

Board Meeting  
January 15, 2009

POLICY FOR CONSIDERATION OF MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL DEGREE  
PROGRAMS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**Action:** Approve the Policy for Consideration of Multi-Institutional Degree Programs, Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The Vice President for Academic Affairs with the advice of the University Senates Conference recommends approval of the Policy for Consideration of Multi-Institutional Degree Programs.

Preparation from multiple perspectives increases the likelihood of success in a global environment and the benefits of studying and interacting within multiple learning environments are becoming increasingly evident and valuable. However, strength and depth in certain areas of knowledge or academic disciplines will often be distributed across several institutions. To afford our students the “knowledge advantage” for leadership in global knowledge economy, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois is asked to consider for approval proposals for multi-institutional degrees. The attached Policy provides the general guidelines by which the multi-institutional degree programs will be structured.

To develop this policy, the Vice President convened a committee made up of representatives from the University Senates Conference, the faculty, and the graduate

colleges as well as university administration. The Senates Conference invited review by the campus Senates; the Senates and the University Senates Conference each accepted the proposal.

As proposed, the multi-institutional degree is a single degree awarded jointly by both the University of Illinois and a distinguished, partner institution(s). The diploma will bear the seals and signatures from the University of Illinois and the partnering institution(s).

Each campus of the University of Illinois will develop guidelines for campus approval of Multi-Institutional Degrees including a Memorandum of Agreement and fully elaborated Addenda addressing program organization and administration. The multi-institutional degree proposal will undergo campus and university review applicable to all major contractual agreements with international institutional partners. As an example, the proposal submitted by the Urbana-Champaign campus to establish the Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering conforms to guidelines adopted by the campus Senate.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and Federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University concurs.

University of Illinois  
Policy for Consideration of Multi-Institutional Degrees

The Board of Trustees will consider for approval proposals for Multi-Institutional Degrees that reflect carefully constructed educational partnerships between the University of Illinois and other, highly-regarded, foreign institutions of higher learning. The terms of each partnership will be carefully defined by a memorandum of agreement.

A multi-institutional degree is a degree awarded by the University of Illinois and one or more partnering institutions to students who have completed a rigorous program of study that combines the research and educational resources of the University of Illinois with those of the distinguished, partner institution(s). A single degree will be awarded jointly by both the University of Illinois and the partner institution(s). The diploma will bear the seals and signatures from the University of Illinois and the partnering institution(s).

At this time, consideration is given to partnerships with foreign institutions for graduate programs. Partnerships with other institutions involving undergraduate programs may be considered in the future.

Consideration of the following characteristics, as examples, will be critical when reviewing a proposed partnership leading to the awarding of a multi-institutional degree:

- Quality and comparability of proposed, international partner institution(s) and program
- Institutional and program accreditation
- Modes of program delivery and student support
- Revenue stream and sustainability of proposed program
- If a new degree at one or both institutions, process and timeline for approval of program
- Timeliness and length of agreement
- Venues and modes for addressing conflicts or concerns

Additionally, the distribution of educational requirements must be agreed upon by all partner institutions, and the specific, degree fulfillment requirements for these students must be shared equitably by participating institutions. The program in the partner institution(s) must be appropriately distinguished as an academic program, and must provide distinctive resources that add significantly to the educational experience that cannot be provided by the University of Illinois program alone.

Each campus of the University of Illinois will develop guidelines for campus approval of Multi-Institutional Degrees that build on the traditional approval process to accommodate what is distinctive in their proposed multi-institutional degree programs.

Once approved within the University, multi-institutional degrees will be established between the University and the foreign institutional partner through the use of a Memorandum of Agreement and fully elaborated Addenda addressing program organization and administration. Such documents constitute comprehensive contractual agreements which will capture in detail, the responsibilities of each partner, consistent with established University procedures for major international agreements. As such, the proposed agreement will, in turn, undergo the complete campus and university review, applicable to all major contractual agreements with international institutional partners. Therefore, fully detailed agreements, themselves requiring signature on behalf of the Board of Trustees, will be executed before any multi-institutional degree programs can be in force and operational.

Programs will be expected to develop a rigorous review process to assess the success of the program and to define a clear termination and exit process that protects both students and the University in the event that the program does not meet expectations or either institution decides to alter or withdraw from the program or the partnership. Each partnership should be reviewed annually with an option for renewal every three or five years. Proposals for changes to a multi-institutional degree, after its approval, will go through normal levels of review and approval.