



## **University leaders from Europe & North America debate challenges and benefits of Higher Education cooperation**

### **Transatlantic Dialogue Meeting: 20 - 23 June 2008**

**27<sup>th</sup> June 2008.** On 20-23 June 2008, 30 presidents, rectors, and vice chancellors from Canada, Europe and the United States, met in Vancouver to discuss the challenges and benefits of cooperation in a context in which globalisation exacerbates competition. Sponsored by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the European University Association (EUA), and hosted by Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, this meeting revisited the 2001 Transatlantic Dialogue “The Brave New World of Higher Education” that looked at a future shaped by technology, globalisation, and competition. The 2008 Transatlantic Dialogue was the 11th such meeting; the first one was held in 1989.

Underlying the discussion was clear agreement that the need for cooperation of all types becomes more acute as competition increases. Partnerships are a central strategy for institutions to increase their capacity, enhance their creativity and meet societal demands.

Participants explored the different types of cooperation, including national, regional, and international partnerships (for teaching, research, and technology transfer) and partnerships with the private sector, government, and the local community.

The group highlighted the need for institutions to be clear about their strategic goals so as to select the partnerships that are most closely aligned with their missions and goals and to develop the appropriate institutional human resources and skills to implement them. These resources include administrative and academic personnel who have the appropriate entrepreneurial, cross-cultural, and multilingual capacities to create and sustain successful partnerships.

The discussion demonstrated that the issues and challenges faced by institutions are becoming increasingly complex and interlinked. When the larger forces for change such as globalisation and competition are experienced by universities, these must be translated into appropriate institutional strategies to connect with local, regional and international partners.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the crucial role of that institutional leaders play in initiating and negotiating partnerships and in communicating their benefits to colleagues and external stakeholders. If higher education is to be even more central to social, economic, and cultural development, its leaders will need a broad range of skills to ensure that institutions succeed in this new “brave new world.”

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*The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European*

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