

# How to Develop Partnerships Between U.S. and Russian Universities: From Motivation to Results

Prepared by Mark Johnson and Erin Weeks-Earp  
for the U.S.-Russia Social Expertise Exchange  
Higher Education Working Group



The Institute of International Education  
809 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017

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Printed in the United States of America  
ISBN- 978-0-87206-377-8

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Higher Education Working Group. Special thanks for conducting research and providing  
contributions to Erika Nauman.

The views expressed in these chapters are solely those of the authors.  
They do not necessarily represent the official positions of the  
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## **Dear friends and colleagues,**

The idea for this book began with a paradox. No matter where one travels across Russia's vast land, partnerships with U.S. universities are in demand. At the same time, U.S. universities are internationalizing as never before, with thousands of universities investing heavily in building global partnerships. And yet, despite these two trends, which should predict a thriving environment for U.S.-Russia university partnerships, the number of success stories remains frustratingly low.

There are many "big picture" explanations for this regrettable reality—historic, geographic, financial, and political—but the collaborators of this book are convinced that lack of information plays a significant role. *How to Develop Partnerships Between U.S. and Russian Universities* is designed to provide practical advice to those who are ready to challenge the status quo and benefit from the richness in possibilities that exist in U.S.-Russian academic collaboration. While these partnerships are not the norm, the book identifies many important successes, including the long-standing relationship between Far East Federal University and University of Maryland-College Park to Astrakhan State University's joint master's program with Clark University.

The book is a product of the Eurasia Foundation's Social Expertise Exchange — Higher Education Working Group, which has brought together representatives of higher education institutions in Russia and the U.S. to map out collaborative projects. Together, the Working Group identified a guidebook as the best way to encourage lasting collaboration. This book is intended specifically for an American audience, highlighting, for example, how U.S. universities can identify potential partners, obstacles that U.S. universities have faced in sustaining partnerships within Russia, and explains key elements of Russia's ambitious reforms in higher education.

Cooperation in higher education between Russia and the U.S. has provided a number of demonstrably successful results, and these results have only occurred when highly motivated individuals invested in a strategy that could move them forward. We hope this book provides guidance to those interested in building a long-term relationship with Russia, and we look forward to the "paradox of university cooperation" disappearing in the future.

**Carter Johnson**  
Regional Director for Russia and Moldova  
American Councils for International Education

**Irina Arzhanova**  
Executive Director  
National Training Foundation

*Moscow, Russia 2014*



# Executive Summary

## **Purpose of the Guidebook**

This guidebook should help both seasoned and novice partnership builders understand and navigate the Russian higher education system. By providing examples and best practices from successful U.S.-Russian university partnerships, this book will help academic professionals anticipate challenges and solve problems together with their Russian counterparts.

## **Russian Higher Education Landscape and Motivations for Partnerships**

Russian higher education institutions are engaged in large-scale efforts at internationalization, including increased international mobility for students and faculty. In this context, the higher education working group recommends that U.S. institutions actively pursue partnerships with Russian institutions. Such partners will enjoy multiple benefits on numerous levels: institutional, departmental, and personal.

## **How to Find a Partner in Russia and Sustain the Relationship**

U.S. institutions wishing to establish fruitful partnerships with Russian counterparts should consider a long-term relationship with a partner institution. Productive partnerships often grow from initial exchange programs or faculty joint research projects, where mutual areas of expertise and interest foster high levels of trust, dedication, and ability to solve problems as they arise. In the absence of an initial relationship, a clearly envisioned international program model will help U.S. institutions select the right partner among potential candidates.

## **The Four Main Models and Ways to Finance Them**

Partners' expectations of each other, and the financial and contractual relationships that follow, will depend on the program model.

- Faculty research/student exchange
- Joint research
- Dual degrees
- Industry/business commercialization partnerships

## **Future Prospects for International Partnerships**

International student mobility in the United States and around the world continues to grow. The knowledge, skills, and capacity gained by students, faculty, and staff during international collaboration are in high demand, and U.S. institutions are in a position to provide the international programs that foster and cultivate them.

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**The partnerships consistently demonstrate the ability of two countries to cooperate even at times when political relations may seem strained.**

— Muriel Joffe, University of Maryland University College

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**We are very happy with our russian students, they have excelled on our campus.**

— Thomas Massey, Clark University

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# Introduction: Purpose and Origins of the Guidebook

This guidebook, produced under the auspices of the Higher Education Working Group of the U.S.-Russia Social Expertise Exchange (SEE), is intended for educators and administrators in both the United States and the Russian Federation. It is our hope that this publication will be useful for those seeking to sustain existing U.S.-Russian higher education partnerships, and also prove useful for the development of new academic relationships and international programs. This project has been coordinated by the Higher Education Working Group of the SEE program, and has been ably assisted by the American Councils for International Education (ACIE, Washington, DC, and Moscow) and the National Training Foundation (NTF, Moscow), with financial and logistical support from the Eurasia Foundation (Washington, DC). U.S. and Russian SEE fellows and interview participants in both countries cooperated to produce the guidebook.

The background research and drafting of the guidebook has been assisted by Erika Nauman, a 2014 emerging professional fellow of SEE, and was drafted by Mark S. Johnson (University of Wisconsin–Madison), a 2014 advanced practitioner fellow of SEE. Erin Weeks-Earp, a Higher Education Working Group member, edited the final text. All of the U.S. and Russian SEE contributors also participated in the U.S.-Russia Joint/Dual Degree Conference that was held at Bard College and the New York Global Center of the State University of New York (SUNY) in January 2014. Nauman resided in Moscow for several months during spring 2014, where she served as a fellow at NTF and conducted site visits to higher educational institutions in Kazan and Omsk. Johnson conducted site visits and interviews in the cities of Moscow, Tomsk, Perm, Yekaterinburg, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, and Nizhny Novgorod over the course of several weeks in March and April 2014.

This book draws on many sources. The first source is the joint and dual degree conference proceedings, which include direct quotes (Bard College, 2014); open-source data from recent U.S. government exchange programs, most notably the United States-Russia Program: Improving Research and Educational Activities in Higher Education coordinated by the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) ([www2.ed.gov/programs/fipserussia](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fipserussia)); and interview notes generated by the SEE fellows in 2014.

We hope that this guidebook will contribute to developing connections between researchers, faculty members and students in both Russia and the United States. Compared with Russia’s significant connections with European and Asian university partners — and compared with the large flow of researchers and students between the United States, Europe, and Asia, as reflected in annual data from the Institute of International Education’s *Open Doors* report (IIE, 2013a) — there are relatively few truly robust U.S.-Russian partnerships. This anomaly has motivated the organization of the Joint/Dual Degree Conference and this guidebook.



**Joint and Dual Degree Conference 2014**

# Part 1: Overview of the Russian System of Higher Education

Educators and institutional leaders in U.S. colleges and universities should understand that the situation in Russian higher education has changed significantly over the last 20 years. Policy experiments with abrupt decentralization and partial privatization in the 1990s introduced constructive and necessary competitive pressures into the Russian higher education system, and gave rise to a modest role for private providers, especially in high-demand professional fields such as business, management, law, and information technology. There are significant opportunities for U.S. partners in these areas.

Remarkable reforms in recent years from the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, together with other Russian federal agencies, have created a new national innovation strategy. State resources are being channeled into leading Russian universities and the state research sector (especially in areas such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, aerospace, and information technology). At the same time, the Russian higher education system has been aligned to European trends since Russia entered into the Bologna Process in 2003. Increasing conformity with European quality assurance standards can be observed.

## 1. Background on the Transition from the Soviet System to the Russian System

The reforms of the *perestroika* (“restructuring”) period in the late 1980s and especially the radical *glasnost* (“opening”) of the 1990s subjected Russian higher education to rapid internationalization, with both negative consequences such as brain drain and positive consequences such as a vast leap in both state- and

privately-funded global academic mobility. Russian higher education also expanded dramatically in the 1990s, as new private institutions emerged and public institutions grew rapidly, often through regional branch campuses (*filialy*). In July 1992, the Russian government passed a landmark new law, “On Education,” which sought to facilitate decentralization, curricular differentiation, and the use of non-state financial resources and partial privatization to help foster systemic transformation. This latter change allowed “non-state” and religious educational institutions to operate for the first time since the imposition of the Soviet one-party state in 1918.

More recently, the August 1996 law “On Higher and Professional Education” established clear guidelines for the autonomy of higher educational institutions and created new financial mechanisms for the financing of both state and private, or “non-state,” institutions.<sup>1</sup> For state institutions, this allowed for two tracks, one involving “budget” (*biudzhetye*) admissions for students funded by the federal government and the other allowing “paid” (*platnye*) admissions for self-funded, tuition-paying students. The influx of tuition-paying students contributed to rapid growth in enrollments. However, this growth was limited by institutional capacity, which was still regulated by licensing rules. The new private institutions were able to respond more quickly to market demand in key semi-professional and professional fields such as business, management, and law.

## **2. The Modernization Turn: New Investments and Rules for Higher Education in the 2000s**

After the rise to power of Vladimir Putin beginning in 1999 and the subsequent recovery of the Russian economy, the government began to strategically invest in higher education, reassert its regulatory and steering role and to reemphasize adherence to state academic standards in pursuit of system-wide “modernization” (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2002). In 2003, federal policymakers, university reformers, and outside experts pushed Russia to join the Bologna Process of European higher education integration and to align more deliberately with “global” education policies. Beginning in 2007, the policy of alignment with European education standards would culminate in the formal adoption of the European system of “three or four plus two” (BA and MA) degrees. Global alignment meant that Russian state standards were linked with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and degree qualification profiles. International mobility would also begin to be promoted.

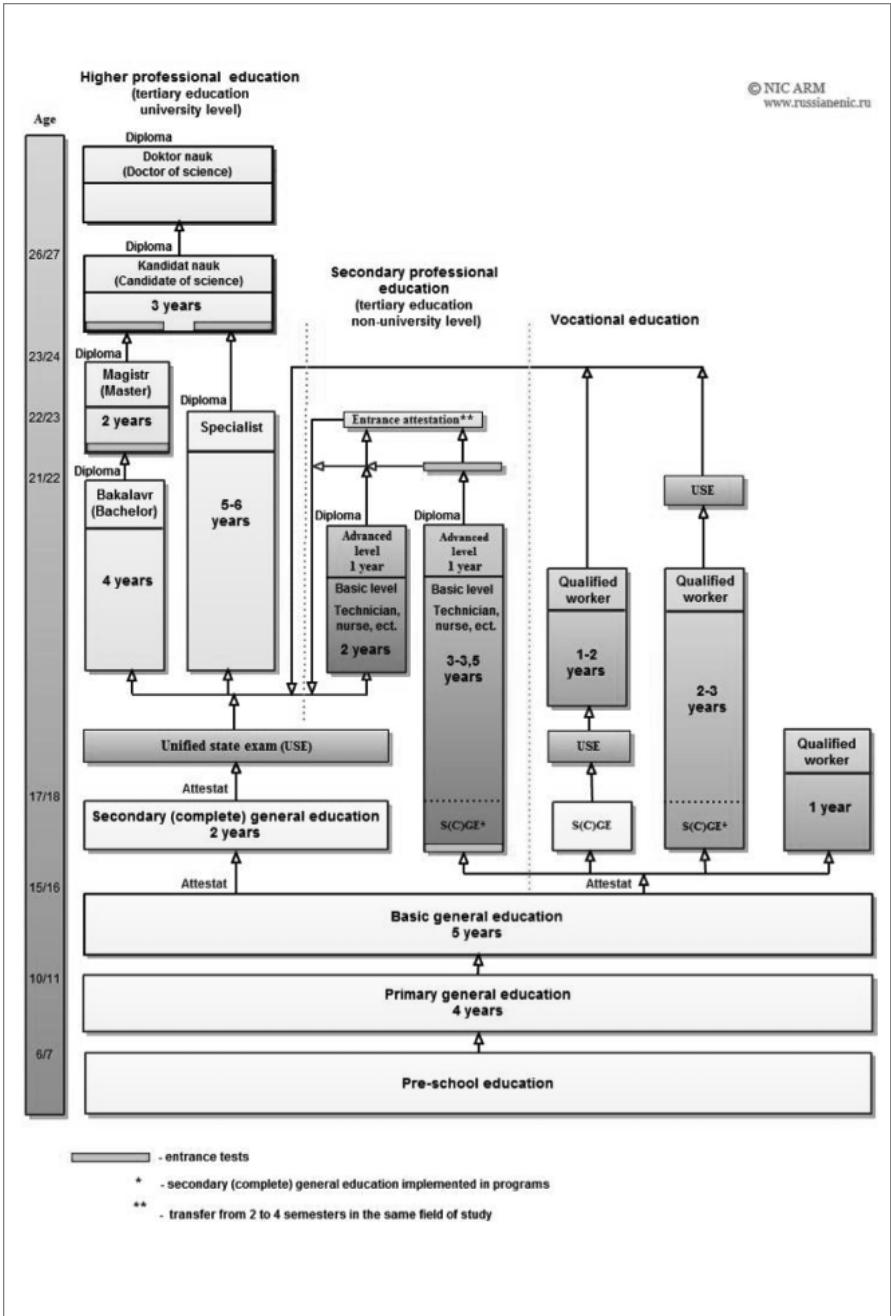
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1. A comprehensive database including these documents is available at <http://минобрнауки.рф>

To summarize, the major areas of note in higher education policy in Russia as listed by the OECD Economic Surveys (OECD, 2014, p. 132) are abbreviated here:

1. The Uniform State Exam (USE) results that determine the entrance to universities will be valid for 5 years (against 2 years before).
2. Higher education institutions, including private ones, will be monitored by the Education Ministry in the context of restructuring of the higher education institutions network.
3. The minimum number of state-subsidized places is fixed by the law at 800 students per 10,000 people aged 18 to 30 living in the Russian Federation.
4. Universities are organized in a two-tier system of bachelor's and master's. Colleges deliver only bachelor's degrees, and institutes deliver diplomas for bachelors and specialists.

The USE exam can be compared to the SAT in the United States, but it is also required for graduation from the secondary (complete) general education (11th grade), as seen in the International Standard Classification of Education chart on the next page. Students may also opt to enter vocational or secondary professional track education programs, for which the USE exam is not required. These students essentially leave school after the 9th grade to pursue job training.



Source: UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012.

As for university governance, both in Russia and globally, a clear trend toward stronger and more centralized management systems can be observed in order to fulfill new responsibilities resulting from decentralization and university autonomy and to purposefully reinvent universities' external partnerships and develop opportunities for entrepreneurialism (Shattock et al., 2004).

**Table 1. Number of Students Enrolled in the Russian System of Higher Education**

	1995/1996	2000/2001	2008/2009	2013/2014
<b>HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION</b>				
Public institutions students enrolled	2,655,200	4,270,800	6,214,800	4,762,000
Private institutions students enrolled	Not available	470,600	1,298,300	884,700
<b>SECONDARY PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION</b>				
Public institutions students enrolled	1,923,300	2,360,800	2,244,100	1,982,100
Private institutions students enrolled	Not available	52,200	108,000	126,000
<b>VOCATIONAL EDUCATION</b>				
All students enrolled	1,689,000	1,679,000	1,115,000	838,000

Source: Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service, 2014. Additional data retrieved from [http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/population/obraz/sp-obr1.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/obraz/sp-obr1.htm) and [http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/population/obraz/np-obr1.docx](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/obraz/np-obr1.docx)

Ambitious programs have been launched in Russia to professionalize the field of university management in areas such as strategic planning, accounting, fundraising, professional and staff development, information technologies, and the development of external (especially international) partnerships.

**Table 2. Number of Higher Professional Degrees Granted in Russia by Subject Major, 2004–2011**

<b>Majors</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Physics and mathematical sciences	18,600	12,100	11,300	11,500	11,500	11,200	10,000	9,200
Natural sciences	14,000	14,000	14,700	15,100	14,700	14,100	13,300	12,600
Humanitarian sciences	194,600	200,800	220,200	234,700	237,900	246,500	249,700	244,900
Social sciences	10,800	11,900	14,600	16,500	16,500	17,500	17,200	16,800
Education and pedagogy	130,800	132,200	128,500	132,300	128,800	126,700	119,700	107,500
Medicine/healthcare	27,100	28,300	31,200	31,500	32,400	33,100	33,500	33,700
Culture and arts	15,900	17,800	19,100	19,300	19,400	21,100	22,100	22,100
Economics and management	332,200	368,700	421,700	457,100	472,200	504,600	527,600	518,900
Information security	900	1,400	1,900	2,400	3,000	3,500	3,700	4,000
Services/hospitality	4,800	8,100	10,000	12,100	14,300	16,800	18,500	19,200
Agriculture and fisheries	32,700	34,800	36,900	36,400	35,900	36,300	35,100	33,300
Geodesy <sup>2</sup> and land management	3,000	3,400	3,800	4,000	4,300	4,700	5,300	5,500
Geology & natural resources	9,900	11,300	13,100	13,300	13,600	14,100	14,300	15,200
Energy, etc.	20,000	22,000	23,600	25,000	24,800	24,600	24,300	24,700
Metallurgy, etc.	23,400	25,800	26,500	26,500	25,800	25,700	24,000	22,000
Aviation and rocket engineering	4,700	4,900	5,100	5,300	5,200	5,400	5,200	5,000
Weapons and defense systems	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	500
Sea (navy) engineering	3,300	3,400	3,800	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,200	4,100
Transportation	26,200	29,600	30,800	31,700	33,800	34,500	35,200	33,700
Instrument making/optical engineering	6,500	7,100	7,900	8,100	7,500	7,700	7,400	6,900
<b>Totals</b>	<b>989,000</b>	<b>1,056,900</b>	<b>1,156,100</b>	<b>1,222,300</b>	<b>1,242,900</b>	<b>1,296,400</b>	<b>1,313,900</b>	<b>1,277,600</b>

Source: National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2013a, p. 141.

2. Geodesy is the scientific discipline concerned with the size and shape of the Earth, its gravitational field, and the location of fixed points.



Looking at the distribution of students between academic subjects, it is notable that 40 percent of students pursuing Russian higher professional education degrees were majoring in economics and management (National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2013). As the labor market becomes saturated, this trend may change, but in Russia economics and management continue to be a top choice among specializations.

Russian census data for 2013 shows that 94,000 foreign students were enrolled in the country's higher education system, of which about 50,000 came from outside of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Since 2000, there have been successful efforts to increase international enrollments in Russian institutions (Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service, 2014).

A major restructuring reform launched in 2009 was intended to create three distinct tiers of institutions. First, a significant investment of state resources flowed to the top tier, intended to incentivize globally competitive (read "world-class" and highly ranked) universities, with dedicated budget lines for Moscow State University and St. Petersburg State University, along with the "top 15" research institutions. Also in the top tier are about 30 "national research universities" (NRUs) are intended to revitalize specific sectors of the Russian economy, especially sectors related to the sciences and technology.

State- and private-sector resources are being further leveraged to rebuild the middle tier of HEIs (led by a network of 10 or more "federal universities") that will help to redevelop regional economies and rebuild infrastructure around services, such as transportation, housing, and healthcare, with a goal to revive local labor markets. Finally, efforts are being made to more carefully regulate a lower tier of locally governed public and private institutions that will meet demand in other regions and employment sectors, drawing largely on private and local or municipal funding.

Thus, U.S.-Russian cooperation will necessarily unfold in this changing policy environment as public-private partnerships expand and as the global higher education marketplace becomes more dynamic.

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**Make certain each partner understands the constraints set by accrediting agencies, is prepared to operate within those constraints, and also understands the reporting requirements of each agency, Russian or American.**

— Gary Wishniewsky, California State University East Bay

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The implications should be clear to current and potential U.S. partners: there are substantial efforts underway in Russia to restructure the higher education system; to professionalize university management; to improve degree quality and to use international benchmarks such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Bologna Process; and to improve university infrastructure, especially in the areas of information technology, housing, and services for visiting scholars and students. After more than 20-year hiatus, Russia is arguably poised to reassert a global position in higher education and research. It is the responsibility of academic professionals and institutional leaders on both sides to work together to sustain and expand U.S.-Russian cooperation amid this rapidly changing economic and political environment.

### **Main federal programmes to promote research and innovation at the universities**

#### **Development of co-operation between Russian universities and enterprises**

- This federal programme provides subsidies for manufacturing enterprises for a period from 1 to 3 years for financing projects in high-tech production carried out jointly with universities. Recipients are determined according to a competition process that selects the most innovative projects. Each project should be at least 50% co-financed by enterprise. The total budget for 2010-12 is RUB 19 billion.

#### **Development of innovation infrastructure in Russian universities**

- This programme aims at supporting the development of innovation infrastructure, including business incubators, technology parks, engineering centres, transfer centres, certification...The budget amount to RUB 8 billion for 2010-12. As a result of the competition process, 56 schools have already been selected.

#### **Attracting leading scientists to Russian universities**

- Government allocates a budget in the form of grants to attract leading scientists. The primary goals of scientific research conducted by leading scientists in Russian universities is to create top-quality laboratories, produce world-class research, train highly qualified specialists, and transfer know-how to the economy. The total funding for 77 projects in 2010-12 amounted to RUB 8.3 billion and resulted in 42 laboratories being created. This funding will be extended to other research institutions (scientific institutions of the state academies of sciences and public research centres) until 2016.

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, retrieved from OECD, 2014, p. 126.

# Part 2: Analysis of Motivations for Creating a Partnership

Motivations varied among the 15 partnerships represented at the January 2014 conference at Bard College, but participants agreed that mutual understanding of motivations was important to building a good partnership. Motivations need not be symmetrical or identical, but they should be compatible. Nowadays, U.S.-Russian university partnerships are initiated not only in order to provide enrichment for existing language, literature, and history programs. From an academic perspective, partnerships are motivated by a desire to deepen the comparative dimension of U.S. degree programs in social science fields such as sociology, economics, and political science as well as to strengthen students' international capacity in professional fields such as business, management, public administration, international development, and public health. Finally, significant opportunities exist for educational exchanges and research collaboration in science and engineering, environmental studies, as well as in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related technology transfer and entrepreneurship programs.

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**For George Mason it is now of great strategic importance to educate students who are globally aware, interculturally competent, and engaged global citizens. It is with this notion that we approach our global partnerships, including dual degrees.**

— Svetlana Filiatreau, George Mason University

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Institutions stand to benefit immensely from self-funded partnerships, especially in the STEM fields, such as the partnership between the new Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology in Russia and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States. Institutions can also benefit from relationships established to create public-private partnerships in areas such as technology transfer and university innovation, as in the U.S.-Russia Foundation-funded Enhancing University Research and Entrepreneurial Capacity (EURECA) program, which is explored in more detail below. Finally, institutions can benefit from fee-for-service or revenue-generating programs.

Regardless of academic discipline, participants benefit from cross-cultural learning and, often, from language acquisition. Students benefit from exposure to new curricula, new teaching methods, and different educational practices. Faculty, during exchanges or research collaborations, similarly benefit from exposure to new teaching environments, opportunities for teamwork, distance teaching, and new types of collaborative research. Federally funded and private foundation programs remain available for individual faculty exchanges and small research projects and may be used as seed funding and as opportunities to make initial overseas research contacts.

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**The most important practical guarantor of sustainability and success is the presence of a committed group of faculty who want the project to succeed.**

— Susan Gillespie, Bard College

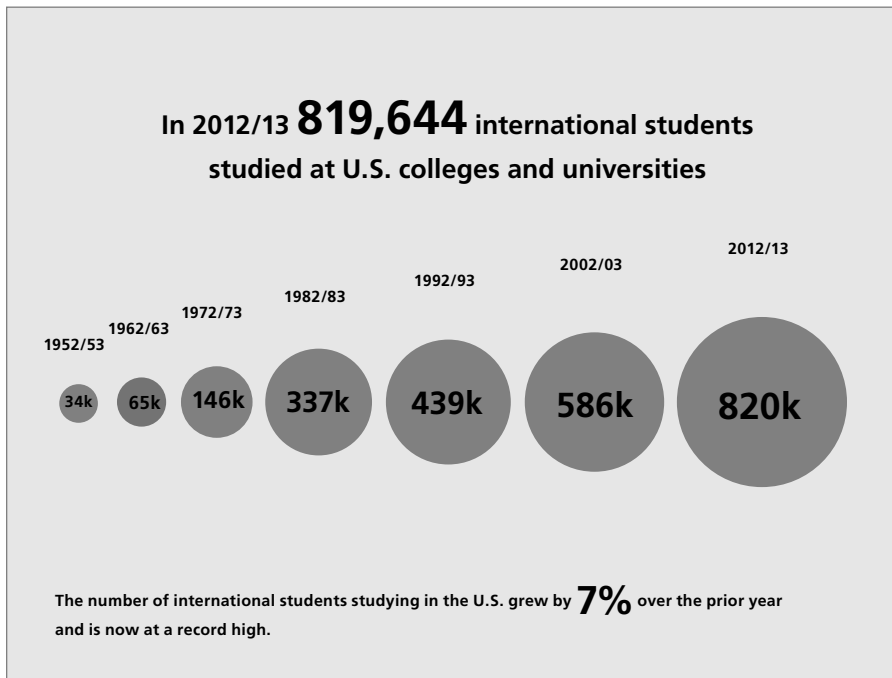
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U.S. institutions may already be thinking strategically about how their faculty members engage in exchange programs, such as the Fulbright program, viewing them not just as individual research or professional development opportunities, but also as part of more coherent and institution-wide international development strategy. International exchanges and partnerships also have financial motivations: business models are generally expected to recover costs, if not generate revenue.

Russian and Eurasian studies expertise in the United States can serve as an important resource for potential partners. A vibrant academic community, this field has developed multidisciplinary networks with colleagues throughout Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia, as evident in the ongoing work of the increasingly global scholarly networks around groups such as the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN), and the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS).

Furthermore, because many leading urban centers in Russia have experienced nearly a decade of sustained economic growth, visitors will note the dramatic improvement of transportation infrastructure (both rail and air) as well as a rapid expansion of the service and retail sectors. Russian regional university leaders emphasize that their cities are livable and safe, that residents enjoy rich cultural opportunities, and that institutions offer a high-quality experience for international students and visiting researchers at very competitive prices. These universities are located in cities such as Rostov, Saratov, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Yekaterinburg, Perm, and Tomsk.

Each year, the Institute of International Education (IIE) publishes a study of international student mobility, *Open Doors: Report on International Exchange*, in partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The following graphic, which has been reproduced from *Open Doors 2013*, is helpful for beginning conversations about the role of the United States in fostering international student mobility:



Source: IIE, 2013a.



# Part 3: Step-by-Step Guidelines for How to Find a Partner

Participants at the conference in January 2014 identified four major issues in identifying appropriate partner institutions. First, good relations and trust are necessary and factor greatly in the success of a partnership. Second, motivations also matter a great deal, and it is important to remember that they may change over time. Third, money matters, obviously, but experienced partnership backers emphasize that money should not be the primary goal of the partnership. Lastly, the outcomes are not necessarily predictable, and this can have both positive and negative consequences.

The emerging top tier of Russian universities will bring significant federal and institutional funding to potential partnerships with U.S. colleges and universities. These new partnerships can be genuinely mutual and focused on peer-to-peer collaboration and the sharing of educational practices. Potential partnerships in the middle tier of specialized scientific and technical institutions may be formed by integrating goals with specific industrial enterprises, and sometimes with state corporations on the Russian side. The keen advancement of research and development in Russia (especially in areas such as chemistry, computer science, electronics manufacturing, nanotechnology, and cyber security) means that Russian institutions are engaged in a global search to identify leading partner institutions in these fields.

Institutions should decide what kind of programs they want to establish, and then search until they find the right partners. The U.S.-Russian partnership established at Clark University was based on an existing program model. Clark had a very successful international program, which was a bilingual adult public

health administration program with over 3,000 graduates. Clark University professor Thomas Massey explains:

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**That was a model that I wanted to bring to Russia, and it took many years to find the right partner...they were a relatively small university, and they were looking for a way to connect with the United States. They had no prior American partners, and they were interested in learning about American styles of education. We shared our program model, they visited our site and became very interested in developing the program for their own students and for employers in the region.**

— Thomas Massey, Clark University

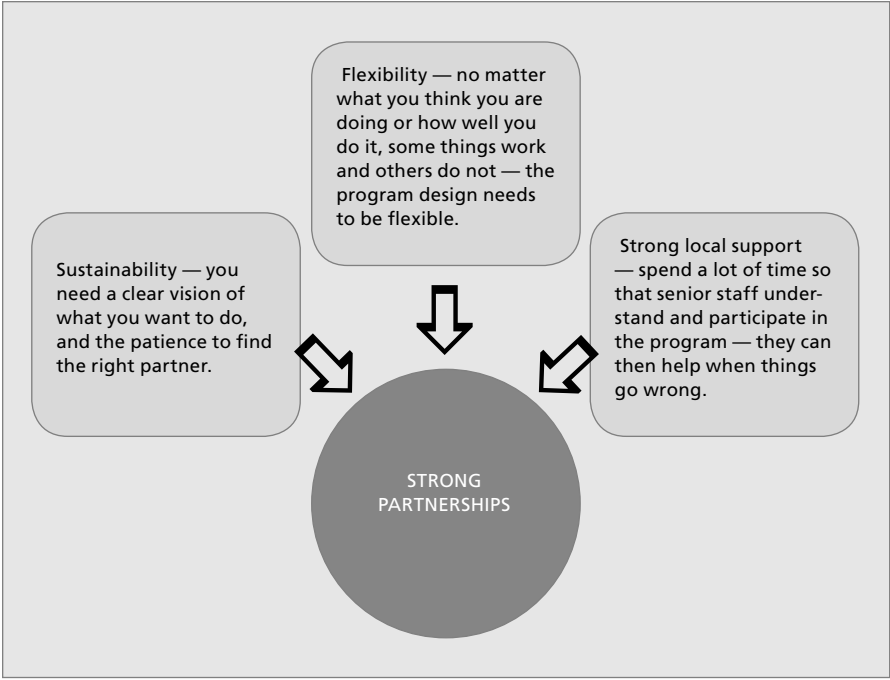
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International partnerships can begin in many different ways. In the absence of a program template, international academic relationships can grow from student or faculty exchanges. These may begin small, and eventually the two institutions may decide to build a partnership. In such cases, the task is to find the right model and program.

The experience of U.S.-Russian university partners over the past two decades suggests that institutions should proceed via the following steps:

1. Do you need a partner or a program? Or both?
2. Understand the market/context/purpose of your partnership.
3. Understand the capacity needed to support the program and partnership.
4. Establish a business plan, including enrollment minimums and maximums necessary to sustain the program.
5. Build relationships, trust, presence, communication, and dedicated staff.
6. Be patient and do not lose sight of the long-term goals of the program.
7. Celebrate successes along the way.





Source: Adopted from a presentation by Thomas Massey at the Bard Degree Conference 2014



# Part 4: Lessons Learned in U.S.-Russian University Partnerships

Looking over the last 20 or more years of U.S.-Russian cooperation, the relative scarcity of successful partnerships is a curious anomaly amid the rapid internationalization of leading universities in Russia. Several lessons can be derived from the experiences of universities over this period:

## **The MOU is not a partnership**

The most common problem or pattern may well be one in which there are well-intentioned initial contacts, often resulting in a flurry of memoranda-of-understanding (MOUs). Afterwards, little is done to follow up or deepen relations. The web sites of Russian universities of all tiers are replete with dozens of such “partnerships” with institutions in the United States and elsewhere. As detailed throughout this report, while there are a handful of robust U.S.-Russian partnerships, there are far more that seem to amount to little more than an MOU. Many have effectively lapsed since the end of U.S. government grant funding, or continue as only a sporadic or limited exchange of students or faculty.

## **It is hard to get past grant-funded exchanges**

Another enduring problem in U.S.-Russian relations in higher education has been the difficulty of finding viable business models to sustain linkages beyond start-up or grant funding. There are, admittedly, some that stand out as quite successful. These include an enduring exchange between Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and the Plekhanov State Financial University in Moscow, which revolves around a dual

bachelor's degree in economics (for details, see Appendix A), as well as a long-standing dual degree in economics and management between the University of Maryland University College (primarily distance educational offerings) and the Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok.

### **It is easier when partners can communicate**

The lack of language skills on both sides, but perhaps especially the lack of Russian skills among participating U.S. faculty and students, can be an enduring barrier. This problem has been offset to some degree by the desire of Russian institutional leaders and students to participate in English-language programs, and/or provide English language content in Russia. Another risk in this regard is the rising number of English-language professional and certificate programs at non-U.S. institutions, notably institutions in Europe. Cross-cultural sensitivity and deeper connections are more likely to develop through a deeper appreciation of each other's academic strengths, history and culture.

#### **Example: U.S.-Russia Joint/Dual Degree Conference Goals**

- Provide opportunities to share best practices and address challenges of implementing joint- and dual-degree partnership programs.
- Create a mechanism for ongoing and sustainable peer-to-peer and institution-to-institution dialogue.
- Provide an accessible forum for institutions interested in initiating joint- and dual-degree programs to share information, document best practices, and share queries.

Based on the 20-year partnership between California State University East Bay and the Institute of Business and Economics of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in Moscow, Gary Wishniewsky and Andrei Petrov recommend the following lessons to keep in mind:

Define your target audience (sector, gender, age range, education level)

- Establish a program structure (contact hours, times, instructors, evaluation, course materials).
- Establish admissions/selection criteria (standardized tests, Russian/English proficiency, etc.).

- Articulate the exchange nature of the program (visits, exposure, other interactions, other purposes).
- Articulate American expectations of the Russian partner
- Articulate Russian expectations of the American partner
- Discuss expected outcomes of the program and long-term vision



# Part 5: Four Major Partnership Models

In this section of the guidebook, we present several productive forms of international engagement work. This should not be considered to be an exhaustive list of all currently existing and potential forms of programs and partnerships. For links to the individual programs represented at the Joint/Dual Degree Conference, see [www.bard.edu/civicingagement/us-russia-conference](http://www.bard.edu/civicingagement/us-russia-conference).

## **Model 1: Faculty Research/Student Exchange**

The first model, and perhaps the best-known form of international mobility in higher education, is student and faculty exchange for study and research. Universities can begin such programs either by finding exchange programs that meet their needs and then helping students and faculty find funding to participate, or by setting up new institutional partnerships. In the case of bilateral exchange, when two universities work together by trading students and faculty directly, an exchange of money may or may not be involved. Students continue to be enrolled at the home university and pay tuition, but they “trade places” with an incoming student from the partner institution.

The advantages of organized study abroad experiences are many, but they do come at an extra cost. In-country staff, organized housing, travel, supplemental cultural curricula, formal evaluations, emergency response, and other benefits are available to participants in organized programs. Risk managers will appreciate more structure and safety nets, of course, when evaluating programs or partnership structures. Sources of funding for student and faculty exchange vary depending on the volume of international traffic. Funding may come from international study grants, such as the Boren and Fulbright programs listed below, or from grants made by institutions in the United States and/or Russia.

Further resources:

- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
<http://exchanges.state.gov>
- American Councils for International Education (ACIE)  
[www.americancouncils.org](http://www.americancouncils.org)
- Middlebury College  
[www.middlebury.edu/sa/russia](http://www.middlebury.edu/sa/russia)
- American Councils Russian Flagship  
<http://flagship.americancouncils.org/russian>
- Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)  
[www.ciee.org](http://www.ciee.org)
- Fulbright U.S. Student Program  
<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries/selectedcountry/Russia>
- Boren Awards for International Study  
<https://borenawards.org>
- International Research & Exchange Board (IREX)  
[www.irex.org/focus\\_area/international-education](http://www.irex.org/focus_area/international-education)

## **Model 2: Joint Research**

Joint research can take place on a small scale, but may also involve large projects that require formal partnerships, such as the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. Faculty initiatives for international research projects take up areas of inquiry shared by faculty partners or departments and strategies to pursue common agendas. Institutions should start by making sure there are appropriate channels that allow faculty to establish international research partnerships, such as support for grant development, and additional administrative resources as necessary, including in the Russian language.

Sources of funding include the U.S. Department of Education, the Russian Ministry of Education and Sciences, private foundations, international organizations, and institutional initiatives.



**EXAMPLE:** George Mason University initiated the creation of the Global Problem Solving Consortium (GPSC) in 2012, in which the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE), based in Moscow, has been a key partner. For George Mason, collaboration with HSE will be framed within the GPSC and will include faculty research collaboration and conference presentations; short-term, problem-specific workshops for students hosted by participating universities; creation of additional globally networked courses (several have already been jointly created by HSE and George Mason faculty); research skills development for undergraduate and graduate students; and other projects. Currently, GMU is working with all member institutions on developing key focus areas that will also contribute to meeting each partner's strategic objectives. The program has been recognized by the international education association NAFSA as a winner of the 2014 Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization.

— Svetlana Filiatreau, George Mason University<sup>2</sup>

**EXAMPLE:** The Bilateral Presidential Commission was founded in 2009 by President Obama and President Medvedev. Since then, Presidents Obama and Putin have reaffirmed their commitment to the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. The BPC is dedicated to identifying areas of cooperation and pursuing joint projects and actions that strengthen strategic stability, international security, economic well-being, and the development of ties between the Russian and American people. Through the Commission's working groups and sub-committees, we will strive to deepen our cooperation in concrete ways and to take further steps to demonstrate joint leadership in addressing new challenges. The foundation for the work of the Commission is based on the core principles of friendship, cooperation, openness and predictability, and we are resolved to address disagreements openly and honestly in a spirit of mutual respect and acknowledgement of each other's perspective.

— U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission:  
2013 Joint Annual Report<sup>3</sup>

2 For more on the Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization, see [www.nafsa.org/SimonAward](http://www.nafsa.org/SimonAward). For more on the GMU-HSE strategic partnership, see <http://masonglobal.gmu.edu/global-initiatives/global-problem-solving-consortium>

3 For more, see [www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/rs/usrussiabilat/219086.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/rs/usrussiabilat/219086.htm)

### Model 3: Joint/Dual Degrees

Joint and dual degrees are partnerships that require long-term commitment from both partners, but the hard work pays off. There is keen interest at Russian universities in cooperating to develop degree and certificate programs in professional fields, such as business, economics, management and law, and in the use of blended learning, MOOCs (massive open online courses), and other new technologies to lower the costs of in-person course delivery.

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**We began with the idea that our partnership should be based on the principals of mutuality and equality... the importance of the dual degree is that basis of mutuality and equality, because by agreeing to give the dual degree, each of the institutions agrees to accredit the results — that is, to assure respective oversight bodies, students and faculty that the degree is the equal of our other normal programs.**

— Susan Gillespie, Bard College

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Institutions should first decide which discipline or field will offer the degree. Evaluate discipline-specific requirements, including areas of flexibility. Discuss motivations and long-term expectations with potential partners. Answers to some common questions, as presented at the U.S.-Russia Joint/Dual Degree Conference (Becker & Akhapiin, 2014), are summarized below:

- Where does the education occur?
  - In Russia only
  - In Russia and the United States (mandatory or optional)
  - Method: online/in person
  - Combinations of location and method
- Who delivers the education?
  - American faculty
  - Russian faculty
  - Predominantly Russian or American faculty
  - Roughly evenly mixed

- What is the language of instruction?
  - Russian
  - English
  - Mix of Russian and English
  - Required competency in both, although one language predominates
- Where does the curriculum come from?
  - Established program curriculum (U.S. or Russian)
  - Jointly developed curriculum
- What degree is offered?
  - The same or similar degree in both countries
  - Different degrees to reflect different program emphases

Sources of funding for joint and dual degrees are tuition or fees for service, usually at special negotiated rates. A five-year business plan is important so that expected enrollment levels and other financial sources are clear.

#### **Examples of U.S.-Russian dual degree programs:**

- Bachelor's Degree in Management and Economics at Far Eastern Federal University and University of Maryland University College  
[www.umuc.edu/global/fevu.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/global/fevu.cfm)
- Bachelor of Arts at Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St. Petersburg State University (Smolny College) and Bard College  
<http://smolny.bard.edu>
- Master of Public Health at Novgorod State University and University of Massachusetts Amherst  
[www.umass.edu/sphhs/Spring2011\\_Newsletter/Spring2011\\_Russia.html](http://www.umass.edu/sphhs/Spring2011_Newsletter/Spring2011_Russia.html)

#### **Model 4: Industry/Business Commercialization Partnerships**

To illustrate the potential of Russian universities for cooperation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), one could look to an institution such as Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU), which is the highest-ranked Russian higher educational institution outside Moscow and St. Petersburg. TPU has undergone a revolution in its internal management, and has moved intentionally to break up the "silos" of powerful departments and schools. The institution fosters more interdisciplinary and innovative work through a series of new institutes and cross-campus centers in areas such as control systems and automation, oil and gas technologies, new and alternative energy systems, water technology

and conservation, and materials science. TPU has adopted key elements of the Bologna Process and linked itself to other institutions throughout Russia through the Association of Innovative Russian Regions. The university is working with international partners and the regional government to foster start-up companies and student entrepreneurship in the Tomsk region, while encouraging technology transfer and the joint commercialization of research using the EURECA program.

The Enhancing University Research and Entrepreneurial Capacity (EURECA) program is funded by the U.S. Russia Foundation (USRF), a U.S.-based not-for-profit corporation established in 2008 with a mission to support Russia's economic, legal, and institutional advancement (EURECA, 2012). The EURECA framework has encouraged the development of "Joint Module Projects," as described here:

A module project is a complex independent Russian-American partner project implemented by two university teams with the purpose of building institutional capacity of the Russian university in the priority areas of the EURECA program. The purpose of the module projects is to test sample models of interaction between a university, the business community, and the authorities, thus integrating universities in the economy of the region and international cooperation.

Within the framework of established partnerships, Russian and American research universities participating in the pilot stage of the EURECA program will develop module projects. Each project will be aimed at resolving one of the key issues faced by the Russian partner in the area of modernization of research management, technology transfer, and commercialization of research.... With support of the program implementers, dual-hub partnership members will attempt to attract additional participants from private industry, investors, and research institutions interested in the outcomes of the respective module project (EURECA, n.d.).

While the various HEIs in the Tomsk region were not consolidated into a "federal" university, a consortium has been formed between TPU, Tomsk State University (TSU), the Tomsk State University of Control Systems and Radio-electronics (TUSUR), and the medical university to foster coordinated internationalization and innovation.

USRF implements several major programs with budgets over \$100,000. Participants in these programs are selected through special competitions ([www.usrf.ru](http://www.usrf.ru)):

- The Enhancing University Research and Entrepreneurial Capacity (EURECA) program.  
*The program focuses on developing joint projects between U.S. and Russian universities in the field of IP innovation and commercialization.*
- The Yegor Gaidar Summer Leadership Program (YGSLP), a joint project with the Yegor Gaidar Foundation.  
*A four-week internship program for Russian university students at U.S. entrepreneurial universities.*
- The Yegor Gaidar Annual Fellowship Program (YGAFP), operated by IREX.  
*A three- to six-month fellowship program for Russian economists at U.S. think tanks and research institutions.*
- Improving Economics Instruction (IEI) program, a joint project with the Yegor Gaidar Foundation.  
*A two-week study program for university-level instructors of economics from Russian universities at one of the leading U.S. universities.*
- Legal Education Exchange (LEX) program.  
*The program aims to strengthen legal education in Russian and U.S. universities through the exchange of experience and best practices in modern teaching methodologies, including practice-based and interactive teaching techniques and those based on modern IT technologies.*

Further resources:

- Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech)/Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
<http://web.mit.edu/sktech>
- U.S. Russia Foundation for Economic Advancement and the Rule of Law (USRF)  
[www.usrf.ru](http://www.usrf.ru)

Several other innovative partnerships have grown up from grant-funded exchanges, having broadened from the original project into diverse fields of study. For example, Perm State University (PSU) initiated connections with Western Montana University and the University of Louisville. This has grown over time into an array of exchanges and summer schools taught in Russian and English; summer field research in geology

and environmental studies; and a human rights program linked to Perm-36, known popularly as the Gulag Museum. Institutional leaders at Perm State University also report that their faculty members are keen to recruit international students and especially to add U.S. and European students to their summer courses; that they are working to invigorate their community-based research and teaching programs; and that they are revitalizing long-standing traditions of field research and local area studies (*kraevedenie*), inspired in part by new global work in community-based research and learning.

The Ural Federal University in Yekaterinburg is seeking to move beyond the existing focus of much Russian venture capital in communications and information technologies and to work with various international partners to generate new university-based venture funding, with an eye to innovation and technology transfer in materials science, the “internet of things” and control systems, and advanced manufacturing involving nanotechnology.

# Part 6: Ways to Finance a Partnership

Potential partners must think creatively and pragmatically about business models and financial arrangements to sustain and develop partnerships. A myriad of funding sources may be used, including government grants, private-sector grants and collaborative relationships, student tuition (fee for service), and institution-sponsored or co-sponsored funding schemes.

Three ways to finance university partnerships are described in this section of the guidebook. First, U.S. institutions can seek Russian funding that is available through the top national research and federal universities, and/or to link directly to the new Russian government-funded graduate exchange programs and funding for joint STEM research and laboratory development. Such an approach requires significant capacity in Russian language and area studies; a willingness to navigate the contractual and logistical complexities that Russian-funded partnerships require; and a willingness to enter into graduate training and research collaboration as genuine equals and professional peers.

Using a second strategy, U.S. institutions can work with Russian counterparts to build connections between the private sector and regional governments, as has been piloted successfully through the EURECA program. The U.S.-Russia Innovation Corridor is another great example, which has functioned to link the University of Maryland, College Park; the Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod – National Research University; and private-sector partners in the life sciences and biotechnology.

Third, U.S. institutions can provide fee-for-service programs of study, which have tended to occur most frequently in professional fields and career education, such as business, management, finance, and information technology. It is possible

that some existing U.S.-Russian partnerships that began as grant-funded projects may evolve in this direction. These may require considerable capacity on the U.S. side to make such choices cost effective.



# Conclusions and Reflections

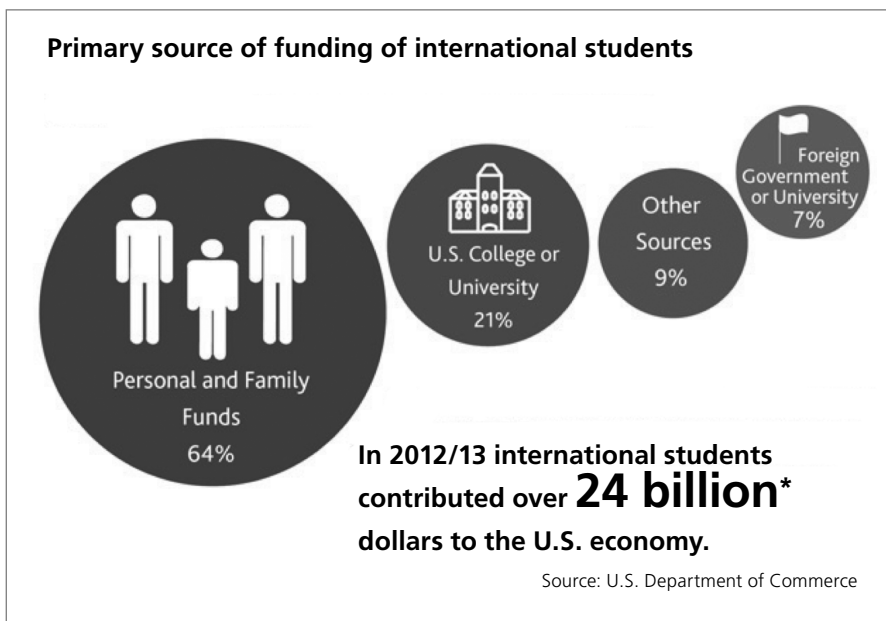
The 25 years following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the socialist bloc in 1989 until 2014 witnessed two grand phases of cooperation. The first was primarily funded by the United States and European governments in the spirit of “technical assistance” and in support of the former socialist bloc’s transition from state socialism to free markets in the 1990s. During a second phase in the 2000s, federally funded programs continued on a reduced scale and academic networks were supplemented by major U.S.-based private foundation grant programs and a growing array of cooperative programs, such as TEMPUS, TACIS, and ERASMUS MUNDUS, supported by European agencies. Some of these European programs have ended, and others may or may not continue in the years ahead.

As U.S.-Russian cooperation now enters a third phase, the financial responsibility for U.S.-Russian international partnerships is shifting in two ways. First, leadership will flow from Russian higher educational institutions that can afford ambitious foreign travel and internationalization programs, such as the new national research universities and federal universities. Second, from the U.S. side, there will likely be renewed interest in programs that generate revenue or that cover their own costs through tuition or fee-for-service arrangements. One can predict that Russian-funded partnerships will tend to be made preferably with elite or highly ranked U.S. research universities. The fee-for-service model will likely encompass a wider array of U.S. institutions, especially in fields that focus on pre-professional training and career education, as well as in high-demand professional fields such as business, management, economics, information technology, and English language training.

In conclusion, outreach to new and existing Russian institutional partners calls for extraordinary efforts, and this will require the work of strong faculty “champions” and the cultivation of Russian and other relevant language skills. Multiple potential partners throughout Russia are ready to engage with their U.S. counterparts.

The Institute of International Education has described the economic impact of international students as follows:

International students contribute \$24.7 billion to the U.S. economy, through their expenditures on tuition and living expenses, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Higher education is among the United States' top service-sector exports, as international students provide revenue to the U.S. economy and individual host states for living expenses, including room and board, books and supplies, transportation, health insurance, support for accompanying family members, and other miscellaneous items.



Source: IIE, 2013b.

*Open Doors* reports that more than 63 percent of all international students receive the majority of their funds from personal and family sources. When other sources of foreign funding are included, such as assistance from their home country governments or universities, over 70 percent of all international students' primary funding comes from sources outside of the United States. And the percentage is even higher for undergraduate students—more than 80 percent of all undergraduate international students receive the majority of their funding from personal and family sources (IIE, 2013b).

Our fundamental reason for producing this guidebook is a profound conviction that U.S.-Russian cooperation in higher education and research can contribute to university transformation and educational innovation on both sides, and that U.S. and Russian educators can and should work together to confront common global challenges such as nuclear proliferation, violent conflict and its aftermath, epidemic disease and public health, climate change and environmental degradation, and threats to global food security.

Russian universities will play an important role in the global international higher education landscape, and there is broad interest in how a revitalized Russian university system can act as an engine for regional development. As U.S. and Russian university leaders map out potential new structures and business models for cooperation, they should look to successful examples of partnerships that have been described here.



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