

**MOTIVATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES  
OF A CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
AND NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY**

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EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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Jaime Rakow Cerilli, PhD  
University of Pittsburgh 2018

This case study explored three research questions: (RQ1): What are the emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border education partnerships? (RQ2): How do the elements of this conceptual framework describe the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) and Nazarbayev University (NU) cross-border education partnership case in each of the three phases: developing the partnership, developing the program, and implementing the program? (RQ3): How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships? The initial conceptual framework for this study (RQ1) was developed from the review of six major published sources on cross-border education partnerships, which revealed 14 elements categorized by phase of partnership. Phase 1 encompassed development of the *partnership*: (A.1) identification of a suitable partner with shared vision; (A.2) development of mission statement, goals and governing documents; (A.3) adequate resources of staffing, programs and infrastructure; (A.4) financial capacity of home and host institutions (transparency and accountability); (A.5) authorization and institutional commitment from senior leadership; and (A.6) mutual agreement of contractual, legally binding agreements. Phase 2 encompassed development of the *program*: (B.1) strategic planning; (B.2) accommodations of social, cultural,

language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions; (B.3) faculty and staff engagement; and (B.4) health safety and security of faculty and students. Phase 3 encompassed *implementation* of the program: (C.1) academic framework, policies and standards; (C.2) student selection, access, equity, support and student learning and development; (C.3) student code of conduct; and (C.4) quality assurance procedures for faculty and students. Semi-structured interviews of seven UPSOM key informants and stakeholders plus UPSOM-NU partnership documents were analyzed in the context of the conceptual framework (RQ2), at which time additional elements revealed through the case study – Phase 1 (A.7) transparency and accountability and (A.8) institutional flexibility; Phase 2 (B.5) curriculum planning and development and (B.6) hard and soft project management skills – and a new Phase 4: Evaluation and Sustainability were integrated into the conceptual framework. This revised conceptual framework provides key elements for each phase of a cross-border education partnership that can be used as a guide by future institutions considering their own partnerships (RQ3).

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

The emergence of a globalized society and an interconnected world has prompted institutions of higher education in the United States and around the world to pursue international partnerships on an unprecedented scale (Zolfaghari, et al, 2009). These initiatives are near the core missions of universities and represent valuable strategic opportunities. International engagement has been a focus of the University of Pittsburgh to varying degrees for many years. In particular, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) has had a significant increase in the number of cross-border partnerships over the last 10 years (UPSOM, 2018).

For example, the Ri.MED Foundation was created in 2006 as an international partnership among the Italian government, the Region of Sicily, UPSOM, and UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center). Since 2007, Ri.Med has sponsored research fellowships at UPSOM for young Italian investigators. These Ri.Med scientists will form the core faculty of the new Biomedical Research and Biotechnology Center to be built in Sicily (UPSOM, 2018).

In 2011, an agreement was established with Tsinghua University, one of China's elite institutions of higher learning for science and technology. A significant portion of students at Tsinghua's relatively new medical school spend two years in Pittsburgh immersed in biomedical research. This partnership was renewed in 2017 for another five-year term (UPSOM, 2018).

In 2012, a collaboration was also begun with China's Central South University Xiangya School of Medicine, for which Pitt provides two years of rigorous biomedical research training to medical students. Consequently, in 2014, Xiangya Hospital formed a partnership with UPMC to establish an international medical center to improve patient care in the region (UPSOM, 2018).

The present case study focuses on a partnership that began in 2012 between UPSOM and the Republic of Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University (NU) to establish a new medical school in the republic's capital, Astana. UPSOM has collaborated with NU to institute a U.S.-style curriculum; design and develop teaching facilities; help recruit and train school leaders and faculty; plan organizational and administrative structures, policies, and procedures; and develop courses, syllabi, and clinical experiences with the participation of physician-educators from Kazakhstan and around the globe (UPSOM, 2018). In 2015, the NU School of Medicine welcomed its first class of 20 students, followed by a second class of 34 students in 2016, a third class of 20 students in 2017 and a fourth class of 28 in 2018. (A.Arita, personal communication, April 19, 2018 and M. McDonald, personal communication, October 23, 2018).

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As surveyed in Chapter 2, the literature addressing the rationale, principles, standards, and evaluation of cross-border education partnerships has grown in parallel with the rise of internationalization of higher education. However, published codes and principles of good practice do not always align with the actual planning and implementation of a new international partnership, are not readily found, and are therefore not always sought out by those seeking to

engage in such initiatives. This case study explores the UPSOM and NU partnership in the context of a conceptual framework of the essential elements of a cross-border education partnership derived from the literature and from preliminary research on this case.

The literature review explored four themes: 1) the evolution and increase of cross-border education partnerships; 2) international principles and standards for planning and implementing cross-border educational partnerships; 3) how a cross-border education partnership is established; and 4) the potential benefit and risks of a cross-border educational partnership.

The preliminary research included interviews and document review related to the partnership between UPSOM and NU, focusing on the role and contributions of each interviewee in the partnership. Three key informants integral to establishing and implementing the collaboration were interviewed to obtain their input, including any pertinent documents and suggestions for additional stakeholders who could provide additional perspective on the collaboration. Seven other stakeholders were interviewed: two senior administrative leaders, two UPSOM faculty, one financial administrator, one attorney, and one librarian.

This study explores the following questions:

RQ1: What are the emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border partnerships?

RQ2: How do the elements of this conceptual framework describe the UPSOM and NU cross-border educational partnership case in each of the three phases: developing the partnership, developing the program, and implementing the program?

RQ3: How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships?

RQ1 was addressed through the literature review and preliminary research in Chapters 2 and 3, which provided the data needed to develop the conceptual framework for RQ2 in Chapter 4. Data from the case study research was analyzed in the context of this conceptual framework to address RQ3 in Chapter 5.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Countries, as well students, are in search of a high-quality educational experience, which has made international education a multi-billion-dollar business (Shanahan & McParlane, 2005, p. 220). The exportation of transnational programs has increased mainly due to significant revenue generation, yet exploration and characterization of the complexities of cross-border educational programs is lacking. Indeed, there is minimal research or literature on the creation of a cross-border higher education partnership, how existing partnerships came to fruition, or whether they achieved their goals. An analysis of the implementation of educational programs and their successes or failures is lacking, such that universities seeking to pursue cross-border education partnerships have no guidance based on actual experience in the context of published principles and standards. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the motivation, development and implementation of a cross-border education partnership of UPSOM and NU in the context of published recommendations to better understand the essential elements of this process.

## 1.4 PURPOSE

Indeed, UPSOM leadership could not find a model to inform their negotiations for a cross-border education partnership with NU, so they started from scratch, identifying their own guiding principles, essential resources, requirements, and timelines as revealed in the preliminary research. In examining both the literature and the UPSOM-NU case study, my goal is to develop a conceptual framework that captures the essential elements of a cross-border partnership over three phases: 1) developing the partnership; 2) developing the program; and 3) implementing the program. The knowledge gained from this study may be useful for academic medical schools as well as other educational institutions that plan to develop cross-border education partnerships in the future.

## 1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework was derived from six published principles of cross-border education partnerships identified through a review of the literature: 1) *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* by The Council of Europe (2002); 2) *Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals* by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (2003); 3) *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide* by the International Association of Universities, et al (2005); 4) *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO)) (2005); 5) *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* by the Forum on Education Abroad (2015); and 6) *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* by the American Council on Education, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (2015).

Chapter 2 surveys the literature (Appendix A). Essential Elements of a Cross-border Partnership, (Appendix B), is a table summarizing 14 elements essential for a cross-border partnership derived from the literature and organized according to partnership phase. The 14 elements from this emerging conceptual framework are also categorized by Knight's four rationales of internationalization (2004a): 1) economic rationale, 2) political rationale, 3) socio-cultural rationale, and 4) academic rationale (Appendix C). Chapter 3 utilized the literature to develop and inform the Conceptual Framework (original) of Cross-Border Partnerships (Appendix D) and provide the study methodology as well as the background and history of UPSOM and Kazakhstan and NU. Responses from the preliminary research interviews will likewise be coded both by element and phase and integrated with the conceptual framework derived from the literature. This composite conceptual framework will then provide an analytic tool for coding interview and document data collected in this case study in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will summarize findings, provide a revised conceptual framework based on the data analysis and findings, analyze the implications of practice, policy and research and provide recommendations for future research.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Despite numerous reports in the literature about internationalization and globalization in higher education, little research or data are available on the actual implementation of these guidelines, and none specifically in an international academic medical school collaboration. There are few systematic studies of specific cross-border educational partnerships. Overall, this study aimed to contribute to the limited literature on the motivations, drivers, experiences, and outcomes of a cross-border medical school partnership. This study will add value to the future development of higher education in the United States and abroad for those institutions looking to pursue a cross-border education partnership.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **2.1 DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT**

Sydney J. Harris, an American journalist for the Chicago Daily News and later for the Chicago Sun Times, once said, “The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows” (1978, p. 7d). Staring into a mirror produces only one’s own reflection and perhaps a peripheral view behind, while gazing out a window provides an expansive forward view beyond oneself. This quote captures the growing phenomena of internationalization and globalization in many disciplines, especially in higher education.

The internationalization of higher education integrates an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service elements of an institution (Knight & International Association of Universities, 2006). The international content of the curriculum, the movement of faculty and students, and the international assistance are key factors in why institutions participate in international higher education collaborations. Internationalization is often confused with globalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007). “Globalization is a basic element to qualify and internationalize higher education” (Zolfaghari et al, 2009, p. 3). Globalization is both an international and an intranational force, while global education is a teaching/learning paradigm. Lane and Kinser (2011) identify national competitiveness through globalization and “increased recognition that higher education is important for the economic development of many nations.”

A deep understanding of global issues, intercultural knowledge, and open lines of communication are necessary for the internationalization of higher education. Historic events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the emergence of the United States as the main military power, the creation of the European Union (EU), the move toward a knowledge-based society, and the horrific events of September 11, 2001 all underscore the need to understand global issues and expand our intercultural knowledge (de Wit, 2002). These concepts of internationalization and globalization have various meanings, depending on situational context. The pressures of globalization have forced institutions to respond through the internationalization of educational programs, such as cross-border educational partnerships.

Development and delivery of curriculum across borders comes under different guises. Domestic higher education is when an institution operates in only one country; cross-border higher education involves at least two countries and two governments (Lane & Kinser, 2011). Throughout the literature, concepts are used inconsistently, and many terms are used interchangeably. Terms such as “offshore education,” “borderless education,” “transnational education,” and “cross-border education” are similar concepts with varying meanings (OECD, 2004, 2005; OECD & International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank, 2007; UNESCO and Council of Europe, 2002; Wende, 2003). This literature review uses the definition by Knight (2006a) and the term “cross-border,” which emphasizes the crossing of national jurisdictional borders by teachers, students, curricula, institutions, and/or course materials. The use of cross-border educational partnership or cross-border curriculum partnership highlights the focus on partnerships established to transpose the curriculum of the “home” institution across to the “host” institution (Coleman, 2003; Waterval, Frambach, Driessen, & Scherpbier, 2015).

In higher education specifically, institutions throughout the world have formed various models to globalize education. “Higher education has become a real part of the globalization process: the cross-border matching of supply and demand”(Qiang, 2003, p. 248). Higher education institutions are seeking cross-border education partnerships, cross-border curriculum partnerships, cooperative agreements, academic franchising, and replication of existing schools and programs to define themselves as global institutions of higher learning. Most models focus on curriculum and delivery of instruction as the main activity.

As Knight (2014) observed, mobility has moved from people (students, faculty, scholars) to program (twinning, franchise, virtual) to provider (branch campus) and most recently to the concentrated development of education hubs, such as in Dubai. Lane (2011) defines an international branch campus as “an entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; engages in at least some face-to-face teaching; and provides access to an entire academic program that leads to a credential awarded by the foreign education provider” (p.5). There has been a shift from a cooperative development framework to a partnership model and to a commercial and competitiveness model in which traditional mobility approaches have been turned into a substantial and worldwide business of international student recruitment (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). There has been “a shift from one of aid to one of trade” in the relationship of universities with international students (Coleman, 2003, p. 355).

International higher education collaborations are on the rise, and it is important to understand why these relationships are formed, how they are formed, and their risks and benefits. Sakamoto and Chapman (2011) noted that “As cross-border partnerships expand in number, size and complexity, the need to more fully understand the ingredients of success increases” (p.4).

One of the main drivers that influence international higher education collaborations is the underlying premise of internationalization. The literature illustrates the complexity and difficulty in defining the term, with many interpretations used, depending on the approach, or approaches, the higher education institution takes. A country's interpretation of internationalization evolves based on its own culture, national identity, and commitment to approaches of internationalization.

de Wit (2002) identified five scenarios describing why stakeholders engage in the internationalization process: 1) There are strong reasons within and between different stakeholders' groups. 2) Generally, stakeholders do not have one exclusive reason for internationalization. 3) Reasons may differ between stakeholders' groups and within stakeholders' groups. 4) Priorities in reasons may change over time and may change by country and region. 5) In most cases, reasons have more implicit than explicit motives for internationalization (p.224).

This literature review examined 1) the evolution and key reasons for the increase of cross-border education partnerships, 2) key dimensions of successful cross-border educational partnerships based on published principles and standards, 3) framework for implementing a cross-border education partnership, and 4) the benefits and risks of a cross-border educational partnership.

This review of cross-border educational partnerships was accomplished through a search of the Database of Research on International Education as the primary source as well as data from Google Scholar, ERIC, and PubMed and was limited to publications in English. Three categories of search terms were applied: cross-border higher education, offshore higher education, and international higher education partnerships. Selected references drawn from

articles found in the initial search were added when appropriate. After combing through the relevant articles and books, each text was grouped under one of the four areas examined as noted above. All citations were downloaded from March 2016 through June 2018 to gather the most current reports in the field.

## **2.2 KEY REASONS FOR THE INCREASE OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Just as there are several definitions of internationalization, there are several rationales and motivations for why the internationalization of higher education occurs and has increased over the past decade. Throughout the literature, internationalization is an underlying reason for the increase in international collaborations. The 2000 Memorandum on Education Policy from President Bill Clinton helped fuel the continuing wave of internationalization: “To continue to compete successfully in the global economy and to maintain our role as a world leader, the United States needs to ensure that its citizens develop a broad understanding of the world, proficiency in other languages and knowledge of other cultures” (Clinton, 2000, para. 1).

Knight, deWit, and the European Association for International Education (1997) identified two sets of motivations for internationalization: economic and political, and cultural and educational. In a follow-up study, Knight (2006a) classified these two groups into four discrete rationales : economic, political, socio-cultural and academic. (p.23) (Appendix C)

1. *Economic*: economic growth and competitiveness, labor market, and financial incentives for institutions and governments
2. *Political*: foreign policy, national security, technical assistance, peace and mutual

understanding, national identity, and regional identity

3. *Socio-cultural*: national cultural identity, intercultural understanding, citizenship development, society
4. *Academic*: international dimension to research and teaching, extension of academic horizon, institution building, profile and status, enhancement of quality, and international academic standards

These rationales were not randomly chosen, but appear in other international development and social science literature (e.g. Kandel, 1936; Paulston, 1977; Feinberg and Soltis, 2009; Weidman, et al, 2014; Weidman 2016). Knight's four rationales of internationalization were utilized as the basis to categorize key reasons noted in the literature for the increase of cross-border higher education partnerships. In addition, the following sections provide a deeper understanding of each rationale as an early introduction to cross-border partnership development.

### **2.2.1 Economic rationale**

This rationale focuses on the short- and long-term economic effects of internationalization on the higher education institution. The short-term effects are direct benefits, such as increased income, increased student interest, and knowledge transfer. The long-term benefits are increased international competitiveness and, ultimately, a properly trained and skilled workforce. Economics and financial gains are a primary motive for many institutions to engage in the export of education products and curriculum development. "If one is to ensure that improving the quality of higher education is the primary goal of internationalization, not the development of

international export markets, it is essential to find the balance between income generating motives and academic benefits” (Knight, 1997, p.10).

Home institutions have determined that, if negotiated properly, international partnerships can be a significant revenue stream while achieving the institution’s internationalization and globalization goals. International higher education initiatives exist in almost every country. Institutions from developed countries, especially the large English-speaking nations and, to a lesser extent, larger EU countries, “reap the main financial benefits and control most programs” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p.294). The host countries “buying” services are, for the most part, Asian and Latin American middle-income countries. Even though the host countries are “buying” educational services, many have determined that it is more cost effective to bring the expertise to their country than to export students across borders.

### **2.2.2 Political rationale**

Across the world, many new policies and legislative measures have put cross-border education at the forefront of internationalization and globalization efforts in higher education. The Sorbonne Declaration and the Bologna Process are the most well-known initiatives to advance globalization and increased collaborations (Fegan & Field, 2009). The Sorbonne Declaration was signed in 1998 by the ministers of four countries: France, Germany, United Kingdom (UK), and Italy. The aim of the Declaration was to create a common frame of reference within the intended European Higher Education Area, where mobility was to be promoted for both students and graduates as well as for the teaching staff, and to ensure the promotion of qualifications, with regard to the job market (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998).

The Bologna Process, signed in June 1999 by ministers of education in 29 European countries, is a three-level model for courses intended to facilitate international recognition and mobility. The Process started as a model to bring order to the European higher education arena so university degrees would be more comparable throughout Europe; it represents a collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers, and students together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organizations, and institutions, including the European Commission. The Process introduces a three-cycle system of bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees as a unified platform across Europe. The goal was to provide a strengthened quality assurance system and easier recognition of qualifications and periods of study across European institutions of higher education (The Bologna Process, 2011).

There are similar but less prominent initiatives in Japan, China, Taiwan, and Germany, and non-state actors such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and nongovernmental organizations have programs that range from state-based to global education delivery standards. Rotberg (2004, p. xi) writes, “When a country is subject to major societal shifts – political, demographic or economic – it focuses attention on its educational system and seeks to reform that system so it becomes more consistent with the changing societal context.” Almost all discourse surrounds the notion of the influences of globalization and the need for higher education to internationalize to provide an across-border education (Fegan & Field, 2009).

Knight (1997) observed that “Education, especially higher education, is often considered as a form of diplomatic investment for future political and economic relations”

(p.9). Such investment in foreign students as future ambassadors for the sponsoring country could lead to improved diplomatic or economic relationships years down the line.

### **2.2.3 Cultural and social rationale**

Knight (1997) observed that “The preservation and promotion of national culture is a strong motivation for those countries which consider internationalization as a way to respect cultural diversity and counter balance the perceived homogenizing effect of globalization” (p.11). With their enhanced intercultural understanding and communication, graduates of education programs born out of internationalization efforts bring a strong knowledge and skill base back to their home country. Integration of such intercultural understanding and communication is essential, however, as observed by Fegan & Field (p.17), “Reforming structures and systems without simultaneous reform in thinking will merely repeat what has preceded, but in new skins.”

### **2.2.4 Academic rationale**

One of the main reasons cited in the literature for the internationalization of higher education is the desire for high quality international academic standards for teaching and research, as identified above with the Bologna Process. Sutton and Obst (2011) recognize both that academic internationalization is as much a process of outward engagement as internal restructuring, and the increasing need for academic institutions to position themselves within emerging global systems of higher education (p. xii). The first theme envisions the best programs in the world globalizing their programs by transferring knowledge to another institution. The second theme recognizes competition among top tier institutions for a place at the globalization table, as the

motivation for increased interest in international partnerships. “International collaboration brings international recognition to those thus engaged and sets the stage for further international work and outreach” (Sutton & Obst, 2011). The main concept explored by Sutton and Obst is that “what happens outside of institutions can change what happens within them” (p. xvii). If a strategic partner is chosen, and the partnership is successful, the international partnership can be transformative for the main partner institution.

The host countries benefit because they contribute to the internationalization of higher education, aid in the training of a skilled workforce, retain students, and enhance their country’s geopolitical status. Benefits to home institutions include financial gains, enhancement of institutional profile, expansion of student base, enhanced opportunities for student and staff mobility, development of new curricula, research and development, and strategic network building (McBurnie & Pollock, 2000; Wilkins & Huisman 2012). Both home and host institutions benefit from sharing educational resources, creating knowledge, reviewing and addressing common issues, and preparing students to appreciate and understand each other’s cultures to work together for a better tomorrow. The next section will summarize the six existing standards and guiding principles in the literature and utilize Knight’s four rationales for internationalization by element.

## 2.3 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

International higher education collaborations are a recent phenomenon for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The literature is limited to either generic overarching concepts or specific elements of a particular educational collaboration. The six existing standards and guiding principles of strategic cross-border educational partnerships are: 1) Council of Europe, *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* (2001); 2) New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, *Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-US Nationals* (2003); 3) International Association of Universities, et al, *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide* (2005); 4) OECD/UNESCO *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* (2005); 5) Forum on Education Abroad, *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2015); and 6) American Council on Education *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (2015).

The most recent and comprehensive document identified that summarizes published literature and best practices of cross-border educational collaborations is *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* by the American Council on Education, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (2015). As the Council stated in its introduction, “a one-size-fits-all set of standards would not adequately address the nuances of international partnership development by U.S. Institutions.” The chronological review of all six of these works therefore focuses on existing best practices that reflect key elements of successful cross-border higher education partnerships (Appendix A).

### **2.3.1 The UNESCO/Council of Europe, *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* (2001)**

The *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* (Council of Europe, 2001) was the first guideline to offer direction to institutions interested in internationalization activities. This document grew out of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications regarding Higher Education in Europe sponsored in 1997 by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. This convention has come to be known as the Lisbon Convention, and the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee was developed to implement the convention goals.

The Code of Good Practice identifies 11 principles for home and host institutions to consider prior to finalizing collaborations (principles listed in Appendix A): structured legally binding agreements, access to higher education, mission statement, legal agency, promotional material, cultural awareness, faculty and staff qualifications, admission standards, academic quality standards, academic workload, and degree standards.

These 11 principles launched the development of standards in international education and cross-border partnerships. Several principles might be considered common sense but must nonetheless be made explicit. Left unstated is how institutions enforce and monitor what is promised while adhering to social, cultural, and national standards of both institutions, though some principles are intentionally left vague so as to provide room for the home and host country to define the term “comparable standards” (ACE CIGE 2015, p. 5). Home institutions (most likely the American-based institutions) need to fully research the host country to understand current educational standards, and, if they are not comparable with the host institution, the differences need to be discussed, and a plan to accommodate the gap due to these differences must be implemented. Competent and trained staff in each area from both partners, home and

host institutions, should be assigned to the appropriate portion of the initiative, and competencies must be matched appropriately. Partnerships cannot be rushed. Time must be taken at the outset of the process to fully understand the educational system, the people, and the culture in each country to ensure clarity and an understanding of ideas and perspectives from both home and host institutions.

The last five principles define responsibilities for legal agreements between partners and for specifying the proposed programs' degree requirements. Because this Code was developed when higher education partnerships were just beginning and early partnerships involved home institutions creating satellite campuses at the host institutions, most principles focused on responsibilities, legal agreements, and degree requirements. Since 2001, international partnerships have grown into many forms of collaborations, and the limited published principles and guidelines have expanded in the intervening years to address these new models.

### **2.3.2 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, *Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-US Nationals* (2003)**

In 2003, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education amended a document that was written in 1990 and first amended in 1997 entitled, *Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-US Nationals* (NEASC/CIHE, 2003). This document provides 10 principles for engaging in international educational endeavors: institutional mission, authorization, instructional program, resources, admissions and records, students, control and administration, ethics and public

disclosure, contractual arrangements and distance education. The Principles are based on the following basic assumptions, as stated in the Preamble (p.47):

1. “The accredited institution is responsible for whatever is done in its name.
2. U.S. accredited institutions operating abroad are guests in another country; they become knowledgeable about and respect the laws and customs of the other country and, consistent with their mission, enhance the community in which they operate.
3. The accredited institution bears the responsibility to assure that the international entity does not claim for itself or infer any accredited status other than that held by the accredited institution.
4. The accrediting commission retains the right to review overseas international programs for non-U.S. nationals on evaluation cycles different from those established for the home institution.
5. The accredited institution is expected to bear the costs of reviews and visits required by the accrediting commission.
6. Unless exceptions are stated explicitly, the Principles supplement but do not supplant the accrediting commission’s stated criteria and requirements for accreditation” (p. 47).

This document is very similar to the Lisbon Convention *Code of Good Practice*, except the *Principles of Good Practice* focuses on the rights, responsibilities, and due diligence of the United States institutions, whereas the *Code* refers to best practices for both the host and home institutions.

### **2.3.3 International Association of Universities, et al, *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide (2005)***

As internationalization spurred globalization efforts in higher education all across the world, an additional document was released in 2005 by the International Association of Universities (with the American Council on Education and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation) and by the OECD in collaboration with UNESCO. In January, the International Association of Universities and others developed the *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide* (International Associations of Universities, et al, 2005), which summarizes considerations to be taken by both home and host institutions prior to engaging in an international agreement with an emphasis on impact rather than procedural detail. Overall, these principles focus on maximizing contributions and benefits to each partner at all levels (education, economic, social, cultural) and ensuring equity and accountability. The home and host institution are each advised to review the eight principles internally, identify an action plan for satisfying them, and then meet to align goals and objectives (Appendix A).

The International Association of Universities , et al (2005) makes the following recommendations for implementing the published principles:

- “Become conversant with issues surrounding cross-border education and trade to inform the exchange among associations and their associations’ engagement in a constructive dialogue with governments.
- Strive to ensure that higher education across borders contributes to the broader social and economic well-being of communities in the host country, is culturally sensitive in

its approach and content, and strengthens local higher education capacity by, for example, cooperating, when appropriate, with local institutions.

- Improve access to programs and courses by providing support to qualified students from other countries with financial need.
- Obtain the proper authorization to operate as a higher education institution from government or other competent bodies in the home and host countries. At the same time, governments and competent bodies should increase their collaboration, transparency, and information sharing in order to alleviate the administrative burden on higher education institutions.
- Build a culture of ongoing quality review, feedback, and improvement by creating robust quality assurance processes at the institutional level which rely heavily on faculty expertise and incorporate the views of students.
- Cooperate with their associations as well as with relevant governmental and nongovernmental bodies to develop effective quality assurance principles and practices and apply them to cross-border activities.
- Cooperate with relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies to improve the international exchange of information and cooperation on quality assurance and recognition issues.
- Provide reliable information to the public, students and governments in a proactive manner, particularly with respect to the institution's legal status, award granting authority, course offerings, quality assurance mechanisms, as well as other relevant facts as suggested by codes of good practice" (p. 3-4).

These principles and recommendations were set forth to guide higher education institutions when cross-border partnerships were a recently new phenomenon. Several instruments were a representative sample of what was used to develop these principles and recommendations such as: UNESCO regional conventions on the recognition of academic qualifications and credentials; UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education and many other initiatives developed from OECD and UNESCO. The goal was to address the need for international policy frameworks for cross-border education partnerships “to enhance equity, access and quality of higher education.” (International Association of Universities, et al, 2015, p. 6)

#### **2.3.4 OECD/UNESCO, *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* (2005)**

In 2003, the UNESCO Director-General was invited by the General Conference of UNESCO to develop guidelines for cross-border higher education. UNESCO, in collaboration with the OECD, developed eight guidelines, published in 2005 (OECD, 2005), to be used as best practices to address six stakeholders in higher education: governments, higher education institutions, student bodies, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, academic recognition bodies, and professional bodies. These guidelines were developed around the quality of education with the intent of protecting students and stakeholders from accreditation mills (guidelines can be found in Appendix A).

The guidelines also focused on four challenges faced by the internationalization of education: 1) national capacity for quality assurance accreditation often does not cover cross-border education; 2) national systems may have limited knowledge and experience dealing with

cross-border higher education; 3) the increasing need to obtain national recognition of foreign qualifications has posed challenges to national recognition bodies; and 4) the increasing possibility of obtaining low-quality qualifications could harm the professions and undermine professional qualifications (OECD, 2005)

### **2.3.5 Forum on Education Abroad, *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2015)**

In 2015, the Forum on Education Abroad amended the 2005, 2008 and 2011 versions of *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015). When the Forum on Education Abroad was launched in California in May 2000 by a group of international educators that recognized the need to organize, internationalization was on the rise, but nothing existed in terms of published best practices or standards. Primarily, home institutions developed their own standards as they went through the process for each program under development. From the beginning, the Forum's priority was to develop best practices and set standards. They identified nine standards and provided a set of points to use in assessing achievement of each standard (standards listed in Appendix A).

Of the nine standards, the Student Learning and Development and the Organizational and Program Resources and Academic Framework standards are most useful for partnerships with a primary focus of developing a curriculum abroad. Students should be the main focus of any cross-border education partnership. Engaging in an international agreement is a daunting undertaking, and some agreements take on a life of their own and lose sight of the students. To

assess progress toward meeting the standards of Student Learning and Development and Academic Framework, the home and host institutions must ensure that:

- “The organization’s mission, goals, and operations prioritize student learning and development.
- Educational objectives remain central to program design and management.
- Regular evaluations are conducted to assess student learning and development.
- Organizations seek to create and maintain continuity with student learning and development on the home campus” (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015, p. 4).

Similarly, adequate resources must be provided by each side to make the partnership successful. The *Standards for Good Practice* recommend that each institution: qualify its commitment and investment in the partnership; ensure that its programs are adequately funded and staffed; ensure that faculty and staff are qualified for their roles, fairly compensated, and appropriately trained, with workloads that enable them to support the educational goals of the program and devote sufficient time to their students; fund programs at levels that ensure safe, clean, and hospitable student housing; provide extra-curricular activities that support the program’s educational aims; supports responsible health, safety, and security measures; and ensures that facilities and infrastructure are suited to realizing the program goals, providing a safe environment that is conducive to learning, and accommodating students of varying needs and abilities (Forum on Education Abroad, 2015)

Home and host institutions can use assessment tools to evaluate their positions and help define goals and objectives of the partnerships prior to engagement. I feel that the 2015 *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* represents the most useful published tool for

home and host institutions to use in evaluating their individual and shared goals and objectives prior to engaging in a cross-border partnership. Each of the nine guidelines provides a statement, a set of queries for evaluation and corresponding interactive activities on The Forum website. This publication provides a multi-level and interactive approach to review guiding principles as well as a framework for implementation of the standards on The Forum on Education Abroad website.

### **2.3.6 American Council on Education, *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (2015)**

Of all publications reviewed, the *Global Review* best captures both the evolution of principles and standards since 2001 and how these practices provide comprehensive themes for the development, implementation, and management of a cross-border education partnership (ACE CIGE, 2015). Upon review of prior standards documents, the American Council on Education (ACE) (2015) developed four themes in two areas, *Program Administration and Management* and *Cultural and Contextual Issues*, as discussed below (areas and themes listed in Appendix A).

#### **2.3.6.1 Transparency (Area: *Program Administration and Management*)**

Transparency refers to clarity in all information and communication exchanged between the home and host institution. All information and communication must be clear, accurate, and timely. Any language barriers must be addressed through the use of a translator. Transparency is especially important in describing the partnership as well as policies and procedures relating to

the management of the partnership and its finances. The itemized description of the partnership is a primary document that defines key elements of the partnership, including, but not limited to, overall goal and objectives, scope of work, milestones, schedule, and budget documents. Even though these items may seem clear, each key element must be thoroughly reviewed and agreed upon by both the home and the host institution. In terms of the students, information regarding enrollment and tuition must be communicated to all applicants, and policies about student resources must be readily available. Every known detail must be addressed prior to engagement in the process. If there are gaps due to “unknowns” along the way, the home and host country need to review the gap and provide a remedy in a timely fashion (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 8).

#### ***2.3.6.2 Faculty and Staff Engagement (Area: Program Administration and Management)***

Qualified, engaged, and committed staff and faculty are instrumental to a successful international higher education partnership. A defined organizational structure, outlining the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders is a necessity. Upon development of a contract, milestones, staffing, and funding must be consistently monitored. There is usually a staff member designated at both the home and host institution who assists with day-to-day management of the partnership. A new trend is the creation of the position of director of international partnerships, whose sole focus is internationalization activities (ACE CIGE 2015, p. 10).

Not only should administrative structures at both the home and host institution be defined and evaluated, so should appropriate qualifications for existing faculty and staff as well as employment policies for new hires. Specifically, human resources policies at the host institution need to undergo a thorough review to ensure that tenure and promotion policies do not interfere with faculty mobility and participation in international activities. Fair salary levels need to be

reviewed, and faculty who will need to travel extensively should have some form of additional compensation to deter turnover. There must be ongoing support and engagement of the faculty and staff. Adequate working conditions need to be secured and agreed upon; recognizing that what is acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in another. Participation in important academic decisions will ensure buy in and commitment. Professional development opportunities are also a popular motivation of additional compensation. Engaged and happy faculty who are not overwhelmed can keep the partnership moving in the right direction (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 11).

Indeed, ACE identified four strategies for faculty engagement specific to international partnerships: 1) “Capitalize on the enthusiasm of faculty champions; 2) Create programs and policies to engage more faculty in existing relationships abroad; 3) Find opportunities for long-term engagement, but short-term stays; and 4) Emphasize networking and multifunctional relationships” (ACE CIGE 2015, p.12).

Developing faculty research needs additional review. Challenges include obtaining grants from funding agencies that are primarily geared toward domestic projects, steering through the institutional review board policies that were created and designed based on U.S. models of research, and working with host institutions that do not have a research infrastructure in place. The offices of human resources, tax management, general counsel, and risk management should work to develop guidelines for faculty research (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 13). Open lines of communication at both the home and host institution require commitment from senior leadership to review and amend existing research policies to accommodate globalization efforts and make research endeavors successful.

### **2.3.6.3 Quality Assurance (Area: Program Administration and Management)**

Shared goals and objectives must be reviewed and agreed upon by both the home and host institution. Both the home and host institution must feel confident that both institutions are a good match to develop a successful partnership. Ongoing internal and external assessments need to be conducted throughout the partnership. A risk assessment of the proposed program must cover physical, cultural, financial, legal, and reputational risks. An evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness is needed to meet agreed upon terms and conditions of the partnership agreement. When deficiencies are determined, corrections and improvements must be implemented.

Accreditation is always the foundation of quality assurance efforts. The home and host institution need to develop programs on the basis of where the program will be accredited and the requirements of the accrediting bodies. However, OECD (2005) *Guidelines for Quality Provision* note that “While in some countries, the national frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications take into account cross-border higher education, in many countries they are still not geared to addressing the challenges of cross-border provision ... [and] the lack of comprehensive frameworks for coordinating various initiatives at the international level ... create gaps in the quality assurance of cross-border higher education, leaving some cross-border higher education provision outside any framework of quality assurance and accreditation” (p. 15). OECD determined that additional quality assurance measures must be taken in addition to accreditation initiatives, and key stakeholders consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators need to meet frequently to review academic and administrative effectiveness. Such assessments should be used as a valuable tool to create a culture of continual improvement to make the partnership a success (ACE CIGE 2015).

#### ***2.3.6.4 Strategic Planning (Area: Program Administration and Management)***

The published principles provide guidance for individual partnerships, but it is important to understand how these partnerships align with institutional strategic planning. Internationalization has infiltrated higher education over the past two decades, and it is no wonder that institutional partnerships have evolved as rapidly as they have in past years. No single partnership, collaboration, or program can be copied verbatim. Each partnership is unique and must be customized to the culture of the host institution. ACE explains that even when the goals of an institution are not clearly defined, the goals of advancing diversity, enhancing faculty research, promoting community engagement, and increasing visibility of the institution can serve as the overarching goals of an international partnership.

ACE has defined a Model for Comprehensive Internationalization that identifies six key areas that require institution-wide attention: 1) “Articulated institutional commitment; 2) Administrative leadership, structure and staffing; 3) Curriculum, co-curriculum and learning outcomes; 4) Faculty policies and practices; 5) Student mobility; and 6) Collaboration and partnerships” (ACE 2015, p. 18).

When institutions have an experienced international office to assist with cross-border partnerships, resources are readily available. If an institution is prepared with appropriate experience and resources to engage in an international partnership, that is half the battle of getting it up and running.

Commitment from senior leadership reinforces momentum for the partnership. This is the most prevalent theme for a successful partnership. If the partnership is orchestrated correctly

from the home institution, the host institution will see its commitment and dedication to the project, which is essential from a cross-cultural standpoint. ACE also determined that there must be a balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches. For example, signing of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) at some host institutions can take months because the process must go through a long review and signature chain all the way to the president. There needs to be a balance for day-to-day issues and delegation to staff members who can make independent decisions (ACE CIGE 2015, p. 20)

#### ***2.3.6.5 Cultural Awareness (Area: Cultural and Contextual Issues)***

The second main area of the ACE standards focuses on cultural and contextual issues and specifically “the understanding that cultural differences present both challenges and opportunities” (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 21). The home institution must thoroughly research the host institution in terms of the geographic location, current state of the host country’s higher education system, and cultural context of the environment. For example, in curriculum development, cultural differences often exist in teaching methods – single lecturer versus team-based, grading practices, and faculty relationships with students. Faculty are a key asset to understanding and managing cultural differences. Language barriers are also an important consideration, and training programs should be made available to ensure that those participating can be successful. The home institution must recognize and acknowledge the difficulty of the host institution operating and conducting business outside their native language and remain patient when dealing with miscommunication (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 22). Cultural awareness itself is a key learning outcome of international partnerships, and all partnership activities should help faculty, staff, and administrators develop cultural awareness by learning about the host

country and its culture, customs, and beliefs. Indeed, some home institutions have orientation programs to teach their personnel how to become acclimated in the host country.

#### ***2.3.6.6 Access and Equity (Area: Cultural and Contextual Issues)***

An important item for consideration is admissions and financial aid, with fair and equitable policies and procedures for student selection designed to ensure that a diverse cohort has access to the institution. The same goal of promoting diversity should be considered in hiring faculty and staff. Programs should be widely publicized, especially in areas where residents may not be aware of the opportunities. To accommodate students with limited resources, a mechanism for financial aid should be available to those in need. Most home institutions provide guidance to the host institution on this issue and help find funding and/or exchange programs. Funding is critical, but so are other sources of aid, such as student services, technology, housing, and co-curricular activities (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 25).

ACE also determined that equity is important in terms of collaborating partners. Sutton (2015) observed that “Successful partnerships ... are alliances among co-principals, with shared rights, responsibilities and commitment” in which trust is developed, opportunistic actions are rejected, and “there is respect for independence as well as partnership” (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 26). Both the home and the host institutions must consider and evaluate the immediate and the long-term benefits of the partnership agreement.

### ***2.3.6.7 Institutional and Human-Capacity Building (Area: Cultural and Contextual Issues)***

The institutional and human-capacity building should advance individuals, systems of higher education, communities, and ultimately society as a whole. Faculty, staff, students, administrators, and other key stakeholders participating in an international partnership should develop new broader skills and attitudes, including leadership, critical thinking, and information synthesis skills. At the institutional level, partners should complement and cooperate rather than compete with each other or other local institutions. In addition, the standards identify research and quality assurance as important areas that can build capacity for other higher education systems. Lastly, both the home and host institution need to be aware of how the partnership and programs will affect the surrounding community (ACE CIGE 2015, pp. 27-28).

### ***2.3.6.8 Ethical Dilemmas and Negotiated Space (Area: Cultural and Contextual Issues)***

Due to the complexity of international partnerships, it is common for situations to occur in which good practices are not clear between the home and host institution. Depending on the economic climate of the region, there could be a resource imbalance, and the question as to whether resources are inadequate or just not equivalent to those available in the United States must be clarified early in negotiations. Often, the home institution will assist the host institution when addressing resource imbalances, such as in the area of technology, to implement joint activities. Such engagement is often viewed as capacity building for the partnership (ACE CIGE 2015, p, 30).

One of the most controversial and ethical dilemmas in international partnerships is academic freedom. Two sources defining academic freedom are the International Association of

Universities statement on *Academic Freedom, University Autonomy and Social Responsibility* and UNESCO's 1997 *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel*, which outlines norms and standards for the employment of educators working at institutions of higher education worldwide.

Recently, the American Association of Universities developed *Principles and Guidelines for Establishing Joint Academic Programs and Campuses Abroad* that directly address academic freedom in international partnerships: "Academic freedom is the freedom of university faculty members and students to produce and disseminate knowledge through research, teaching and service without undue constraint" (ACE CIGE 2015, p. 31). These guidelines encourage institutions developing an international partnership to include a commitment to commonly accepted principles of academic freedom and unrestricted access to information through the Internet.

There will ultimately be issues that surface over the course of the partnership, even when following the standards and best practices as a guide. Some issues will take time, but the most problematic course of action is inaction. Open lines of communication with mutual respect will assist with partnership development. Patti Peterson, ACE's presidential advisor for global initiatives, uses the term "negotiated space." She observes, "When institutional partners come together to engage in academic cooperation, it is imperative that all parties lay out their expectations for ethical behavior and good practice. To be silent or hope for the best will not form the foundation of an effective partnership. International partnerships are ultimately a matter of negotiated space, hopefully between honorable and well-intended parties. If partners take this seriously and mutually develop their ethical frameworks for collaboration, they plant the seeds of

long-term sustainability for the partnership” (ACE CIGE 2015, p. 33). Open lines of communication are necessary for many negotiated partnerships, but especially with the cultural sensitivity of international engagement.

### **2.3.7 Summary of Six Publications of Cross-Border Education Partnerships in the Literature**

These six publications illustrate decades of work from academic and government agencies to provide guidance on cross-border education (See Appendix A and Appendix C). From 2001 when The UNESCO/Council of Europe developed *the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* to 2015 when the ACE/CIGE developed the *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices*, upon review, one can see that similar elements emerged across the literature. To identify similar elements and differences across the literature, I created a color-coded diagram with all literature and assigned a color per element to assist in the development of the conceptual framework in Chapter 3. The analysis was interesting to review that the first publication was very formal and similar to a decree to the last publication that was interactive and asking institutions to answer questions to position themselves on achieving certain aspects of partnership development. This section will be referred to at the end of this chapter and shape the mold for the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 3.

## **2.4 FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIPS**

As part of the “how” to establish and implement cross-border partnerships, I reviewed a framework developed by Waterval, Frambach, Driessen, and Scherpbier (2015) of factors influencing the success and failure of cross-border curriculum partnerships. Three factors are related to contextual differences between the home and host institution: the domain of the students, the domain of the teacher, and the domain of the curriculum. The fourth factor is a general management factor, the domain of soft and hard project management (Waterval et al., 2015).

### **2.4.1 Students**

With regard to students, the framework recommends outreach to develop a level playing field in terms of students’ learning behavior, prior knowledge, and language proficiency. There needs to be an awareness of such differences and an effort to mediate them. The home institution must do a thorough investigation of the host institution at all levels to ensure understanding of the political, social, cultural, and economic factors affecting students. For example, Western ways of teaching are very collaborative and interactive, and team-based learning is a norm. In the South Pacific, many countries utilize a top-down teaching mentality: the faculty members lecture, and the students memorize and repeat what they learn, with minimal interaction between faculty and students or among the students themselves. To integrate Western approaches into a top-down teaching paradigm takes time. The literature reveals that one option is to bring the students of the host country to the home country so they can see first-hand and understand how team-based learning is conducted.

The home institution must also understand differences in entry levels of education in the host country compared with the home country. If there are gaps at entry levels, these must be anticipated, and a plan to accommodate them implemented. For example, the host country may need an additional year of training before acceptance in a particular program due to a skill or knowledge gap in students entering the program. Acknowledgment and accommodation of language differences must also be addressed, including the core language of the program being developed. The literature shows that most cross-border curriculum partnerships use English as the main language for instruction and course development.

#### **2.4.2 Teachers**

In many respects, faculty are the gatekeepers of successful partnerships. Recognizing social and cultural differences, faculty on both sides must be understanding and take the time to thoughtfully explore approaches to the curriculum so it is in the best interest of the students. Merely duplicating and re-creating the curriculum of the home institution at the host institution will not achieve the goals of a cross-border curriculum partnership. The curriculum must be tailored to the host institution to accommodate its social and cultural norms. Having home institution faculty design and customize the curriculum in partnership with faculty from the host institution will give the host institution ownership in the process. In addition, home institution faculty must be cognizant of their current workload in balancing the demands of helping the host institution. Incentives for professional development and added compensation have had a positive effect on outcomes.

### **2.4.3 Curriculum**

Curriculum development and delivery methods are the primary focus of this domain. McBurnie & Pollock (2000) observes that in most host countries, education also serves a nation-building role, which is reflected in courses on national values and ethics. Assessment programs of both home and host countries must be comparable if the ultimate goal is to provide similar educational experiences (Waterval et al., 2015). Vinen and Selvarajah (2008) recommend the creation of a course advisory committee to evaluate the design and delivery of course materials and to determine whether partnership goals and objectives are being met.

### **2.4.4 Soft and hard project management**

Of the four domains, I feel that the domain of soft and hard project management is most important, because it sets the tone for the success or failure of the partnership. Soft project management relates to communication and personal relationships, while hard project management deals with rules, regulations, contracts, and record keeping (Waterval et al., 2015). International higher education collaborations require common ground on definitions of what is expected as a starting point, and the process must be constantly revisited as the partnership grows. Patience, flexibility, and attention to building trust and rapport are critical. Identifying early achievable projects that can move the partnership to the next level is key. Compatibility is a crucial component of a successful partner (Sutton & Obst, 2011). Home and host partners must get along, understand each other, enhance the other's strengths, and respect the other's culture and values.

Successful partnerships display flexibility and a commitment to working through difficulties to achieve project goals. Partner institutions do not necessarily need to share similar cultures to succeed. Alliances can exist between partners with very different ways of functioning. However, differences must be acknowledged, explored, addressed, and resolved prior to formal agreements being executed (Mallon, n.d.).

The literature shows that most partnerships deteriorate with mistrust, and top priority must be given “to steering, monitoring and watching personal interactions and personal collaborations at all levels” (Waterval et al., 2015, p. 12). Mallon summarizes trust best: “Trust is the cornerstone of strategic partnership success. Alliances are living, organic systems, much like real relationships among people. They both produce, and rely upon, interpersonal and inter-organizational trust. In fact, trust among strategic partners is the unifying theme in the literature across research paradigms and sectors” (Mallon, n.d.).

Many higher education institutions must look at the partnership as a business relationship and ensure that the home institution does not sell itself short, in terms of the funding needed to develop a robust program and achieve milestones, when negotiating the contract, as appropriate allocation of both financial and human resources are essential. Thoughtful planning and negotiating will prevent later difficulty as the partnership progresses, and meticulous attention to detail will prevent miscommunication and trust issues. Hefferman and Poole (2004) recommend identification of key roles and responsibilities, addressing the interest of all stakeholders, and integrating financial and educational objectives.

There must be a baseline of support from both the home and host institutions to keep the partnership moving forward (Klahr, 2011). When budgeting for a partnership initiative, especially for the first time, it is a daunting task to establish a comprehensive budget.

Determining the number of hours faculty will spend on specific tasks, the number of trips to the host institution, and legal fees, especially for a multi-year contract, can be overwhelming. A core team at the home institution must brainstorm all facets of the proposed project and do the best they can to develop an inclusive budget for review by the host institution.

There must be a mutual benefit on both sides. The host countries benefit because they contribute to the internationalization of higher education, aid in the training of a skilled workforce, retain students, and enhance a country's geopolitical status. Benefits to home institutions include financial gains, enhancement of institutional profile, expansion of student base, enhanced opportunities for student and staff mobility, development of new curricula, research and development, and strategic network building (McBurnie & Pollock, 2000; Wilkins & Huisman 2012). As Qiang notes, "Internationalization must be entrenched in the culture, policy, planning and organizational process of the institution so that it can be both successful and sustainable" (Qiang, 2003, p. 257).

The home and host institutions must have a quality assurance core committee provide a final review of all documentation. As discussed in the Domain of the Students and the Domain of the Teachers, understanding social and cultural differences when developing the curriculum is crucial for a successful outcome. In general, the literature reveals that few national quality assurance procedures exist that are specific to cross-border partnerships.

## **2.5 BENEFITS AND RISKS OF MEDICAL SCHOOL CROSS-BORDER EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND CONTRIBUTORS TO SUCCESS**

Historically, medical schools have always had collaborations, partnerships, and affiliations with other institutions for a myriad of reasons. The basis of an academic medical center is a partnership between a medical school and a teaching hospital. Expanding these domestic partnerships to international partnerships was a logical next step in the search for and sharing of knowledge in our current information society (Glinos & Wismar, 2013).

### **2.5.1 International medical education**

Professor Ronald M. Harden, general secretary of the Association of Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) and director of education of the International Virtual Medical School in Dundee, UK, published an article in the journal *Academic Medicine* entitled “International Medical Education and Future Directions: A Global Perspective.” In this article, he identified seven factors encouraging internationalization among medical schools: (1) globalization of healthcare delivery, (2) governmental pressures; (3) improved communication channels, (4) development of a common vocabulary, (5) outcome-based education and standards, (6) staff development initiatives, and (7) competitiveness and commercialization (Harden, 2006).

Recent years have seen increased migration of students who come to the US for medical school. Many of these students originally plan to return to their home country after graduating but over time decide to stay in the U.S., creating a shortage of physicians back home. The increase in cross-border curriculum partnerships represents an effort to retain medical students in the host country by allowing them to obtain at home a state-of-the-art medical education in

partnership with a leading institution in the field. As previously discussed, internationalization efforts are at the forefront of agendas of government leaders. The creation of the Bologna Process is a prime example in which European higher education institutions reorganized to create a level playing field in terms of shared educational standards and learning outcomes to increase the competitiveness of higher education across all countries. This top-down approach views higher education institutions as a mechanism of governmental policy (Harden, 2006).

“Leaders at medical schools and teaching hospitals are also increasingly interested in global health issues because the resulting initiatives are both socially beneficial and foster institutional growth and development,” wrote Steve Kanter, MD, then vice dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (Kanter, 2008). Timely communication channels among medical schools around the world occur through international conferences and journals. An annual international meeting organized by the AMEE attracts 2,000 participants from more than 80 countries (Harden, 2006), (AMEE, n.d.). These forums, as well as other international conferences, provide a vehicle for discussions that increase globalized medical education partnerships. Many medical journals, such as *Academic Medicine*, *Medical Education*, and *Medical Teacher*, are focusing on internationalization efforts across the world, and papers on internationalization have continued to increase over the years.

The development of a common vocabulary in medical education has led to the creation of online medical education glossaries such as Best Evidence Medical Education ([www.bemecollaboration.org](http://www.bemecollaboration.org)) and MedEd Central ([www.mededcentral.org](http://www.mededcentral.org)) (Harden 2006, p. S23). Given cultural differences between a home and host institution, having a clear understanding of and agreement on medical education terminology is essential, especially when developing curricula. The World Federation for Medical Education has been instrumental

through its development and publication of global medical education standards, which have contributed to outcome-based education and standards. Similarly, MedBiquitous is a not-for-profit international group of professional associations, universities, commercial, and governmental organizations that develops and promotes technology standards for health professions education (MedBiquitous Consortium 2017). The ultimate goal of MedBiquitous is to have guidelines connected to a competency framework (Harden, 2006). Another group, the Foundation for Advancement of International Education and Research has also bridged the gap for outcome-based education and standards through faculty development programs (Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research 2017).

Finally, competitiveness and commercialization have served as an impetus of internationalization efforts in medical education. International education not only increases competition among higher education institutions, it provides an additional revenue stream for the home institution.

In 2003, the International Campaign to Revitalize Academic Medicine (ICRAM) was created by the *Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* with 40 other partners, including stakeholder groups in academia, business, government, professional associations, and students (ICRAM, 2005). The goal of ICRAM, as outlined in “The Future of Academic Medicine: Five Scenarios to 2025,” was to produce recommendations to reform global academic medicine by developing a vision and values, strategies for building capacity, and improving relationships of academic medicine with customers (p. 606).

Indeed, as Mallon observed, “With the current upheaval in health care delivery, specialization of knowledge, diffusion of technology, commercialization of research, and globalization of everything, medical schools and teaching hospitals cannot thrive, perhaps not

even survive, using the solo approaches of a bygone era” (Mallon, n.d.). The literature reveals that a majority of international partnerships in medical schools begin with interest from a host institution reaching out to a home academic medical center as a first step of inquiry.

## **2.5.2 Examples of cross-border medical school partnerships**

An increasing number of North American universities and AHCs are participating in international higher education collaborations abroad. Schools of medicine have additional hurdles beyond those required for any cross-border education partnership that they need to evaluate, such as licensure, accreditation requirements, and the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates certification to ensure graduates can practice medicine in the U.S. if desired.

Merritt and colleagues (2008) collected information regarding cross-border partnerships involving 16 academic health centers (AHCs) and major teaching hospitals. Seven AHCs (Cleveland Clinic, Duke University School of Medicine, Partners Harvard Medical International, John Hopkins International, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, University of Texas – MD Anderson Cancer Center and Weill Cornell Medical College) were considered to have significant initiatives abroad, categorized as large portfolios of international services delivering care, education, or research abroad. Other AHCs (Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Jackson Memorial Hospital, Mayo Clinic, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, The Methodist Hospital System, and New York Presbyterian Hospital) were considered to have limited and focused initiatives abroad and were categorized as having a presence in the international arena or actively considering additional globalized efforts. Two (Baylor College of Medicine and Hospital for Special Surgery, NYC) were considered to be in

early phases of engagement. There are most likely many more that should be included in this category but were not included in the study. A few notable cross-border partnerships of prominent medical schools are discussed below.

In August 1998, Columbia University and the faculty of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev formed a partnership to develop the Medical School for International Health (Columbia University, 2018). In April 2005, Duke University formed a partnership with the National University of Singapore to establish a US-style medical school (Duke, 2018). In May 2008, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar was the first American university to award an MD degree abroad (Weill Cornell Medicine, 2018). Partners Harvard Medical International provides consulting services to organizations outside the U.S. interested in developing medical school health related curriculum, or health care programs by Harvard University faculty. Partners has projects within Alfaisal University in Riyadh, Saudia Arabia; Ludwig Maximillians University in Munich, Germany; Dresden University of Technology in Dresden, Germany; Asian Medical Center in Seoul, South Korea; Tokyo Medical and Dental University in Tokyo, Japan; and Dubai Healthcare City in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (Partners International, 2018).

With regard to risks, in March 2014, a dispute with Johns Hopkins and Perdana University Graduate School of Medicine (owned by Academic Medical Centre) in Malaysia was terminated for “frequent late payments.” Johns Hopkins also had a medical school partnership in Singapore that failed in 2006 but continues to operate a private hospital (Sharma, 2014).

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine has had a significant increase in cross-border partnerships over the last 12 years. The Ri.MED Foundation was created in 2006 as an international partnership among the Italian government, the Region of Sicily, UPSOM, and UPMC. Since 2007, Ri.Med has sponsored research fellowships at UPSOM for young Italian

investigators who will form the core faculty of the new Biomedical Research and Biotechnology Center to be built in Sicily. In 2012, UPSOM renewed an agreement with Tsinghua University, one of China's elite institutions of higher learning for science and technology, for a second five-year term in which a significant portion of students at Tsinghua's medical school spend two years in Pittsburgh immersed in biomedical research. That same year, UPSOM initiated a collaboration with China's Central South University Xiangya School of Medicine, where Pitt provides two years of rigorous biomedical research training to medical students. Consequently, in 2014, Xiangya Hospital formed a partnership with UPMC to establish an international medical center to improve patient care in the region.

Also in 2012, a partnership began between UPSOM and the Republic of Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University to establish a new medical school in Astana, Kazakhstan – the basis for this case study. UPSOM collaborated with NU to institute a U.S.-style curriculum, design and develop education facilities, recruit and train leaders and faculty, and plan all aspects of a medical school based on Westernized medicine (UPSOM, 2018). In 2015, the NU School of Medicine welcomed its first class of 20 students, followed by a second class of 34 students in 2016, a third class of 20 students in 2017 and a fourth class of 28 in 2018 (A. Arita, personal communication, April 19, 2018 and M. McDonald, personal communication October 23, 2018).

### **2.5.3 Development of cross-border medical school partnerships**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, cross-border higher education partnerships in medical education were a desired outcome but not a priority. Due to increased internationalization in higher education as a whole, efforts to internationalize medical education have also increased, specifically in the last decade. Stockley and deWit (2011) state that “Strategic partnerships in

research, teaching and transfer of knowledge beyond national borders will be the future for higher education.” The same holds true for the future of cross-border medical education.

Countries, institutions, and governments all over the world are in agreement that internationalization and globalization efforts in academic medicine are a necessity for the future of medical education. (Merritt, et al., 2008) Although cross-border partnerships are forming at an increasingly rapid pace, the strategies to sustain and grow these relationships are less evident. Evers and Lokoff (2012) describe four steps for creating sustainable academic partnerships based on the recommendations of experts in European-Asian partnerships: (1) find a suitable partner, (2) develop a shared vision, (3) gain institutional commitment from all sides; and (4) ensure longevity. These recommendations may seem trivial, but they are key components to nurturing the partnership relationship. When finding a suitable partner, it is important to fully understand the potential partner’s history with previous partnerships and evaluate those partnerships. A host and home institution must spend a considerable amount of time learning the culture, the vision and the reasoning behind the interest in the partnership. These elements should be aligned with or similar to each other. Expectations from both the home and host institution need to be identified, communicated, understood and agreed to in writing. There needs to be an agreement on the type of partnership each institution is willing to engage in and what is feasible based on the goals: a cross-border curriculum partnership, a cooperative agreement, academic franchising or “twinning” – a replication of an existing school are a few examples. During this exploration phase, there needs to be patience, understanding and mutual respect between the home and host institution with regard to each other’s culture and customs. There also needs to be shared ownership of the partnership for sharing of the responsibility and the benefits. The partners need to be compatible and complementary. Evers and Lokoff (2012) compare an academic

partnership to a marriage: “One needs to know more or less what one expects, to invest time to find and choose the right partner, to get to know the partner and last, but not least, to be prepared for challenges” (p. 4).

The second step in achieving a sustainable partnership is to develop a shared vision. Both the host and home institution need to have open lines of communication and talk about goals, objectives and expected outcomes. The shared vision defines the partnership agreement; no matter what type of partnership is being developed. The partnership agreement should consist of policy goals and objectives, institutional commitments, a framework for the collaboration, a communication plan, and a decision-making structure. The development of the vision and the conduct of appropriate due diligence on a potential partner are key foundations to a successful partnership.

The third step to a sustainable partnership is to gain institutional commitment at all levels. After a partner is chosen and a shared vision is explored and agreed upon, institutional commitment from both the host and home institution is necessary for success. Institutional commitment should be obtained initially to engage in a cross-border partnership, then continually informed of the process and progress of the partnership. The relationships need to be nurtured from inception throughout the process. Examples of strategies to gain institutional commitment include these: align the partnership with institutional goals, invite senior level leaders to attend key milestone meetings, show the benefits of partnership and how it positively affects the institution and the region.

The fourth step is to ensure longevity of the partnership. Dissemination of information both internal to multiple levels of the institution and externally through an international conference sharing the process of how the partnership was formed and both successful outcomes

and challenges faced will help others learn from the process. More importantly, communication of the process between the partners and how to express the partnership to others will strengthen the partnership relationship. Keeping information flowing to senior administration, faculty, staff, and students will keep the partnership on the minds of many people at many levels that will keep the project moving forward and remain sustainable. Financial sustainability is also critically important, but academic interest is also a key priority. These priorities need to be reviewed constantly by key stakeholders and evaluated regularly. As Evers and Lokoff summarized, academic partnerships can be compared to marriages. Just like marriages, sustainable partnerships are legal contracts that establish the rights of all parties involved, have a significant time investment for a common goal and need to be constantly prioritized and nurtured.

## **2.6 ELEMENTS OF A CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP**

I used six published principles of cross-border education partnerships reviewed above (also summarized in Appendix A) to identify emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border partnerships (RQ1). Based on these sources, the following 14 elements of a cross-border education partnership, which also align with Knight's (2004a) four rationales of internationalization (economic, political, socio-cultural, and academic [Appendix C]), emerged across the literature:

- 1) suitable partner with shared vision;
- 2) mission statement, goals, and governing documents;

- 3) adequate resources of staffing, programs and infrastructure;
- 4) financial capacity, transparency, and accountability of home and host institutions;
- (5) authorization and institutional commitment from senior leadership;
- 6) mutual agreement on contractual, legally binding agreements;
- 7) strategic planning;
- 8) accommodation of social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal, and ethical values at both institutions;
- 9) faculty and staff engagement;
- 10) safety and security of faculty and students;
- 11) academic framework, policies, and standards;
- 12) student access, selection, equity, support, and learning and development;
- 13) student code of conduct; and
- 14) quality assurance procedures for faculty and students (See Appendix B).

Higher education institutions must identify a suitable partner to engage on this journey. It may seem like an elementary step, but home and host institutions need to investigate and compare and contrast institutional goals, vision, and academic proficiency prior to making any commitment. This exploratory phase ensures that each institution can determine compatibility

before fully engaging in a partnership. Do the institutions have the financial resources to engage in such a significant effort? Has either institution been through this process before? This is a complex relationship, and together they must define the details of the collaboration (Evers & Lokhoff, 2012).

Upon completion of the initial assessment of the proposed partner, the institutions jointly develop a mission statement, goals, and governing documents to manage the partnership. A primary goal of cross-border education is to strengthen higher education and promote global equity (International Association of Universities, 2005).

Once the goals and objectives are clearly defined, the adequacy of staffing, infrastructure, and, most importantly, the proposed programs must undergo preliminary review and thereafter constant monitoring and evaluation. Economics is a key element of a partnership. Can the institution afford to engage in a partnership? Is it worth the investment? Are adequate resources being made available to support the partnership? Each organization must ensure that the programs are adequately funded and staffed.

One of the most important elements in developing the partnership is obtaining institutional commitment from senior administration at both the home and host institution. Maintaining an open line of communication between the partners and monitoring the partnership must be ongoing. Once there is a commitment between both institutions, the authorization to proceed is a vital element to begin to develop the proposed program aligned with their shared mission and goals.

Obviously, a legally binding contractual agreement must be established. Both institutions need legal counsel to draft, review, approve, and execute the contract. In general, institutional commitment is not achieved until all legal aspects of a proposed partnership have been approved

by legal counsel. Authorization and approvals from relevant government bodies and accrediting institutions should also be documented. The home institution most likely must engage with legal counsel from the host country to assist with the culture, language, and any laws regarding such a contract. Once there is institutional commitment and a legally binding agreement, strategic planning must build on the model developed from the mission statement, goals, and governing documents.

Accommodating social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal, and ethical values of both institutions is key to developing a program acceptable to faculty and students. Being knowledgeable and aware of the culture and customs at the home and host institutions builds trust and fosters open communication. Sociocultural awareness improves faculty and staff engagement at both institutions.

Faculty and staff must participate in the development of the program from inception. If they are part of the process, they will feel more ownership of the program and will commit the time and resources needed to achieve program goals.

Throughout program development, the institutions need to evaluate the impact of the program on the health, safety, and security of students and faculty.

Agreeing on an academic framework, policies, and standards is essential, and awarding institutions must be responsible for ensuring the qualifications of graduates from the program of study. The framework should address the nature, duration, workload, location, and language of the program, recognizing that the culture of the host country could affect the interpretation of the teaching paradigm. The U.S. institution must specify the educational requirements, and academic content must correlate with stated goals. The institutions must jointly develop fair and

ethical recruitment and selection processes. Student learning and development must constantly be evaluated.

Together, both institutions must develop and implement a clearly defined student code of conduct that articulates the consequences of rule violations.

A quality assurance program must be in place for faculty and students. Academic quality standards should be at least comparable to those of the host institution. Faculty and staff from both the host and home institution must be proficient in the required qualifications for the proposed program.

These elements reflect the iterative process of partnership development. They may not occur in a set order, and they may continue to be evaluated and updated throughout the process. These 14 elements were categorized by the three phases of partnership development: developing the partnership, developing the program and implementing the program (Appendix B). In Chapter 3, I further developed these elements for the framework of partner and program development in the context of the preliminary research conducted to explore data from the case study.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

As noted in Chapter 2, the growing interest in cross-border education partnerships among academic medical schools has more American institutions seeking models of collaboration. Although multiple organizations have issued guiding principles and standards for strategic cross-border educational partnerships, case studies of their implementation are lacking (American Council on Education, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, 2015).

This descriptive, single-case study explored the partnership between the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) and Nazarbayev University (NU) in Astana, Kazakhstan, in the context of published principles for cross-border partnerships in education. The study sought to provide guidance for key elements of partnerships in the context of published principles. Specifically, 14 elements of a cross-border education partnership derived from the six main published principles of international partnerships in Chapter 2 were categorized with the three phases of partnership development: developing the partnership, developing the program and implementing the program, that formed the conceptual framework for this study. As an administrator in the University of Pittsburgh Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor, Health Sciences, I did not participate in the partnership process but became interested in the project through my colleagues. Four key informants and three other

stakeholders were interviewed, and documents pertaining to the partnership were reviewed in spring/summer of 2018 on the University of Pittsburgh campus. The following sections describe the design of this case study, identify the participants and describe the methods for data collection and analysis.

### **3.2 PRELIMINARY RESEARCH**

Nazarbayev University (NU) was dedicated in June 2010 by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, with the charge of making the republic's then 15-year old capital, Astana, a leading research and educational center for Eurasia. Each NU academic unit was paired with an international partner. Originally, Harvard University was under exclusive consideration to be the partner for the NU School of Medicine, but they withdrew. However, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM), through its McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine, was already engaged with NU through a basic research collaboration; and Duke University was the identified strategic partner for NU's school of business. NU asked both if they were interested in becoming the strategic partner for NU's School of Medicine and issued a request for proposals (RFP) for which Duke and Pitt were the only institutions invited to respond. Based on its response to the RFP, UPSOM was chosen to help develop the NU School of Medicine (NUSOM) based on a U.S. model with instruction in English. Combined with the six hospitals of National Medical Holding, also part of NU, and the NU Center for Life Sciences, NU planned to create Kazakhstan's first integrated academic health system. It was logical for NU to invite UPSOM to be a partner in developing NUSOM given with the existing

collaborative research agreements and also the University of Pittsburgh's ties with a strong clinical partner, UPMC.

First, a pilot study of why UPSOM agreed to enter into this partnership and how the school proceeded was conducted to determine the feasibility and substance of a larger, more detailed case study. This process began in January 2017 with preliminary interviews of key stakeholders in the partnership to assess the best approach to the research process and to identify critical data sources. An exemption was first obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the interviews with the intent to analyze the responses for research purposes.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three key informants to understand the origin of the partnership, discover insights into the process, and seek assistance to identify additional stakeholders and sources of evidence. These initial interviews helped inform the development of the data collection form used for subsequent interviews in spring 2018 (Appendix E). Based on information received from the key informants, a "snowball" sampling technique was used to explore responses to initial questions and pursue unanticipated lines of questioning (Merriam, p.78). Additional semi-structured and informal interviews were conducted to understand various stakeholder perspectives, including those of deans, administrators, faculty, finance, legal, and other staff, to obtain a holistic view of the process. I recorded interviews and took notes in an interview journal.

Lessons learned in the process of conducting these interviews included the need to interview informants individually rather than in pairs or larger groups to ensure that each individual responded rather than simply acknowledge input from another informant in the room. The questions answered in the preliminary research were very general to determine whether an opportunity existed to gain a deeper understanding of the development and implementation of

the partnership. Insight was gained on how to frame questions related to key drivers for the partnership, categories of benefits and risks, and process and outcome evaluation measures to consider. Feedback obtained from the pilot study participants was used to tailor and sharpen the questions utilized in this study. More specific questions that correspond to published principles, standards, and overarching themes from the literature review were also developed as part of this process.

### **3.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The study used a conceptual framework derived from the six published principles of cross-border educational partnerships reviewed in Chapter 2: (1) Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education by The Council of Europe (2001), (2) Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (2003), (3) Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide by the International Association of Universities, et al. (2005), (4) Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education by OECD (with UNESCO) (2005), (5) Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad by the Forum on Education Abroad (2015), and (6) International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices by the American Council on Education, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (2015).

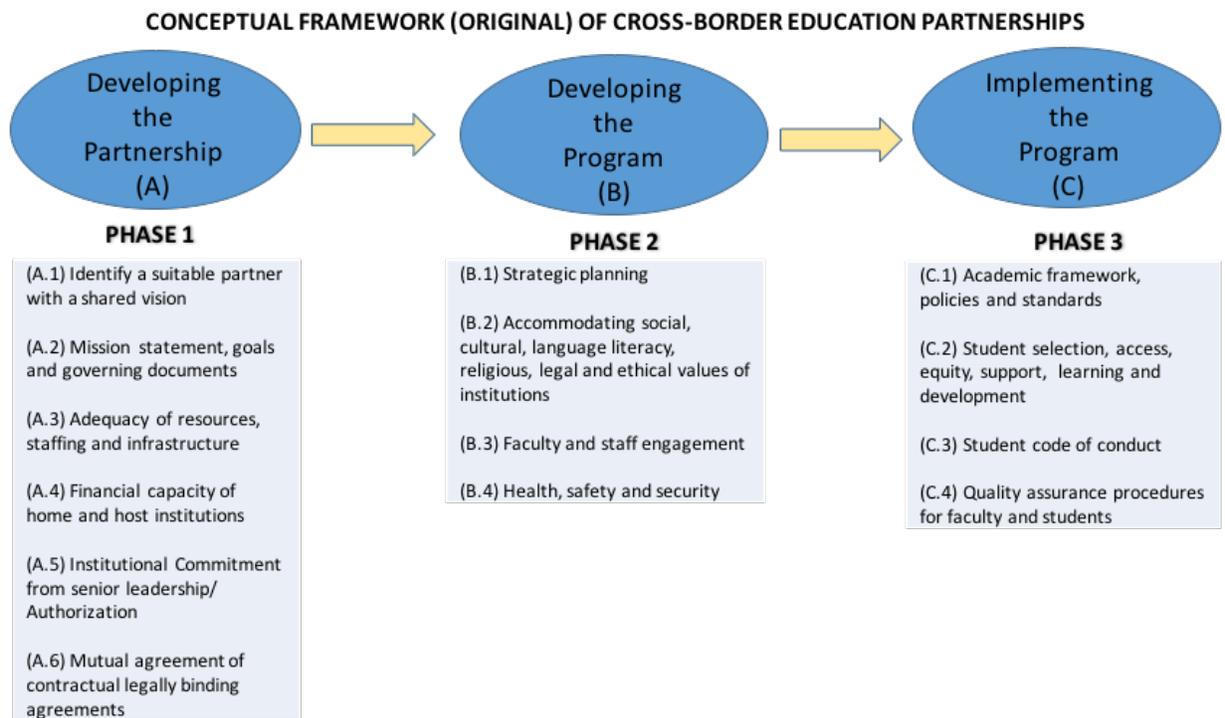
Appendix A provides a table of the literature review of these six published principles of cross-border partnerships in education. Appendix B summarizes 14 elements derived from the

concept map, and Appendix C summarizes the 14 elements categorized by the four rationales of internationalization by Knight (2004): (1) economic, (2) political, (3) socio-cultural rationale, and (4) academic rationale. However, simply reviewing these six published guidelines does not sufficiently prepare an educational institution to understand all of the required elements of partnership development, program development or program implementation.

Therefore, the 14 elements derived from the literature were also categorized by three phases of partnership development that formed the conceptual framework for this study and could serve as guides for the development and implementation of future partnerships and programs (Figure 1). Phase 1 encompassed the development of the *partnership* through the following components: (A.1) identification of a suitable partner with shared vision; (A.2) development of mission statement, goals and governing documents; (A.3) adequate resources of staffing, programs and infrastructure; (A.4) financial capacity of home and host institutions (transparency and accountability); (A.5) authorization and institutional commitment from senior leadership; and (A.6) mutual agreement of contractual, legally binding agreements.

Phase 2 encompassed development of the *program* through the following components: (B.1) strategic planning; (B.2) accommodation of social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions; (B.3) faculty and staff engagement; and (B.4) health, safety and security of faculty and students.

Phase 3 encompassed *implementation* of the program through the following components: (C.1) academic framework, policies and standards; (C.2) student selection, access, equity, support and student learning and development; (C.3) student code of conduct; and (C.4) quality assurance procedures for faculty and students (Appendix D).



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Original) of Cross-Border Education Partnerships**

Responses from interview questions were coded and explored both by element and phase to create the lens through which this case study was examined. The preliminary research findings showed that partnership development can occur quickly and while recommended, in practice, partnership development does not always have the luxury of a lengthy exploratory phase as suggested by the Global Review of the American Council on Education (2015). The rationale for this framework was to explore the phases of cross-border education partnerships utilizing the elements of published principles as a guide.

### 3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

The case study method of inquiry was chosen for this research based on Yin's (2009) three key elements for a significant case study: the individual case or cases are unusual and of public interest, the underlying issues are nationally important either in theoretical terms or in policy or practical terms, or the case meets both of the preceding conditions (p.185).

Yin (2009) defines a case study in terms of the research process as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon within its real-life context are not clearly evident” (Yin, p.18). The purpose of this case study was to understand the emerging concepts from the literature that could guide cross-border education partnerships and identify the components of the emerging conceptual framework that should be recommended for future partnerships.

This research applied qualitative methodology that used data from sources in person rather than through surveys, questionnaires, or machines (Creswell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Instead of utilizing quantifiable measures, each informant's spoken and written words (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975) were used to build concepts, principles, and best practices from the data (Merriam, 2009). For this research, an explanatory heuristic theorized from preliminary research helped develop the emerging conceptual theoretical framework. That is, the model UPSOM and NU utilized for planning and executing a strategic cross-border educational partnership was analyzed in the context of published guidelines (Appendix D).

As with the preliminary research, interviews were conducted with all major stakeholders who participated in contract negotiations to formalize the collaboration, and all documents associated with the collaboration were thoroughly reviewed. (See Appendix F for a list of stakeholders)

### 3.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Data collected through the literature review (Chapter 2), preliminary research, and the proposed research addressed three questions:

**RQ1:** What are the emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border partnerships?

**RQ2:** How do the elements in this conceptual framework describe the UPSOM and NU cross-border education partnership case in each of the three phases: developing the partnership, developing the program and implementing the program?

**RQ3:** How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships?

Overall, this study aimed to contribute to the limited literature focused on the motivations, drivers and actual development of strategic international higher education partnerships and to suggest conceptual and practical recommendations for successful partnerships based on published principles and case study experience.

### 3.6 SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

This case focused on a partnership that began in 2012 between UPSOM and NU to establish a new medical school in Astana, Kazakhstan. UPSOM collaborated with NU to institute a U.S.-style curriculum; design and develop teaching facilities; help recruit and train school leaders and faculty; set up organizational and administrative structures, policies and procedures; and develop courses, syllabi, and clinical experiences with the participation of physician-educators from

Kazakhstan and around the globe (UPSOM, 2018). In 2015, the NU School of Medicine welcomed its first class of 20 students, followed by a second class of 34 students in 2016, a third class of 20 students in 2017 and a fourth class of 28 in 2018 (A. Arita, personal communication, April 19, 2018 and M. McDonald, personal communication October 23, 2018). Stakeholders on the UPSOM side of this partnership participated in the preliminary research in 2017 and this case study in 2018 after successfully enrolling four classes of students.

### **3.7 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

#### **3.7.1 Introduction**

The University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) is a state-related research university founded in 1787. Pitt is a member of the Association of American Universities, an organization of 62 leading doctorate-granting research institutions in the United States and Canada. Pitt has six Schools of the Health Sciences: Medicine, Dental Medicine, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Nursing, Pharmacy and Public Health. Funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is considered the benchmark of overall stature among research-intensive academic medical centers; and since 1997, Pitt has ranked among the top ten recipients of NIH funding and in the top five in 2009, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. In fiscal year 2017, Pitt received more than \$528 million in funding – nearly 78% of which (\$411 million) went to the School of Medicine. Clinical and basic research have grown remarkably and continue to attract support from federal institutions, private foundations, and corporations (University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Fact Book,

2017/2018). The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine continues to build on the strong foundation of past groundbreaking leaders, such as Dr. Bernard Fisher (revolutionary change in breast cancer treatment), Dr. Maud Menten (developed the Michaelis-Menten equation in biochemistry), Dr. Peter Safar (father of cardiopulmonary resuscitation), Dr. Jonas Salk (developed the first safe, effective polio vaccine), and Dr. Thomas Starzl (pioneer of transplantation medicine), to highlight a few.

### **3.7.2 Demographics**

For the 2017-18 academic year, there were 591 registered medical students in UPSOM, including 300 women and 291 men. Of these students, 31% were from Pennsylvania. In 2017, 6,151 applications were received, 796 students were interviewed, and 148 first-year students were admitted. The School of Medicine has 2,264 regular and 2,213 volunteer faculty members. Of these, 81 are current members of the Academy of Masters Educators, an organization that recognizes and rewards excellence in medical education (University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Fact Book, 2017/2018). Tuition is approximately \$55,000 per year.

### **3.7.3 Clinical partner – UPMC**

UPSOM is no stranger to educational partnerships. UPSOM has a long-standing affiliation with UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center) that offers extraordinary and invaluable training and research opportunities, such as clinical rotations, internships, and diverse biomedical and clinical research opportunities for students, medical residents and fellows. Although legally

UPSOM and UPMC are distinct and independent organizations, they share a commitment to excellence in education, research, clinical care and entrepreneurship. Without UPMC, UPSOM could not continue to thrive and grow, and vice versa. “What is good for one is good for both” (Academic Medicine, 2008, pg. 816). The core of the health system is located in the Pittsburgh neighborhoods of Oakland, Shadyside and Lawrenceville, where healthcare facilities are interwoven with UPSOM facilities, such as several research towers, the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, and the Rangos Research Center, respectively.

As an integrated global health enterprise and one of the nation’s leading academic health care systems, UPMC generates more than \$16 billion in revenues and has more than 65,000 employees; approximately 5,700 affiliated physicians, including more than 3,600 employed by the health system and 1,384 who are also full-time faculty of the School of Medicine. UPMC Health Plan covers more than 3 million members (UPMC Fact Book, 2018). As of August 2017, the UPMC Medical Education Program had 1,132 medical residents and 370 clinical fellows in programs approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education plus 7 clinical fellows in other training programs. UPMC’s clinical centers have earned international recognition, drawing patients from around the world. In addition, UPMC has a strong history of disseminating its expertise to other countries, including Italy, Ireland, China, Colombia and Kazakhstan (University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Fact Book, 2017/2018).

## 3.8 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN

### 3.8.1 Introduction

The Republic of Kazakhstan is located in Central Asia and is surrounded by Russia to the north, Uzbekistan to the south, Turkmenistan and the Caspian Sea to the west, and China to the east. Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world (1,049,150 square miles), approximately four times the size of Texas. The population is 18,270,893 (2018), with a life expectancy of 70 years of age (average is 74 years for women and 65 years for men). According to the latest census (2009), 63.1% of the population in Kazakhstan is ethnic Kazakh, 23.7% is Russian, 2.9% is Uzbek, and 2.1% is Ukrainian (Population Reference Bureau, 2018.) Almaty, the former capital, is the largest city, with 1.42 million people. In 2002, the capital was relocated north to Astana, which has continued growth as the city develops.

Russian is the official language and is used in daily business, and Kazakh is the state language. The literacy rate is 99.7%. Religion is split between Islam (70%) and Russian Orthodox (26%) (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics, 2018). The monetary unit is the tenge, with approximately \$340 tenge to 1 U.S. dollar (National Bank of Kazakhstan, 2018).

The current president, Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, has ruled the country since 1989, when Kazakhstan was still part of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan declared its independence in 1991, the last of the former Soviet Republics to do so. Kazakhstan's official government is a presidential republic, with regular elections, but in practice, President Nazarbayev rules under a model that has come to be known as "enlightened authoritarianism" (Lipton, 2011). In the most recent presidential elections in April 2015, Nazarbayev was re-elected to another five-year term

with 97.8% of the popular vote (CIA World Fact Book, 2018). There are virtually no opposition parties in Kazakhstan. The most recent parliamentary elections were criticized by independent observers, who specifically noted that President Nazarbayev is presiding under an authoritarian regime (Kramer, 2012). The criticisms revolved around human rights abuses presided by an authoritarian regime: right to vote in a free and fair election and the limit of free speech. By maintaining strong central control and exploiting the country's vast natural resource wealth, Nazarbayev has made significant progress in developing the country's economy and improving the overall wellbeing of Kazakhstan citizens. In 2000, oil was discovered in the Kazakhstan portion of the Caspian Sea, the largest oil find in 30 years. This discovery boosted the national economy and provided the means to Westernize the country.

Kazakhstan joined the World Bank in 1992, and the most recent World Bank country report details a real growth in GDP for 2017 of 4% (World Bank-Kazakhstan, 2018). However, Kazakhstan's real GDP growth slowed from 6% in 2013 to 3.9% in 2014, to 1.1% in 2016 due to internal capacity constraints in the oil industry, less favorable terms of trade, and an economic slowdown in Russia. Exported oil is the primary revenue source for the national economy. Oil output is predicted to stabilize to an average annual rate of 3% through 2020 (World Bank-Kazakhstan, 2018).

### **3.8.2 Education**

Education in Kazakhstan consists of preschool and primary, lower and upper secondary, postsecondary and tertiary (university) education. Higher education consists of higher secondary school, vocational training and university education. Preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education are compulsory and are paid for by the Republic (OECD, 2014). Pre-

primary education is provided for children up to six years of age. “The Central Asian republics have been going through radical social and economic change since gaining their independence from the former Soviet Union” (Weidman, Chapman, Cohen & Lelei, 2004, p. 182). There has been a rapid increase in access to preschool education, with enrollment rising from 23% in 2005 to 74% in 2013; pre-school organizations and students rose from 1,666 and 253,600, respectively, in 2009 to 6,684 and 541,100, respectively, in 2013 (Statistical Yearbook Kazakhstan, 2013). Approximately 90% of the population completes secondary education or beyond. (World Bank – Kazakhstan, 2014)

Primary education starts at age six or seven and lasts four years, grades 1-4. Lower secondary school is for children ages 11-15 and lasts five years, consisting of grades 5-9. Upper secondary school is for children ages 16-17, includes grades 10-11, and can extend to four years for those in the technical or vocational track. About 90% of the population completes lower secondary education or beyond; approximately 65% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders continue on to the upper secondary education track, while half continue on the vocational education track (Statistical Yearbook Kazakhstan, 2013).

Higher education is available to citizens who completed upper secondary, technical or vocational education. The bachelor’s degree is a four-year program, the master’s degree is a two-year program, and the doctoral degree is a three-year program. The number of higher education institutions across the country decreased from 180 schools in 2003 to 128 in 2013 due to mergers, closures and reforms to tighten licensing regulations and qualifications.

Almaty, the former capital of the country has the highest concentration of institutions. The major higher educational institutions are: Kazakhstan National University, Kazakh-American University, Eurasian National University and the University of Central Asia.

Nazarbayev University in Astana is the flagship higher educational institution, bringing Western ways to central Asia.

The majority of the male workforce in Kazakhstan is engaged in industry, construction, agriculture, forestry, transport and communication. Women tend to seek jobs in public health, education, art, and culture. A large focus of the education sector is to incorporate Western education, medicine and research practices into the republic. There are significant concerns about ensuring that Kazakh graduates are sufficiently competent in and adaptable to the cognitive, technical, and non-cognitive needs of the evolving global labor market. The government also hopes to improve educational efficiency within a resource-constrained environment by improving the quality of education. The State Program on Education Development for 2011–2020 calls for an improvement in the quality of education under the new socioeconomic realities.

### **3.8.3 Funding of education**

The Republic of Kazakhstan has made a substantial investment in all levels of the education system over the past 25 years. Traditionally, education, which constitutes a major investment into human capital, is a key driver of economic growth (NUGSE, 2014). In 2000, Kazakhstan allocated \$526 million to educational services; in 2013, \$6.2 billion was allocated. An analysis by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for a 13-year period showed that funding for education increased by 12-fold over the original allocation (United Nations ESCAP, 2013). In 2011, Kazakhstan ranked first on UNESCO's Education for All Development Index by achieving near-universal levels of primary education, adult literacy

and gender parity (United Nations ESCAP, 2013). This priority is apparent in the expansion of pre-school access and free compulsory secondary education.

Over the next decade, Kazakhstan plans to implement additional major reform initiatives across the educational system. Kazakhstan spends considerably less of its GDP on tertiary education (bachelor's degree of four years or specialty degree of five or more years) than most other countries, including those with a similar GDP per capita (NUGSE, 2014). Public funds benchmarked for higher education are based on state grants, essentially a voucher program, to students who achieve top scores on the Universal National Test. This allocation of funds is somewhat biased, because the wealthy historically attend private schools and score higher than other socioeconomic groups according to recent statistics (NUGSE, 2014). While a small percentage of grants are allocated to disadvantaged groups, the majority of academic merit grants go to the wealthy. Those who do receive state grants choose state-owned institutions, contributing to further inequality.

#### **3.8.4 Educational policy framework**

The central executive governmental body responsible for the management of the education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan is the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). MES is responsible for the implementation of state education policy and methodological guidance of all education institutions. Strategic planning and funding of the education system, including the preparation of draft education budgets, are under the direction and authority of the MES. “In accordance with the Education Law, the functions of the MES include: defining and executing the State educational policy; drafting regulations concerning State funding for education; drafting and adopting State educational standards, curricula and syllabi; preparing State orders

concerning the training of specialists; providing assistance in the organization of the educational process in the Kazakh language; and establishing international agreements on educational issues” (UNESCO, 2012). The goal of the MES is to institute regulations that provide equality of conditions and equal rights for all students. Higher education institutions have limited autonomy and must abide by MES rules and regulations. The MES consists of several committees and departments as follows: Higher and Postgraduate Education, Secondary Education, Technical and Vocational Education, Development Strategy, Administrative, Legal Affairs, Financial, and Public Procurements and Information Technical Provision Departments; and Control Committee in the sphere of Education and Sciences, Children’s Rights Protection Committee, and Science Committee. The committees are directly in charge of their corresponding branches. Article 36 of the Law on Education guarantees the principle of self-government of educational institutions (UNESCO, 2012).

The rectors of national higher education institutions are nominated by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The rectors of state higher education institutions are nominated by the government based on the proposal of the Ministry of education and Science (MES). Heads of higher education institutions are the main representative and have the authority to sign agreements, issue warrants, open bank accounts, recruit and dismiss staff and teachers, adopt incentive measures and impose penalties as they see fit. They are responsible for the daily management of the institution. The governing body of a higher education institution is the Academic Council, which consists of teachers, students, public bodies and administrative staff from the institution.

Both public and private higher education institutions operate on equal playing fields in most instances. Currently, both public and private institutions utilize curriculum and admissions

standards set by the MES. However, as in the United States, private institutions of higher education have more operational autonomy and greater management flexibility. State institutions do not own their land or facilities, while most private institutions do. Thus private institutions are able to prioritize and authorize capital projects and implementation of project schedules. They can also pay staff and teachers higher salaries and allow teachers to choose which subjects they teach.

Based on MES documents, policies created from 2000-2004 were intended to establish short-term and long-term priorities of educational development as well as qualitative standards. Policies created in 2005-2008 were designed to move Kazakhstan into compliance with world standards. Policies created from 2009 to the present are intended to modernize and internationalize education in Kazakhstan.

In March 2010, Kazakhstan became the 47th member country to join the Bologna Declaration, which places special emphasis on using foreign languages (English) for the professional development of faculty and students. In Kazakhstan, results of a survey about the necessity of teaching in a foreign language were considered, as well as the challenges and difficulties of delivering courses in English. The Bologna Declaration in Kazakhstan incorporates several elements: comparable degrees, formation of research universities based on science, and the educational process. For example, use at Nazarbayev University of the European Diploma Supplement, which is attached to a diploma of higher education to increase international recognition of professional qualifications, provides employment opportunities for graduates, a unified system of academic credits, and the ability to develop joint educational and research programs (Abdiraimova, Burkhanova, Kenzhakimova, 2012). The Bologna three-cycle structure (4+2+4 years) is implemented throughout most of the country, and the doctoral-

level structure needs to be assessed and implemented. The national system of credits and equivalent courses across the country has been implemented. Kazakhstan has also instituted the Lisbon Convention, which recognizes qualifications issued in one country based on a set of standards.

The 2011–2020 national strategic plan for the development of education in Kazakhstan is detailed in the State Programme of Education Development (State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2011). The overall goal is to increase the competitiveness of education and to develop human capital by ensuring access to high quality education for sustainable economic growth. Its objectives include transitioning to a 12-year education model, improving the inclusiveness of schools, and updating educational content. A major aim is integration into the European Higher Education Area. The strategic plan contains an analysis of the country's education policy in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as well as detailed goals and targets relating to education at all levels, including developing financing mechanisms, enhancing teacher motivation, curricular adaptation, and expanding education infrastructure. The strategic plan builds on the State Programme of Education Development for 2005–2010, the State Programme of Technical and Vocational Education Development for 2008–2012, the Children of Kazakhstan Programme for 2007–2011 and the Balapan Preschool Education Programme for 2010–2014. The Ministry of Education and Science plans to follow and implement the roadmap of the state program of education as well as evaluate the country's steady economic growth, which will ultimately allow higher education spending to increase and meet policy goals.

### 3.8.5 Nazarbayev University (NU)

Nazarbayev University (NU) was formally dedicated in June 2010 by Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of the Republic of Kazakhstan (the only institution to which he has affixed his name), with the mission of advancing the development of education and research in the Republic of Kazakhstan and making the republic's then 15-year-old capital, Astana, Eurasia's leading research and educational center. (It should be noted that Kazakhstan joined the European Higher Education Area [the Bologna Process] in March 2011, committing itself to high-quality higher education based on democratic principles and academic freedom and the preparation of students for life as active citizens in democratic societies.) In June 2011, NU reorganized as an "autonomous organization of education" operating independently of the republic's Ministry of Education and Science.

In addition to its independence, a second feature that distinguishes NU from other Kazakhstani universities is that each of its schools and research centers is working with at least one international academic partner selected from leading universities and research institutions world-wide. Lane & Kinser (2011) states, "Some importing nations are particularly interested in attracting prestigious institutions or institutions from well-respected higher education systems in order to help improve the country's international reputation" (pg. 82; Lane, 2011a). Currently, NU's academic partner in Singapore is the National University of Singapore – Graduate School of Public Policy. Academic partners in the United Kingdom are or have been the University College London – Pre-Matriculation Foundation Year and the School of Engineering; the University of Cambridge – Center for Educational Policy and Graduate School of Education; and the University of Warwick – partner for NU Foundation Year Program in 2015-2016.

Strategic Partners in the U.S. include: Colorado School of Mines – School of Mining and Geosciences; Duke University - Graduate School of Business; Carnegie Mellon University – School of Science and Technology (contract not renewed); Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory – Private Institution “National Laboratory Astana”; University of Pennsylvania – Center for Educational Policy and Graduate School of Education; and the University of Wisconsin-Madison – School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Most importantly related to this study, the University of Pittsburgh completed a short-term contract with the University of Pittsburgh McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine - Center for the Life Sciences and UPSOM is the current strategic partner for NU - the School of Medicine. In addition, UPMC is the strategic partner for the hospitals composing NU’s University Medical Center (UMC). There is a strong University of Pittsburgh presence in the development of NU along with the institutional partners of the University of Pennsylvania and Carnegie Mellon University representing educational institutions from Pennsylvania (Nazarbayev University, 2017). The three largest exporters of higher education are Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, and NU has chosen two of the three countries to participate as a strategic partner (Lane & Kinser, 2011).

One of NU’s strategic goals is to establish an integrated academic health center (AHC) comprising NUSOM; the National Laboratory Astana, which includes a Center for Life Sciences (CLS), and three hospitals of the former National Medical Holding (NMH: Republic Center for Child Rehabilitation, Republican Diagnostic Center and National Research Center for Mother and Child Health [recently re-accredited by the Joint Commission International]. NMH has been made a part of NU and renamed University Medical Center (UMC). The Nazarbayev University AMC aspires to become “a flagship of the modernization of Kazakhstan’s national health care

system” and plans to do so by collaborating with foreign partners to implement best international practice in education, research, and clinical care. NU’s goal for the Nazarbayev University School of Medicine (NUSOM) is to produce Kazakhstan’s future medical leadership. NU notes, “As [UMC] develops its own systems for integrated hospital management, it will work with other parts of Kazakhstan’s health provision system to transfer knowledge and improve services.”

### **3.9 INITIATION OF THE STUDY**

An exempt study was approved by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB) in May 2018. In-depth semi-structured interviews with the same three key informants who participated in the preliminary research, in addition to a fourth informant, were conducted to further understand the origin of the collaboration and to gain new insights into the process. All participants were contacted via phone and e-mail with an invitation to participate and were supplied with general details of the study (Appendix G). Interview questions sought to address the research questions with follow-up questions based on responses intended to clarify or expand on the initial answers (Appendix H). The semi-structured interviews were conducted with additional stakeholders using a “snowball technique” (Merriam, p.78). Utilizing the responses from the four key informants, the study expanded to include additional individuals and additional documentation suggested by the key informants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using Rev Voice Recorder and coded by the 14 elements of the conceptual framework and phase of partnership and/or program development. In addition, notes were taken in an interview journal. The perceptions and beliefs of the key informants and stakeholders were evaluated to determine

how their responses aligned with the elements and phases of the conceptual framework and were examined for emergent patterns against the conceptual framework. See Appendix I for Alignments to Research Questions.

Upon agreement to participate, informants and stakeholders were asked to provide key documents, such as contracts, budgets, newspaper articles, website content, program information, and photographs, in advance of their interviews to allow time to review all such material prior to conducting any interviews. All pertinent documents provided by stakeholders were scanned, filed by topic, and classified as evidence under the appropriate research question associated with that particular document. Per Yin (2009), these documents were used to corroborate and augment data from other interviews and materials, including letters, memoranda, e-mail correspondence, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, written reports, administrative documents, proposals, agreements, budgets, progress reports, and newspaper reports.

### **3.10 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

“A qualitative design is emergent” (Merriam, 2009, p.169). Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous process that began when the first data were received and continued iteratively throughout the study. The 10 steps for analyzing data suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) were taken into account during data collection: make decisions that narrow the focus, make decisions about the type of study you want to complete, create analytic questions, review field notes to help with planning pursuit of leads, write observer comments as you go, write down what you are learning along the way, try out themes and ideas, explore literature while

completing the study, consider what you are seeing and make comparisons, and visualize your findings. (p. 171-172).

Upon completion of all interviews and document analysis, Creswell's (2009) six-step data analysis strategy was applied in "an interactive practice" to analysis (p.185). The first step was to organize and prepare the data for analysis (p. 185). Merriam (2009) encourages the researcher to organize first and refine last (p. 171). Yin (2009) recommends "playing with the data" to become familiar with the data set. During this step, audiotapes from interviews were conversations transcribed in their entirety to avoid inaccurate recollections of the interview. An inventory of the entire data set was collected and entered into an Excel spreadsheet based on Appendix I –Alignment to Research Questions.

The second step was to again read through the data (Creswell, 2009, p. 185), including all interview transcriptions, document analysis notes and direct observation notes, to become familiar with all the data collected and summarize recurrent themes to interview questions and notes. A written summary of thoughts, inferences and assumptions was created.

The third step was to begin detailed analysis with the coding process (p. 186). Merriam (2009) highlights the constant comparative method of data analysis proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the method for developing grounded theory (p. 175). Merriam further references Lincoln and Guba (1985) by defining a unit of data as "the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself, that is, it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out." (p. 177) Merriam's procedure of organizing the unit of data into segments by taking the text data and segmenting sentences into categories was utilized.

Categories were then labeled with terms based on the participant's responses and reviewed as to how they relate to Appendix I –Alignment to Research Questions.

The fourth step was to use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories for these for analysis (Creswell, 2009, p.189). Merriam (2009) states, "I see a category the same as a theme, a pattern, a finding or an answer to a research question" (p. 178). I used Creswell's process to generate codes for the descriptions, which then led to categorizing responses against the elements and phases of the conceptual framework. The Data Collection Form and the Interview Data Coding Form were also categorized based on the conceptual framework elements and phases (See Appendix E & Appendix J). Next, I analyzed and identified the elements from the conceptual framework that were utilized in the case, identified those elements that were omitted and identified emerging elements into a general description for this bounded case.

The fifth step was to advance how the themes were described and represented in the qualitative narrative (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). For this step, I reviewed Appendix I –Alignment to Research Questions and mapped study elements to each question, per phase of development. I then summarized information into a narrative for each research question.

The last step was to interpret the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). Creswell understands that a researcher's own background plays as important a role in the analytical process as a researcher's other forms of evidence. My experience as an administrator at the University of Pittsburgh in the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences and Dean of the School of Medicine informed my interpretation of the process and understanding of the participants' stories: although I was not directly involved in the partnership, I was aware of the project through updates from my colleagues. The themes that emerged from this study came

directly from the data gathering, analysis of the data and my awareness of the processes in place between my own biases and participants' point of view specific to the research questions.

Another point of reference for reconciling analyses with the research questions was Yin's (2009) four principles for social science research. First, the analysis documented that all evidence was included, and the analytic strategies answered the key research questions. Next, the analysis addressed all major alternative interpretations. Third, the analysis addressed the most significant aspect of the case study. Lastly, my own prior knowledge was used in the case study (pp. 160-161).

### **3.10.1 Interview protocol**

Key informants and other stakeholders were contacted via telephone to discuss the case study. If they agreed to participate, they were e-mailed a Participant Invite Correspondence (Appendix G) and Interview Guide (Appendix H). A hard copy of the letter and the Interview Guide was provided at the interview. I contacted the key informants and other stakeholders either by phone or e-mail to schedule and coordinate a date, time and location for the interview and to forward any pertinent documentation beneficial to the study prior to the interview. Before each interview, I asked permission to record the interview, and I also took notes in a journal to document the interview. Immediately after the interview, the notes were transcribed through Rev Voice Recorder and coded to accurately document the responses.

As a qualitative study, the case emerged over the course of the interviews in parallel with the simultaneous analysis of documents, which were used to redirect subsequent questioning and analysis. Analysis compared data from primary and secondary sources for the case study with

findings from the literature review to identify principles and actions that did or did not facilitate the case study partnership.

### **3.10.2 Coding the data**

Upon completion of all interviews and document analysis, all data was organized and prepared for analysis (Yin, 2009, p. 185). An inventory of the entire data set was collected and entered into an Excel spreadsheet based on Appendix I –Alignment of Research Questions. The Interview Data Coding Form (Appendix J) included three columns: transcript, codes and categories and themes. The entire transcript was copied and pasted into the first column. Upon review of the data, the interview responses were coded using deductive and inductive approaches. A deductive approach was used to categorize responses according to alignment with the 14 (codes) and with the three phases of a cross-border educational partnership (categories and themes). An inductive approach identified similarities in responses and attempted to develop further meaning to consider additional elements and outliers or modifications to the conceptual framework. A second Excel spreadsheet, Interview Coding Summary, was developed that utilized one tab for each of the 20 interview questions (Appendix K). Each tab had five columns: Interviewee #, Key Responses, Themes, Codes and Frequency. Each transcript was reviewed multiple times to ensure that details had not been omitted in previous reviews. Each tab represented a question, and the themes and codes were summarized for all seven interviews. A similar process was conducted for partnership documentation. Each document was reviewed, and any deductive codes were written in the margin of the document and then summarized in notes. Transcripts, notes and a personal journal were reviewed to add details.

Per Saldaña (2009), “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p.3). He further states that “coding is not just labeling, it is linking from the data to the idea and back to other data” (Saldaña, 2013, p.8.).

I used a coding process recommended by Merriam (2009), the constant comparative method of data analysis proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The organizing unit of data was defined as “the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself” (2009, p. 177). These units were segmented into categories, labeled with terms based on the participant’s responses, and reviewed for how they related to Appendix I –Alignment of Research Questions.

Next, I used Creswell’s coding process to generate codes for descriptions of the setting or people and categories for each (Creswell, 2009, p.189), which were then generalized into 14 partnership elements. I also categorized the Data Collection Forms and the Interview Data Coding forms (Appendix E and J) based on elements of cross-border education partnerships that were utilized for this study from the Alignment of Research Questions (Appendix I).

Finally, I analyzed elements that corresponded to the conceptual framework and elements that emerged from the data and identified elements that were omitted in a general description for this bounded case. I then determined how the elements should be represented in the qualitative narrative (Creswell, 2009, p. 189) by reviewing Appendix E – Data Collection Forms, Appendix J - Interview Data Coding Form, Appendix K – Interview Coding Summary, and Appendix I – Alignment of Research Questions. During and after data organization and analysis, I interpreted the meaning of the data and emergent themes (Creswell, 2009, p. 189).

### **3.11 LIMITATIONS**

A limitation to this study is that it is a single case study. As such, while the case may serve as an example of a partnership and illustrate the implementation of specific published principles and standards, it is not designed to be generalizable. This study made analytical generalizations through an examination of published principles as related to the research questions. Future research could expand to include other academic medical schools for comparative purposes.

In addition, the data collection process could be a limitation in that interviews are the main source of data collection and are dependent on what the interviewee is willing or able to contribute and on his or her perspective and experiences. Document analysis supplemented the interviews.

Another limitation is that this study utilizes the major stakeholders affiliated with UPSOM but not NU. The scope of this study focused on why and how UPSOM responded to the invitation to develop an international partnership with NU. A separate future study could be conducted utilizing the same study approach from the perspective of NU, with the analysis of these data compared with those from UPSOM, but that is beyond the scope of this work.

### **3.12 SUMMARY**

Through the collection of interview data and documents provided by key informants and other stakeholders, I sought to learn why and how UPSOM engaged in a cross-border education partnership with NU and to determine whether published guidelines were reflected in the process of developing and implementing the partnership. RQ1 is answered and addressed in Chapter 2

through the review of the literature and the development of the 14 elements from the six published guidelines. This study also assessed my proposed conceptual framework of cross-border education partnerships developed from published guidelines (Appendix D) and whether an actual case utilized this conceptual framework; RQ2 is answered and addressed in Chapter 4. RQ3 is answered and addressed in Chapter 5, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations. The knowledge gained from this study could be used as a guide by academic medical schools that plan to develop cross-border educational partnerships in the future.

### **3.13 REPORTING THE CASE**

Merriam, et al (2016) note that no standard format exists to report the findings of a qualitative study, though Yin (2009) emphasizes that an important phase of planning is to know the audience. My intended audience is any university that might be interested in planning and implementing a cross-border educational partnership, with a specific focus on American medical schools. The goal of the upcoming chapters is to analyze and report a conceptual framework that was applied to an actual cross-border educational partnership for universities to review and discuss prior to engaging in a cross-border education partnership of their own.

Chapter 4 summarizes the Data Analysis and Findings, which reintroduces the background and purpose of the study, presents elements from the data used in analysis, and discusses their meaning and application. Data collection and data analysis are reviewed by element. When presenting findings, it is common to organize them into categories, themes or theories developed by analyzing the data (Merriam, 2009). Chapter 4 examines all 14 elements and identifies which elements were utilized, which were omitted and which additional elements

emerged and also gives recommendations to create an international partnership more efficiently and effectively based on a summary of unforeseen conditions and lessons learned from the UPSOM case study. These elements are tied directly back to RQ1 and RQ2 and the literature review of Chapter 2. Chapter 5 completes the study with Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations, summarizes the case study, its key findings, and knowledge gained from Chapter 4. These chapters include specific details from the interviews recorded in the study and specifics from pertinent documentation as a means of making the case and its implications more meaningful for the reader. Chapter 5 considers the application of lessons learned in other practice-based contexts, implications for policy, and opportunities for continued research. Next steps and future research are evaluated as well.

## **4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The previous chapter addressed the methodology and research approach of this study. This chapter will address both analysis of documentation and open-ended responses of interviews as they relate to the conceptual framework. This chapter provides an opportunity to understand whether the UPSOM cross-border education partnership with NU utilized the elements in the conceptual framework. Emerging elements and elements not apparent in the data will be documented. Responses will be organized by phase of the partnership and elements within each phase.

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study explored the following questions:

- RQ1: What are the emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border partnerships?
- RQ2: How do the elements in this conceptual framework describe the UPSOM and NU cross-border educational partnership case in each of the three phases: developing the partnership, developing the program, and implementing the program?
- RQ3: How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships?

RQ1 is addressed through the literature review and preliminary research in Chapter 2 and 3. This chapter provides the data needed to address and answer RQ2 through analysis of the conceptual framework. Data from the case study research was analyzed in the context of this conceptual framework to address and answer RQ3 in Chapter 5.

Fourteen elements derived from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and categorized by three phases of cross-border educational partnerships comprise the conceptual framework for this study. Phase 1 encompasses the development of the *partnership* through the following components: (A.1) identification of a suitable partner with shared vision; (A.2) development of mission statement, goals and governing documents; (A.3) adequate resources of staffing, programs and infrastructure; (A.4) financial capacity of home and host institutions (transparency and accountability); (A.5) authorization and institutional commitment from senior leadership; and (A.6) mutual agreement of contractual, legally binding agreements.

Phase 2 encompasses development of the *program* through the following components: (B.1) strategic planning; (B.2) accommodations of social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions; (B.3) faculty and staff engagement; and (B.4) the health safety and security of faculty and students.

Phase 3 encompasses *implementation* of the program through the following components: (C.1) academic framework, policies and standards; (C.2) student selection, access, equity, support and student learning and development; (C.3) student code of conduct; and (C.4) quality assurance procedures for faculty and students (Appendix D).

This chapter provides an overview of the execution of the case study and summarizes data gathered from seven semi-structured interviews and multiple partnership documents. Interview data were gathered during May and June of 2018 from four key informants and three faculty participants integral to all phases of the partnership from UPSOM's perspective using audio recordings transcribed with the application Rev Voice Recorder. Corresponding to the study protocol, the key informants and stakeholders are not identified by name in the study, but assigned an interviewee number. Appendix H lists the 20 questions from the Interview Guide. All interview questions are analyzed in this chapter. I started each interview requesting permission to record the discussion. Transcription services were also contracted through Rev Voice Recorder, and I coded each transcribed session immediately after the interview so that the conversations were fresh in my mind. During the interviews, I took notes and also recorded my personal thoughts, which I also immediately coded.

To organize the codes and emerging themes, I used the Interview Data Coding Form, an Excel spreadsheet with three columns to code: Transcript, Codes, and Categories and Themes (Appendix J). Each transcript was copied and pasted into the first column. Upon review of the data, the interview responses were coded using deductive and inductive approaches and entered in the second column, and the third column identified themes. A deductive approach was used to categorize responses according to alignment with the 14 elements (codes) and with the three phases of a cross-border education partnership (categories and themes). An inductive approach identified similarities in responses and attempted to develop further meaning to consider additional elements, outliers, and modifications to the conceptual framework.

A second Excel spreadsheet, Interview Coding Summary, was developed that utilized one tab for each of the 20 interview questions (Appendix K). Each tab had five columns: Interviewee #, Key Responses, Themes, Codes, and Frequency. Each transcript was reviewed multiple times to ensure that details had not been omitted in previous reviews. Each tab represented a question, and the themes and codes were summarized for all seven interviews per tab.

A similar analysis process was conducted for partnership documentation. A set of Data Collection Forms (Appendix E) was completed for each document. Four Sponsored Project Agreements were reviewed: (1) Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase One, Short-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (feasibility study), effective 8/29/2012 – 1/31/2013; (2) Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Two, Mid-Term Services Agreement for establishing NUSOM (planning phase), effective 1/1/2013-10/31/2014; (3) Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Three, Long-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (development of first and second year medical school education), effective 12/3/2014-12/31/2016; and the current agreement, Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Four, Long-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (development of third and fourth year medical school education), effective 1/1/2017-6/30/2019. Each agreement had corresponding, voluminous, semi-annual reports. Each agreement and semi-annual report was reviewed, any deductive and inductive codes were written in the margin, and codes summarized in notes according to phase and element. In addition, the codes were mapped back to the interview questions utilizing the Data Collection Form (Appendix E). All emergent codes were highlighted and then summarized. The Interview Data Coding Form (Appendix K), notes, and a personal journal were also reviewed to add details.

This chapter is organized by the three phases of a partnership and further broken down by the elements per phase as outlined in the original conceptual framework. The two main data sources were partnership documents and semi-structured interviews.

## **4.2 ANALYSIS OF PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS BY PHASE**

When presenting findings, it is common for researchers to share their findings by organizing into categories or themes developed by analyzing the data (Merriam, 2009). The Interview Guide (Appendix H) was developed by forming questions that addressed the three phases of partnership development and corresponding fourteen elements. As noted above, emerging codes that evolved were inductive codes that explored further evaluation and analysis. Appendix E – Data Collection Forms, Appendix J – Interview Coding Forms, Appendix K - Interview Coding Summary and Appendix E, Data Collection Form were utilized as primary sources to summarize the data according to each of the three phases of partnership development. Merriam (2016) indicates that there is not a standard format to report the findings of a qualitative study.

### **4.2.1 Phase 1: Developing the partnership**

The partnership between UPSOM and NU developed rapidly over a period of six months from June 2012 through December 2012. The McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine, a UPSOM institute, already had a research agreement in place with the NU Center for Life Sciences. In May 2012, UPSOM was asked by NU to respond to a request for a nonbinding pre-proposal on developing an integrated academic health care system, but with special emphasis on

the creation of NUSOM. NU requested proposals from only two institutions: Duke University and the University of Pittsburgh. The University of Pittsburgh was informed in June 2012 that, based on the merits of its response to NU; it was the preferred partner for the development of NUSOM. Duke University was already NU's strategic partner to develop the Graduate School of Business at NU and so remains an active NU partner.

Once UPSOM realized that this cross-border educational partnership was a reality, a Steering Committee was established in June 2012 that included the Vice Dean, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Health Sciences, and three key faculty. The Phase One Short-Term Agreement for Establishing Nazarbayev School of Medicine (UPSOM, 2012) was developed and signed on August 29, 2012. Interviewee #2 described the initial stages of the partnership as “the train left the building, and we were constantly trying to catch up.”

#### **4.2.1.1 Sponsored project agreements**

Upon analysis and review of the documentation, the data illustrate that three of the four sponsored project agreements are categorized under Phase 1 – Developing the Partnership and overlap into Phase 2 – Developing the Program. The first agreement, Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase One, Short-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (feasibility study), effective 8/29/2012 – 1/31/2013 is a vital document of the partnership (UPSOM, 2012). This agreement detailed the following planning services: fees, expenses, and payment schedule; program organization; NUSOM preliminary curriculum and implementation planning; NUSOM facilities planning; nursing education in the Republic of Kazakhstan; UPSOM Steering Committee site visits; and report preparation. Each of these services had corresponding details included in the agreement with a list of deliverables. The fees, expenses, and payment schedule were confidential and redacted from all documentation. However, through the interviews, it was

clear that a payment schedule corresponded to deliverables in reports UPSOM provided to NUSOM. For each planning service, a list of deliverables was identified. For example, there are five implementation planning deliverables: (1) detailed implementation roadmap with key milestones and timelines, including two years of NUSOM operations in the format of a Gantt-style chart; (2) preliminary roadmap and timeline for years three and four of NUSOM operation; (3) staged outline for faculty selection and recruitment, with recommended search strategy and criteria; (4) recommendations on screening and selection of local faculty candidates; and (5) written assessment of existing faculty, facilities and other resources to determine the feasibility of matriculating NUSOM's founding class in fall of 2014 with corresponding conditions (UPSOM, 2012a). These deliverables were developed and contained under the implementation planning service in the report for Short-Term Services Agreement for establishing NUSOM (UPSOM, 2012b). For transparency and clarity, the agreement was designed in two columns per page: the left side was translated in Russian and the right side was in English, side by side so there was no misunderstandings between documents or misinterpretations between home and host institutions. The Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh and the Chairman of Executive Council of NU both signed the agreement.

The stated overarching goal was that “The University of Pittsburgh will provide consulting services to develop an implementation plan to assist in the creation and operation of the Nazarbayev University School of Medicine (NUSOM).” The agreement also stated, “Ultimate governance of NUSOM will reside with NU. University of Pittsburgh will serve only in an advisory capacity.”

This short-term services agreement provided a commitment for a six-month feasibility study so that both UPSOM and NUSOM could understand the expectations and deliverables and

develop a schedule. It gave UPSOM the opportunity for site visits to Astana, the ability to meet with NU senior leadership and government officials regarding goals and objectives, and, most importantly, time “on the ground” to interact with the people and learn about the culture. In December 2012, a report aligned with the Short-Term Agreement was submitted by UPSOM to NUSOM that detailed a NUSOM Implementation Roadmap for the time period leading to the opening of NUSOM and the initial two years of operation plus a preliminary roadmap and timeline for years three and four of NUSOM operation. The report is 106 pages and provides details for every deliverable outlined in the agreement. The report contains a spreadsheet categorizing activity, description, predecessor, expected time, start date, and comments/assumptions. There are 75 activities identified in the report: 47 related to years one and two, and 28 related to years three and four.

This Short-Term Agreement - Phase 1 summary report (December 2012) resulted in three subsequent agreements: Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Two, Mid-Term Services Agreement for establishing NUSOM (planning phase), effective 1/1/2013-10/31/2014; Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Three, Long-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (development of first and second year medical school education), effective 12/3/2014-12/31/2016; and the current agreement, Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Four, Long-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (development of third and fourth year medical school education), effective 1/1/2017-6/30/2019.

The report of the Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Two, Mid-Term Services Agreement for establishing NUSOM (planning phase), effective 1/1/2013-10/31/2014 (UPSOM, 2013), was 1,163 pages long and included 70 appendices, covered activities from January 2013 through September 2014 and generated two reports. The final report, submitted in October 2014,

addressed six key areas: leadership engagement, infrastructure, faculty and staff, policies and procedures, course materials, and clinical teaching sites. There were 25 deliverables associated with the key areas.

The Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Three, Long-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (development of first and second year medical school education), effective 12/3/2014-12/31/2016 (UPSOM, 2014) consisted of five six-month project periods. To summarize, all five of the reports consisted of the following planning services: program organization and project support: hiring and orientation of NUSOM leadership and management team: hiring of NUSOM faculty and staff; mentoring of NUSOM faculty and staff; NUSOM admissions process; clinical teaching site development; NUSOM library; and NUSOM policies and procedures. The Phase Four agreement (UPSOM, 2016) was not part of Developing the Partnership and will be discussed in a future section.

#### **4.2.1.2 Identification of a suitable partner with a shared vision**

The first interview question addressed this specific element. Because NU was a new university with minimal web presence and no previous international engagement, there were no data or information to evaluate suitability and not much that UPSOM could have investigated. There was no history with partner institutions to evaluate experiences. Each interviewee had similar responses as Interviewee #2, “Comfort level came from site visits and being on the ground.”

NU had developed a university-wide plan that each academic unit would have a strategic partner, UPSOM being the strategic partner for the new medical school to be developed. Interviewee #4 stated, “Commitment came from the highest levels of government. We met with all government officials and advisors from the World Bank.” All respondents felt there was no

due diligence required for this specific partnership. The biggest concern the majority of respondents shared were concerns with remnants of the former soviet republic mindset.

All the respondents felt that identification of a suitable partner with a shared vision would be an essential element for future partnerships. The respondents recognized that NU wanted a strategic partner that would bring western medicine and teaching methods to NU and that NU felt comfortable with UPSOM based on their separate research partnership. An emerging code through the interviews was legitimacy. “As defined by Suchman (1995), “Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574). Both the home and host institutions must seek legitimacy to partner with each other. Another code that emerged in response to this question was adequacy of resources for staffing, program and infrastructure, which is reviewed in section 4.2.1.3.

#### **4.2.1.3 Development of a mission statement, goals and governing body.**

In responding to the second interview question, all respondents concurred that the service agreements between UPSOM and NU were intended to develop a U.S. style medical school at NU. The majority of responses centered on the milestones and deliverables in bi-annual reports tied to each service agreement that were equivalent to goals as well as timeframes. The governing body from UPSOM was identified as the Steering Committee or sometimes called the project team throughout the interviews. The documentation officially refers to the core group as the UPSOM Steering Committee. The UPSOM Steering Committee did not work with NU to develop a mission statement and goals per se, but they did work through goals and objectives to be conveyed in the semi-annual reports tied to deliverables in the consulting services agreements. NU had annual “Partners Meetings” with all US institutions working with NU to develop the

multiple undergraduate and graduate schools being developed at NU. In addition, Interviewee #5 stated, “Partners Meetings have a mission statement and goals for the graduate schools. Our contract was granular. The contract was based more on objectives to achieve goals.” The respondents felt that they indirectly developed a mission statement and goals through the semi-annual reports and that the main governing body for UPSOM was the UPSOM Steering Committee.

#### **4.2.1.4 Adequacy of resources for staffing, program and infrastructure**

The majority of responses to the third and fourth interview questions reflect the belief by respondents that staffing was underestimated during the initial discussions of partnership development. It was difficult for anyone to estimate the amount of time necessary for each aspect of the partnership during the feasibility phase. In the beginning, NU wanted UPSOM to go to Kazakhstan for a month or more to train local faculty. Interviewee #2 referred to this way of teaching as the “train the trainer” model of teaching. However, it was impossible to ask the UPSOM faculty to devote that much time away from their responsibilities at their home institution.

The UPSOM Steering Committee was tasked to hire a dean for NUSOM as well as a faculty leader in basic science to focus on the pre-clinical instruction years. Interviewee #3 stated, “Faculty were chosen who understood core components of medical education as well as regulatory requirements.” The UPSOM Steering Committee also looked for faculty who had a general enthusiasm for global education. Interviewee #3 stated, “We looked for faculty who would embrace an adventure.” Staffing decisions were based on need and funding. Interviewee #6 stated, “Staffing was an ongoing process for evaluation and analysis. I started when the Dean at NUSOM was just hired and a couple key faculty. UPSOM developed a framework/hierarchy

for hiring local faculty and European faculty.” Several European faculty were hired who had experience with western ways of teaching and spoke fluent English.

UPSOM created a position for the Director of Global Education as well as a full-time project manager. These positions evolved after the initial partnership was formed, but respondents recommended that future institutions interested in global engagement create these positions at the onset of a cross-border partnership to assist with international engagement efforts.

NU originally housed temporary medical school operations in whatever space was available, mostly in underutilized space in the new business school building and in one of the UMC hospitals. Interviewee #2 stated, “Planning and evaluation of a new medical school building was reviewed during the first trip to Kazakhstan. They took us to look at dirt that now holds the new NUSOM medical school building.” Interview #3 stated, “The new NUSOM medical school is nicer than UPSOM.” The majority of responses determined that temporary space was used until the new home of the NUSOM was built. An additional element evolved under this questioning – curriculum planning and development. Faculty were hired to begin development of the first two years of the medical school curriculum. Under the current conceptual framework, this falls under phase 2 – developing the program. The majority of responses addressed planning for curriculum development in parallel with developing the partnership. This approach may be a result that one of the main goals of the partnership was to create a western style curriculum at NU.

#### **4.2.1.5 Financial Capacity of home and host institutions - transparency and accountability**

The fifth interview question addressed this element. Interviewee #4 stated, “A risk assessment of doing business in Kazakhstan was performed. There was a lack of transparency in the

government and NU discussed their values and goals of creating a “corruption free environment.” At the time of the original partnership discussions, there was no concern that NU might lack the financial capacity to pay for the expenses detailed in the consulting agreements. They had an abundance of financial resources as a result of their oil market. Midway through the original consulting agreement, however, the tenge, the currency of Kazakhstan, significantly dropped in value, and the consulting agreement needed to be amended. This market currency devaluation could not have been predicted. NU wanted to maintain the same goals of the consulting agreement but only had a portion of the funding due to the devaluation of the currency. This put UPSOM in a very difficult position. UPSOM had to decrease the hours on the project and still provide a high quality deliverable. All respondents felt this was a necessary element of developing the partnership. An inductive code that emerged from the inquiry was institutional flexibility. UPSOM had to be flexible and step back to reevaluate how they could complete the program with fewer resources. NU had to re-evaluate its thinking and compromise on the final product delivered, given that less funding was available.

#### **4.2.1.6 Mutual agreement of contractual legally binding agreements**

In response to the sixth interview question, the majority of respondents felt that attorneys at both the home and host institution were intimately involved in the project from inception. Interviewee #2 stated, “Attorneys were engaged at all levels. UPSOM hired a Kazak firm to evaluate UPSOM interests. They spoke the language, knew the system and understood the cultural translations.” It was recommended that U.S. institutions hire a law firm in the host country to assist with partnership development. UPSOM had contracts as well as semi-annual reports finalized in both English and Russian so there was no miscommunication. Interviewee #1 stated, “We were bogged down in legal at the expense of the real work.” Interviewee #6

stated, “Legal slowed the partnership process and was very paper heavy.” From the perspective of the faculty actively engaged in the partnership, they felt the lawyers were too conservative. Because this was the first cross-border educational partnership of its kind for UPSOM, the attorneys felt the need to be conservative and worried about the reputational and financial risks of the home institution. All of the respondents understood the necessity of this element, and they feel they will have a better frame of reference based on this experience for engagement with future cross-border education partnerships. The previous element, financial capacity of home and host institution – transparency and accountability spilled over as an emergent code from all the responses from this interview question. Legally binding contracts are directly tied to financing and identified goals and objectives.

#### **4.2.1.7 Authorization of institutional commitment from senior leadership**

The theme of “jumping in in a big way internationally” resonated well with senior UPSOM administration and faculty, and their enthusiasm was conveyed to the University of Pittsburgh Chancellor as noted in several responses to interview question seven. Respondents at UPSOM felt “official authorization” was granted when the Chancellor acknowledged his interest and commitment to the cross-border partnership. Several levels of the University of Pittsburgh were concerned with “tampering with our brand” as stated by Interviewee #1. There were serious questions on whether the schedule and tight timelines could be met and still maintain a high quality deliverable (i.e., preserve “our brand”). The majority of respondents felt that the authorization of a short-term feasibility study – officially referred to as the Short-Term Services Agreement, launched the partnership. It was the “bail-out clause that UPSOM needed” as stated by Interviewee #1. The short-term feasibility study gave UPSOM the time and analysis on the

ground in Kazakhstan to develop the Mid-term and Long Term contracts. UPSOM needed time at NU to understand the project and understand their partner.

#### **4.2.1.8 Phase 1 Summary: Developing the partnership**

Based on responses to questions 1-7 of the Interview Guide (Appendix D), UPSOM directly or indirectly addressed the six elements in the conceptual framework for Phase 1. Element (A.1) identification of a suitable partner with a shared vision, was achieved during the feasibility study in which the UPSOM Steering Committee learned about the region, the culture, and the government after working in Astana and meeting with the key stakeholders at NU. For element (A.2) the sponsored project agreements served as a mission statement with goals and milestones, and the UPSOM Steering Committee was the “governing body”. Element (A.3) adequacy of resources and element (A.4) financial capacity go hand in hand. All planning was going well for both UPSOM and NU until the market devaluation of the tenge occurred during the second contract, the planning phase, on December 3, 2014 that affected deliverables and milestones for the third contract, phase 3, on January 1, 2016. (K. Sidorovich, personal communication, April 19, 2018). UPSOM re-evaluated the goals and objectives and completed the work necessary, but attention to the evaluation of processes was lost due to the reduced funding available. Element (A.5) mutual agreement of contractually legally binding agreements is recommended for all partnership efforts. Once contracts are agreed upon by home and host institution, Element (A.6) institutional commitment, falls into place. In addition to the six elements in the first phase of the conceptual framework, curriculum planning and development and institutional flexibility are inductive codes that emerged from this phase of inquiry. Element (A.4) of financial capacity of host institution and payment for services was an inductive code directly or indirectly raised through the discussion of every interview question.

#### **4.2.2 Phase 2: Developing the program**

Interview questions 8-11 in the Interview Guide (Appendix H) correspond to the responses for this phase and its elements in the conceptual framework. Review of all the interview responses identifies an overlap between Phase 1 (partnership development) and Phase 2 (program development) for several elements. For this specific case, some elements of developing the partnership and developing the program occurred in parallel.

Interviewee #2 stated, “The entire project was a strategic plan of developing a team with different kinds of expertise to achieve goals.” Upon addressing interview question eight, several respondents felt that the entire partnership consisted of mini-strategic plans to accomplish goals and milestones outlined in the Short-Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term Consulting Services Agreements. Interviewee #7 stated, “The whole process was a strategic plan due to timing. Stakeholders became involved because of their broad experience in education and teaching.” Interviewee #1 stated, “I would not call it strategic planning, it was more like sophisticated logistical planning. We identified critical activities. There was no time for long range planning.” Most responses concurred that strategic planning was incorporated into the program development process. Two of the seven responses were outliers and responded that there was no time for strategic planning and that “sophisticated logistical planning” was done.

Upon review of the documents, the sponsored project agreements identify milestones and scope of work with schedules. Broad goals and objectives are outlined. The corresponding semi-annual reports for periods 1-5 of the Long-Term Consulting Services Agreement between NU and UPSOM dated January 2015 – December 2016 correspond with this phase of the partnership. As a point of reference, the Period 1 report documents six key areas: hiring and orientation of NUSOM leadership and management team, hiring of NUSOM faculty, mentoring

of NUSOM faculty and staff, NUSOM admissions process, clinical teaching site development, NUSOM library, and NUSOM policies and procedures. For reference, this report has 19 deliverables and is 131 pages with 20 appendices. The faculty elements correspond with Phase 2, Developing the Program, but the student elements correspond to the next phase, Phase 3, Implementing the Program.

These documents can be viewed as multiple strategic plans. Long-range plans changed due to the devaluation of the tenge, and new short-term goals were identified. One major difference identified was that NUSOM tended to think in short-term goals, while UPSOM was trying to develop long-term goals for the program. As Interviewee #5 stated, “They need to get on a cycle. You do not do it once and declare victory. You have to keep doing it to maintain continuity.” This quote refers to NUSOM preparation for United States Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE).

In addition to the conceptual framework element (B.1) strategic planning, themes related to leadership style, open communication, curriculum development and global engagement initiatives emerged as additional inductive codes.

#### **4.2.2.1 Sponsored project agreements**

As indicated in Phase 1, the first three sponsored project agreements overlap between phase 1 and phase 2 of the partnership. All details analyzed in section 4.2.1.1 are relevant for this phase of the partnership also. This will be further explored in Chapter 5 in analyzing the conceptual framework.

#### **4.2.2.2 Accommodating social, cultural and ethical values**

Responses to interview question nine were all over the spectrum. Many felt that UPSOM was sensitive to locals, and that was a major reason the partnership developed. The Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase One, Short-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (feasibility study) was a necessary step in partnership development for UPSOM to take time in Astana and learn about the social, cultural and ethical values of the country. Discussion of this feasibility study resonated throughout all the interview responses as a main reason for understanding the people and the country. In addition, UPSOM Steering Committee members and key faculty involved in the partnership read the book *Apples are from Kazakhstan* and used many other resources to learn about the culture. The UPSOM Steering Committee established personal relationships of trust with key NU leadership.

Several accommodations were made in the NUSOM curriculum due to the majority of faculty and students practicing the Muslim religion. One major issue is that Muslims do not physically touch dead bodies. For anatomy, instead of teaching with cadavers, electronic Anatomage tables were utilized for teaching. The UPSOM Steering Committee was sensitive to the HIV/AIDS crisis in Kazakhstan. The Republic of Kazakhstan does not admit to the use of drugs or the practice of homosexuality, as both are illegal. This issue had to be delicately addressed in the curriculum due to the legal ramifications. Another issue that had to be tailored for the curriculum was residents touching a patient during an examination. NUSOM students were shocked that residents, not just attending physicians, intimately interacted with patients. From the perspective of UPSOM, as interviewee #5 stated, “Differences were exciting, not scary.” In addition, NUSOM was interested in adopting western ways of teaching such as team-based learning and role-play scenarios, not just traditional lecture-based teaching methods.

Many Europeans were hired as senior faculty at NUSOM because of their experience with a western style of teaching and their proficiency in English. Unfortunately, some were not as sensitive to customizing the curriculum to the Kazakhstan culture, as they needed to be. Some also displayed an attitude of superiority to the local Kazak faculty who were mostly junior faculty. Interviewee #7 stated, “The Kazak junior faculty have a deep respect for authority and are afraid of asking questions or making a mistake.” This continues to be a major cultural issue UPSOM has raised with NUSOM senior leadership. Respondents feel that Kazaks are friendly, forthcoming and willing to exchange information to their peers. They need to have open communication with the senior faculty and remove themselves from the soviet way of thinking which is easier said than done.

Inductive codes such as decision-making methods, communication process, and academic framework policies and standards emerged. This element also teetered between partnership phases, Phase 1: Developing the Partnership and Phase 2: Developing the Program.

#### **4.2.2.3 Faculty and staff engagement**

Interview #3 stated, “Develop the course list and pool from the experts and those energetic about teaching.” This quote summarizes the majority of responses to interview question ten. Interviewee #2 stated, “Meet with faculty individually and explain why it is an interesting opportunity.” The UPSOM Steering Committee negotiated business class travel accommodations for site visits. It was difficult to recruit faculty and send them around the world in coach accommodations. Interviewee #6 stated, “We tried to match expertise with courses and get the teaching mission accomplished, then move on to research. UPSOM chose faculty to assist in the partnership by focusing on faculty with expertise on the curriculum of the first two years of the program. NUSOM only had four faculty to work with in the beginning so it was

manageable.” UPSOM primarily looked for a content expert for a particular course who was open minded and adventurous, and provided remuneration for the faculty member’s effort. Inductive codes such as faculty selection and qualifications, curriculum development and faculty commitment emerged through the responses, in addition to faculty and staff engagement.

#### **4.2.2.4 Health safety and security**

The majority of responses to interview question 11 had no concerns regarding health and safety at all. The biggest concern was that a process be implemented for faculty and staff who became ill abroad. Faculty wanted the opportunity to get home immediately at whatever the cost if they became ill. Interviewee #3 stated, “I wouldn’t want to be sick there. Their medical system is not one I want taking care of me now. Maybe in the future.” This process was put into place and budgeted in the Long-Term Consulting Agreement. There was no issue with safety. Interviewee #3 further explained, “Wondering around Astana feels safer to me than most places in the world. It is really a benign city.” Interviewee #5 stated, “Really safe, but bring a winter coat!” The biggest concern was the extreme cold weather and -40 temperatures and exhaustion from the travel.

An inductive code that emerged was a cultural issue of schedule and timing. The respondents felt that Kazakhstan and NU conducted business on a slower pace than UPSOM. UPSOM was very precise and NU generalized tasks. Where these two paths converged were many areas of uncertainty at the beginning of the partnership.

#### **4.2.2.5 Phase 2 Summary: Developing the program**

Upon review of responses to interview questions 8-11 and appropriate documents, UPSOM appeared to achieve all elements of this phase. Element (B.1) strategic planning, was outlined in

all service agreement documents and identified by goals and milestones in the bi-annual reports. Element (B.2) accommodating social, cultural, language, literacy, religious, legal, and ethical values, was at least attempted if not fully achieved. The partnership is still relatively new and continually evolving, but the responses identified that every effort was made to accomplish these principles. The first agreement provided the time necessary on the ground in Astana to understand the cultural. Element (B.3) faculty and staff engagement was addressed by UPSOM to find the right faculty with not only the expertise necessary but also the appropriate attitude and demeanor to be a team player on this project. Element (B.4) health, safety and security was achieved. All faculty felt safe, but wanted special accommodations made if they became ill abroad. The biggest concern addressed was the cold temperatures in Kazakhstan.

A handful of elements overlapped into both Phase 1 and Phase 2, which points to the opportunity to re-evaluate the conceptual framework to accommodate the fluidity of certain elements between phases of the partnership (Chapter 5).

### **4.2.3 Phase 3: Implementing the program**

The final and ongoing phase of the cross-border education partnership is implementing the program. This process evolves and changes to accommodate the needs of the host institution. Interview questions 12-17 were designed to understand whether the partnership between UPSOM and NU utilized the elements in Phase 3, Implementing the Program of the conceptual framework. Upon review of the documents provided, the semi-annual reports for periods 1-5 of the Long-Term Consulting Services Agreement between NU and UPSOM dated January 2015 – December 2016 partially correspond with this phase of the partnership. The faculty elements correspond with Phase 2, Developing the Program, but the student elements correspond to this

phase. In addition, the current sponsored project agreement, Phase Four, and two reports align with this phase.

#### **4.2.3.1 Sponsored Project Agreements**

The fourth agreement, Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase Four, Long-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (development of third and fourth year medical school education), effective 1/1/2017-6/30/2019, was signed in December 2016 and is currently in effect. Two reports were provided that align with this phase and three reports are scheduled for completion after the data collection phase of this study commenced and are not included. The main goal of this agreement is to “promote the success of the collaboration and monitor progress toward the aim of developing NUSOM and to meet the deadline of June 2019 for the graduation of the inaugural NUSOM class” (UPSOM, 2016). A summary of the goals focuses on years three and four of the NUSOM curriculum such as: hiring of qualified faculty for the clinical years, mentoring of NUSOM clinical and research faculty and staff, development of teaching materials for clinical clerkships, continued assistance and guidance on the admissions process, conducting assessments of students at every level and finally, providing student training at NUSOM for those who qualify for a specified time period.

#### **4.2.3.2 Academic framework, policies and standards**

A majority of respondents to interview question 12 articulated that the curriculum developed for NU was based on that of UPSOM, with alterations and adaptations implemented for local needs. Interviewee #2 stated, “Curriculum adaptations were made to do innovative things like bridge the gap and incorporate medicine and public health together.” Interviewee #3 stated, “Develop clinical training through western ways, because currently in Kazakhstan, students never touch

patients without an attending present.” Interviewee #7 stated, “Changes were made to accommodate Kazakhstan culture. We developed master classes and discussed the importance of active and passive learning. UPSOM faculty actually incorporated changes into our curriculum based on this exercise. Working to develop courses for others makes you look at what you currently are doing and reevaluate your own work.” Developing the curriculum had many obstacles along the way. NU wanted UPSOM to turn over their current curriculum to include syllabus, instructor notes, power point presentations, and images, with nothing redacted. UPSOM was under the understanding that they would develop the curriculum in conjunction with NU, not turn over their current curriculum verbatim. Many legal issues ensued over copyright of images and scope of work for this major milestone of the partnership. An example of the way it eventually worked was the development of a neuroscience course. A UPSOM faculty member and a neurologist from UPMC worked with a faculty member at NU to develop every aspect of the course. There were several Skype meetings, conference calls and power point reviews. The UPSOM faculty member had experience running the courses and the UPMC neurologist and NU faculty had the clinical expertise to develop a well-rounded course. The biggest lesson learned was to involve the host faculty as early as possible. In addition to this element, the code of curriculum development emerged throughout the responses.

In response to interview question 13, all of the responses concluded that no accrediting body reviewed and approved the curriculum, but UPSOM was working with NU towards World Federation of Medical Education standards, a more global system than the local accreditation system. Interviewee #4 stated, “In 2023, anyone who wants to apply to the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates needs to have graduated from an institution that obtained regional accreditation.” With the first class graduating in 2019, this is an issue that is

being evaluated and planned for best avenues for accreditation. In addition to the element of academic framework, policies and standards, the code of curriculum development emerged through the responses of this question also.

#### **4.2.3.3 Student selection, access, equity, support learning and development**

Interviewee #2 summarized a response based on all of the respondents for interview question 14, “NUSOM wanted everything based on numbers and test scores to limit corruption.” NUSOM was concerned with the issue of corruption and worked with UPSOM to adopt similar policies to those in place in the U.S. Interviewee #1 stated, “NUSOM instituted a panel for interviews so the likelihood of an entire panel being paid off was less likely than one individual.” The chair of the panel was public, but not a voting member. NUSOM implemented rigid criteria by the numbers that included strict MCAT scores, English competency and a specific grading scale. Interviewee #4 stated, “NUSOM felt that we only admit students that meet these criteria and felt it displaced integrity and transparency.” UPSOM faculty felt that some of the criteria were too rigid and that NUSOM turned away too many students, resulting in low enrollment. NUSOM felt this rigid process was the only way to avoid corruption for selection. An emerging code through the responses was integrity and transparency in the student selection process.

In response to interview question 15 regarding student advising, UPSOM recommended that NUSOM hire a Dean of Students and a Dean of Medical Education similar to UPSOM, but to date, this recommendation has not been implemented. Due to NUSOM’s current small class size, NUSOM is opting for now to assign existing faculty to advise a group of students. A general response was that NUSOM was very good at recruiting day-to-day faculty and slow in hiring administrative positions.

#### **4.2.3.4 Student Code of Conduct**

Responses to question 16 indicate that early in the development of the partnership, NU wanted a program established on highly professional, ethical behavior. Interviewee 1 stated, “NU had a code of conduct and UPSOM worked with NUSOM to specifically alter the code for the medical school.” These adaptations included behavior and interactions with patients, and confidentiality guidelines similar to HIPAA in the US. This element had the least feedback from respondents due to minimal involvement with the issue.

#### **4.2.3.5 Quality Assurance**

In response to interview question 17, all prospective NUSOM faculty were interviewed by UPSOM faculty via Skype, in Kazakhstan or an alternate location in the U.S. or Europe. Ads were placed in prestigious international journals, on medical specialty listservs, and distributed via professional among UPSOM faculty. Interviewee #4 stated, “We look for faculty with the triple threat: research, teaching and clinical care. We looked for clinical qualifications and reviewed publications, grants and board certifications.” Interviewee #1 stated, “We were matchmakers of those that interviewed. If someone we interviewed was more into research than education, we tried to align their strengths with a need.” A code that emerged through responses was references to faculty selection and qualifications.

A majority of responses for interview question 18 duplicated responses for interview question 14, “What was the policy to evaluate student selection into the program? What were admission criteria?” The majority of respondents also felt that UPSOM wanted to evaluate the student selection criteria, but there was never funding approved for quality assurances initiatives. Throughout the interviews, several respondents discussed the issue of evaluation and that it was not a welcomed process at NU. UPSOM respondents felt that as academics, they wanted to

know what processes worked and what processes needed improvement but evaluation by NU was deemed as failing and doing something wrong. This was a cultural issue that should be addressed in the future.

#### **4.2.3.6 Phase 3 Summary: Implementing the program**

Interview questions 12-18 aimed to understand the necessity of the elements in this phase of the partnership. The conceptual framework for this phase focuses on the students, for whom the program is being implemented. However, the documentation for the consulting agreements for the partnership included both faculty selection (Phase 2) as well as student selection (Phase 3) and student policies and standards. Element (C.1) academic framework, policies and standards was adhered to, but a focus on curriculum planning and development should preface this element in the previous phase of the partnership, Phase 2 - Developing the Program. The UPSOM-NU partnership was mainly a curriculum development partnership to bring western ways of teaching medical education to Astana and as Interviewee #2 stated, “The devil is in the details.” The elements of the conceptual framework not apparent in this cross-border educational partnership were part of (C.2) student support, learning and development, (C3) student code of conduct and (C.4) quality assurance initiatives.

### **4.3 SUMMARY OF UNFORSEEN CONDITIONS**

Interview question 19 of the Interview Guide (Appendix E) specifically asked respondents to report any unforeseen conditions that would be beneficial to identify for the study for institutions to evaluate during the three phases of partnership development. Interviewee #3 stated,

“Everything will be three times harder than you expect.” This statement is a prelude to the unanticipated obstacles identified below that UPSOM and NU faced during the phases of partnership development. Upon analyzing the responses, the most unexpected condition that could have caused the cross-border education partnership to fail was the devaluation of the currency of Kazakhstan, the tenge. In fall 2015, the oil industry struggled with supply and demand of exports, and costs decreased by 30%, which in turn devalued the tenge by 23%. At the time of the devaluation, UPSOM and NU had a mutually agreed upon, signed, legally binding contract, with scope of work and deliverables. This devaluation of the currency could not have been planned for unless there were clauses built into the contract for reduced scope of work if less funding was made available due to a devaluation. A majority of respondents felt that clauses in the contract to deal with this unforeseen condition would be beneficial for both the home and host institution. UPSOM could have deemed NU in breach of contract, but respondents felt it was not constructive for the partnership or the project. Both UPSOM and NU were flexible and decreased the scope of work and deliverables to accommodate the decrease in funding. The biggest decrease in scope of work and deliverables was quality assurance initiatives. The decrease in scope was difficult for UPSOM because as academics, they wanted to know what was working well and what needed improvement in the curriculum. This was another unforeseen cultural issue that constructive criticism, quality assurance initiatives and evaluation were frowned upon in Kazakhstan. Evaluation was viewed as something being wrong and being a failed process. As reported, this has been a frustrating issue for UPSOM because they want to improve the curriculum and any of the processes implemented to make things better for students and the faculty if necessary.

An unexpected and tragic event that occurred was the death of a NUSOM key senior faculty member who played a main educational role in the implementation of the new curriculum. The loss of this faculty member caused the UPSOM steering committee, as well as the NUSOM steering committee, to brainstorm ideas and scramble for a replacement mid-semester. A local junior faculty member was interviewed and jumped in and took over the course and implemented the curriculum as planned. The death of a key faculty member could happen at any institution, but it could have been catastrophic at the inception of a new medical school based on western models of teaching with a new strategic partner if not re-evaluated properly. The only recommendation a few of the respondents made was to have a core group of faculty review the curriculum together so that, in the case of an illness, death or departure of a faculty member, others could possibly teach on an interim basis until a replacement was found.

Another major unforeseen condition was a change in senior leadership at the level of the NU Provost. This one change in a key leadership position negatively affected policy implementation and caused turmoil among the home and host institution. The majority of respondents again felt that this could occur at any institution and the need for detailed policy, processes and mutual agreement of contractual legally binding agreements that detail every approval is essential. Change in leadership leads to another topic, namely leadership style, which is important when evaluating recruits for administrative positions as well as key faculty positions. It is important to investigate leadership styles as thoroughly as is feasible and evaluate whether recruits are well suited for the environment. The respondents felt that one key NUSOM administrator was very controlling, especially with communications and made all communication flow in writing by e-mail. There was no free-flow of ideas or phone calls when an issue, whether small or large arose. Everything needed to be documented in writing.

Interviewee #5 stated that “NU and in turn NUSOM followed a method of central planning – all decisions had at least ten people signing off so that no one was solely responsible for the decision.” Leadership style, open communication and detailed processes for approvals of decisions are imperative to understand and have documented.

Finally, the last unforeseen condition that emerged from the responses was a cultural condition of mistreatment of the local Kazakh junior faculty who were not afforded the same respect, salary and benefits as the expatriate European senior faculty. Through the responses, UPSOM faculty felt that the Kazakh junior faculty were bright, energetic and willing to learn new ways of teaching. However, they respected authority and were not willing or eager to voice their opinions to senior faculty. The junior faculty would express their concerns and ideas to the UPSOM faculty, but would not raise questions or issues with their direct superiors. The UPSOM steering committee has raised this issue with NUSOM on many occasions and it is a cultural issue that still needs to be addressed. In summary, as Interviewee #3 stated above, “everything will be three times harder than expected” because of the unforeseen conditions that evolved during the phases of partnership development.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED**

The last interview question, #20 from the Interview Guide (Appendix H) states, “Is there any other information useful for the planning and implementation of a cross-border medical school partnership not covered in this interview that you could share? Any lessons learned?”

Interviewee #1 felt it is important to establish long-term contracts for long term planning, especially for stability and retention of faculty. Both local and expatriate faculty recruits do not

want to commit to short term contracts. Interviewee #4 believes it is important to develop an all-inclusive long-contract with milestones, timeframe and deliverables. It is important to develop the local work force and to hire expatriate recruits who will communicate and work collaboratively with local faculty. Interviewee #5 felt that faculty development workshops are essential for team building and curriculum development. Interviewee #4 states, “One individual can make or break a project.”

Interviewee #1 also felt the home institution should determine how many full-time employees will be necessary to manage the cross-border education partnership at the earliest phase possible. Core administration to help manage the partnership “during the messy phase” will assure the commitment of the home institution to the host institution.

Several of the respondents believe that richer compensation packages should be provided to the faculty at the home institution so that money is never an issue to participate. Several felt that “money should not be thrown at faculty to participate” but they should also not feel that compensation is inadequate for the scope of work.

Interviewee #2 felt that UPSOM assumptions were different from NUSOM and it was a major point of contention. He recommended that a thorough examination of any assumptions be reviewed in detail with partners and resolve any uncertainty. Interviewee #7 felt that this was a major issue for course development. “Make details clear.” UPSOM assumed they were designing a course with NU. NU assumed UPSOM was giving them their curriculum “as-is”.

Last and most importantly, Interviewee #5 stated, “Establish what the role of the partnership should be. We should be partners, not vendors, engaged in equal development. We should be equals, not mentees.”

#### **4.5 SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

In terms of the first data source, documentation, four sponsored project agreements were developed and implemented between UPSOM and NU from August of 2012- June 2019. There were nine semi-annual reports provided that corresponded to the deliverables in the four agreements at the completion of the data collection process. The agreements are in place for approximately a seven-year period; however, documentation of reports was provided through January of 2018. The documentation verified several contractual issues that were not clear in the interviews. For example, some respondents called the short-term agreement the MOU. There was not an MOU for this partnership. The interviewees were focused on their tasks in the partnership and not privy to every date, amendment or contractual issue that arose. The documentation was a supplement to corroborate additional information from the respondents. Upon analysis of the responses to the interview questions, UPSOM did adhere to a majority of the published principles in the Conceptual Framework (original) of Cross-border Education Partnerships. However, there are elements that emerged that are not in the framework and elements not reflected in the case study data.

The next chapter will summarize and assign meaning to the major findings of the study. The findings will report implications of practice, policy and research through a review of the conceptual framework. Although this is an individual case of a specific cross-border education partnership, I believe the meanings associated with the findings can be valuable to institutions interested in engaging in cross-border education partnership development.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study and addresses the final research question, RQ3: How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships? These answers are provided through a review of the research process, research findings, implications of the research findings and recommendations and implementation of the conceptual model and future research.

### **5.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROCESS**

As a prelude to the case study, I conducted preliminary research with interviews soliciting basic information about the partnership from key informants at the UPSOM to determine whether this study was plausible. In addition, I reviewed the six existing standards and guiding principles of strategic cross-border educational partnerships: 1) Council of Europe, *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* (2001); 2) New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, *Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-US Nationals* (2003); 3) International Association of Universities, *Principles for Cross-border Higher Education* (2005); 4) OECD/UNESCO *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* (2005); 5) Forum on Education Abroad, *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2015); and 6)

American Council on Education *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (2015). Through the case study, I examined the cross-border education partnership of UPSOM and NU. The literature guided my development of a conceptual framework comprising 14 elements, grouped in three phases of a hypothetical sequence of partnership development, designed to guide future institutions interested in pursuing a cross-border education partnership.

During the data collection phase of this study, I interviewed key informants and stakeholders and collected partnership documents from UPSOM to evaluate the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border partnerships?

RQ2: How do the elements in this conceptual framework describe the UPSOM and NU cross-border educational partnership case in each of the three phases: developing the partnership, developing the program, and implementing the program?

RQ3: How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships?

RQ1 is addressed through the literature review and preliminary research in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4 provides the data needed to address and answer RQ2 through analysis of the original conceptual framework arising out of the literature and preliminary research in the context of the case study. This chapter addresses the last research question, RQ3, through data from the case study research analyzed in the context of a revised conceptual framework.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The data in Chapter 4 demonstrate that the conceptual framework (Appendix D) is valid with a few caveats. The details of each element by partnership phase is summarized in section 4.2. This section summarizes the major findings of the case study and highlights new knowledge gained through a review, analysis and interpretation of the data from the previous chapter. The caveats of the study will provide a revised conceptual framework in the following section.

### **5.2.1 Revised conceptual framework**

Based on the analysis of case study data and a re-review of the literature, the Revised Conceptual Framework of Cross-Border Education Partnerships (Figure 2 and Appendix L) was developed. Several elements overlapped into Phase 1 and Phase 2 and fluidity of certain elements was observed between phases of the partnership. In addition, emerging elements and fourth phase to the conceptual model, Phase 4: Evaluation and Sustainability, that evolved from the data were added.

REVISED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

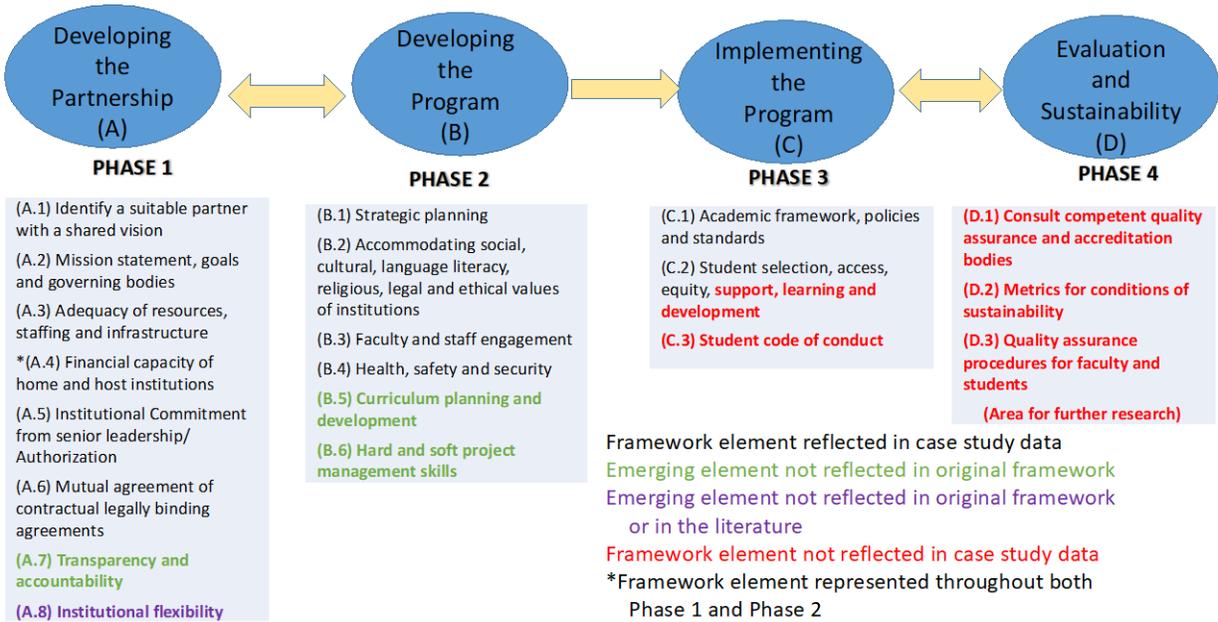


Figure 2. Revised Conceptual Framework of Cross-Border Education Partnerships

### 5.2.2 Case study findings supporting the conceptual framework

Through the interviews and documentation provided for this study in Chapter 4, it is evident that a majority of the elements of the conceptual framework were reflected in the case. It is interesting that even though this cross-border education partnership developed very rapidly with no time to review literature on relevant principles and guidelines, UPSOM nonetheless predominantly adhered to the published standards and hence the conceptual framework. One point in which the real-life case digressed from the conceptual framework derived from the literature was that Phase 1: Developing the Partnership and Phase 2: Developing the Program did not progress linearly and sequentially but rather through an iterative process of development. Several of the elements occurred and reoccurred in both phases. Most notably, element A.4

Financial Capacity of Home and Host institution was reflected in a majority of the interview questions as a deductive code for Phases 1 and 2. Even though financial data were not provided in the documentation due to confidentiality, deliverables for each contract were tied to a deliverable in each semi-annual report that in turn was tied to a payment.

### **5.2.3 Conceptual framework elements not reflected in the case study**

Some elements in the conceptual framework were not reflected in the case study, though these omissions do not indicate a need to remove the missing elements from the conceptual framework. The last three elements (part of Phase 3 Implementing the Program) are not represented in interview responses: (C.2) Student Support, Learning and Development, (C.3) Student Code of Conduct and (C.4) Quality Assurance Procedures for Faculty and Students. For (C.2), UPSOM has extensive services in place for student support, learning and development. Either these services did not exist as part of the NU partnership, or the respondents were unaware of the services. It was mentioned in the responses that student advising was done by a core group of faculty because of the small class sizes at NUSOM.

For (C.3) Student Code of Conduct, most respondents stated, “Yes, they adopted the code of NU,” but respondents did not actively participate in the development of the code as part of the partnership effort. Interviewee #4 stated, “A strong code of conduct extends to medical students in regard to interactions with patients. Confidentiality is similar to HIPAA guidelines.” This was the most detailed response upon review of interview question 16 regarding student code of conduct. Although the student code of conduct did not play a huge role in the development of the partnership, it may act as an extension of element (C.1) Academic Framework, Policies and Standards element. Upon review of the responses, it is possible that informants and stakeholders

interviewed may not have participated in planning the code of conduct, so it should remain in the conceptual framework for future partnerships.

The final element of the conceptual framework not reflected in the case study, (C.4) Quality Assurance Procedures was not raised in the interviews, but is incorporated in the contract documents. Most respondents were upset that, specifically with the curriculum development, no quality assurance initiatives were in place to understand what was working and what needed to be improved. This concern emerged in some responses as a cultural issue at NU. The respondents feel that NU officials perceive constructive feedback regarding improvements to curriculum and processes as a sign of failure. As academics, UPSOM faculty believe that quality assurance measures are an important element that should be evaluated with each class, especially the first NUSOM graduating class. Such processes are routine at UPSOM and, in fact, are considered essential. The ongoing use of quality assurance procedures at UPSOM and their desire for such processes at NUSOM suggested the need for a fourth phase in the conceptual framework dedicated to continual evaluation and improvement of the program being implemented, even if such a phase was not formally incorporated in the UPSOM-NU partnership.

A suggestion for future research is to further develop Phase 4: Evaluation and Sustainability as part of the conceptual framework, with the objective of improving the probability of long-term sustainability of the partnership. Metrics for conditions of sustainability could be developed. UPSOM faculty and staff emphasized the need for continuous assessment during all phases of the process with an eye toward insuring long-term sustainability. Quality assurance practices were likewise identified in the literature review, specifically in the OECD *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* (2015), and the American

Council on Education, *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (2015). The essential elements for Phase 4 include (D.1) Consult Competent Quality Assurance Accreditation Bodies, (D.2) Metrics for Conditions of Sustainability, and (D.3) (formerly (C.4 from Phase 3) Quality Assurance Procedures for Faculty and Students. This will be an area of further development and research.

#### **5.2.4 Case study elements not reflected in the conceptual framework**

A review of the Interview Coding Summary (Appendix K) upon completion of interview and documentation codes identified additional elements that emerged from the data outside of the conceptual framework (inductive codes), such as curriculum planning and development, integrity and transparency in the student selection process, faculty qualifications and selection criteria, clear decision-making and approval processes, leadership style of administration and faculty, open lines of communication at both the home and host institutions, and institutional flexibility. Upon re-evaluation of the Cross-Border Partnership Standards (Appendix A) that guided the literature review and conceptual framework in Chapter 2, all of these additional elements are in the literature, except institutional flexibility, but had not been deemed sufficiently important to rise to inclusion in the conceptual framework because they were not emphasized or repeated across the six publications as were the original 14 elements.

During the initial examination of the literature on which the conceptual framework is based, it had been assumed that elements (B.1) Strategic Planning and (C.1) Academic Framework, Policies and Standards would cover curriculum planning and development. The Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001) by the Council of

Europe has a standard that the mission statement should include “goals, objectives and contents of specific programmes.” The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad (2015) by The Forum on Education Abroad have a standard for academic framework requiring that the organization deliver appropriate academic content in its stated mission and goals. International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices (2015) has a standard for program administration and management and strategic planning and role of the institution.

While the UPSOM and NU partnership had such a focus on curriculum development, due to the underlying goal of creating a medical school at NU based on western pedagogical methods, a new element, (B.5) Curriculum Planning and Development, has been added to the conceptual framework as part of Phase 2: Developing the Program. Curriculum development was a major point of contention between UPSOM and NU in terms of a deliverable. The element of curriculum planning and development of a cross-border education partnership needs a detailed road map of what is being developed, deliverables provided (and when) and roles of the home institution versus host institution.

The terms “transparency” and “accountability” were most frequently aligned in the literature with financial capacity of the home and host institution. The inductive code of integrity and transparency of the student selection process emerged from the interviews. NU was specifically concerned with corruption in the admissions process and almost to a fault, based admission on stringent criteria based on MCAT scores and grades. The new Phase 1 element (A.7) Transparency and Accountability had been omitted from the original conceptual framework because it was expected to be part of each phase without being explicitly stated. *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices*

(2015) has a standard for program administration and management with transparency and accountability.

Another inductive element that emerged from interview and documentation data was faculty selection and qualifications, but this falls under (A.7) Transparency and Accountability, (B.7) Curriculum Planning and Development (as previously discussed), and (B.3) Faculty and Staff Engagement and so does not require a new element specific to faculty qualifications.

Other emergent elements that evolved were clear decision-making and approval processes, leadership style of administration and faculty, and open lines of communication at both the home and host institutions. *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices* (2015) includes standards for “hard and soft project management skills” that were not incorporated in the original conceptual framework. This guideline encompasses clear decision-making skills, leadership style and open lines of communication, all three of these which were discussed by several interviewees during different questions over the three phases and was added as element B.6 under Phase 2: Developing the Program.

Finally, institutional flexibility was an inductive emergent code not readily found in the literature and as such will be discussed separately in the next section.

### **5.2.5 Case study elements not reflected in the literature**

The sole inductive code not readily found in the literature, but reiterated throughout the interview responses is the new element of (A.8) Institutional Flexibility. An example of how the UPSOM-NU partnership could have failed without the key element of institutional flexibility was the

devaluation of the tenge in fall 2014 during the negotiation of the third sponsored project agreement. If UPSOM had not been flexible, the school could have opted to terminate the agreement and walk away from the partnership. It was a daunting undertaking to reevaluate all the planning to determine which deliverables could be scaled back without sacrificing the quality of the program. NU was also flexible in agreeing to the reduced scope of work in light of the financial situation to meet the end goal, the admission of students to a NUSOM program within a scheduled time frame.

### **5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, and preliminary research in Chapter 3, I proposed a conceptual framework with which to conduct and analyze the case study. The Conceptual Framework (Original) of Cross-Border Education Partnerships is displayed in Figure 1 and Appendix D.

While this framework largely reflected the case, the framework did not fully support all elements by phase or how an institution would practically initiate the development of a partnership. For example, the arrows in the original conceptual framework are linear and lead from one phase to the next in succession, whereas in reality, elements of Phase 1 and 2 were repeated in an iterative fashion across phases, and the same would be expected for Phases 3 and 4. These features and the emerging elements detailed above were incorporated into a revised conceptual framework that is proposed for use in the planning and development of future cross-border education partnerships and the study of these partnerships. A recommendation for further

research is to further develop Phase 4: Evaluation and Sustainability in the conceptual framework (See Appendix L).

### **5.3.1 Implications for current guidelines and principles**

Home and host institutions can use assessment tools to evaluate their positions and help define goals and objectives of the partnerships prior to engagement. Following my in-depth review of the six publications of cross-border education partnership standards (Appendix A) in the context of this case study, I feel that the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2015) by Forum on Education Abroad and *International Higher Education Partnerships: a Global Review of Standards and Practices* (2015) offer the most useful published tools for home and host institutions to use in evaluating their individual and shared goals and objectives prior to engaging in a cross-border partnership.

The published principles provide guidance for individual partnerships, but it is important to understand how these partnerships align with institutional strategic planning. No partnership, collaboration, or program can be replicated verbatim. Each partnership is unique and must be customized to the culture of the host institution. The American Council on Education, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement explains that even when the goals of an institution are not clearly defined, the goals of advancing diversity, enhancing faculty research, promoting community engagement, and increasing visibility of the institution can serve as the overarching goals of an international partnership.

### 5.3.2 Cultural differences matter

This case study shows evidence that cultural differences impact cross-border education partnerships at three levels: 1) the interpersonal level between people; 2) expectations and understanding related to the field(s) of study, (in this case, medicine); and 3) business management standards.

Cultural differences at the interpersonal level between the Western UPSOM and post-Soviet NUSOM created challenges in developing the partnership. In Kazakhstan, there is no such thing as constructive criticism. The fear of making a mistake outweighing the benefit of learning from a mistake was a difficult concept for UPSOM to understand. It was also difficult to recruit into Kazakhstan, so several well-compensated ex-pats were hired at NUSOM because of their experience and knowledge of westernized medicine and the English language. However, due to their respect for authority, another remnant of post-Soviet ways, the local Kazakh faculty were afraid to question the expats and express their opinions. This was raised as a major issue to senior NUSOM leadership and is under evaluation.

Expectations and understanding related to medicine also differed significantly between UPSOM and NUSOM. The doctor-patient relationship in Kazakhstan is very different than in the US. Patients are passive, and the doctor gives instruction that are never to be questioned, even if the patient does not understand. Teaching medical students to be sympathetic and to listen to the patient is a major cultural shift for NUSOM from post-Soviet ways to Westernized medicine.

Another cultural issue raised is that male instructors teach male students and female instructors teach female students. Because Kazakhstan is primarily a Muslim country, men do not touch women in public, which was a challenge since medical students need to touch patients

of the opposite sex during an exam. In addition, Muslims are not permitted to touch a dead body. The curriculum was developed to be culturally sensitive to these issues and electronic Anatomage Tables were purchased for teaching the gross anatomy curriculum.

Another significant cultural difference is that homosexuality is illegal in Kazakhstan, and sex education is not provided. NUSOM teaches about sexually transmitted diseases but does not explain how they are contracted, and there are no prevention campaigns regarding human papilloma virus and cervical cancer. A new focus on medicine and public health is being explored to spread awareness and education.

Cultural difference of business management standards were likewise evident from this case study. Kazakhstan, as a former Soviet republic, has a checklist for every process (as indicated in chapter 4, section 4.2.2.1 Sponsored Project Agreements), and leadership and decisions are top-down. The voluminous contracts and reports are evidence of this mentality. It could take weeks for a simple change in wording to be approved. UPSOM would not be paid unless the deliverables were checked off and approved as received. NUSOM personnel never wanted to take responsibility for a decision because they could be fired or imprisoned for being at fault, so decision chains involved many people.

Cultural interpretation of tasks differed as well. In terms of curriculum development, UPSOM indicated they would develop the curriculum in conjunction with NUSOM faculty. To UPSOM, this meant identify a textbook, develop an outline for class, develop learning objectives, and work with NUSOM faculty to create a syllabus. NUSOM simply wanted to take all existing UPSOM syllabi without developing their own materials. This harkens back to the Soviet mentality and the fear of doing it wrong. If NUSOM used the UPSOM syllabi and course materials and failed, the fault would lie with UPSOM, not NUSOM.

Thus, this case study demonstrates that these three levels of cultural differences were not reflected in the published guidelines. These differences emerged throughout the interviews and partnership documentation. Kazakhstan is a different culture, with different languages and different way of doing business due to their Soviet mentality.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **5.4.1 Application of the revised conceptual framework to future cross-border education partnerships**

Other institutions are encouraged to apply the revised conceptual framework to all phases of their partnership efforts and in turn validate (or identify weakness of) the revised conceptual framework. UPSOM will use the revised conceptual framework as a guide for planning of future partnerships. In particular, this case study identified the essentiality of a feasibility study as part of Phase 1: Developing the Partnership rather than waiting for Phase 2: Developing the Program. Such a feasibility study should be conducted before, rather than after, signing an initial agreement, but the importance of doing so had not been fully recognized by UPSOM and NU and was hence conducted contemporaneously with partnership planning discussions. The identification of the need for institutional flexibility by both the home and host institution emerged as an essential element arose from the need for a feasibility study as part of planning of the partnership. Indeed, one of the most useful documents for this case study was the first sponsored project agreement, Partnership to Develop NUSOM - Phase One, Short-Term Services Agreement for Establishing NUSOM (feasibility study) effective 8/29/2012-1/31/2013 (UPSOM,

2012). A feasibility study conducted in advance would give both the home and host institution the time and comfort level to, at a minimum, evaluate program requirements in developing the partnership (Phase 1) and to assist with a strategic planning document for developing the program (Phase 2).

#### **5.4.2 Future research directions**

This study and the resultant conceptual framework serves as a starting point for additional research that could expand and further define the phases and elements of cross-border education partnership development. This study represents a single case of a cross-border education partnership. Analysis of multiple cross-border education partnerships utilizing the revised conceptual framework are necessary to determine similarities and differences to gain a deeper understanding of whether the framework can be implemented in other partnerships. Further review of the conceptual framework by higher education institutions may advance its utility as a roadmap for future cross-border education partnership development.

Another possibility for future study is a follow-up interview with UPSOM key informants to determine if they agree with the revised conceptual framework and to identify any further refinements to the framework. A suggestion for further research is to fully develop Phase 4: Evaluation and Sustainability as part of the conceptual framework. This additional phase serves as an ongoing assessment mechanism, with the objective of improving the long-term sustainability of the partnership. Such an ongoing Phase 4 would be beneficial to both UPSOM and NUSOM for evaluating what teaching methods and curriculum are working and which areas need improvement.

An additional study could pose the revised conceptual framework and interview questions to NUSOM key informants and stakeholders and compare the results of the UPSOM perspective (current study) with the NUSOM perspective (future study). My intent is that this study, and the revised conceptual framework derived from it, will provide future research opportunities in the field of cross-border education partnership development.

In closing, a quote in the literature summarizes this study. Evers and Lockoff (2012) compare an academic partnership to a marriage: “One needs to know more or less what one expects, to invest time to find and choose the right partner, to get to know the partner and last but not least, to be prepared for challenges” (p.4.).

**APPENDIX A TABLE COMPARING CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS**

Literature Source	Partnership Elements
<p><b>Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education</b> Council of Europe (2001) (11 principles)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracts should be so elaborated, enforced and monitored as to widen the access to higher education studies, fully respond to the learners' educational demands, contribute to their cognitive, cultural, social, personal and professional development, and comply with the national legislation regarding higher education in both receiving and sending countries. In the case of collaborative arrangements, there should be written and legally binding agreements or contracts setting out the rights and obligations of all partners.</li> <li>• Academic quality standards of transnational education programmes should be at least comparable to those of the awarding institution as well as to those of the receiving country. Awarding institutions, as well as the providing institutions, are accountable and fully responsible for quality assurance and control. Procedures and decisions concerning the quality of educational services provided by transnational arrangements should be based on specific criteria, which are transparent, systematic and open to scrutiny.</li> <li>• The policy and the mission statement of institutions established through transnational arrangements, their management structures and educational facilities, as well as the goals, objectives and contents of specific programmes, sets of courses of study, and other educational services, should be published and made available upon request to the authorities and beneficiaries from both the sending and receiving countries.</li> <li>• Information given by the awarding institution, providing organization or agent to prospective students and to those registered on a study programme established through transnational arrangements should be appropriate, accurate, consistent and reliable. The information should include directions to students about the appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals. Where a programme is delivered through a collaborative arrangement, the nature of that arrangement and the responsibilities of the parties should be clearly outlined. The awarding institution is responsible for and should control and monitor information made public by agents operating on its behalf, including claims about the recognition of the qualifications in the sending country and elsewhere.</li> <li>• Staff members of the institutions, or those teaching on the programmes established through transnational arrangements should be proficient in terms of qualifications, teaching, research and other professional experience. The awarding institution should ensure that it has in place effective measures to review the proficiency of staff delivering programmes that lead to its qualifications.</li> <li>• Transnational education arrangements should encourage the awareness and knowledge of the culture and customs of both the awarding institutions receiving country among the students and staff.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The awarding institution should be responsible for the agents it, or its partner institutions, appoint to act on its behalf. Institutions using agents should conclude written and legally binding agreements or contracts with these, clearly stipulating their roles, responsibilities, delegated powers of action as well as monitoring, arbitration and termination provisions. These agreements or contracts should further be established with a view to avoid conflicts of interests as well as the right of students with regard to their studies.</li> <li>• Awarding institutions should be responsible for issuing the qualifications resulting from their transnational study programmes. They should provide clear and transparent information on the qualifications, in particular through the use of the Diploma Supplement, facilitating the assessment of the qualifications by competent recognition bodies, the higher education institutions, employers and others. The information should include the nature, duration, workload, location and language(s) of the study programme leading to the qualifications.</li> <li>• The admission of students for a course of study, the teaching/learning activities, the examination and assessment requirements for educational services provided under transnational arrangements should be equivalent to those of the same or comparable programmes delivered by awarding institution.</li> <li>• The academic workload in transnational study programmes, expressed in credits, units, duration of studies or otherwise, should be that of comparable programmes in the awarding institution, any difference in this respect requiring a clear statement on its rationale and its consequences for the recognition of qualifications.</li> <li>• Qualifications issued through transnational educational programmes, complying with the provisions of the present Code, should be assessed in accordance with the stipulations of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals</b>  New England Assoc of Schools and Colleges (2003)  (10 principles)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional mission – the international program is rooted in the US institutions stated mission and purposes and reflects any special social, religious and ethical elements of that mission.</li> <li>• Authorization – the international program, received all appropriate internal institutional approvals, including that of the governing board and review by the faculty on the same basis as on-campus programs. The program also received all appropriate external approvals where required, including system administration, government bodies and accrediting associations. The US institution documents the accepted legal basis for its operations in the host country and meets the legal requirements of the host country.</li> <li>• Instructional program – The US institution specifies the educational needs to be met by the its international program. The content of the international educational program is subject to review by the US institution’s</li> </ul>

	<p>faculty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources – The institution currently uses and assures the continuing use of adequate facilities and learning resources for its international educational program, including classrooms, offices, libraries, and laboratories and provides access to technology that will allow students to attain the same learning outcomes as students on the US campus. The US institution has demonstrated financial capacity to underwrite the international program without diminishing its financial support of the US campus. Financing of the international program is incorporated into the regular budgeting and auditing process. The US institution provides financial information that describes its total financial income and direct expenditures and overhead for the international site.</li> <li>• Admissions and records – international students admitted abroad meet admissions requirements equivalent to those used for international students admitted to the US campus, including appropriate language proficiencies.</li> <li>• Students – The U.S. institution assures that its institutional program provides a supportive environment for student development, consistent with the culture and morales of the international setting.</li> <li>• Control and administration – The international program is controlled by the U.S. Institution. The teaching and administrative staff abroad responsible for the educational quality of the international program are accountable to a full-time resident administrator from the U.S. institution who is qualified by education and experience to represent the U.S. institution internationally.</li> <li>• Ethics and public disclosure – The U.S. Institution provides as full accounting of the financing of its international program including an accounting of funds designated for third parties within any contractual relationship</li> <li>• Contractual arrangements – The official contract is in English and the primary language of the contracting institution. The contract specifically provides that the U.S. institution controls the international program in conformity with these Principles and the requirements of the U.S. institution’s accreditations. The U.S. institution confirms that the foreign party to the contract is legally qualified to enter into the contract. The contract clearly states the legal jurisdiction under which its provisions will be interpreted will be at the U.S. Institution. Conditions for program termination specified in the contract include appropriate protection for all enrolled students. All contractual agreements are consistent with the accrediting commission’s “Good Practices in Contractual Arrangements.”</li> <li>• Distance Education -When a US. Institution uses distance education in its international program, it adheres to the accrediting association’s Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs.</li> </ul>
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**Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide**

International Assoc of Universities (2005)

(8 principles)

- Cross-border higher education should strive to contribute to the broader economic, social and cultural well-being of communities.
- While cross-border education can flow in many different directions and takes place in a variety of contexts, it should strengthen developing countries' higher education capacity in order to promote global equity.
- In addition to providing disciplinary and professional expertise, cross-border higher education should strive to instill in learners the critical thinking that underpins responsible citizenship at the local, national and global levels.
- Cross-border higher education should be accessible not only to students who can afford to pay but also to qualified students with financial need.
- Cross-border higher education should meet the same high standards of academic and organizational quality no matter where it is delivered.
- Cross-border higher education should be accountable to the public, students and governments.
- Cross-border higher education should expand the opportunities for international mobility of faculty, researchers and students.
- Higher education institutions and other providers of cross-border higher education should provide clear and full information to students and external stakeholders about the education they provide.

**Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education**

OECD (with UNESCO) (2005)

(9 guidelines)

- Ensure that the programmes they deliver across borders and in their home country are of comparable quality and that that they also take into account the cultural and linguistic sensitivities of the receiving country. It is desirable that a commitment to this effect should be made public.
- Recognize that quality teaching and research is made possible by the quality of faculty and the quality of their working conditions that foster independent and critical enquiry.
- Develop, maintain or review current internal quality management systems so that they make full use of the competencies of stakeholders such as academic staff, administrators, students and graduates and take full responsibility for delivering higher education qualifications comparable in standard in their home country and across borders.
- Consult competent quality assurance and accreditation bodies and respect the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving country when delivering higher education across borders including distance education.
- Share good practices by participating in sector organizations and inter-institutional networks at national and international levels.
- Develop and maintain networks and partnerships to facilitate the process of recognition by acknowledging

	<p>each other’s qualifications as equivalent or comparable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where relevant, use codes of good practice such as the UNESCO/Council of Europe “Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education.”</li> <li>• Provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on the criteria and procedures of external and internal quality assurance and the academic and professional recognition of qualifications they deliver and provide complete descriptions of programmes and qualifications, preferably with descriptions of the knowledge, understanding and skills that a successful student should acquire. Ensure the transparency of the financial status of the institution and/or educational programme offered.</li> <li>• Ensure the transparency of the financial status of the institution and/or educational program offered.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad</b> Forum on Education Abroad (2015) (9 standards)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission and Goals - The organization has a mission statement and articulates clear goals for its education abroad programming.</li> <li>• Student Learning and Development - The organization’s mission, goals, and operations prioritize student learning and development.</li> <li>• Academic Framework - The organization delivers academic content appropriate to its stated mission and goals, ensures adequate academic supervision and evaluation, and maintains clear and transparent academic policies.</li> <li>• Student Selection, Preparation and Advising - The organization maintains fair and ethical recruitment and selection processes, adequate student preparation and advising, and ongoing student support.</li> <li>• Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Measures - The organization articulates clear and accessible guidelines for student behavior and consequences resulting from violations.</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures - The organization has well-defined and clearly articulated policies and procedures that govern its programs and practices, ensures that they are fairly and consistently implemented, and conducts regular reviews to assess their effectiveness.</li> <li>• Organizational and Program Resources - organization ensures that its programs are adequately funded and staffed</li> <li>• Health, Safety, Security and Risk Management - The organization prioritizes the health, safety, and security of its students through policies, procedures, advising, orientation, and training</li> <li>• Ethics – The organization operates its programs in accordance with ethical principles, and trains its staff and students in ethical decision-making and practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program administration and management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transparency and accountability</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Standards and Practices</b> American Council on Education, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (2015)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Faculty and staff engagement</li><li>○ Quality Assurance</li><li>○ Strategic planning and the role of institutional leadership</li><li>● Cultural and contextual issues:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Cultural awareness</li><li>○ Access and equity</li><li>○ Institutional and human capacity building</li><li>○ Ethical dilemmas and “negotiated space</li></ul></li></ul>
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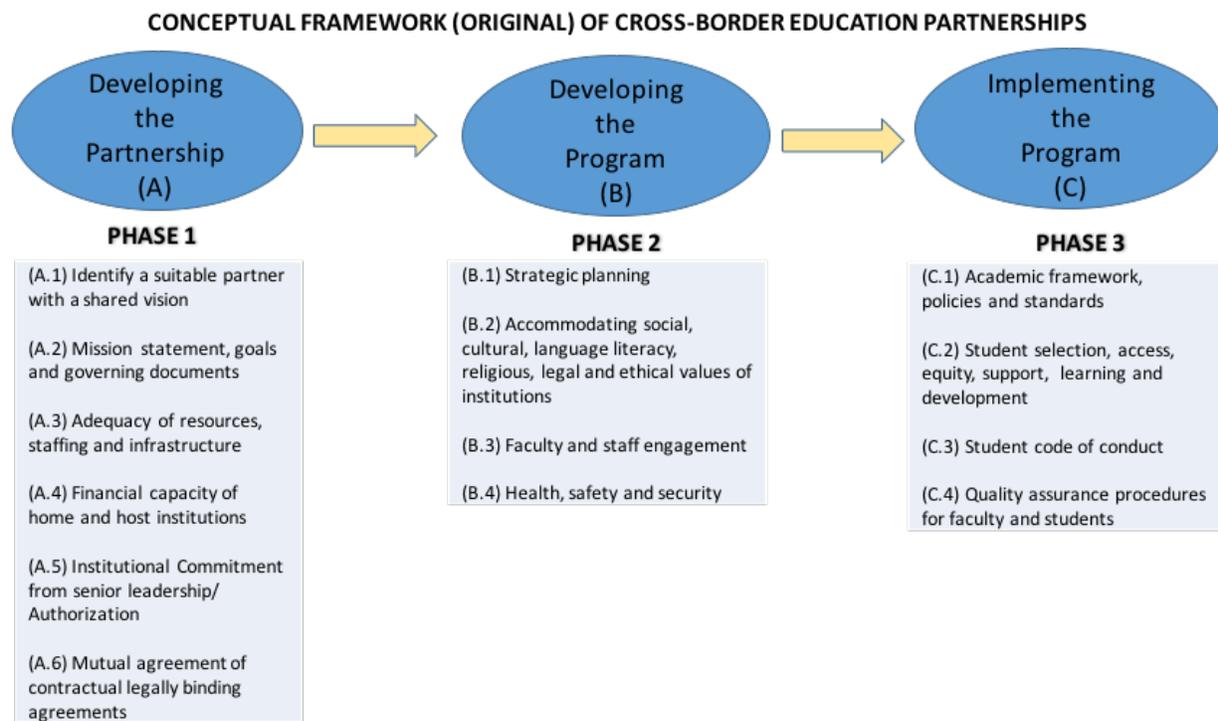
## **APPENDIX B ELEMENTS OF A CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIP**

<b>Three Phases of Partnership Development</b>		
<b>Developing the Partnership (A)</b>	<b>Developing the Program (B)</b>	<b>Implementing the Program (C)</b>
<p><b>(A.1) Identify a suitable partner with a shared vision</b></p> <p><b>(A.2) Mission statement, goals and governing documents</b></p> <p><b>(A.3) Adequacy of resources, staffing and infrastructure</b></p> <p><b>(A.4) Financial capacity of home and host institutions</b></p> <p><b>(A.5) Institutional Commitment from senior leadership/ Authorization</b></p> <p><b>(A.6) Mutual agreement of contractual legally binding agreements</b></p>	<p><b>(B.1) Strategic planning</b></p> <p><b>(B.2) Accommodating social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions</b></p> <p><b>(B.3) Faculty and staff engagement</b></p> <p><b>(B.4) Health, safety and security</b></p>	<p><b>(C.1) Academic framework, policies and standards</b></p> <p><b>(C.2) Student selection, access, equity, support, learning and development</b></p> <p><b>(C.3) Student code of conduct</b></p> <p><b>(C.4) Quality assurance procedures for faculty and students</b></p>

**APPENDIX C KNIGHT'S FOUR RATIONALES OF INTERNATIONALIZATION  
(2004A) ALIGNED WITH ELEMENTS OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION  
PARTNERSHIPS**

<b>Knight's Four Rationales of Internationalization and Elements of Crossborder Education Partnerships</b>			
<b>Economic</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Socio-cultural</b>	<b>Academic</b>
<p>Strategic planning</p> <p>Adequacy of resources, staffing, programs and infrastructure</p> <p>Financial capacity of home and host institutions-</p> <p>Transparency and accountability</p>	<p>Institutional Commitment/</p> <p>Authorization from senior leadership</p> <p>Strategic planning</p> <p>Contractual legally binding agreements</p> <p>Mission statement, goals and governing documents</p> <p>Access and equity</p> <p>Health, safety and security</p>	<p>Student learning and development</p> <p>Access and equity</p> <p>Health, safety and security</p> <p>Accommodating social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions</p> <p>Faculty and staff engagement</p>	<p>Transparency and accountability</p> <p>Strategic Planning</p> <p>Mission statement, goals and governing documents</p> <p>Academic framework, policies and standards</p> <p>Student selection &amp; support &amp; student learning and development</p> <p>Student code of conduct</p> <p>Quality assurance procedures for faculty and students</p> <p>Faculty and staff engagement</p>

## APPENDIX D CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (ORIGINAL) OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS



## **APPENDIX E DATA COLLECTION FORMS**



**DATA COLLECTION FORM**

**Phase 1: *Developing the Partnership***

**DATE:**

**NAME:**

Element	Coded Data
A.1: Identification of a suitable partner with a shared vision	
A.2: Development of a mission statement, goals & governing documents	
A.3: Adequacy of resources, staffing, programs & infrastructure	
A.4: Financial capacity of home & host institutions – transparency & accountability	
A.5: Institutional commitment/ Authorization from senior leadership	
A.6: Contractual legally binding agreements	



**DATA COLLECTION FORM**  
**Phase 2: *Developing the Program***

**DATE:**

**NAME:**

Element	Coded Data
<b>B.1:</b> Strategic planning	
<b>B.2:</b> Accommodating social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions	
<b>B.3:</b> Faculty & staff engagement	
<b>B.4:</b> Health, safety, & security	



**DATA COLLECTION FORM**

**Phase 3: *Implementing the Program***

**DATE:**

**NAME:**

Element	Coded Data
C.1: Academic framework, policies and standards	
C.2: Student selection, access, equity & support and student learning & development	
C.3: Student code of conduct	
C.4: Quality assurance procedures for faculty & students	

## **APPENDIX F STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANT LIST**

### **Key Informants**

Interviewee #1 – Associate Dean, UPSOM

Interviewee #2 - Former Vice Dean, UPSOM

Interviewee #3 - Vice Dean, UPSOM

Interviewee #4 - Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UPSOM

### **Participants**

Interviewee #5 - Faculty 1

Interviewee #6 - Faculty 2

Interviewee #7 - Faculty 3

## APPENDIX G PARTICIPANT INVITE CORRESPONDENCE

### Participant Invite Correspondence

Jaime R. Cerilli  
Scaife Hall, Suite 401  
3550 Terrace Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

May 1, 2018

**RE: MOTIVATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES  
OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
AND NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As we have discussed during our phone conversation, I am a doctoral student in the Social and Comparative Analysis of Education (SCAE) program in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. I am in the final stages of my doctoral program and working on a case study regarding the international collaboration of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine and Nazarbayev University.

Enclosed is a preliminary Interview Guide for your review. Please let me know whether you have any questions, need further clarification or have concerns regarding any of the questions.

If you are still interested in assisting me with this research project, please let me know your availability in the next month to conduct the initial survey, which will take approximately one hour. If you have any data and/or documentation that you can share that would benefit my research (i.e., expand responses to the Interview Guide questions or related topics not specifically listed), please let me know.

I appreciate your support as I work to complete my doctoral research. Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Jaime R. Cerilli

## **APPENDIX H INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **PHASE I: Developing the Partnership**

#### **Identification of a suitable partner with a shared vision**

**Q1:** Did you investigate the history of international engagement initiatives at the home institution?

If yes, what is current level of global engagement activities? Did you check references?

If no, did you proceed into partnership without a vetting process? Outcomes or lessons learned?

#### **Development of a mission statement, goals and governing body**

**Q2:** Did you develop a mission statement, goals and a governance agreement/document?  
At what part of the partnership process? What was the process to develop these documents?  
What was the participation from both the home and host institution?

### **Adequacy of resources for staffing, program and infrastructure**

**Q3:** How did you determine staffing for the partnership? Who made these decisions from both the host and home institution? Did you re-evaluate regularly as the program was being developed and then again during implementation?

**Q4:** Were there thoughts and planning on where the programs would be housed? Were the locations adequate, and did they address the needs? If not, what accommodations were made?

### **Financial capacity- transparency and accountability**

**Q5:** Did you investigate the financial viability of engaging with the proposed partner? If so, what was the process? Did any concerns arise?

### **Contractual legally binding agreements**

**Q6:** What was the interaction and process of how home and host institution legal counsel communicated? Was legal counsel contracted in the home country? If so, explain process for hiring outside counsel. Any lessons learned?

### **Institutional commitment**

**Q7:** When did senior leadership and both UPSOM and NU commit to the partnership? How was commitment secured? Did legal ramifications impede the process? What was the crucial step for formal approval to proceed with the partnership?

## **PHASE II: Developing the Program**

### **Strategic planning**

**Q8:** What strategic planning efforts were developed and at what stages of the partnership? How were key stakeholders assigned to the project?

### **Accommodating social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values**

**Q9:** What accommodations were made to be sensitive to social, cultural, language literacy, legal and ethical values of the home institution? Please provide examples and at what stage of the partnership they occurred.

### **Faculty and staff engagement**

**Q10:** How did you approach faculty at the host institution to work on the project? What process or plan did you follow? How was percent of effort accommodated in addition to current work load? Was special remuneration made for participation? Any lessons learned on how to engage faculty in international initiatives?

### **Health, safety and security**

**Q11:** Was there any concern about the health, safety and welfare of the faculty and staff traveling and participating in the partnership? If so, what accommodations were made?

### **PHASE III: Implementing the Program**

#### **Academic framework, policies and standards**

**Q12:** How was the curriculum developed? Was it strictly based on existing UPSOM curriculum? Were changes made to accommodate needs of the partner? Was there an overarching set of policies and standards developed for the NU academic framework?

**Q13:** What accrediting bodies reviewed and approved the curriculum?

#### **Student selection, access, equity & support – student learning and development**

**Q14:** What was the policy to evaluate student selection into the program? What were the admissions criteria?

**Q15:** What advising was in place to assist students on their academic career? How were advisors assigned?

#### **Student code of conduct**

**Q16:** Was a student code of conduct developed or adopted for the program? Who participated in the process?

#### **Quality Assurance**

**Q17:** What quality assurance programs or initiatives were developed and implemented for selection criteria for faculty? Were they qualified? Who determined qualifications?

**Q18:** What quality assurance programs or initiatives were developed and implemented for student selection?

**Q19:** Did any unforeseen conditions occur that you could share?

**Q20:** Is there any other information useful for the planning and implementation of a cross-border medical school partnership not covered in this interview that you could share?

## **APPENDIX I ALIGNMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### Alignment to Research Questions

Study Questions	Data Source	Study Elements	Relevance	Analysis	Relevant Literature
RQ1: What are the emerging concepts from the literature that can guide or inform cross-border education partnerships?	6 –main literature sources with published guidelines and principles	(A.1) Identification of a suitable partner with a shared vision  (A.2) Development of a mission statement, goals and governing body  (A.3) Adequacy of resources, staffing and infrastructure  (A.4) Financial capacity- of host and home institution	Seeks to provide a conceptual framework  Gives insight to others interested in developing cross-border partnerships by understanding published guidelines.	Use coding process to generate a description of most apparent elements across the literature.	Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education by The Council of Europe (2001)  Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (2003)
RQ2: How do the elements in this conceptual framework describe the UPSOM-NU cross-border education partnership case in each of the three phases: developing the partnership, developing the program and implementing the program?	Key informants and stakeholder interviews  Formal agreements Formal reports E-mail communication Steering Committee Documentation	(A.5) Institutional commitment  (A.6) Contractual legally binding agreements  (B.1) Strategic planning  (B.2) Accommodating social, cultural, language literacy, religious, legal and ethical values of institutions  (B.3) Faculty and staff engagement  (B.4) Health, safety and security  (C.1) Academic framework, policies and standards	Provides a detailed and thorough description of how the partnership was formed.  Illustrates the degree to which, if at all, published guidelines inform planning and implementation decisions in the case study partnership  Demonstrates how the process and outcomes of the case study partnership reflect the recommendations in the literature-based conceptual framework	Use a coding process to generate linkage between conceptual framework guidelines and actions taken in planning and implementing the case study partnership  Identify components of the conceptual framework utilized, not utilized, and emerged elements in the case study.	Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide by the International Association of Universities (2005)  Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education by OECD (with UNESCO) (2005)  Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad by the Forum on Education Abroad (2015)
RQ3: How might the case inform other potential cross-border higher education partnerships?	Key informant and stakeholder interviews  Formal agreements Formal reports E-mail communication Newspaper Articles	(C.2) Student selection, access, equity & support – student learning and development (C.3) Student Code of Conduct  (C.4) Quality assurance procedures for faculty	Suggests which tenets of the conceptual framework are actionable and of greatest benefit in actual implementation.	Use a coding process to link case study partnership actions and outcomes with study themes  Identify study themes of most importance to outcomes of case study partnership	International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices by ACE/CIGE (2015)  Creswell (2009)  Merriam (2009)  Yin (2009)  Waterval, Frambach, Driessen and Scherpbier (2015)

## APPENDIX J INTERVIEW DATA CODING FORM

Interviewee Name:

Title:

Date, Time

Location:

<b>Transcript</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Categories and Themes</b>
Interview 1:		

## APPENDIX K INTERVIEW CODING SUMMARY

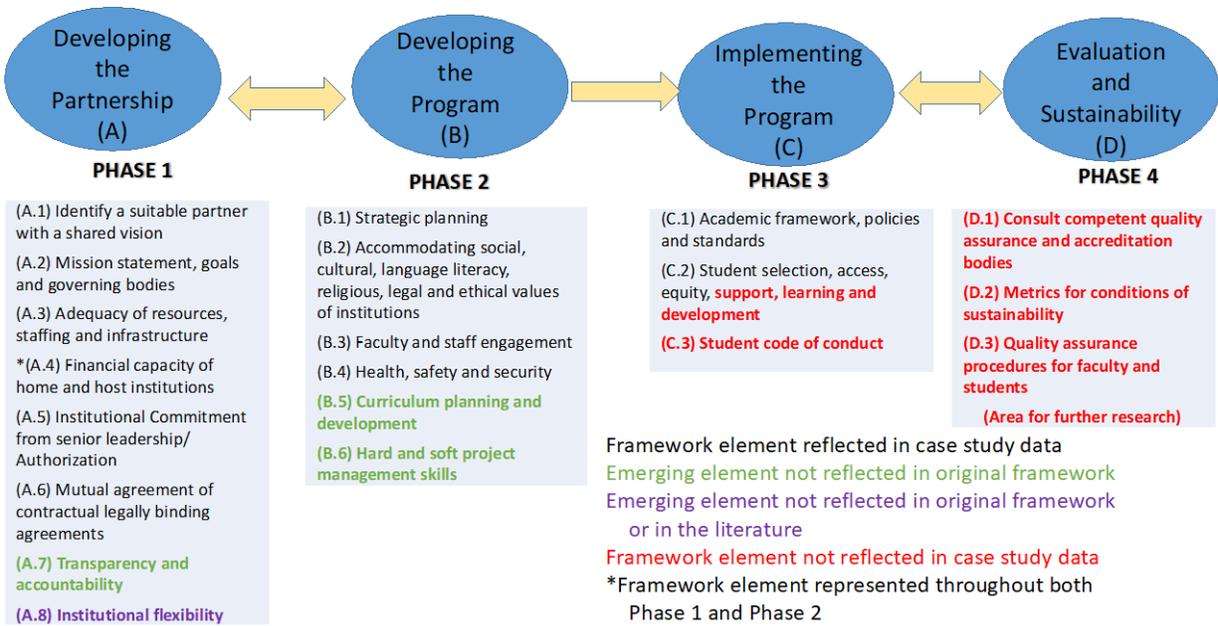
1	Interviewee #	Responses	Themes	Codes	Statistics/Frequency
2	1				
3	2				
4	3				
5	4				
6	5				
7	6				
8	7				
9					
10					

◀ ▶	Elements of a partnership	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
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# APPENDIX L REVISED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

REVISED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS



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