

Current Trends in Strategic Partnerships

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Overview

- Current Trends in Strategic Partnerships:
Results of an International Survey
- Case Study Snapshot:
Developing Bilateral and Multilateral Strategic
Partnerships at Freie Universität Berlin

Global Trend

- „Strategic Partnerships“ are increasingly discussed and developed among universities worldwide (partly with varying understanding of what a strategic partnership actually is)
- Strategic wording spreading (i.e. new Erasmus+ program, etc)
- Introduction of new funding opportunities specifically for strategic partnerships (i.e. DAAD Program „Strategic Partnerships and Strategic Networks“)
- Not much research on SPs in higher education:
 - International survey and report on strategic partnerships by Institute of International Education and Freie Universität Berlin (Report in IIE/DAAD „Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships“, 2016)
 - The EAIE Barometer: „International Strategic Partnerships“

Survey on International Strategic Partnerships

- Online-survey conducted in early 2015 by IIE/FUB
- Initially 258 participating institutions
- 91 qualified to complete entire questionnaire
 - Persons in charge of SPs at institutions that have established SPs and that differentiate between SPs and „non-SPs“
 - North America (28), Latin America (9), Africa and Middle East (3), Asia (4), Australasia (13), Europe (34)

What is a Strategic Partnership?

Suggested definition in the IIE/FUB survey*:

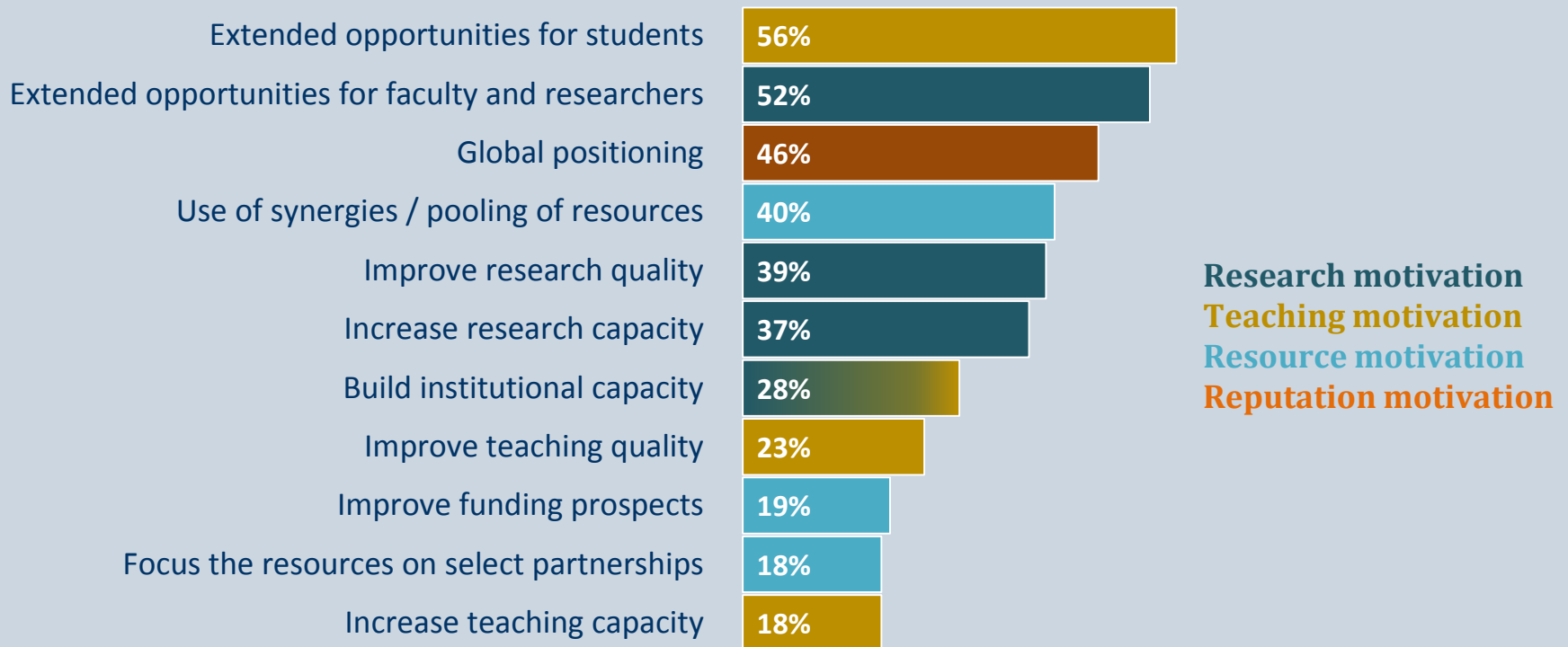
“A strategic partnership is a **formal alliance** between two or more higher education institutions developed through an **intentional process** whereby the partners **share resources** and leverage **complementary strengths** to achieve defined **common objectives**. Strategic cooperation is tied to the strategic goals and objectives of an academic unit, college, or the university as a whole. It indicates a **multi-dimensional engagement** between the involved institutions and implies the joint undertaking of a **diverse range of activities**.”

*online survey on international strategic partnerships conducted by the Institute of International Cooperation (New York) in cooperation with Freie Universität Berlin, Jan-March 2015

Motivations, Goals and Partner Selection

Motivation

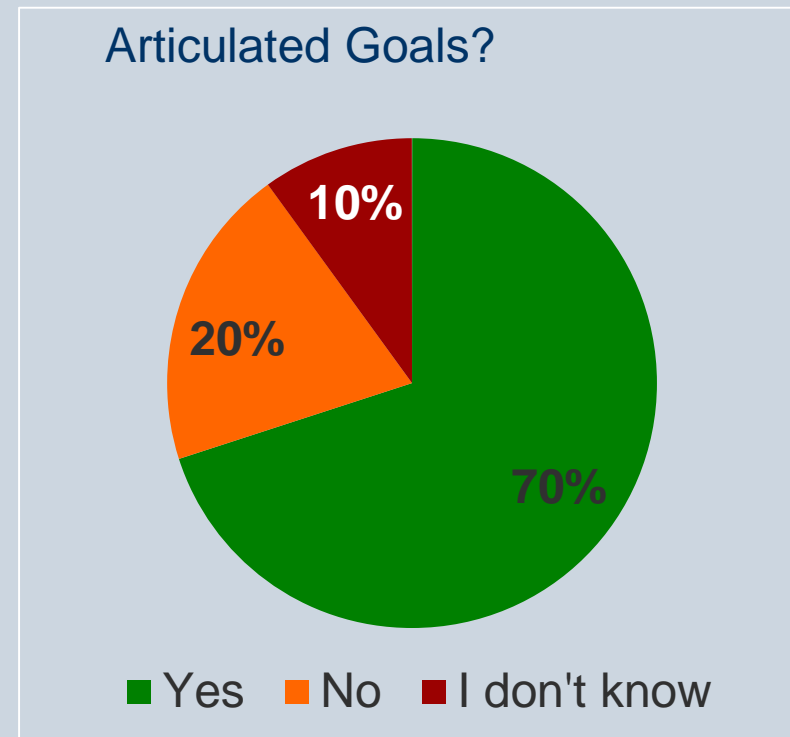
Motivation for institutions for developing strategic partnerships (Multiple answers allowed)



Source: IIE/FUB Survey on International Strategic Partnerships, 2015

Goals

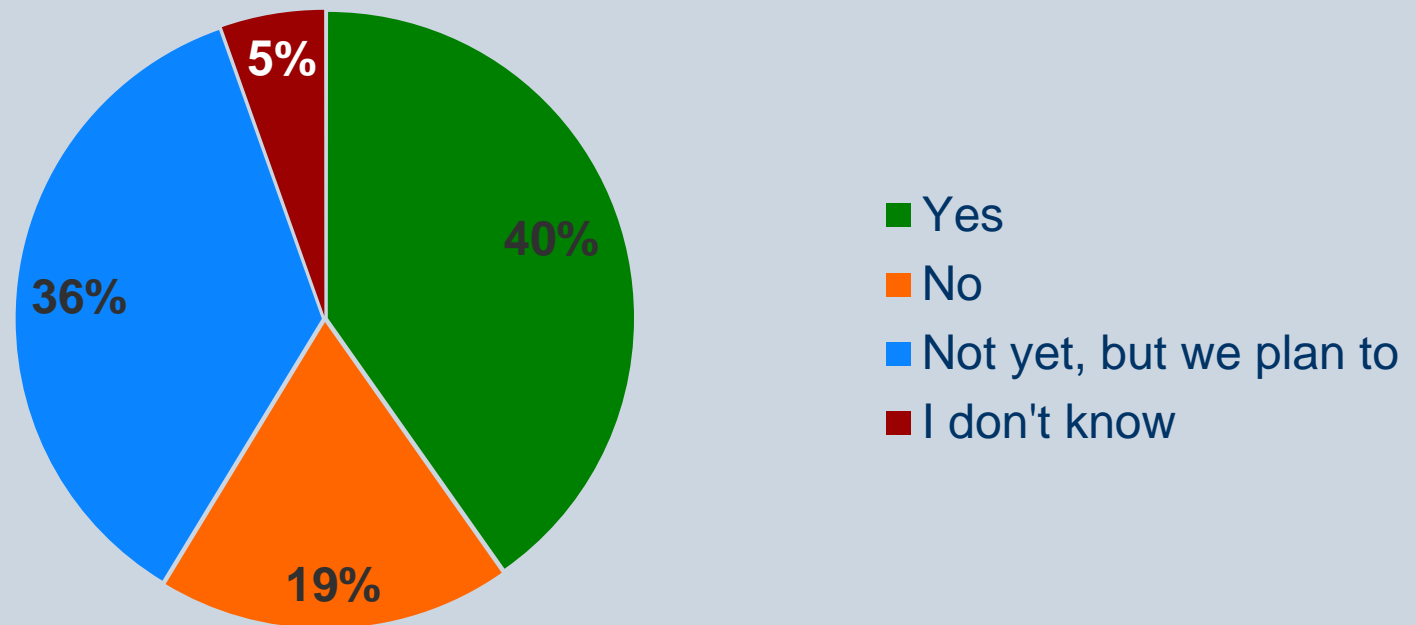
- Most SPs are reported to be part of a larger internationalization strategy
- Majority has defined set of goals that are to be achieved with help of SPs:
 - Improving research: Int. publications, improved research capacity, co-supervising doctoral students
 - Increasing student mobility & international student intake
 - Internationalizing teaching and offering international programs



Source: IIE/FUB Survey on International Strategic Partnerships, 2015

Goals

Has your institution developed ways/means to evaluate the strategic partnership, its benefits and effectiveness?



Partner Selection

- SP are mostly developed out of **existing partnerships**
- Majority (65%) developed their SPs through a **consultation process**, incl. **top-down as well as bottom-up** elements (vs 16% purely top-down)
- A variety of indicators used to identify strategic partnerships:

Highest rated factors for identifying SPs:

- potential for further development
- specific research strengths of partner institution
- compatibility of academic profiles
- degree of interest among faculty
- pre-existing formal relations

Lowest rated factors for identifying SPs:

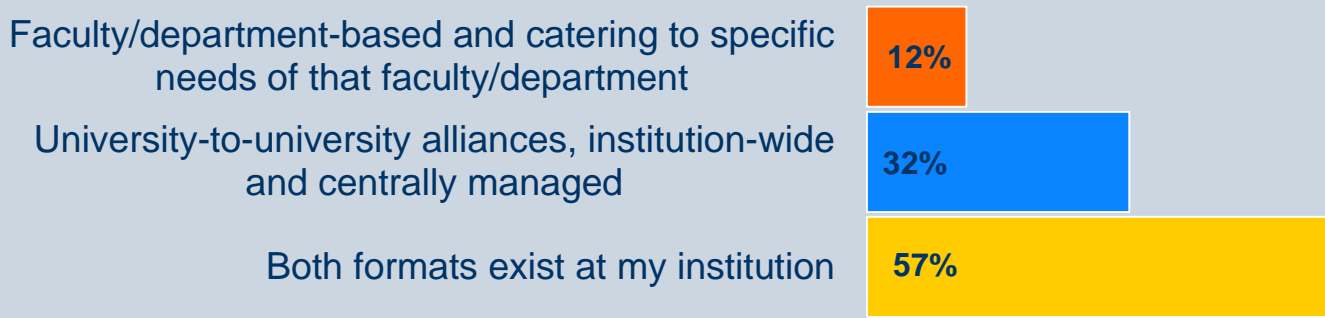
- personal preferences of institution's leaders
- international rankings
- political reasons/national priorities
- history of previous cooperation (joint research, publications etc)

Cooperation Formats, Management, Funding

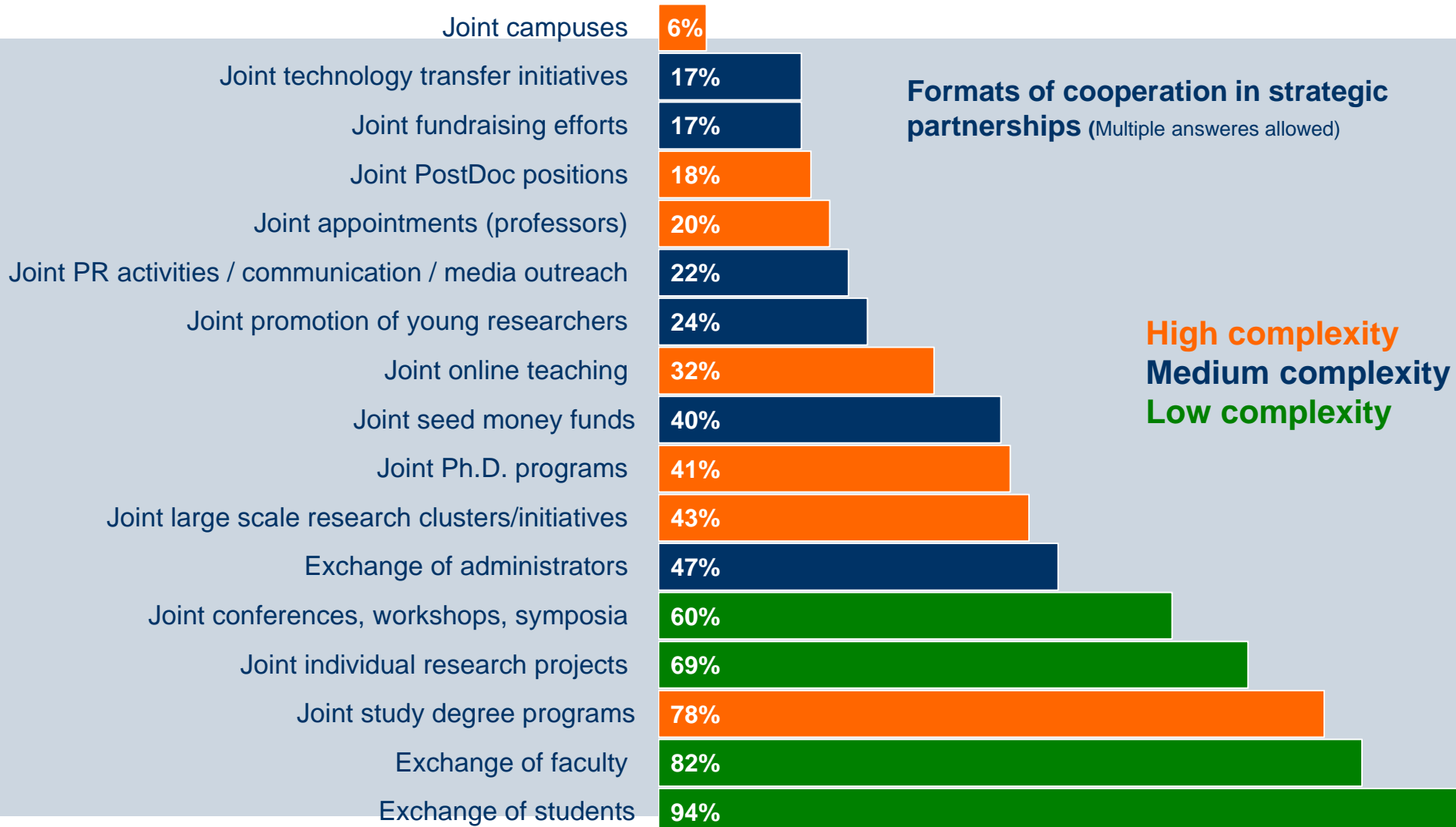
Forms & Formats of Cooperation

- Bilateral SP settings more common than multilateral/network settings
- Most SPs encompass variety of fields, involve teaching, research, administration
- Fewer SP focus on only one particular academic field
- Most confirm that the SP is a mutually pronounced endeavor
- University-to-university SPs are more common than single faculty/department based ones, but both can co-exist:

Which of the following best describes the nature of strategic partnerships developed at your institution?

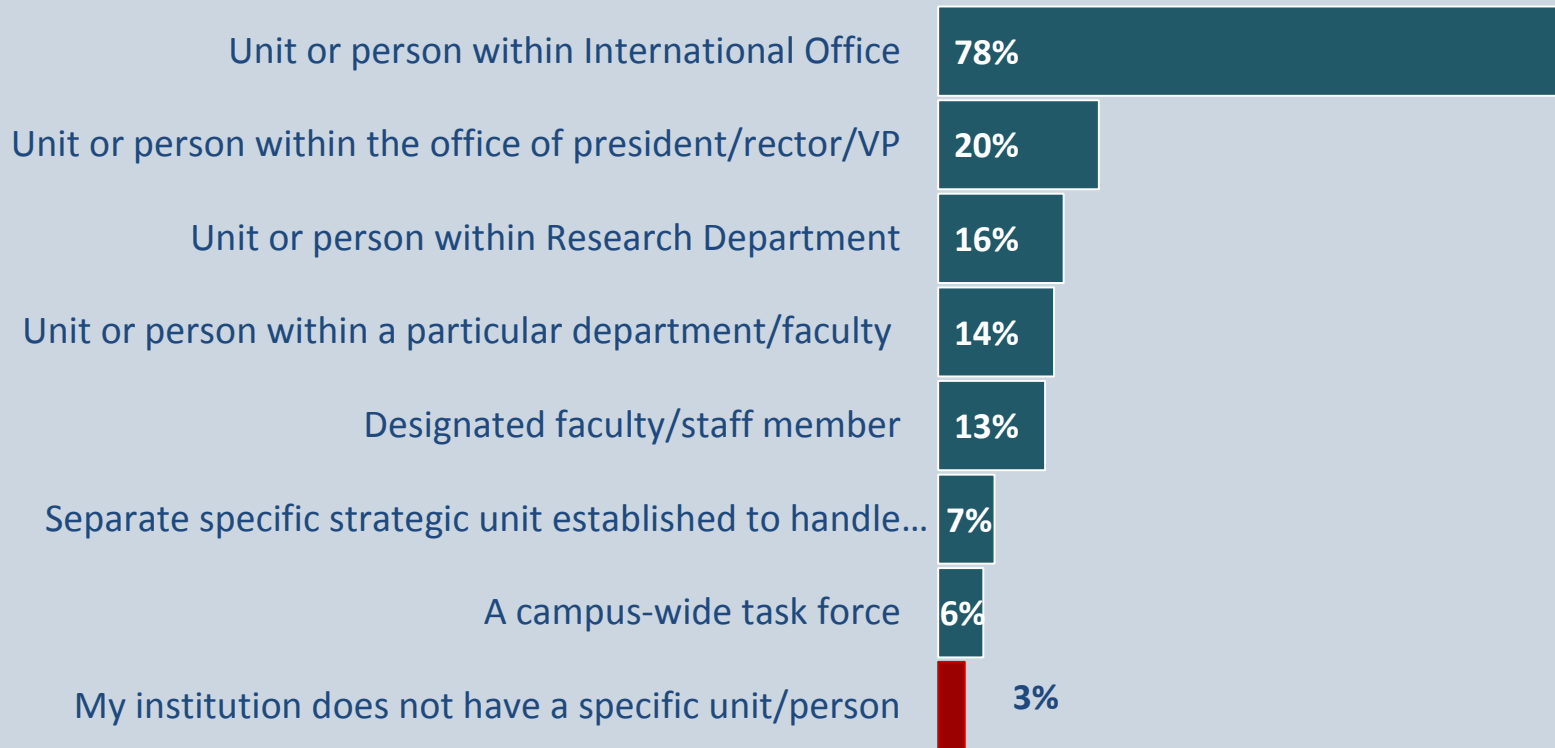


Forms & Formats of Cooperation



Management and Funding

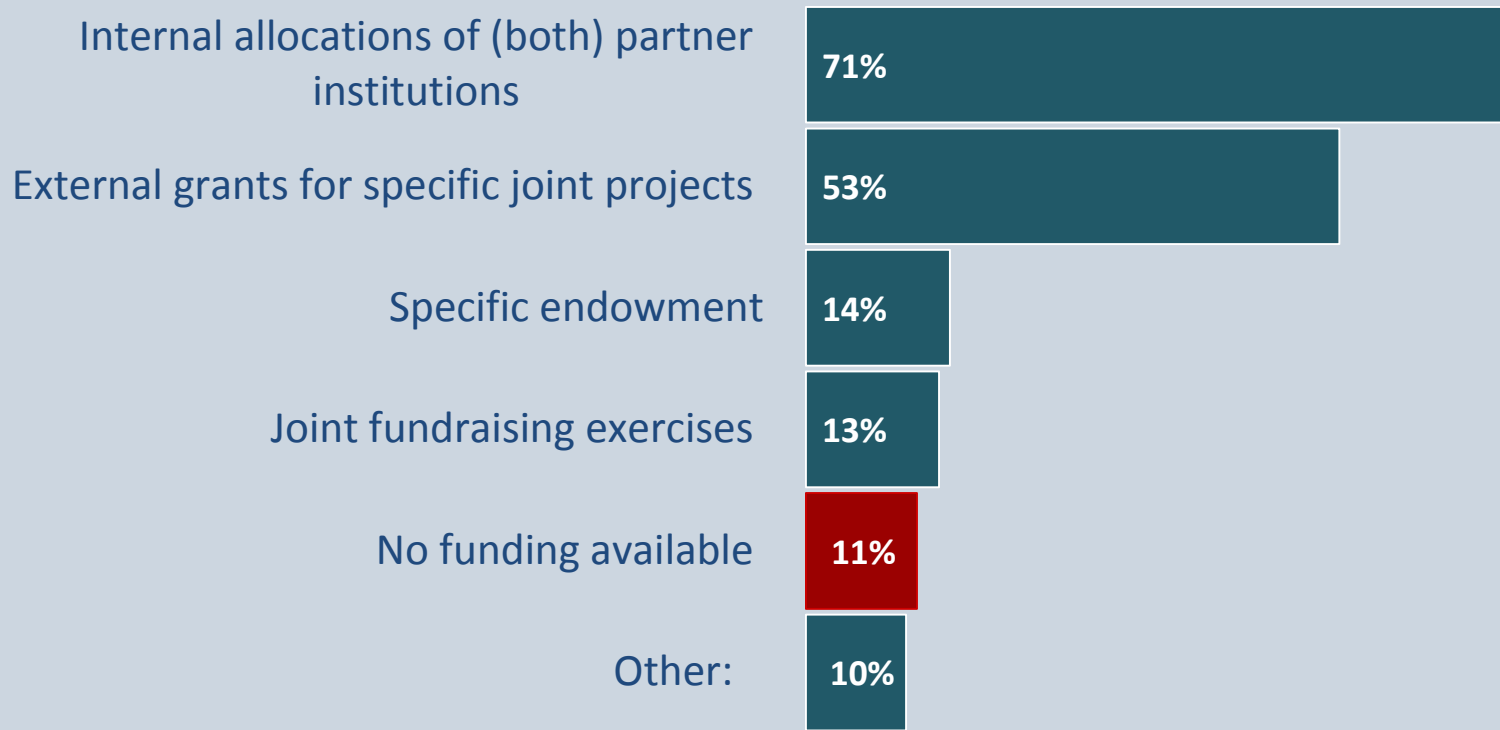
Does your institution have a specific unit/person in charge of developing and managing strategic partnerships?
 (Multiple answers allowed)



Management and Funding

How are your strategic partnerships funded?

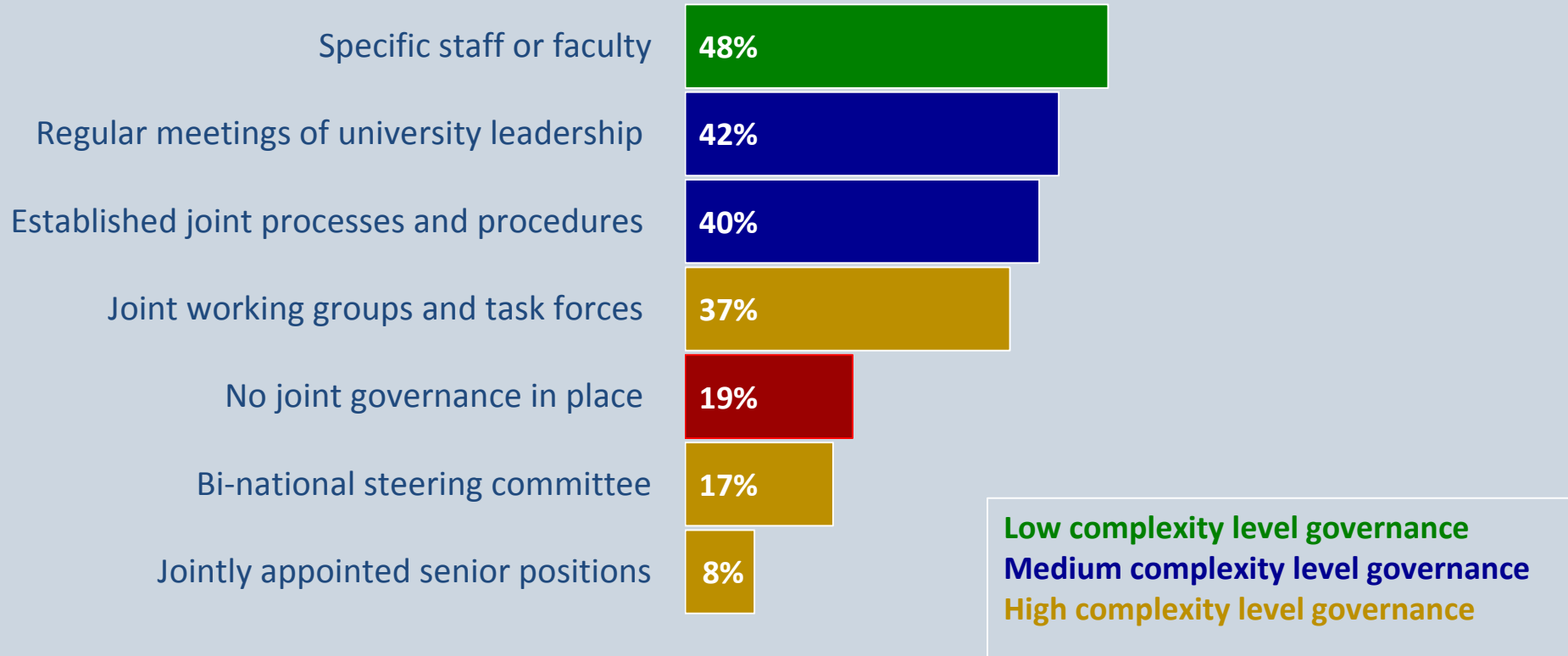
(Multiple answers allowed)



Management and Funding

Modes of governance in strategic partnerships

(Multiple answers allowed)



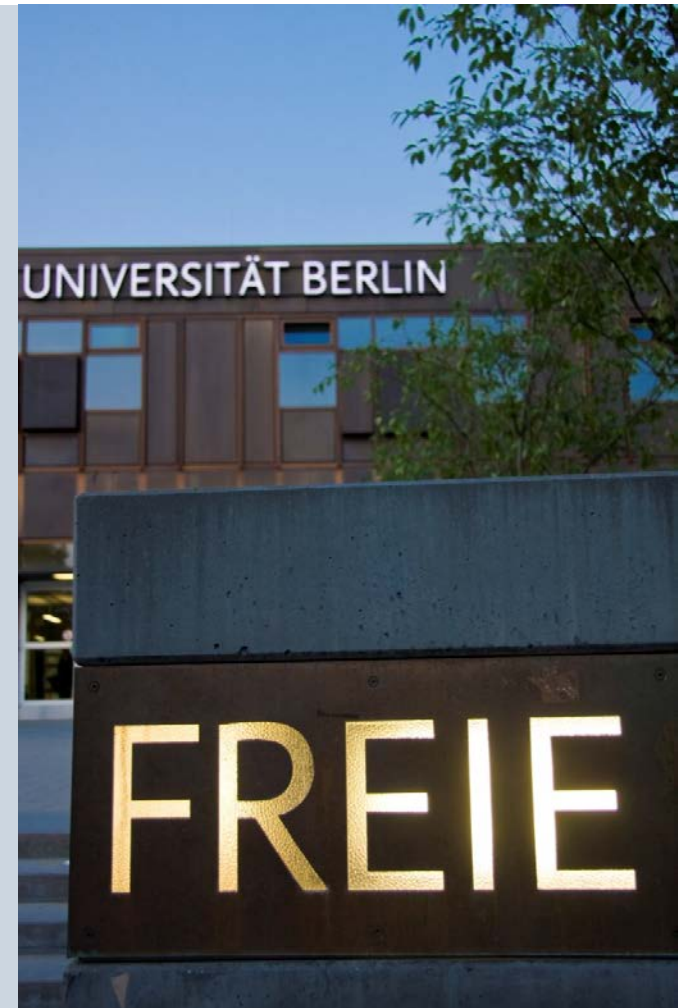
Impact and Challenges

- Negative effects of SPs on „other / non-strategic“ partnerships? 78% say no
- Most report improved international visibility, brand recognition, reputation and ranking position, increase in new research projects and academic programs
- Transformative effects for the university (especially in admin/management)
- Challenges:
 - Communication and coordination (internal and external)
 - Resources (securing funding and staff)
 - Partner selection (identifying the right partners)
- Cap on number of SPs? About 60% say no, most other report range of 3-12
- 80% plan to develop more strategic partnerships in the future

Case Study Snapshot: Freie Universität Berlin

Who We Are

- One of Germany's 11 Universities of Excellence
- Founded in 1948, with strong international orientation
- 32.000 students, 500 professors, 11 departments
- #1 in Germany: highest number of guest researchers, most Erasmus students, most DAAD scholarships, highest number of international doctoral students
- More than 100 partnerships with universities around the world, 54 departmental agreements, 340 agreements within the European mobility programs



Strategic Focus on Internationalization



Part of FUB's „International Network University“ Strategy

- Liaison Offices
- Strategic Partnerships
- Strategic Unit: Center for International Cooperation
- Funding for internationalization measures

Strategic Partnerships – Means to an end, not an end in itself

Objectives:

- Deliver additional quality & opportunities for research and teaching
- Deliver complementary strengths
- Promote sustainable research cooperation
- Provide attractive options for students, early-career researchers and established faculty
- Increase international co-publications
- Increase FUB's visibility in specific regions and globally

Question: Which partners and in which regions are the right ones?

Answer: Identify particularly synergetic partnerships in particular regions.

Identification Process

Top-down

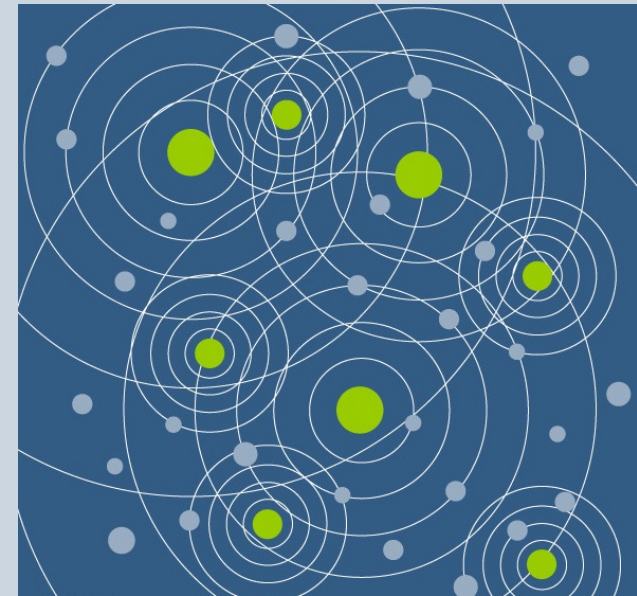
- Focus on regions/countries with high and/or growing research potential
- SPs must mirror faculties' research interest
- Partnerships should have a history of collaboration at min. 3 departments
- Availability of funding opportunities should be taken into consideration
- Process managed by a central unit (Center for International Cooperation)



Identification Process

Bottom-up

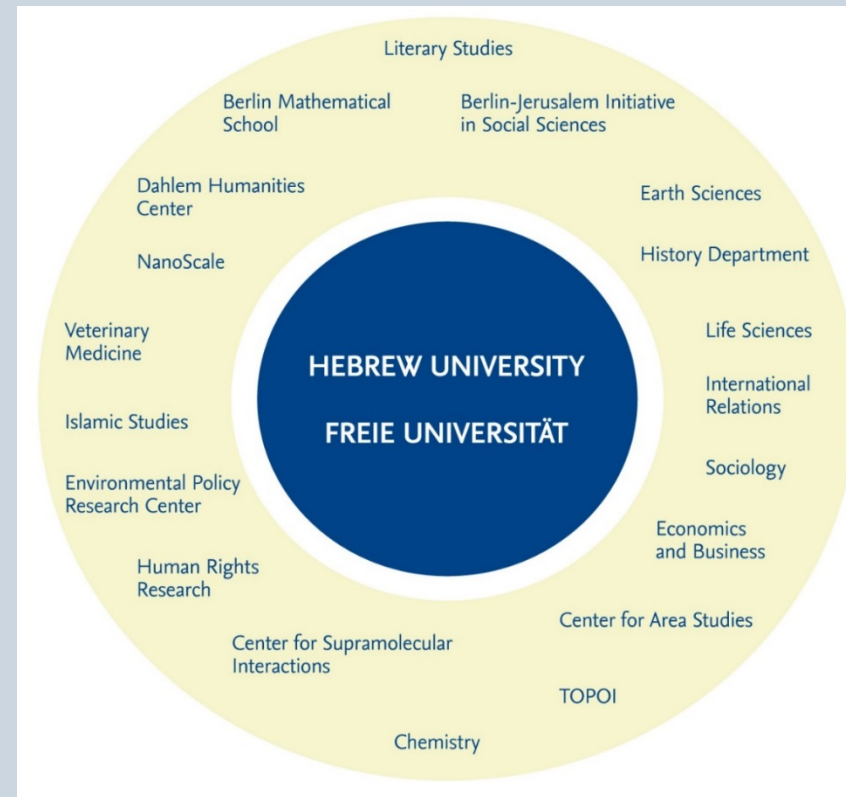
- Target Agreements: Departments map their international activities and develop their own internationalisation agendas
- Consultation process with Deans
- Analysis of existing partnerships (level of activity, mobility, etc)
- Analysis of third party funded research projects (FUB database)
- Analysis of research output (co-publications), where data available
- Analysis of incoming guest scholars / fellows



Example: Bilateral FUB – HUJI

Current joint activities involving approx. 100 researchers from FUB und HUJI

- Joint research projects / joint publications
- Joint Seed Money Fund
- Joint PhD agreement
- Joint PostDoc Fellowships
- Joint PhD Program „Human Rights Under Pressure“
- Joint annual PhD workshops
- Joint initiative in online education
- Student exchange
- Faculty mobility
- Erasmus+
- Regular consultations between university leadership
- Administrative staff exchange
- Joint press releases / marketing
- Joint fundraising



Example: Multilateral

University Alliance for Sustainability

Use synergies to promote joint research and teaching on sustainability related issues and foster dialogue and inter-institutional learning with regard to sustainable campus management issues.

Measures:

- Stakeholder Mobility (both ways)
 - Explorative Research Visits
 - Senior & Junior Research Stays
 - Student Research & Study Stays
 - Administrators' Explorative Stays
 - Volunteer Swap
 - Incubators for teaching and management
 - Joint Annual Spring Campus
-
- Managed by Central Sustainability Unit at FUB
 - Funded by DAAD through Strategic Partnerships Program



Example: Thematically Focused



- Strategic research network focusing on the topic of “Principles of Cultural Dynamics”
- Combines expertise of leading humanities institutes/centers at FUB, Hebrew U, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the Chinese U of Hong Kong, and EHESS Paris
- Cooperation promoted through a fellowship & mobility program
- Annual joint Global Humanities Campus with workshops & summer schools
- Strategic network managed by Dahlem Humanities Center DHC at FUB
- Funded by DAAD through Strategic Partnerships Program

Final Comments and Observations

Observations from FUB

- Steadily growing number of joint projects and initiatives in research and teaching spurred by strategic partnerships
- Growing number of involved faculty, often in unexpected fields
- Increasing number of admin individuals or units directly involved in SP
- Results in terms of additional research projects incl. publications can be seen but it's too early to draw definite conclusions
- A solid understanding within all four SPs that they are a strategically motivated endeavour and are pronounced accordingly
- FUB's bilateral strategic partnerships begin to show tendencies for triangular or multilateral schemes

Further Observations from Survey & FUB

- Time: Identifying, developing and managing SPs takes time (and staff)
- Scepticism: Yet another fancy-sounding idea of the central management? Will I be forced to work only with XYZ now?
- Fear of potential negative effects on other existing partnerships
- Exclusion: Faculty might feel excluded if their own field is not reflected in an SP
- Proactivity: Some faculty might feel encouraged to take the initiative for more SPs
- Reluctance: Certain units will not be used to working internationally but might be pushed to do exactly that within an SP context
- Commitment: Do both sides consider the partnership to be strategic? Similar internationalization ethos?
- Communication: A crucial element both internally and externally
- Realism vs wishful thinking
- Measurability of success/output: When/how/who?
- Success is a curse: The better the SP works, the more work there is 😊

THANK YOU

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Weitere Informationen:



Further information: www.fu-berlin.de