Academic and Scholarly Collaboration with Russia: Policy and Cultural Nuance

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Where Innovation is Tradition
Overview

• Country background
• Structure and funding of Russia’s higher education
• Higher education reforms
• Sample partnership
• Partnership process
• Cultural Nuance
Country Background

• Economic factors and Russia’s middle class
• Socio-political factors
• The Role of higher education in Russia’s economic development
  – Moving from resource fueled to innovation-driven development
  – WTO as a factor
Structure and Funding of Higher Education System

• Types of Higher Education Institutions
  – Directly under the president – 2 universities
  – National research universities
  – Institutions within the Ministry of Education and Science
  – Institutions within other government units
  – Private institutions

• Administration and Coordination of research - Academy of Sciences and universities
Network of Russian leading universities

Lomonosov Moscow State University and Saint-Petersburg State University
Federal Universities – 7
National Research Universities - 29

Association of Russian Leading Universities (established in 2010)
Higher education reforms

• **Bologna Process**
  – Bologna Process Reforms
    • Ability to deliver 3 /4 + 2 education (Bachelor’s + Master’s)
    • Transition from teaching-only university model to include research

• **New Law on Education – signed in November**
  – Focus on improving quality; innovation
  – Implications for higher education institutions
    • Examples

Where Innovation is Tradition
Reforms and Funding

• Importance of international rankings
  – for US institutions interested in expanding operations in Russia
  – for Russian institutions

• Government Scholarships and Professional Development funding
  – Presidential
  – Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Education
  – Specific geographic area related
  – Institutions of certain types
Russia as Strategic Partner with George Mason University

• TraCCC-Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center

• Agreements with Partner Institutions:
  – Moscow State University: Dual Degree
  – Higher School of Economics: Dual Degree
  – St. Petersburg State University

• Summer & Winter Short Term Programs

• Center for Eurasian Studies
Sample Partnership
Lomonosov Moscow State University
Undergraduate Dual Degree in Economics and Management

• Program Structure

• Program Students
  – Student body composition in MSU Economics Department
  – Students entering MSU-GMU Dual Degree program

• Program Faculty
  – Education levels and income disparities
  – Holding 2-4 full-time teaching appointments
Marketing for Mason / Moscow State University
Dual Degree Program

Important structural/cultural differences:

• MSU’s admissions structure
• Academic timetable
• Paper driven
• Parental involvement levels
Recruiting trip for Dual Degree Program, Summer 2011

• Wins

• Misses

Rita with MSU professor

Richena at the info table with current dual degree student

Information session lead by coordinators and professors
International Collaboration: Public Diplomacy in Every Way

• Partner institutions and country politics
  – Relationships matter
    • Personal, political, and present and past affiliations of the in-country partners
    • Your faculty’s research and personal networks in the country
  – Example of Mason’s relationships in the context of the US public diplomacy context

• US educational organizations with in-country operations
  – Education USA
  – American Councils
  – US Embassy
  – US Russia Business Council
Part I – The eMOU Process

Originator submits Notification of Intent (NOI)

Dean’s Review

Provost’s Review
Evaluation for alignment with strategic objectives.
Approval authorizes further exploration of the project.

If denied: originator receives email notification of Dean’s decision

Originator receives email with notification of status and directions to MOU templates

Start Part II: MOU /Agreement development process

If denied: originator receives email notification of Provost’s decision
Part II – The MOU Development Process

**Agreement Development**
Originator uses templates and works with partner to develop agreement

**Administrative Evaluation**
Originator submits draft agreement to Agreement Administrator for review by MOU Committee

**Agreement Revision**
If revision is needed, originator produces final document; submits to Agreement Administrator

**Verification, Final Approval, and Signature**
Agreement Administrator verifies changes with MOU Committee members as needed, obtains signatures and return Agreement to originator for partner’s signatures

**Agreement Maintenance**
Agreement is stored in database.
An alert will be sent when the Agreement is due for renewal

If Agreement includes joint or dual degrees, ongoing discussion with Office of Academic Affairs, Registrar’s Office, Office of the Assoc. Provost for Graduate or Undergraduate Education, Office of Admissions, Office of Financial Aid, and Office of Student Accounts prior to drafting Agreement is expected.
Cultural Nuances

• Invest in relationships
  – Time
  – Authentic care
• Understand your partner institution’s and individual leaders’ and faculty context
  – Political
  – Economic
• Build trust through dialogue
• Invest in educating both sides in specifics of each other’s culture
• Apply coalition building and community development principles to developing partnership with Russian universities
• Be ready for many frustrations
• Keep informed about multiple levels of the fast changing environment of your partners
• Learn to let go and embrace serendipitous moments
Conclusions

- Vast and ever-changing region
- Declining population and increased emigration
- Education plays a crucial role in determining social status

Students at a technical school
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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