



Views on academic mobility
VU University Amsterdam 2010
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Academic Mobility: most promising model



- > Graduate mobility, based on cooperation in scholarly content
- > Examples:
 1. Desmond Tutu Programme
 2. VU Programme for North-South collaboration



Desmond Tutu Programme

Desmond Tutu Programme (1)

- > Started 2008 with Bishop Tutu present
- > Theme: Youth, Sports and Reconciliation from different perspectives:
 - Social science (conflict, violence & security)
 - Human movement (decision skills of young soccer players)
 - Theology (reconciliation & conflict in religious societies)
 - Economics (poverty reduction for youths)
 - Medicine (tuberculous meningitis)
- > Five Desmond Tutu chairs
- > Funding by
 - NRF of SA
 - Dutch Government
 - VU University Amsterdam

Desmond Tutu Programme (2)

- > Joint PhD supervision by VU University and South African Partners
- > 8 PhDs selected, 9 following, 17 dissertations by 2014
- > Exchange of master's students
- > Exchange of staff (capacity building)
- > Firm reciprocal relation, based on academic excellence and societal relevance
- > Strong focus on research topics



VU programme for North-South collaboration

VU Programme (1)

- > Privately funded since 2002
- > Driven by VU wish to combine academic interest with societal relevance
- > Seed money to set up content related activities
- > Aiming for more structural cooperation
- > Graduate mobility based on cooperation in scholarly content
- > Continuity and reciprocity are crucial
- > Always dual aim
 - Scientific quality and societal relevance
 - Clear advantages for both partners

VU Programme (2)

Examples:

- > Land restitution & redistribution (South Africa)
- > Laser research on indigenous plants (Ghana)
- > Research capacity in commercial economics and marketing (Tanzania)
- > Religions in the Search for the Common Good in Pluralistic Societies (Nigeria)
- > Development of local expertise in Precambrian Mineral Resources (Sierra Leone and Liberia)

Strengths of our model

1. Easy to build up mutual trust and respect
2. Easy to avoid “expectations gap”
3. Real ownership at both sides
4. No risk of ill feeling and suspicion of colonial mentality
5. Fits in merging of “development cooperation” and “international academic cooperation” (mainstreaming)



Facts about VU University Amsterdam

Facts about VU University Amsterdam (1)



VU University Amsterdam

- > 2,764 academic staff
- > 1,905 non-academic and ancillary staff

VU University Medical Center

- > 1,989 academic staff

Facts about VU University Amsterdam (2)

Faculties, research institutes and schools

- > 12 faculties
- > 14 interdisciplinary research institutes
- > Participant in two national research centres of excellence, of which one as coordinating institution
- > Participant in 38 accredited research schools, of which six as coordinating institution
- > Leiden Ranking: #3 in NL, #15 in EU, #48 in world
- > Shanghai Ranking 101-150
- > Budget (excl. VUmc): 500 M€ p.y.

Facts about VU University Amsterdam (3)

Education

- > 22,738 students: 6,595 first years; 4,410 master, 490 international students
- > 48 Bachelor's degree programmes: two taught in English (AUC, IBA)
- > 89 Master's degree programmes: 50 taught in English, one in French and one in German
- > 28 postgraduate programmes
- > Postgraduate continuing education courses provided by five faculties and institutes
- > Contract teaching
- > Higher education for senior citizens

Identity of VU University Amsterdam



- > 130 years of emancipation
 - First generation students
 - Protestant / Calvinistic background
 - Ethnic minorities
- > Firmly rooted in society
 - Started as private university
 - Focus on non-profit and public servants
 - 40 years North-South collaboration

Fit of our model

- > Suited to VU identity
- > Suited to the lean environment for Higher Education in Europe
 - Post crisis / continuous pressure for value for money
- > Suited to interest of staff and students
 - Personal match of academic and social sense of meaning
 - Institutional match of academic and social responsibility



African perspective

African perspective

- > Contribution to institutional and personal capacity building
- > Help for African universities to focus on matching academic excellence with societal relevance
- > But, of course, our partners in the South should speak for themselves



Advantage of our model over alternatives

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- > Undergraduate mobility is difficult and expensive

Difficult:

- cultural shock & tight Bologna undergraduate programs

Expensive:

- Erasmus= 1% additional costs
 - Europe / America = 100/300% additional costs
 - Africa / Europe = 500/1000% additional costs
- > Free mobility will continue, but:
 - Less impact on institutional strength and risk of brain drain
 - No need for policy to enhance free mobility
 - There is need for policies against excess in commercial exploitation of free mobility



Undiscussed subjects

Undicussed subjects

- > Intra African mobility is important, but beyond my expertise
- > Links between Africa, India, China and Brasil:
 - Promising and potentially important
 - No need to worry about in Europe
 - But, again, not my field of expertise



VU University Amsterdam believes in graduate mobility based on cooperation in scholarly content.