

# Report series

04/2017

---



## **Review of the Partnership Program in Higher Education with North America: 2012-16**

**Published by** the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU)  
December, 2017

**Executive Editor:** Ragnhild Tunesvik

**Author:** Dr. Sabine C. Klahr \*

**Contributor:** Linda Petrine Rutledal

ISSN 1893-1065

ISBN 978-82-93017-73-8

The report can be downloaded at [www.siu.no](http://www.siu.no)

\* This report presents a review conducted by Dr. Sabine C. Klahr, Associate Chief Global Officer, University of Utah, funded by a Fulbright Specialist Award from May 15 – June 14, 2017.

## Preface by SIU

The Partnership Program for Collaboration in Higher Education with North America was established in 2008 with funding from the Ministry of Education and Research, and is currently in its third program period. Since 2008, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) has funded 155 projects for collaboration between Norway, the U.S. and Canada, in a wide range of subjects and at all levels of higher education. Through these projects, more than 1,000 students have had the opportunity to study, carry out research or have internships abroad as part of their education. The partnership model at the core of the program has influenced the design of other programs in SIU that support collaboration in higher education, such as UTFORSK and the High North Program.

In 2012, twelve new four-year projects were funded after a very competitive call. The projects were selected based on how well they responded to the goals of the program: to strengthen institutional partnerships, connect research and education, increase student mobility and connect with non-academic partners. In order to measure the success of the program it was important for SIU to evaluate the results and impact of the activities funded.

Dr. Sabine Klahr approached SIU regarding a Fulbright Specialist stay with our organization at a very opportune time, as her conducting a review of the North America program would be a good fit for both her interests and our needs. As Associate Chief Global Officer at the University of Utah and former president of the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), Dr. Klahr contributed relevant perspectives and valuable insights to both the program review and Norway-U.S. education collaboration overall.

SIU is grateful to the Fulbright Foundation for granting the Specialist Award and to Sabine Klahr for taking an interest in our work and coming to Bergen to conduct this important review. We value the input and recommendations provided in the review and will use them when developing and implementing future partnership programs.

Vidar Pedersen  
Head of Department

**Table of Contents**

Executive summary ..... 4

1. Introduction..... 5

2. Findings..... 7

3. Conclusions and Recommendations ..... 16

APPENDIX A ..... 21

## Executive summary

The Partnership Program in Higher Education with North America (PPNA) is part of a strategic effort by the Norwegian government to strengthen higher education collaboration between Norwegian institutions and higher education institutions in Canada and the U.S. This report is based on a review of projects funded from 2012-16 which constitutes the second program period of funding of the PPNA. The first period of funding took place from 2008-11. Additionally, shorter-term projects (18-24 months) have been funded annually since 2009.

Overall, this review finds that the PPNA has met the goals of the program to facilitate the development of sustainable higher education partnerships, not only between Norwegian institutions and partner institutions in North America, but often multiple institutions in Canada and the U.S. The PPNA has significantly contributed to the establishment of strong networks and long-term relationships among faculty and students, and also between faculty and students from the partnering institutions, leading to increased collaboration, innovation in research and education, and stronger support for graduate students. There are some challenges, such as the mobility of students from Norway to North America, the prevalence of short-term vs. semester-based mobility, and securing the resources needed to continue partnership activities after the funding period ends.

The report provides recommendations to address some of the challenges as well as best practices for international higher education partnership development in general. Both quantitative and qualitative data are included. The quantitative data was collected from all projects by SIU and quantitative data was collected from a sample of projects by the author of this review document.

Overall, the primary objective to create sustainable partnerships in higher education and research between Norway and North America has certainly been achieved. This report provides a detailed analysis regarding the successes, challenges, and lessons learned as well as best practices for long-term partnership development.

# 1. Introduction

## The Program

The Norwegian Partnership Program for Collaboration in Higher Education with North America (the Partnership Program) is a program established to encourage and support cooperation with the United States (U.S.) and Canada. The program is funded through the Ministry of Education and Research's North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation (2012-2015). The program is administered by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU). This evaluation relates to projects allocated in the second program period of the program, for a four-year period from 2012 to 2016.

The aim of the Partnership Program is to support high quality cooperation, in order to develop and strengthen robust, long-term institutional partnerships between Norway and the U.S. and Canada.

The objectives of the Partnership Program (2012-2016) are:

- to increase higher education collaboration between Norway and North America
- to develop strong and sustainable institutional partnerships between institutions in Norway and North America
- to encourage and strengthen the connection between higher education and research collaboration between Norway and North America
- to contribute to increased mobility of students and staff between Norway and North America

Through the program, Norwegian institutions of higher education were invited to apply for funds related to higher education collaboration with institutions in the U.S. and Canada. The total annual allocation for the program was NOK 6 million from 2012-2015. The annual allocation per project was maximum NOK 500 000 (maximum NOK 2 million in total). 12 projects were awarded funding.

Measures and activities funded through the Partnership Program include, but are not limited to:

- Development of joint courses, study programs or degrees
- Joint teaching and supervision
- Student and faculty mobility (including student internships or work practice)
- Joint seminars, conferences and similar activities clearly linked to the project

## Goals and scope of this evaluation

The 12 projects funded in 2012-16 represent the second phase of funding for projects in the Partnership Program with North America. The first phase, projects funded from 2008-11, was reviewed by NIFU in 2011<sup>1</sup>, and this evaluation is structured similarly. In 2017, there is more data available regarding project outcomes and therefore, this evaluation includes more quantitative analysis than the previous review. The primary goals of this evaluation are to:

1. Assess major successes of the partnerships and challenges encountered
2. Analyze whether expected partnership outcomes were achieved
3. Determine whether the partnership has had an impact on internationalization at each institution and whether the partnership activities are sustainable

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nifu.no/publications/883961/>

4. Identify best practices in developing and sustaining partnerships between Norwegian and North American institutions in comparison to general best practices in international partnership development
5. Assess the support provided by SIU to fully develop the partnership activities and make recommendations regarding administration and support

This set of goals will guide the methodology and provide the overarching structure for this report and the main narrative for the results of this evaluation.

### **Methods used for this evaluation**

The evaluation took place in the year following the end of the funding period for the projects in May and June 2017. Several projects were granted no-cost extensions to August 2017. The evaluator selected seven projects for which the project coordinators were contacted regarding interviews. Projects were selected on the basis of location, completion of the final report, an equal mix of Canadian and U.S. partnerships, and diversity of disciplines. All three projects at institutions in Bergen were selected due to the opportunity for the evaluator to meet with the Norwegian project coordinators in person rather than via video conferencing allowing for a more relaxed and informative meeting. The questionnaire for the interviews is attached in the Appendix. In the end, interviews with both project coordinators for each project were possible with five of the projects. For two projects, only the Norwegian project coordinators were available and one provided answers in writing rather than via an interview. Interviews were conducted with both the North American and the Norwegian project coordinators at the same time for four of the projects. For one project, the project coordinators were interviewed separately due to both not being available at the same time.

In addition to the interviews, the evaluator analyzed the quantitative data for mobility numbers, length of student mobility, type of activities, and dissemination activities.

## 2. Findings

### Qualitative findings from the interviews with the project coordinators

Generally, all project coordinators felt they had developed sustainable partnerships and connections with faculty at the main partner institution as well as other participating institutions (where applicable) resulting in long-term relationships and expanded collaboration over time. They indicated that the funding provided by SIU was absolutely critical to allow them to plan and implement project activities. With other funding agencies, funding typically cannot be used for meetings simply to plan collaboration on specific activities and they felt having the time and funding to do so was essential to the success of the projects.

Additionally, they unanimously expressed their satisfaction with the support and administration provided by SIU. All commented that they appreciated the flexibility allowed by SIU with their projects and budgets, the availability of SIU staff for questions, the involvement of SIU staff during the four years, and that the reporting requirements were easy to follow with deadlines that provided sufficient time to complete reports. One project coordinator commented that it felt like SIU was an active partner in implementing the project.

Most of the project coordinators indicated as a major overarching success that the project activities allowed them to establish a strong international network or community of researchers and students in their particular academic discipline or across multiple disciplines around a particular topic. They indicated that they are now part of a close-knit group that has built trust, understands individual members' areas of expertise, and will continue their long-term relationships and expanded collaborations. The inclusion of students in this network is critical to introduce them to the key researchers in their field, to assist them in refining their own research and connect it to the research of others, and to facilitate future job prospects. It makes students feel less isolated in their own research projects and helps them to be more innovative and to think more broadly within their discipline.

Many also mentioned that a major success was engaging students with peers and colleagues internationally and in international experiences. Also, they strongly valued being able to improve the curriculum through joint courses, guest lectures by faculty from the partner institution, field courses, workshops, and summer institutes. The funding from SIU allowed faculty members at the participating institutions to collaborate on pedagogy and curriculum for which there are typically no other funding sources. A successful model is the 2-week (or other short-term) summer institute or field school set up in a retreat-type of format that includes faculty and graduate students from multiple disciplines. The time commitment required for these short-term retreats are ideal for graduate students compared to a longer-term program and therefore, participation is much better than for semester-length programs. One project recruits top students from around the world in addition to students at the project institutions and thereby boosting attendance. This summer institute has developed such a strong reputation that there are now more applicants than can be accommodated. The summer institute model has had multiple positive outcomes:

- Faculty learn a great deal from each other
- Peer-to-peer learning among the students
- Students are exposed to faculty from multiple disciplines to explore big global research issues

- The retreat setting allows everyone to step out of their routine and focus on the discussions and workshops which allows them to think outside of the box, be creative, and become more deeply engaged in specific topics
- Creates a strong community or network of researchers and long-term relationships
- Since students come from around the world, the knowledge and skills gained are spread widely
- Develop specialized field work skills not possible in a classroom setting
- Include time for socializing which helps build relationships among participants

Overall, project coordinators highly valued these opportunities and felt strongly that without the SIU funding, they could not have developed these types of collaborations that bridge research and education.

#### Major successes:

- Recruitment of students to masters or PhD programs in highly specialized fields; graduates of programs moving into postdoc positions at the partner universities; faculty positions or percentage of faculty position at partner institutions
- Developed a strong research community and long-term relationships between faculty, faculty and students, and among students in the discipline or across multiple disciplines connected across a broad theme (climate change, for example) to enhance not only research collaboration, but also research-based education
- Short, intensive summer institutes/field courses (2-3 weeks) have been more successful for most projects than semester-long exchanges; however, several projects developed sustainable semester-long exchanges for UGs and graduate students
- One project developed successful joint courses taught via interactive video conferencing (taught at Purdue University and attended by Purdue and University of Stavanger (UiS) students); UiS is now using this model to develop a similar program with a Chinese university
- Supervision of graduate research by faculty at both institutions (or multiple partner institutions) which has broadened the education/perspectives/research capacity of the students and connects them to multiple faculty members in the field
- One institution developed a joint-masters degree that is well-established and continues to have strong enrollment
- Global visibility for the particular research group which has resulted in increased connections and opportunities to collaborate with researchers around the world
- All projects are generally leading to sustainable partnerships, but not necessarily including significant student mobility

### Major challenges (in order of frequency mentioned):

- Students at Norwegian institutions not participating in exchanges, mobility from NO to NA is the biggest challenge; generally, short-term mobility works better, especially for graduate students (four sets of project coordinators mentioned this)
- Continuing with field courses, summer institutes, and student mobility in general without additional funding, especially for a program that targets underrepresented students (indigenous, older, have families/jobs, attending school part-time), but almost all project coordinators saw this as a major challenge
- Not having the budget for administrative and logistical support
- Logistical issues between NA and NO such as the time difference, different academic structures and policies, different academic cultures and expectations

### Lessons Learned for Developing Successful Collaboration and Projects:

#### General:

- Developing concrete goals and a solid organizational structure that is clear to everyone involved; continue to focus on established goals throughout the project period
- Willingness on the part of the project coordinators and other faculty members involved to spend a significant amount of time on planning, administration, and logistics and to seek assistance for some of the administration and logistical aspects within the institution early on in the project to alleviate some of the burden
- Taking the time to fully understand the academic system at the partner institution and to engage in planning and discussions with partner institution colleagues to fully explore shared interests in research, education, improving the discipline-specific curriculum, and creating an international network of researchers that includes students and faculty members
- Complex projects with many “moving parts” that require strong leadership, motivation, flexibility, and problem-solving to make it work
- Developing a long-term vision, understand that it takes many years to achieve major milestones, celebrate small successes along the way, and be patient

#### Project Design and Structure:

- Use the research being conducted and cultural differences encountered as a basis to build the educational components
- Often, there is a desire to create an international academic community within a specific discipline that includes students and introduces them to a range of researchers; including students as much as possible in the planning process and design of activities allows them to engage more deeply and become part of the community
- Including undergraduate students in research activities and introducing them to graduate studies in the particular discipline to ultimately recruit them to graduate programs (more important in the sciences, especially in highly specialized disciplines in which there is a strong need to educate the next generation of researchers)

- 
- Students tend to participate in short-term international experiences and intensive courses versus semester-long exchanges, especially at the graduate level
- Semester-long exchanges for undergraduate students tend to be more popular if they include an experiential component (internship/practicum)
- Create interest in semester-long exchanges through opportunities for students to meet peers from the partner institutions in short-term experiences or virtually
- Include students in summer institutes or field schools from other institutions through outreach to alumni or colleagues around the world; many students are able to self-fund such an experience or can obtain funding from their institutions; the reputation of the program will increase student interest over time through word-of-mouth advertising
- Building a strong partnership is a long-term process and takes more than the four years of funding. Therefore, it is important to begin exploring additional funding and opportunities for collaboration from the beginning of the project
- Many of the projects have jointly developed courses; however, developing joint masters programs has been difficult as there are many structural barriers and they take a long time and great deal of effort to develop; only one project has developed a joint masters program of those included in the interviews
- One project has successfully developed a joint-live-broadcast interactive class that is held late in the day in Norway and early in the morning in the U.S.; despite the awkward timing, it has been a popular class at both institutions; the class is taught at Purdue University
- More likely to develop sustainable partnership and increasing collaboration when leadership (department heads and deans) are involved and the international office; at Norwegian institutions, the international office tends to be more involved in supporting the partnership than at the North American institutions

#### Unintended and Value-Added Outcomes:

- In one project, the students in each cohort in the joint-masters program have developed a long-term informal network that keeps them connected and in several other projects this was also developed from summer institutes and field courses.
- In several projects, faculty meet regularly at conferences, continue to look for collaboration opportunities, and jointly organize workshops at major conferences in their field or coordinate part of the conference together
- For the summer institutes and field courses, one project continues to have student participants who have never slept in a tent or spent much time outdoors and part of the education provided is students gaining outdoor and camping skills
- Since U.S. students are accustomed to being more participatory in classes than Norwegian students, one project found that the U.S. students provided good role models in this regard and helped Norwegian students to be more vocal and interactive
- Students have become more engaged in major research projects beyond the project funded by SIU and/or have been hired as post-docs or junior faculty positions at participating institutions or research institutes; also at least one project coordinator in Canada mentioned that they have been able to recruit top undergraduate students to their graduate programs from the partner institution in Norway

- At one U.S. and one Canadian institution, the projects provided an opportunity for faculty members to better understand the education system in Norway, how courses and exams are structured, academic expectations and other general aspects of higher education in Norway

#### Recognition by and Involvement of Institutional leadership and the International Office:

- All surveyed project coordinators at Norwegian institutions indicated strong support and engagement from their international offices and the projects being aligned with the internationalization strategy at the institution. At the Canadian institutions, this was also the case
- At the U.S. institutions it is more common for the department/division head to support the project and be engaged, rather than the international office
- At one Canadian institution, the administration removed the legal and structural barriers for the establishment of a joint degree, which was previously not possible

#### SIU Administration and Support:

As mentioned at the beginning of the Findings section, project coordinators are highly satisfied with the administration and the support provided by SIU. Three recommendations were provided:

- Allow for overhead/additional funding to handle the administrative tasks. One project coordinator mentioned that the Norwegian project leads also have to be the driver at the North American partner university and that the lack of student administrative support is a bottleneck as project activities increase
- Provide assistance with identifying other potential funding sources to continue partnership development and student mobility
- Provide additional opportunities under PPNA to continue funding successful partnerships. It takes more than four years to fully develop the partnership and prioritizing funding for those with the greatest potential to succeed would be better than continuing to fund new projects

### **Outcomes assessment from the interviews and the final reports**

All project coordinators who were interviewed felt strongly that the PPNA funding was critical for developing the education-focused collaborations, enhancing the research collaboration, and for creating sustainable partnerships between the main Norwegian and North American institutional partners and also often with an expanded group of institutions and entities in Norway, the U.S., Canada, and other countries. All expressed confidence that the collaborations will continue to grow, especially in the research activities, but also in education, especially those activities that were curriculum-based, such as joint courses and degrees. Most expressed concern regarding the student mobility, especially from Norway to North America, and how to fund it in the future.

A majority of the project coordinators indicated that the funding period is too short to fully develop the partnerships and complex activities such as joint curricula. They also indicated that implementing their projects and activities required an extraordinary effort in terms of administrative and logistical tasks as well as in developing content, pedagogy, and research design. Many expressed the need to build administrative support into the project budgets.

Regarding student mobility, most project coordinators indicated that short-term intensive summer courses were most appropriate rather than semester-length exchanges, especially for graduate students. There are too many barriers for graduate students to spend an entire semester abroad.

The project coordinators at Norwegian institutions all indicated that their international offices strongly support the partnerships and view them as aligned with the internationalization strategy at their institutions. At the North American institutions, especially the U.S. institutions, there was uncertainty regarding institutional support for the partnership and that it felt more like an initiative that was valued by their department or division rather than the upper administration (such as the dean of their college) or their international office. One U.S. project coordinator mentioned that it is seen as not contributing as much of the work by the faculty members involved in the project is voluntary as the funding does not pay for research positions, for example.

Regarding the necessary steps involved in developing the partnerships and the projects, most indicated that it is critical to meet in person and communicate regularly to develop shared interests, carefully plan activities, develop a strong organizational structure, establish clearly stated goals that are well-understood by all who are participating, and to build trust among the key people who are involved. It takes strong leadership, resourcefulness, and problem-solving skills to handle the many complex issues that arise. Common research interests are always at the foundation of these partnerships and it is important to develop education activities that are grounded in the common research interests as well as the intercultural learning that naturally arises from the interactions of international faculty and students and immersion in a different cultural and physical environment.

All of the projects have already expanded to other disciplines or expanded collaborations or there is a strong likelihood that they will. One set of partner institutions is even involved in revising the earth sciences curriculum in higher education in Norway now with an integrated international component. Another is using the development of a joint course delivered to the Norwegian institution via interactive video technology as a model to develop joint courses with a Chinese university. Others are expanding the disciplines engaged in the collaboration to truly develop multi-disciplinary projects around major themes such as climate change in the Arctic.

Several of the project coordinators indicated that the projects have assisted them in recruiting graduate students and post-docs and that they have helped the students in making important career connections. The intensive summer courses and institutes have created strong faculty-to-faculty bonds and student-to-student bonds, but also faculty-to-student bonds that are very important to graduate students' progress on their research as well as their future in education and careers. All coordinators highlighted the importance of having gained a much broader and stronger research community in their fields as a major outcome of these projects and partnerships. Students tend to be part of this international community and in some projects, students have also developed their own informal peer network that extends across Norway and North America.

One of the projects has developed a successful student exchange model in physical therapy. The experiential component of students participating in clinical experiences appears to be a strong motivator. All of the projects offering semester-long exchanges had conducted curriculum reviews

and have agreements in place to allow students to earn credit for their courses while on exchange; however, this does not appear to be a strong motivator for students to spend an entire semester at the partner institution. Project coordinators especially emphasized that Norway to North America mobility is very difficult to implement and offered possible reasons that students in Norway feel their curriculum is too structured to spend time abroad or they simply are not interested. For projects that included courses at the University Center in Svalbard (UNIS) and other field sites in the European Arctic, the locations may have been very attractive to North American students, possibly contributing to their stronger participation compared to Norwegian students.

### Findings regarding the quantitative data

#### Faculty mobility

From	To Canada	To Norway	To United states	Total
Canada	6	73	2	<b>81</b>
Norway	63	15	131	<b>209</b>
United states	0	131	1	<b>132</b>
<b>Totalsum</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>422</b>

**Table 1:** Faculty Mobility

Faculty mobility has been fairly equal between Norway and North America in both directions with 180 faculty members from North America traveling to Norway and 173 from Norway to North America. The purposes of faculty travel vary, and include project meetings, guest lecturing, and participation in intensive courses, workshops and seminars

#### Student mobility

From	To Canada	To Norway	To United states	Total
Canada	23	236	20	<b>279</b>
Norway	104	26	86	<b>216</b>
United states	14	130	0	<b>144</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>639</b>

**Table 2:** Student Mobility

366 students from North America traveled to Norway and 190 students from Norway traveled to North America. There was higher participation from students in Canada and the U.S. traveling to Norway representing 57 percent of all student participants. There is some student mobility within countries or between the U.S. and Canada. This is due to the involvement of several partners from one country, where students participate in mobility activities.

### Student Mobility by Type of Participation

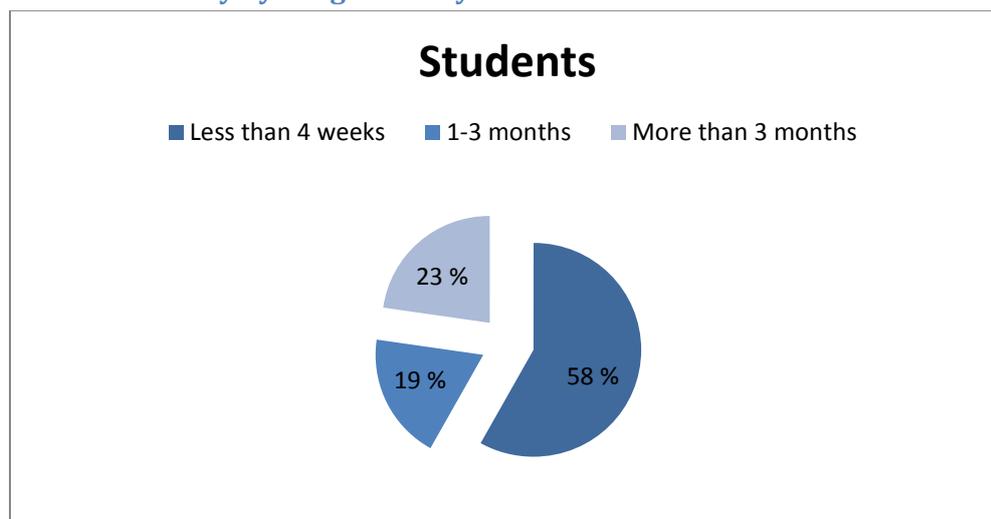
Type of mobility	From Norway	From U.S. and Canada	Total
Participation in seminar/workshop	22	33	55
Semester exchange	58	62	120
Short term course/field course	97	290	387
Study visit/Research visit	38	38	76
Work placement	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>639</b>

**Table 3:** Student Mobility by Type of Participation

The largest number of students (387) participated in short-term courses/field courses compared to other types of mobility with semester exchange seeing the second largest participation at 120 students. There were 76 students who participated in a study or research visit, 55 who participated in a seminar or workshop and one who participated in a work placement.

The table also shows that students from the U.S. and Canada are more active in mobility activities, in particular when it comes to short-term courses. Possible explanations for and solutions to this are discussed throughout the report.

### Student Mobility by Length of Stay



**Figure 1:** Student Mobility Length of Stay

The above pie chart shows that 58% of students studied abroad for less than 4 weeks while 23% stayed in the host country for more than 3 months and 19% stayed 1-3 months.

### Joint courses Developed by Level of Study

Level	Number of courses/programmes
No level	1
Bachelor	4
Master	14
PhD	19
<b>Totalsum</b>	<b>38</b>

**Table 5:** Joint Courses Developed by Level of Study

Table 5 shows the number of joint courses developed by the projects by level of study. The term “study program” can apply to any program that is more than one course, such as a set of connected courses, certificate program, or degree program. The data shows that 38 joint courses were developed and 6 study programs. Most joint courses (19) were developed at the PhD level while 14 were developed at the master’s level and 4 at the undergraduate level.

### 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Impact on Internationalization at the Partnering Institutions

At the Norwegian institutions, the projects are aligned with the institutional strategy for internationalization and the international offices strongly support the projects and partnerships. At the Canadian institutions, the alignment with the internationalization strategy was not mentioned, but generally project coordinators felt the international offices were involved and supportive. One Canadian project coordinator even mentioned the excellent support provided by the international office at the Norwegian institution. At the U.S. institutions, the project coordinators were not working with their international offices and generally there seemed to be more support within the department or division rather than from central administration. Keeping in mind the small sample size, this assessment for the U.S. institutions may not be universally the case for all projects involving U.S. partner institutions.

Project coordinators appear to be aware that the partnership is valued by the international offices and that they feel there is strong support, and the international offices would likely not be strongly engaged or support the project if they felt the collaboration was not contributing to internationalization. Additionally, the evidence regarding the partnership activities and overall collaborations as well as the effort and enthusiasm by the faculty members who are involved, indicates that these will be sustainable partnerships. Any long-term collaborations, often among multiple institutions, indicates they would certainly contribute to internationalization of the institutions.

Faculty mobility and research collaborations are well-established. All have implemented collaboration in education as well which appears sustainable. Semester-long student mobility may be the only component that will not be sustainable (or even begin) at several institutions; however, the project leads have found other ways for students to interact with peers and faculty in North America either through short-term mobility, classes taught via video conferencing, and one established joint-masters program.

Recommendations for creating sustainable student mobility are as follows:

The North American partners should work with their international offices to find ways to institutionalize the student mobility. For example, their Norwegian partner institution may offer other academic programs that are a good match to those offered at the North American institution with courses in English across those disciplines, so that a semester exchange could be developed at the institutional level. This would broaden the number of students who could participate in the exchange, potentially making it sustainable. International offices engage in a wide range of promotional activities to get the word out to students about mobility opportunities, such as via education abroad fairs, classroom presentations, social media, advising sessions, and many other activities.

International offices in the U.S. typically have a range of scholarships available for students to participate in education abroad and can assist students with applying other funding, such as their federal or state financial aid, or to apply for national scholarships such as the Gilman Scholarship. Education abroad advisors typically work with students to help them determine how to finance an

academic experience abroad. Therefore, a connection and collaboration with the education abroad or international office is critical to the success and sustainability of student mobility.

Faculty members at both the Norwegian and North American institutions should consider other funding mechanisms to include students in the ongoing research collaboration by including research assistantships in grant applications for example or encouraging students to apply for a Fulbright or other fellowships for graduate students to conduct research abroad.

Reaching out to and involving other disciplines at the institution in the partnership or reaching out to colleagues in the field at other institutions can also broaden participation from students that allows student mobility to become sustainable. In one of the projects, students are recruited to summer schools from all around the world through word-of-mouth promotion. This has been successful to the degree that they now have too many top applicants and they cannot accommodate all students who apply.

Integrating courses students can complete at a partner institution into the home institution curriculum, so that students can complete classes required for their degree, allows students to “stay on track” to degree completion. Also, when students can easily see how courses count towards their degree, they are more likely to see an education abroad experience as an integral part of their education and not something “extra” they do.

Project coordinators should consider opportunities for students that allow them to get to know peers and faculty at the partnering institution to motivate them to potentially spend some time abroad. For example, a class taught via interactive video technology or a way for students to interact online around a class project they might work on at both partnering institutions, might lower any anxiety about studying at the partner institution and provide motivation to get to know their peers in person. A short-term faculty-led experience to the partner institution may also be a way for students to get an “introduction” to peers and faculty as well as the culture, so they may be motivated to spend a longer time period there.

The project coordinators indicated that it was more difficult to encourage the students in Norway to go to North America, but could not provide specific reasons why students were not motivated, other than possibly the structured curriculum or generally a low interest in going abroad. If the curriculum is indeed a barrier, creating more flexibility and integrating courses from partner institutions into the curriculum would be an important first step before student exchanges are developed.

### **Recommendations for the program model and structure of the projects**

From the qualitative data, the following recommendations have emerged regarding the program model, funding model, and project structures:

- Recognition of short-term mobility as having a significant impact on students, if it is structured as an intensive experience that maximizes formal and informal interactions around research topics among faculty and students
- Allow budget allocation for introductory experiences that help students gain confidence with a potential mobility experience
- Allow for the projects to build administrative and logistical support into the budget

- Require the North American partners to submit a letter of support from their international offices as part of the proposal process, so they connect with their international offices from the beginning
- Provide assistance with identifying other funding sources in Norway to continue funding the Norway to North America student mobility.
- As the student mobility from Norway to North America is more difficult to implement than North American students going to Norway, address potential underlying reasons such as curriculum structure, for example.
- Provide extended funding for projects that are particularly successful and require more time to implement some of the more complex partnership activities such as a joint degrees for example or provide a longer funding period for projects that are just developing their partnerships versus those where the partnership is already developed but funding is needed to implement student mobility and other education collaboration
- Highlight the benefit of SIU funding providing the necessary resources for planning project activities and developing an appropriate organizational structure and that project coordinators should take full advantage of it

### **Recommended best practices in partnership development**

The following principles generally apply in developing sustainable international partnerships:

- Transformative rather than transactional: the collaboration should provide value, innovation, and improve learning and/or research at the partnering institutions with both institutions adding critical new opportunities that did not exist previously
- Broad impact: Engage students, faculty, and staff in initiatives that advance global learning, internationalization of the curriculum, collaborative research, and/or outreach and service that addresses global issues and needs. Involve multiple colleges, departments, or other units, cross-academic disciplines, and involve multiple personnel levels (faculty, students, and administration). Address the partnering institutions' core mission. Include a variety of collaborative initiatives that effectively improve teaching and student learning, scholarship, and outreach at the partnering institutions (e.g., joint research projects, jointly managed research or other facilities, jointly taught courses, integrating global learning outcomes in the curriculum, etc.).
- Student-Focused: Must meet student needs and interests if students are to be involved for both incoming and outgoing students
- Potential for thematic focus: Focus on and develop a particular interdisciplinary theme (a world region, for example) that is integrated across a broad section of the curriculum or into other university functions and activities
- Strong "grass roots" faculty support and involvement: Having multiple faculty members with strong contacts and shared interests with colleagues at the partner institution is essential to sustaining the relationship over the long run.
- Significant and sustainable mutual benefit: Need not necessarily be reciprocal (as with student exchanges), but all parties must derive benefits in the partnership.
- Commitment: Characterized by a strong commitment and relationship among the partners that leads them to combine resources to achieve common goals through dialogue and collaborative activities.

The above general best practices certainly apply to the PPNA-funded partnerships, but in addition and at a more detailed level, they should also consider the following:

- The North American institutions should partner closely with their international offices to obtain support for partnership activities and in particular the student mobility component
- The underlying reasons for the low student mobility from Norway to North America should be researched and addressed and recommendations should be provided to the Norwegian institutions regarding approaches that would allow more students to participate
- Faculty members who are engaged in the partnership should take the time for careful planning to develop shared interests and clearly stated goals as well as seeking alternative funding sources for student mobility from the beginning of the partnership. They should also strategically plan to expand student participation from the beginning.

### **Has the PPNA met the stated goals?**

This review demonstrates that the PPNA has successfully facilitated the development of sustainable partnerships, not only between Norwegian institutions and one partner in North America, but often multiple institutions in Canada and the U.S. The PPNA has significantly contributed to the establishment of strong networks and long-term relationships among the faculty and the students leading to increased collaboration, innovation in research and education, and stronger support for graduate students for their research as well as their advancement to additional graduate studies (moving from undergraduate to graduate or masters to PhD programs) and career options. The students represent the next generation of researchers and educators in their discipline and their participation in this network is critical to continue to develop the collaborative activities between Norway and North America.

Several of the projects include top researchers and research institutes in the respective countries and disciplines while many include multiple disciplines. This has resulted in advancing the highest level research activities within specific disciplines, encouraging interdisciplinary research and education around major themes such as the impact of climate change, bringing together internationally distinguished scholars to educate the next generation of scientists, and a better understanding of the expertise and work of each top scientist within the community to continually expand high level cooperation. The measurable benefits of this collaboration can be demonstrated by outcomes such as joint publications output and mobility of faculty and students during the project period, which are provided in this report. However, the long-term and intangible benefits arising from this network and shared experiences are impossible to measure. All project coordinators who were interviewed for this evaluation spoke highly of the value of this funding scheme in allowing for the planning and activities that created these networks.

Recommendations in this report pertain mainly to the challenge most frequently highlighted by the project coordinators: how to improve student mobility and sustain it after the funding period ends and especially, how to motivate students at Norwegian institutions to participate. The lack of administrative and logistical support for the projects was also mentioned as a major challenge. The support provided by SIU was seen as a major benefit and project coordinators felt SIU staff members were responsive, flexible, and offered sound advice along the way.

Overall, the PPNA has certainly achieved the desired outcomes of the funding scheme, including unintended results that strengthen the established partnerships and networks. Some challenges are to be expected in any large-scale programs of this kind and they can be addressed with the recommendations provided in this report.

## APPENDIX A

### Interview Form

Project:

Project Coordinator(s):

Date:

---

1. What has been the most successful aspect of the project?
  - a. What contributed to the success?
  - b. Is this success leading to sustainability of the partnership?
2. What has been most challenging and why?
  - a. Were you able to address challenges and how?
  - b. If not, why not?
3. Which partnership activities are sustainable long-term? Why those and not others?
4. Is the partnership recognized by institutional leadership/the international office as contributing to internationalization at your institution?
  - a. If so, how is it contributing to internationalization?
  - b. Has this partnership led to collaboration beyond the project activities (with other academic departments, for example, or broader scope exchanges for students in other disciplines)?
5. Were there any unexpected outcomes of the partnership?
6. Did you develop specific outcomes for the student and faculty mobility and were those outcomes achieved? If not, why not?
7. Did you assess other activities regarding their effectiveness or outcomes beyond implementation?
  - a. If so, did outcomes generally meet expectations? If not, why not?
8. Did SIU adequately support your project?
9. What would be improvements you could suggest for SIU in supporting your project?
10. What is your overall view of the success of the project and the partnership?
11. Additional comments?