

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire and Notes from CONAHEC Session, October 1999

QUESTIONS FOR TRILATERAL STUDY (Available in Spanish at meeting)

The American Council on Education (ACE), la Asociacion Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educacion Superior (ANUIES), and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), with the support of their respective governments, are studying possible new approaches to increased North American higher education cooperation. The goal of the study is to find mechanisms or approaches to stimulate, invigorate, and advance academic cooperation, linkages, and exchange among students and scholars in North America. We seek your input and ideas, request your responses to the questions below, and welcome other ideas that will inform our thinking, address obstacles to interaction, and spur greater activity.

I. We are interested in identifying the current **level of need** for North American academic collaboration and exchange.

- Do you think that there is more demand for than supply of for North American collaboration and exchange programs? That is, do more students and faculty members want to engage in such exchange than there are opportunities available?
- If so, is the unfilled need for bilateral exchanges or for trilateral approaches involving all three countries?
- Where is the demand coming from—students? university administrators? faculty? governments? others?
- Or are there more opportunities for exchange available than students who want to take advantage of them?

II. We are trying to **test assumptions** to learn whether certain barriers to exchange that we often hear cited are indeed ACTUAL deterrents to exchange. These include:

A. Differing priorities and asymmetries.

- Differing national and institutional priorities, e.g., the need for undergraduate opportunities for study vs. the need for graduate training and degrees.
- Asymmetries between and among higher education systems, numbers of institutions, program design, and institutional governance, or between levels of national resources, interest, and student populations.
- Given that differing priorities and asymmetry between and among the three nations exist, are these significant barriers to exchange and collaboration?
- If so, what kinds of asymmetries and /or differing priorities do you see as the most problematic, and in what ways?
- If a degree of asymmetry, or certain types of asymmetries, as well as differing priorities are intrinsic, how can we work around these differences?

B. Credit transfer and program recognition issues

- Do you see issues surrounding credit transfer and program recognition as significant barriers to exchange, mobility, or collaboration?
- If so, how do these issues impact exchange? Can you give us some examples of such problems?
- How do you believe credit transfer and program recognition issues are most effectively addressed? at what level of the institution?

C. Resource issues

We assume that those students with private or family financial means can find ways to obtain international experiences. But the scarcity of resources for individuals who lack personal resources, and for institutions that lack means to negotiate and support

exchange and other cooperative endeavors, is often seen as a serious barrier to exchange and cooperation.

- Do you believe that limited financial resources (for use by institutions and individuals) are a serious obstacle to exchange?

If so, how serious is the problem? with what impact? and on whom?

- Given that large growth in new resources is not likely, what do you believe can be done WITHOUT new monies to effect greater collaboration and exchange?

D. Other barriers

- Visa/immigration issues, especially surrounding internships and other nontraditional exchange.

- Lack of language proficiency.

- Lack of intra-institutional sustainability (i.e., changes in leadership or faculty).

- Lack of faculty interest in or hostility to exchanges (in some disciplines).

- How significant are these issues in practice? Is it the lack of language proficiency the key issue? Or is one of the other barriers the lynchpin?

- Do you believe there are other key barriers?

III. Envisioning

Can you envision what your institution would need to facilitate greater participation in North American exchange and collaboration? That is, what kind of entity, mechanism, or approach would add value to what you already do? What kind of help do you need at a "mega" level?

IV. Model Programs

As we explore possibilities for the future, we will look at existing models for exchange and collaboration, in North America and elsewhere. Although we have developed a list of possible examples (e.g., ISEP, RAMP, Socrates ECTS, CEEPUS, and others), we are interested in your suggestions. We are especially interested in those programs that appear to have addressed one or more of the barriers cited above, and those that stimulate increased exchange and collaboration activity.

Thank you so much for thinking about these questions. We hope you will forward any thoughts to Dr. Naomi F. Collins at Ncollins99@aol.com.

Notes on Panel Session, "Toward a New Model of Academic Mobility: The North American Educational Marketplace," October 27, 1999, CONAHEC Meeting, Veracruz, Mexico.

Background

With about 250 participants, the October 1999 Veracruz (and Xalapa) meeting of CONAHEC provided a good forum for eliciting responses to "Questions for Trilateral Study;" and for judging needs, testing assumptions, and assessing interest in a possible new program.

The CONAHEC meeting included a one-day discussion on October 25 to plan a UTEP meeting on accreditation issues; a two-day student forum on October 25 and 26; and the CONAHEC conference itself from October 27 to 29.

Our panel entitled "Toward a New Model of Academic Mobility: The North American Educational Marketplace" took place Wednesday, October 27, from 3:00 to 4:30. The last-minute change in the nature of the session from small workshop to full-court plenary session (of nearly 200 people) required a quick shift in approach from in-depth discussion to simplified yes/no questions and "voting card" responses.

Prior to the session, we sought to ensure that Spanish translations of key terms (e.g., "marketplace," "broker," and "barter"), were the most accurate and appropriate rendition in meaning and sense.

The session was structured to begin with Barbara Turlington's introduction and background on the program origin and association sponsors; followed by a presentation (in Spanish) by Guillermo Morones (in place of Dolores Sanchez Soler) on the proposed program's goals and process, and moderated by Sally Brown, who led a question and answer session based on questions developed prior to the meeting by the principle investigator, with the steering and advisory committees.

The presentation was accompanied by a PowerPoint visual projection of the questions. (Although the Spanish version of the PowerPoint visual was not available, simultaneous interpretation covered the oral presentation, and print questions were available in Spanish.)

Questions and Answers

I. To our first question, "is there more demand than supply for exchange?" participants agreed virtually unanimously that there is indeed great demand. However, some noted that the student and institution may have DIFFERENT concepts of where to study; that there is need for good information and for clear direction to it, and that there is a difference in the extent and nature of demand by country.

When we asked if trilateral exchange was more important/of greater value than bilateral exchange and in what disciplines trilateral exchange might be more beneficial than bilateral, there was much discussion. Comments noted that trinational agreement is even more difficult than binational, but that in the long run, trinational exchange may be more beneficial and should be the goal, even if we need to begin with binational. It was agreed that for some disciplines, trilateral programming is clearly advantageous, e.g., in business and environment.

II. In discussing barriers to exchange, the first issue raised was of language non-proficiency. After some discussion, it was agreed that the question of language study (requirements, trends, etc.) needs to be disaggregated by country, by sector, by program, and by education level, e.g., graduate v. undergraduate.

The question, "how many of you see credit transfer and program recognition issues as a major barrier?" elicited an overwhelming, uniform, and unambiguous "yes!" Almost every person in the room held up cards indicating that this is a very significant barrier.

Further discussion indicated that at least one part of the problem may lie within institutions. For example, if a credit recognition agreement is made by a president without prior involvement of faculty or awareness of registrars, deans, or administrators, then academic recognition within the institution may be difficult (hence an intertwining of inter- and intra-university issues).

It was additionally noted that even if formal agreements address and resolve these issues, the process of negotiating is difficult and time-consuming. That is, credit transfer / program recognition issues hinder the ease of negotiation and agreement.

Sally then introduced the concept of a scheme for credit recognition. She described very briefly the ECTS and UMAPS models, the European and ASEAN schemes to develop a common language for credit recognition.

She then asked if it would be useful to have a common language or template (like the euro) for academic recognition of credit like ECTS. The audience response was again strongly affirmative by as many as 75 percent of the participants.

On issues surrounding resources, no one appeared to dispute the notion that significant growth in new activity is unlikely without the infusion of new resources. But in answer to where new resources may come from, the responses simply noted that business may be of some help, but that people cannot go to the same well too often; that business needs to be included from the outset; that governments, when they do have funds to support programs, have too much red tape; and that people should look at "tuition issues." There was not sufficient time to delve into these responses.

Sally then turned to the four additional barriers we had projected: visas, language proficiency, sustainability, and lack of faculty interest. When she asked for a show of hands/ cards to indicate the single most important one in the group, language proficiency received the vast majority of votes, with only a few votes each for visas, sustainability, and faculty disinterest. [Compare this response with the discussion "envisioning" of below.]

III. The "envisioning" exercise followed, opened with the question: "Can you conceive of a mechanism that would add value to what you already do?"

Here, the majority of those that responded suggested the following: send faculty and administrators on cultural experience abroad; support and encourage faculty and administrator travel; and educate faculty and administrators, including admissions officers and registrars, about the value of exchange and collaboration.

Note that these responses appear inconsistent with the top priority barriers selected above. In that discussion, problems with language proficiency and program recognition / credit transfer were given top billing; "faculty-as-barrier" did not win many votes.

Yet in the envisioning exercise, and in the preponderance of discussions with individuals outside the session, participants cited the need to start with stimulating, supporting, and educating faculty in order to foster exchange. The apparent discrepancy may be attributable to the way questions were phrased or ordered, or from people's reluctance to picture faculty as a barrier or problem, while more easily seeing faculty as a possible spur or solution.

The second vision that emerged was to create more opportunities for service learning, practical learning, internships, and work-study for students.

As the last item, Sally described our proposed mechanism to stimulate exchange, a managed barter system or organized brokerage house. Unfortunately, as the session was at an end, people had no time to think and respond further. They were also showing the symptoms of post-hearty-lunch-syndrome. Naomi Collins closed the session, encouraging people to pick up print copies of the questions in English or Spanish, think further about these issues, and provide further thoughts and feedback to her after the conference.

In sum, the question and answer session showed that participants see great demand for and interest in exchange and collaboration; believe starting with binational exchange can forge the way to trilateral efforts; find key barriers to be credit transfer/program recognition and lack of language proficiency (as well as lack of resources); and envision solutions that start with faculty (and administrator) travel and education, and with wider opportunity for student internships and work-study arrangements.

Feedback data gleaned quickly from session evaluation forms indicated that marketing for the session may not have prepared the audience for the nature of the session. Participants arrived expecting to learn from experts, or to hear about a new program model, rather than to be queried about their views, interests, and perceptions. It appeared that while some participants welcomed being asked their views and the chance to participate, others were disappointed at "not learning anything new."

It is also important (if obvious) to recognize that this was a self-selected, interested, and "converted" audience, not necessarily reflective of the broader university community.

Despite the limitations of time and setting, I believe we gained interesting and valuable data, in part because of the unanimous, unambiguous, and strong consensus of response (with the exception noted above, regarding faculty as solution but not obstacle).

Additionally, the session raised questions that facilitated discussion with numerous individuals during the remainder of the conference, at meals, receptions, and bus trips, providing further feedback. The enthusiasm for the concept and mechanism, including by experienced professionals in the field, seemed high and most encouraging for moving ahead with the next phases of conceptualization and feasibility. Or, to quote one senior educator: "If you build it, they will come." The mechanism will create the need, interest, and demand, he predicts.

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