



## 1.2.1 IARU Future Directions Document

---

Extracted from the Confirmed Outcomes of the Fifth IARU Presidents' Meeting

### Agenda item 2 – Future IARU Directions: Assessments from Presidents and Senior Officers

Dr Heather Bell (Oxford) and Prof Lily Kong (NUS) were acknowledged for their contributions on the earlier iterations of this paper. The finalized document is a synthesis of contributions from the Presidents and Senior Officers, drawing together the various institutional priorities and interests.

The document (please see Annex 1) proposed to cluster the activities of IARU into three broad areas: 1) Global Education Initiatives, 2) Institutional Joint Working and 3) Grand Challenges. Sub-categories include Networks, Articulation of Principles, Major Research Projects and Major Events. The meeting adopted this framework, as it provides clear direction and focus for current and future activities of the Alliance. Though comprehensive, the framework must also allow exceptions, and bottom-up initiatives are encouraged.

#### Global Education Initiatives

The Presidents noted that the Global Summer Program has been very successful and suggested extending it to more graduate students. Research opportunities and internships can be developed as an extension to what was currently being offered.

The meeting also suggested more networking initiatives and virtual meetings for students to enable them to benefit from the Alliance partnership.

#### Institutional Joint Working

Presidents acknowledged the value of the projects in this cluster, citing that it was beneficial for staff from member institutions to network and learn best practices from one another. It was agreed that such initiatives could take the form of one-off physical meetings with subsequent follow-ups, whether bi-lateral or multi-lateral, being done through virtual meetings.

#### Grand Challenges

Grand Challenges typically address issues of a global scale, for example Sustainability – the only IARU initiative to have developed nicely into a Grand Challenge. The initiative had grown organically, as should future IARU Grand Challenges. Yale suggested that IARU should take a more opportunistic approach by constantly scanning the horizon for upcoming big events and/or where IARU could possibly value-add. Todai shared that it was crucial for the next Grand Challenge to be distinctive to achieve differentiation from the key initiatives by other alliances.

## Research Initiatives

The subject of whether IARU, as an Alliance of 10 leading research-intensive universities, should be doing more by way of research initiatives resurfaced. Collectively, it can achieve much – as demonstrated by the few research initiatives that are currently ongoing. ANU added that it is critical for universities – individually and collectively – to communicate the value of our research and the contributions it makes to society. The meeting agreed that IARU should support research, not through direct seeding, but through exploring/developing research opportunities through students, innovation and growing research organically.

Future participation in initiatives will differ with each university's resources and priorities. Copenhagen shared that the current research initiatives, for example the Ageing, Longevity and Health project, are flourishing through its ability to obtain external funding. It is also demonstrative that the research is valuable. There is no need for IARU central funding.

The meeting also observed that research initiatives sometimes start off too ambitious – it may be useful to address a more specific issue within an overarching topic. Universities can also encourage graduate student exchanges or internships to stimulate possible areas of research collaboration.

Going forward, all proposals should:

- Identify which cluster (of the adopted framework) the proposal fits into before submission;
- Request the support of at least one other IARU institution prepared to work together on the proposed project, before the endorsement of the IARU Presidents and/or Senior Officers is sought;
- State the intended outcomes of the initiative;
- Have the outcomes and deliverables of all initiatives made available online for sharing with IARU institutions (and where appropriate the general public).

Possible future activities:

- Yale suggested organizing a networking initiative for student leaders, as they are “cauldrons for leadership”. Cambridge, Copenhagen, and Berkeley supported this although all agreed that the areas for collaboration and networking should be clearly defined beforehand.
- Yale also suggested possible areas of “one-off” joint working interests such as: offshore projects (setting up institutes abroad and managing compliance issues), intellectual property issues in various countries, and the meeting of Deans of Students (new students' orientation).
- Oxford suggested that IARU examine research related issues that affect research-intensive universities such as animal testing, peer review and grant applications.
- Beida proposed the set-up of an IARU laboratory to support sustainability research collaborations. It would be the centre for IARU faculty and students to discuss and work on research related to Sustainability. Beida mentioned that IARU may be able to apply for funding from the PRC government, which is highly supportive of educational initiatives.

- Beida proposed having virtual classes with all IARU partners. Currently, Beida runs a successful I-Podium course with 12 students each from its University and the University of Southern California.
- ETH Zurich suggested holding a major conference on Engineering, to be held in conjunction with the World Engineering Council in 2011. This was in response to the discussion whether IARU should have a major event every 2 or 3 years (for example, the IARU International Scientific Congress on Climate Change which was held alongside the COP-15 discussions)

## Appendix 1

---

### 2. Future Directions for IARU

*Prepared by Dr Heather Bell (University of Oxford), March 2010 based on inputs from IARU Presidents and discussions at the 2009 Senior Officers' Meeting*

The IARU alliance is now several years old. We recognise that this alliance seems to be more successful than others in which our institutions participate because it is a small group of like-minded universities. This fact of small, exclusive membership has enabled a sense of mutual trust to develop.

We now know a lot more about the different ways that our respective institutions can work together, and about what makes for successful collaboration. In the past 18 months, at two senior officers' meetings and the presidents' meeting, we have reflected on IARU's achievements to date, and on the future directions we might wish to pursue. In Cambridge in April 2009, we developed a classification of IARU's existing activities, as a step toward better managing the portfolio of activities IARU has underway. Through a survey of IARU presidents over the summer and at the Oxford senior officers' meeting in October 2009, we discussed which of these activities should be priorities for the future.

This document is a synthesis of the 2009 discussions. It describes the different types of activities in which the alliance engages, and identifies the main priorities for the near term future among those activities. It is not intended to be a rigid framework. It is intended to help the presidents and senior officers better understand and manage the portfolio of IARU activity. It is also intended as a guide to people currently leading IARU initiatives and to people proposing to start a new IARU initiative. We want them to be clear on the kinds of activities the alliance supports, and outputs expected from these different activities. Indeed, future proposals should specify which category they think they belong to, which will in turn influence the scale of the effort, the budget we allocate, and the output we expect.

#### A. Context

---

Our discussions have emphasised the importance of:

- Constantly asking what value IARU brings to an activity or discussion
- Focus, and following through on existing activities
- Tangible outputs
- Remaining flexible and open to ongoing experimentation.

## B. IARU Priorities

---

The survey of IARU presidents over the summer of 2009 and the discussion at the subsequent senior officers' meeting confirmed that there are currently three priorities for the alliance.

### I. Global Education Initiatives

#### **Description**

These are programmes aimed at enhancing the international experiences and learning of our students, adding value to their university education. Current examples include:

- Global Summer Programme
- Global internships (e.g., sustainability fellowships)
- Bilateral student exchanges
- Joint programmes (e.g., degrees)
- Reciprocal access to student services (e.g., careers)

Associated institutional joint working initiatives (e.g., research-led learning; transforming power of global education).

Global Education Initiatives should be primarily student-facing. We have included associated institutional joint working initiatives here for the sake of thematic coherence only. The standards to which those (non-student-facing) initiatives should be held are described fully in the next section on institutional joint working initiatives.

#### **Future Developments**

Within Global Education Initiatives, IARU's focus so far has been primarily on the Global Summer Programme (GSP), which has developed from nothing three years ago into a major success in which all IARU members now participate. Though challenges around funding and credit recognition remain, GSP will continue to be a priority. The alliance will ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to the important GSP coordinating function now played by the IARU secretariat and by the GSP Working Committee, which meets annually. We may wish to consider expansion into summer programmes specifically aimed at graduate students.

But there are other educational initiatives to consider. In addition to the highly successful sustainability fellowships, some IARU members have started offering, at a small scale, summer internships to students from other IARU universities. Such internships seem a promising way of providing students with international experiences and of assisting with graduate recruitment. The alliance needs to decide (and will discuss separately during this meeting) whether it wants to continue in the current mode of experimentation or to make a more concerted, GSP-like effort to expand internship offerings.

IARU should continue to support bilateral student exchanges and joint programmes, and to share information about what helps these initiatives to succeed.

## II. Institutional Joint Working

### Description

IARU universities share a commitment to research intensity but also bring considerable diversity in terms of size, cultural context, and stage of development in tackling certain institutional issues. This provides a tremendous opportunity for IARU universities to learn from one another.

Institutional joint working has so far focused mainly on groups convening for meetings, which may or may not lead to immediate output or future activity. We think it is important to be clear on the different types of institutional joint working and what the alliance expects from each.

#### 1) Networks, e.g.,

- Presidents
- Senior officers
- PVC/VP Education
- Heads of alumni relations
- Careers advisors
- Directors of summer programmes
- Sustainability officers.

These are specific groups of officers who meet to get to know one another, discuss a wide range of topics, share best practice, and identify possible areas on which they can work together. Networks are typically not narrowly thematically-driven, in contrast to the institutional projects below. When a group proposes establishing a new network, it would be helpful to understand what they are trying to achieve and whether they envision undertaking a joint programme of work. IARU presidents may wish to direct a network to look at a particular set of issues. Where IARU funds a meeting/workshop, a written summary must be produced.

The four most active networks currently are those that meet at least annually to run either the alliance overall or one of its main programmes: presidents, senior officers, directors of summer programmes, and sustainability officers. This reinforces the view that networks are most powerful for IARU when they have real work to do. (We should also note that these examples were not necessarily created as networks, though in practice this is what they are.)

## **2) Articulation of principles, e.g.,**

- Academic freedom
- Value of research-led teaching.

These are topics of importance to each research-intensive university, particularly in justifying our existence (and cost) to government. It may be valuable for the IARU presidents to commission the writing of a joint position on issues that are central to our identity as research-intensive institutions, where the backing of the alliance would be powerful in our discussion with our domestic stakeholders. A minority view at the Cambridge meeting proposed that such principles address political issues. We envisage these as short pieces of work: a 2-5 page paper that could be drafted by the IARU secretariat or a nominated IARU institution, and then discussed during a conference call. A small sum (\$3,000) could be paid to the institution doing the drafting. If a larger scale effort is envisaged – involving people meeting – then we are looking at an institutional project.

IARU has not had a successful initiative in this category so far. Although the alliance funded a workshop on the value of research-led teaching, it did not lead to an articulation of principles.

## **3) Institutional projects, e.g.,**

- Women and men in globalising universities
- Industrial innovation
- Benchmarking HR and corporate services
- Open access publishing.

These projects enable comparison of benchmark data and our respective approaches to these issues at different IARU universities. To start such projects, IARU typically funds day-long workshops that convene representatives of IARU universities and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., corporate sponsors in the case of industrial innovation). Success so far has depended on picking a topic of joint interest, assembling the right people, and ensuring sharp focus. These do not need to become major academic research projects; indeed, experience suggests that they will fail if they do. Given that some of these projects have had a hard time sustaining momentum after an initial meeting, we should be open to the possibility that the project is very short. It may be that one meeting -- in which senior people make contact and exchange views, and which documents its discussion -- is all that is needed.

IARU presidents may in future wish to commission work on a particular topic (e.g., assessment of internationalisation strategies). It is important to be clear on the outputs IARU seeks from the project, from a network of interested people, through a report comparing institutional benchmark data, to a repository of data accessible through the IARU website. At a minimum, any meeting should assemble and circulate all presentations, case studies, and a summary of the discussion. We should consider the possibility that funding beyond meetings may be required to produce the outputs we seek on some topics.

#### **4) Staff development and exchange**

Spending time at another university can be an important form of personal and professional development for administrative staff (historically an under-developed population). It exposes them to new ways of doing things and helps them to build a network of international peers. Such interchange also strengthens the alliance, by increasing our knowledge of one another's universities. On a small scale, we have tried a number of forms of staff placement:

- Co-location, where one IARU university hosts staff from another university, who continue to work for their home university
- Exchange, where a staff member from one IARU university takes a role at another IARU university for a year, and vice versa
- Sabbatical, where a staff member from one IARU university visits another IARU university while on leave from their home job; in all likelihood they would take a role in the host institution, while continuing to be paid by their home institution.
- Like bilateral student exchanges, staff exchange does not need to be mediated formally by the IARU secretariat.

#### **Future Developments**

The 2009 Senior Officers' Meeting identified a number of possible topics to consider as future institutional joint working initiatives:

- Value of research-intensive universities to society/national economy
- International strategy
- International students (recruitment, admissions, performance, support)
- Industrial innovation, academic entrepreneurship, and spin-off incubation (already underway).

We suggest that IARU assemble a portfolio of topics that are identified both top-down by presidents and senior officers and bottom-up by staff in our respective institutions. Amid the portfolio of initiatives, IARU presidents may also wish to select 1-2 areas for development in greater depth. From a sustainability perspective, we should be encouraging people to pursue these initiatives through virtual meetings wherever possible.

### **III. Grand Challenges**

#### **Description**

These are large undertakings that tackle a grand challenge for universities and for humanity. They should be topics where universities are taking action and where IARU institutions are attempting to lead. So far we have only taken on one grand challenge: sustainability. As a grand challenge, it encompasses a number of the different activities above: a student summer fellowship programme that is one model for global internships (and which this year expands from four to all IARU universities participating); an institutional project on sustainable campuses; and a network of sustainability officers.

## Future Developments

We are pleased with the progress made by the sustainability initiative. There are a number of ways in which IARU could consider further strengthening this initiative, including:

- Adding an educational dimension, e.g., jointly developing a web-based educational module for use by all IARU members
- Extending our efforts beyond greenhouse gases, e.g., to water use reduction and trash wastage
- Further engaging with the public policy arena, e.g., making policy statements, hosting another major conference, bringing together experts to engage governments and world organisations.

In terms of other grand challenges: we didn't know that sustainability was a grand challenge when we started activity in this area. The label has emerged after the fact, as activities gained momentum and as Copenhagen in particular spearheaded new initiatives. This organic evolution is a good way to proceed with other possible future grand challenges. Rather than consciously identifying a new grand challenge top down, we should see if another one emerges from existing activities. In the medium term, we would expect IARU's portfolio of activity to include a very small number of grand challenges that are well-executed.

It is important to recognise that there may be movement between the different categories outlined above. A network may decide to articulate a set of principles, which then becomes an institutional project that is so compelling that it flowers into a grand challenge.

### C. Other IARU activities

---

IARU does engage in other activities, but discussions in the past six months have not identified them as standalone priorities.

## IV. Major Research Projects

### Description

When IARU was created, fostering collaborative academic research on important 21st century topics was its main priority. IARU research projects included:

- Ageing, longevity, and health
- Global security
- Sustainable cities
- Global culture and citizenship.

Support for these projects has typically taken the form of funding for one or more workshops, though in some cases it has included funding for a research officer.

## **Future Developments**

IARU's funding support for these projects is now winding down. It is not our current intention to provide further seed funding for such projects. We are delighted that some of the collaborations are now self-sustaining.

IARU meetings of senior officers and presidents have debated IARU's research activity extensively over the years. At the 2010 senior officers' meeting, we again discussed the absence of academic research from IARU's collective agenda. A minority of participants thought that it is excellent to have initiatives for IARU students and administrators, but strange for an alliance of research-intensive universities to have no proposition to its research-active academics. In a group of universities that are committed to excellence in teaching and research, it seems odd that a group of administrators can receive funding to hold a workshop on service or administrative topics, but a group of academics cannot receive funding for a research meeting.

## **V. Major events**

### **Description**

IARU has held only one of these events so far -- the International Scientific Congress on Climate Change -- and it related directly to our grand challenge. It is unclear if a link to a grand challenge should always be required. This is the most outward-looking of IARU activities.

### **Future Developments**

At the 2009 Cambridge presidents' meeting, we proposed that every 2-3 years, IARU contributes a small amount of money, its brand, and the energies of its people to a major event. This event should address an important topic for humanity, where IARU universities are doing important research, and which would attract considerable media interest. (Perhaps energy production should be next.) This was not identified as a priority area by itself in the discussions that ensued during the summer and autumn of 2009. We should decide if it should stay on the list as a separate category or if it should be folded into Grand Challenges.

## **VI. Other Joint Activity**

One other type of activity worth noting is joint alumni programmes between two IARU universities. ANU and Yale have undertaken initiatives in this area, with (for example) Yale alumni joining ANU alumni in Australia for a programme of cultural and educational activity. This is not yet a priority activity for the whole alliance, but it is another kind of activity in which we are engaging.