towards successful agreements. Results showed that most of the bilateral agreements are signed at more than one level, with a majority being signed at the university/faculty level. It should be noted that several exchanges contracted by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) are signed at the university and institutional levels. The Norwegian School of Management (BI) and the Agricultural University of Norway (NLH) together with the University of Oslo (UiO) are signed exclusively at the university level, while the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) have agreements signed exclusively on the faculty level. The US institutions surveyed also had most of the agreements signed at the university level; the Canadian universities had combinations of university/faculty and some agreements signed only on the faculty level.

Observation/Recommendation: *In general, there did not seem to be any correlation between level of partnership and reported success; more important, several institutions noted that an active "champion" or "champions" either at the faculty or institutional level, and a sense of "ownership" and/or "responsibility" by faculty and/or institutions, with follow-up by an engaged administrator, were essential for successful agreements.*

3.4 Faculty/Researcher Mobility

With regard to teacher/faculty/researcher exchanges as part of the formal agreement, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) stands out as having the largest number of agreements that allow mobility for faculty and researchers. This is followed closely by the University of Oslo (UiO). In general, almost all institutional agreements involve a mobility provision among faculty and researchers. The Agricultural University of Norway (NLH) has teacher/faculty/researcher exchanges in all its agreements. It should be noted however that according to the survey while neither the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) nor the private Norwegian School of Management (BI) show faculty/teacher/researcher exchanges in their agreements, these take place on a more personal level through professional contacts. Administrator exchanges are almost non-existent; only the University of Tromsø (UiT) and Stavanger University College (HiS) have a couple of agreements involving administrator mobility.

Again, some institutions do refer to the informal exchanges taking place behind the scenes and special mention was made about research exchanges taking place in a more informal manner. One administrator made reference to the "exchange of ideas" that is more difficult to document. Many researchers have professional links to colleagues in the USA and Canada resulting in research training and supervision of young researchers and post doctoral candidates. While attempts have been made to institutionalize such links, some institutions reported that this has been difficult as there seems to be no tradition for the involvement of administrative central units in research collaboration at US and Canadian institutions.

Observation/Recommendation: *In general, faculty visits and the networks they create seem to be another key component for successful agreements. An overall observation is that even though there are formal agreements with provisions for mobility among faculty and researchers, the actual figures suggest that not much has happened here.*

3.5 Student Mobility

As can be expected, most of the agreements involved students at the undergraduate and graduate levels and some at the postdoctoral level. It should be noted that Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) has agreements only on the graduate level and Telemark University College (HiT) has agreements only on the undergraduate level. Any mobility took place for short terms, either for a few weeks during summer sessions or for a semester. The responses however indicated that it was easier to send undergraduate students for a short time abroad than graduates who were restricted by a more structured curriculum and time plan.

The University of Tromsø (UiT) involves only graduate students in three of its four Canadian agreements with Dalhousie University, Memorial University, and the University of British Columbia. While there seemed little difficulty getting Norwegian graduate students to spend time in the US and Canada, some US and Canadian universities reported that their graduate students could not be persuaded to study in Norway even though the provision was present in the agreement. The Norwegian programs offered were either "not particularly attractive", "courses taught in the Norwegian language presented barriers", "Norway is expensive" and the "academic fit was not attractive".

Observation/Recommendation: *In general, from the figures showing actual mobility, not very many student exchanges seem to be taking place. Most of them are, unfortunately, on a basis for one way movement from Norway to the USA and Canada. It is important to point out that students, like faculty, are ambassadors for exchanging information, sowing seeds about their own culture and educational achievements in the host country, and in turn, reporting about cultural and program experiences from visiting the host country. With this in mind, it is more difficult to promote programs in Norway.*

3.6 A note on internships

Many of the North American higher education institutions include internships, i.e. work/study opportunities (paid and/or unpaid) as an integrated part of the academic curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate levels to give their students hands-on experience within their majors. Internships, however, are neither traditional nor common in Norway. The survey shows that most Norwegian institutional agreements do not include internships in their bilateral agreements with the USA and Canada. An exception is perhaps Telemark University College (HiT) that has internships as a formal provision in all its agreements. Certain US institutions noted that they would like to have internships included when their present agreements are renewed.

Observation/Recommendation: *In general, it is highly recommended to include a provision for internships in future agreements in order to attract North Americans to Norway and open a window for hands-on experience with agencies that promote industry and/or culture in the countries concerned. Academic credit can also be gained through internships, making the program more attractive.*

3.7 Active agreements

As mentioned earlier, "active" agreements in the survey were defined as those exchange agreements in use during the past two years, i.e. since the summer of 2001. This did not necessarily mean that there was an exchange of students/researchers/faculty between the two specific transatlantic institutions since the summer of 2001, but rather that a signed agreement was in place at this time. Those agreements that were not marked "active" were either reported as "passive" or "data not available" or "expected to be active" or left blank for unknown reasons. It should be noted that non-active bilateral agreements did not necessarily mean "passive" agreements. Please refer to the discussion on this point in section 2.

In general, all agreements have a low level of activity when one looks at the figures reported regarding student/faculty/researcher mobility. Many of those that are listed as active do not show much vitality. One possible reason could be that the negotiated exchange had low numbers in the contracted agreement, stipulating that only one or two students/faculty will visit the partner institution for a specific period of time; another factor could be difficulty either sending the contracted number of students/faculty or receiving similar numbers from the partner institution.

A special note should also be added that some institutions reported that they do not have accurate records regarding exact student numbers; others reported them as FTE (full time equivalent per year), others may not wish to report these. These inaccurate figures and discrepancies also appear when comparing numbers provided by Norwegian institutions and their partners in the US and Canada.

Most exchanges, as mentioned earlier, are bilateral in nature with reciprocity being the overarching goal. Responses to the surveyed results in many cases show that reciprocity has not been achieved. One Norwegian administrator commented that: "The agreement is not in balance, i.e. we send more students than we receive. We have barely met the intention of reciprocity in student exchange and are still far from other types of cooperation i.e. curricular development, research, etc."

Certain bilateral agreements do seem to be highly successful with students and faculty reciprocity. A success story is perhaps Agder University College (HiA)'s agreement with Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, where a bilateral agreement in Business Administration since 1993 seems to be highly successful regarding student and faculty reciprocity. Memorial University's partnership with the Norwegian School of Management (BI) that has existed since 1995 should also be mentioned. This partnership is highly active with almost ten students going each way. Another success story is between the University of Bergen and University of Washington, Seattle, where an agreement from 1979 covering all fields has involved more than 100 academic staff over twenty years. Successful factors in general include "good administration procedures", "personal contact", and "motivation" on the part of several actors involved.

Unilateral agreements are few; they do exist regarding summer sessions or one-way consortial programs. Examples of current unilateral programs involve partnerships between the University of Oslo and HECUA (Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs) involving about fifteen US institutions on a fall semester program at the University of Oslo, a program that seems to attract a large number of Americans from a variety of disciplines to Norway. Stavanger University College (HiS) and Michigan State University have a unilateral agreement in hotel and tourist management that also attracts a large number of Americans to Norway. In both cases, large numbers of US students have come to Norway on a one-way program. The University of Bergen (UiB) has a unilateral agreement with the University of California, Berkeley, involving a large number of Norwegian students who spend summer sessions at the University of California, Berkeley. The University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, attracts Norwegian students who wish to qualify as air traffic controllers; the University of North Dakota also has a partnership with the American College of Norway in Moss, Norway, and sends faculty to Norway to teach freshman courses.

Some institutions have marked certain agreements as unilateral and bilateral.

There were a few multilateral agreements mentioned. One in particular involves global partners. For example, the University of Oslo's partnership with Worldwide University Network (WUN) is administered at Sheffield University in the UK and involves global partners as well as the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the University of Washington, Seattle. This is a fairly new agreement and it is therefore difficult to report how it works.

Observation/Recommendation: *Success, it seems, is largely due to the strong commitment on both campuses, good administrative procedures, student demand, motivation and personal contact between institutions. Summer sessions and short term programs are popular.*

4. Major features regarding successful exchange agreements

Most agreements exist at the University and/or Faculty level and there does not seem to be any significant relationship between level of agreement and success where success is defined as a balance in exchanges and the agreement meeting its overall goal. Generally, most agreements involve very few students/faculty/researchers, in many cases less than 5 and closer to 1-2 from each institution. The lower numbers seem to be the target figures in the signed agreements. A general comment would be that many institutions report frustration about the imbalance as far as numbers and not meeting their targeted goals of reciprocity.

Successful agreements or programs according to the survey include a mixture of the following key elements:

- **Champions:** A combination of strong faculty/scientist/departmental/administrator interest and commitment and/or direct cooperation between faculties on both sides; direct departmental involvement and promotion of destination (host institution) are essential for success.
- **Financing** – Tuition can be an obstacle especially as Norwegians do not pay for tuition on their home campuses while North Americans students do, and details have to be worked out carefully. Several models exist: in-state tuition instead of out-of-

state tuition for Norwegians; waived tuition fees; "one-in and one-out" agreements; State Loan Funding for Norwegians studying abroad; stipends from Norway-America Association for Norwegians; and a few scholarships and grants for Americans and Canadians to study in Norway.

- **Students/faculty and alumni are ambassadors for information:** They should be used for promoting exchanges. They share success stories with their colleagues, attracting interest in their experience abroad, and becoming very powerful advocates for programs and study abroad. Alumni should be involved more strongly in promoting programs and exchanges.
- **Faculty/researcher visits** enhance student exchange, creating a bond between two institutions, highlighting profiles and allowing flexibility. It was reported that lecturer exchange and student exchange go hand-in-hand.
- **International offices:** Key and active administrators reinforce links on both sides. It was reported in many cases that friendship and close ties between international administrators opened avenues for co-operation and this contact was essential for success.
- **Information:** Certain institutions reported that information sharing was essential for programs and institutions so that faculty and students know what to expect. Norway should be better promoted as an attractive educational opportunity.
- **Quality and reputation of partners (name brand recognition):** further strengthened by personal contact and trust regarding students and programs; institutions must deliver what they promise in their promotional materials.
- **Logistical arrangements** at the host institution should reasonably match what students are used to at their home institution to avoid undue anxiety and meet expectations.
- **Location:** highlight attractiveness of institution's location, its climate, urban or rural environment, leisure activities, and similarities with partner institutions.
- **"Niches"** of academic areas of interest that make the institution special/unique and present an added value to studying at a particular institution.
- **Scandinavian/Norwegian faculty** at institutions abroad link culture and provide flexibility and understanding.
- **Flexibility and Internships** for students to participate in a variety of academic programs. Internships essential as a further attraction to a program as one gets hands-on experience and gains credits towards completing the degree.
- **Summer Schools**, shorter study periods are attractive during the summer time and give students an opportunity to gain additional academic credits.
- **Academic fit** with home institution's programs allowing for mobility between two campuses and ability to make adjustments and take into account degree requirements; Courses taught in English are important; easier for undergraduate than graduate programs unless study abroad is a part of and integrated into the curriculum. Academic credits have to be recognized and can be transferred between

institutions. Flexibility and an effort made to maximize acceptability of courses into existing curricula.

- **"Ownership" and "assigned" or "designated" responsibility** of exchange program and commitment to follow-up.
- **Work experience** as an added bonus to the student through internships or student-teaching to make it even more attractive to visit a host institution.
- **Length of exchange:** one semester or less is preferred by most students.

5. Remarks from the Norwegian Institutions

Imbalance in agreements: This is emphasized by very many institutions. Norwegian students and faculty are attracted to the US and Canada where there are strong cooperating partners, high interest in North America, and students promote institutions on both sides, but North Americans are not coming to Norway. There is less interest in studying in Norway mainly because it is more expensive to study in Norway than either the US or Canada and there are hardly any financial stipends to help North American students. The goals for reciprocity therefore are not being met.

Bilateral programs and funding should be established between Norway and USA/Canada as in Europe. At present, exchanges are being overshadowed by European Union programs that are being promoted very extensively and actively and given special funding. It is difficult for smaller institutions to compete with the four big Norwegian universities, Denmark's International Study Program (DIS) in Copenhagen and large universities in Sweden. Administrating exchange programs for one or two students is very costly for Norwegian institutions.

Involve industry for a good academic and financial fit and integrate industrial contacts into the academic programs. Some interesting cooperation exists between academia and industry at the University of Science and Technology (NTNU) between Trondheim, Hydro Aluminium and Michigan Technical University. Involve more industrial actors with branch offices in host countries as a way of developing internships and funding research.

Niches: academic and financial: take advantage of special interests at the home institution, e.g. petroleum engineering between Stavanger and New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, New Mexico. Promote scholarship programs where possible: the exchange agreement between University of Tromsø and University of Alaska is promoted by the University of the Arctic and the scholarship opportunity "North to North."

Special funding is needed for US and Canadian students coming to Norway because of higher cost of living in Norway than in North America and the fact that North Americans pay home tuition. This will also encourage more students to study in Norway. Earmarked grants are attached to specific universities; e.g. there is a specific grant given by former U.S. Ambassador Hermelin and Fulbright for a Norwegian NHH student to study at the University of Michigan.

Scandinavian connections are important for establishing credibility and relationships. Those teaching Norwegian language and Scandinavian Studies are especially attractive. On the other hand, some colleges get caught in the "Norwegian-American loop" and need to creatively investigate possibilities at other institutions.

Canadian institutions are generally easier to work with than institutions in the US. They have as high academic standards as the US, no visa requirements, perceived relaxed and safe academic environments, TOEFL test is normally waived, and they have academic exchanges with European partners. The US is perceived as more bureaucratic, involving lots of paperwork and formalities. In addition, the new regulations for student visas requiring a personal interview at the American Embassy in Oslo add further to the anxiety and cost of the application process. In fact, some Norwegian institutions are discouraging their students from applying to the US if possible.

There is a decline in interest to study in the US. It was reported that there was an overall decline in interest to study in the US and students are choosing countries that are cheaper and which offer more flexible application procedures like Canada and Australia.

6. Remarks from the US/Canadian Institutions

Imbalance in numbers, it is difficult to get North American students to study in Norway. Some of the reasons cited are the country's location and related climate, poor academic fit, few courses in English, high cost of living.

Promotion: Norwegian institutions need to be better at promoting and marketing themselves and their programs; Norwegian university web sites are "difficult to navigate" and the English material does not attractively highlight the strengths within the institution.

US/Canadian students' fees subsidize Norwegian students coming to North America. Norwegians do not pay tuition at home while North Americans pay tuition to their home campuses.

Direct enrollment option: In addition to the formal agreements, North American institutions will work towards "direct enrollment" options involving direct recruiting of Norwegian students who will then bring funding from the State Loan Fund directly to the host institution. It is fair to add that direct enrollment will not promote exchanges.

Trends among US students: It is reported that there is a significant increase among the number of American college and university students studying abroad. Students choose short-term programs that last a semester or less either during the summer, the January term abroad and/or shorter special programs between fall and spring semesters. Most have internships included in the package, all with the idea of gaining additional academic credits and getting a global experience.

Reciprocity: Certain US/Canadian institutions have declared that even though the Norwegian programs are very worthwhile, part of the problem regarding reciprocity is that their students do not wish to participate in the exchange with Norway.

Norwegian institutions want their faculty and researchers to be associated only with well known/renowned institutions like Stanford, Harvard, Yale and MIT, but should realize that they have more opportunities for success with the many other excellent and highly reputed educational institutions in the US. Small colleges should not be overlooked.

Student internships are a part of the North American academic experience and should be included in the Norwegian academic experience as far as possible. This will attract more students to Norwegian programs.

Enhancing industrial links: there is a missed opportunity to "use" students and faculty more effectively to better enhance their overseas experience and to benefit each region's business/community/government initiatives. A holistic approach is necessary. For instance, students and researchers could conduct research for a local business hoping to enter the host institution's marketplace and perform this research while abroad, thus earning credits. The industry would gain information about the foreign market, possibly benefit the home market, and this could result in some form of sponsorship.

Faculty exchanges should not involve teaching. This will make it more attractive to spend a semester or year abroad. The US/Norway tax agreement should be maintained in order to attract faculty and researchers to Norway.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations/Success criteria

Norway has to project itself better as a more attractive country for US and Canadian students. In the last 10 years, according to the Institute of International Education (IIE), the number of American students of college age or older studying abroad has more than doubled, from 71,154 in the 1991-92 school year to 154,168 in 2000-01. This is an important trend worthwhile noticing on the global scene. Other interesting points registered by the Institute were that J-term (January month) trips lead to longer and deeper overseas study and that students were choosing to go to places that were off the beaten path. Norway should more actively target this trend among the academic community in the US and Canada, focusing on areas of common research, and **promote some of its unique qualities** as, for example, in peace research, polar research, arctic environment, climate change, indigenous people, oil and petroleum technology, marine biology, relations with Russia and the Baltics, and its expertise as an advanced technology nation.

Membership in **University Networks and Consortia** that have several members either from the same region or country, and networks that have global partners as these will most often include institutions from the USA and Canada. Working in larger numbers will help gain maximum benefits at a low(er) cost in contrast to the high administrative costs of sending one or two students abroad per institution. Exchanging one-to-two students per institution will not produce the results necessary for moving large numbers abroad. Institutions will have to look at consortia, agencies, international organizations that can help move larger numbers of students, either to the same institution or to a variety of institutions.

The Fulbright program, that is highly respected globally, has promoted transatlantic exchanges of students, faculty, and researchers over a long period. Fulbright grants should be increased to include even more exchanges.

Success stories seem to include finding the proper fit between the two transatlantic institutions that includes academic excellence, geographical and climatic attraction, in some cases the Scandinavian Studies network, a "brand" name of recognition or feature or scholarship that is marketable, and industry's role in the partnership. Central however is **total commitment** through faculty on both sides of the Atlantic who will follow up on existing agreements and their promotion, visit one another regularly, and keep the exchanges alive or adjust them to be more in line with changing modern societies in Norway, US and Canada. Information today is internet driven, and transatlantic partners rely heavily on web sites for general and specific information. **University web pages** should design their home pages and present material with this in mind.

Information Office/Center: The four Norwegian universities (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø) should consider forming a **University Consortium** and have an Office/Information center for university partnerships in Washington D.C. All other Norwegian universities / university colleges / business schools should be invited to be affiliated in some form. This Office should act as a lobbying force, an information gathering and sharing center, assisting with networking among partners, and act as a liaison between Norway and US/Canada. It could also be in charge of the central data base on financial opportunities that should be established for information on financial opportunities. The office should be anchored in the **Embassy of Norway**, Washington D.C., for visibility and strategic reasons. This office should have a record of all partnerships involved between Norway and USA and Canada, updating them on a regular basis, and help partners link up on both sides of the Atlantic with networking initiatives. This office should also help Norwegian, US and Canadian institutions identify transatlantic partners for cooperation and perhaps advise on contractual agreements. Besides being the capital of the US, Washington D.C. is also the centre of higher education associations in North America.

Industry's importance in an education marketplace should not be overlooked. Education is not a system but a marketplace, and the US, Canada and Norway, together with other global actors, are players in an international higher education market. There is a stronger need now more than ever before to "brand" the study abroad programs in higher education and exchange programs in order to trade and compete on the global market. Industry, together with universities, has to act like multinational organizations, striving to **identify and build educational brands**. Several Norwegian industries have branch offices in the US and Canada. These should be drawn into the academic experience and work hand-in-hand with universities in partnerships, providing hands-on experience for students, faculty and researchers, and benefiting each region's business and communities and higher education initiatives. The opportunity has to be seized now and together with the **Norwegian American Chamber of Commerce (NACC)**, all industries having common interests with Norway, US and Canada, should be identified as potential sources for "branding" and **internships** and partners in the global marketplace.

Financial matters:

- **Financial Task Force** consisting of a wide representation of key players/stake holders from the US, Canada and Norway should be formed to thoroughly investigate all financial opportunities and costs that exist for students, faculty and researchers, both for Norwegians in North America and for North Americans in Norway.
- Norwegians should be made aware of **academic opportunities** at public and private universities, and public and private 4-year colleges, the community colleges, and the financial opportunities that are available at these various institutions.
- A thorough review of the **State Loan Fund** regarding its policy not to fund the freshman year, as well as a closer examination of the list of accredited institutions that are earmarked for funding in North America and Canada.
- The "**one-in/one-out**" present exchange situation for students seems to work only for small numbers of students as North Americans pay for home tuition, allowing for waived tuition fees in an exchange.
- **Tax benefits** for North Americans in Norway, as well as an eliminated teaching load, are attractive to North American researchers and faculty. The existing Norway-US tax agreement should be kept.
- A **scholarship fund** should be established to help North American students study in Norway because of the high cost of living in Norway compared to North America.

- **A central data base** should be established to record all funding opportunities (scholarships, grants, etc.) available for Norwegians in USA and Canada and for North Americans in Norway.

Finally, this report has been an attempt to register transatlantic partnerships in their present form and make a note of their varying degrees of success. A wealth of information, formal and informal, has been provided for Norwegian, US and Canadian educational institutions seeking transatlantic partners.

This information highlights institutions and academic areas that are involved in bilateral agreements, as well as the name of a contact person who could facilitate primary contact that could develop into a partnership. A check-list of major features that add to successful partnerships has also been provided with the idea of enhancing transatlantic relationships.

This is however only a beginning; this important task should be viewed as an ongoing, long-term project, where the challenge is to update and register Norwegian and US/Canadian partnerships on a continuous basis, sharing information with transatlantic institutions, and updating and advising on contractual matters.

Every effort should be made to expand the present project to include all institutions of higher education in Norway, taking into account especially all the regionally diverse university colleges with their unique strengths. The national and regional research institutions should also be included in a future survey.

Commissioned by the Norwegian Embassy, Washington D.C. and submitted by:

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