
From the Desk of the Principal

Collaboration in Educational Institutions

Collaboration is a series of purposeful decisions driven by the common mission of excellent, accessible educational achievements. Academic institutional collaboration is a deliberative process that requires time, open and frank communication, and a commitment to the belief that collaborating is better than standing alone. Global village is no longer a concept but a reality with a lot of advantages and disadvantages. Academicians have been looking for currently available opportunities since decades for solutions of their problems such as constraints of financial resources and trained expertise.

Pakistan is facing multiple unique challenges in addition to being part of world recession and collaboration is even more needed. Faculty is inadequate in number thus resulting in less number of available supervisors to train the students for post graduation in different disciplines. State of the art training centers are limited in number and every institution is deficient in some facility which might be available in some accessible college or university.

Punjab Medical College has specifically emphasized on academic collaboration in the city, national level and international level. This institution is an active part of newly formed Faisalabad research forum consisting of heads of all science institutions of Faisalabad. This forum is focusing on joint, local need based research projects utilizing human resource and technology backup of all the institutions along with involvement of industry for marketing the research products. PMC has signed an MOU with college of pharmacy, Govt. College University, Faisalabad for providing clinical training facilities to the PharmD students. Department of Medical Education, PMC has developed and implemented a structured programme of clinical attachment of these students with help of Prof. Zahid Hashmi, Head of Department of Medicine and Prof. Maqsood Ahmad, Principal, College of Pharmacy. PMC is also providing research facilities to students of NIBGE. Isra University Islamabad campus is in process of signing MOU with PMC.

At international level Punjab Medical College was successful in representing Pakistan in the group of founder members of Islamic Medical Universities Network (ICMUN). The group includes five Universities of Iran in addition to University of Malaya, Malaysia; University of Damascus, Syria; University of Kabul, Afghanistan and University of Istanbul, Turkey. The Network is soon expanding to include other Medical Universities. Objectives of the network include-

- Networking in information exchange among Member Universities and Colleges,
- Developing grants, awards and scholarships in the Network,
- Facilitating student and faculty exchange programs,
- Developing joint collaborating research centers,
- Developing joint degree programs,
- Carrying out scientific cooperation and collaboration in health crisis

We recommend following steps for active collaboration among institutions:-

1. **Decide to collaborate.** Make the conscious decision to collaborate with other academic institutions. Collaboration must be supported by departmental leaders and widely communicated to all members of departments and divisions.
2. **Proactively discuss monetary issues.** An open discussion of the equitable management of direct and indirect financial resources from grants, contracts, and clinical earnings lays the groundwork

to develop principles of collaborative management. These agreements must be developed before they are needed so that faculty are not caught in the middle of financial debates while trying to produce or implement grants or programs.

3. **Reward collaboration.** Collaborative efforts should receive priority for funding and additional support in the form of salary, office space, staff support, and protected research and educational time.
4. **Initiate regular meetings.** Meeting regularly with other faculty is a potent method for encouraging and supporting collaborative efforts, allowing individual faculty to solicit collaborators. An
5. **Facilitate strategic planning for collaboration among the institutions.** strategic planning can be facilitated by annual think tanks that bring together academic leaders to develop and monitor a comprehensive strategic plan.
6. **Learn from previous collaborative successes and failures.** We should learn from the experiences of those who have attempted collaboration in relevant areas. Successful collaboration will require avoiding previously identified pitfalls and building on promising avenues from previous and current efforts.

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