

*What is the greatest challenge to developing a successful partnership between higher education institutions?*

Periodically take stock of the original agreement. Effective alliances and partnerships grow, evolve, and change, so it is key to assess their effectiveness on a regular schedule and make changes when and where necessary.

Research Associations, and share the knowledge that is generated publicly through peer-reviewed journals.

This early work led to the signing in September 2010 of a formal contract between Penn and NU's Centre for Educational Policy, a private not-for-profit entity established under the laws of Kazakhstan and housed and operating within the now-open university. The center became operational relatively quickly. Shortly thereafter arose a renewed interest from the national government to create the previously mentioned Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University. The leadership at NU thus established a three-way partnership among NU, the University of Cambridge, and Penn GSE's Higher Education Division. The partners developed a master's curriculum that could be launched within a year. The values statement previously originated by Penn became an important touchstone for the later, broader strategic alliance. The partners framed a statement of principle informing the work of Cambridge and Penn faculty members as they worked together to establish Nazarbayev University's Graduate School of Education:

The Graduate Schools of Education at Cambridge University and the University of Pennsylvania will support Nazarbayev University to establish a Graduate School of Education that prepares graduates for careers in the nation, the region and globally as researchers, scholars, policy advisors and educational leaders. Our shared aim is to have a first class school operating at full capacity and internationally recognized by 2020 and to support the school through an ongoing partnership that promotes high quality research, fosters excellent teaching and learning and maintains the integrity of student assessment and personnel practices.<sup>3</sup>

A partnership contract specifying the roles of the various parties was signed in 2012. Initial activities concentrated on recruiting a dean and faculty, and designing the first master's degree programs. Over time, attention has turned to providing an independent check on admissions standards in the master's programs conducting joint quality-assurance visits by faculty



Stages of successful partnership development.

from both universities. The relationship has changed in intensity as the size of the faculty has increased and the programs and policies of the new school and the wider university have developed and stabilized. Penn still participates in faculty selection processes and in moderating assessments and monitoring the admissions processes, however.

While there have been successes, the relationship has not always been smooth. For example, learning that all “deliverables” need to be formally documented seems trivial but reflects a major cultural shift. More significant have been the challenges in accommodating a fundamentally different budget process and time line that is not governed by either a US or a UK academic calendar and is driven by oil and commodity prices. Still, what have defined this partnership are the ongoing opportunities for mutual learning and growth. Working with experienced professionals from different national and cultural contexts has enabled the Penn partnership team to answer questions about international higher education systems, including:

- What is the proper balance between central oversight and control and institutional autonomy and innovation?
- How does the institution create appropriate systems of oversight, such as the establishment of boards of trustees, for institutions not used to deliberative governance processes?
- How does the institution create environments that invite faculty creativity and innovation?
- What constitutes an effective and appropriate relationship between universities and companies who employ their graduates?
- What are the characteristics of a graduate school of education that prepares students for the jobs of today and leadership in the future?