

# Successful University – Implementing Organization Partnerships: An Interactive Exercise to Build Consensus

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## Iain Hunt

Manager, Int'l. Development Initiative,  
Sustainable Engineering Grad. Program  
Villanova University



## Dr. David Leege

Director, University Engagement &  
Research  
Catholic Relief Services



## Dr. Alice Agogino

Executive Director, Blum Center for  
Developing Economies  
Univ. of California at Berkeley



## Dr. Thomas Woodson

Assistant Professor, Dept. of  
Technology and Society  
Stony Brook University

# Background

Prior to TechCon – open ended survey within our respective networks, representing universities and development sector organizations at HQ, country, and field levels to gauge *expert* opinion on:

- 3 most important **characteristics of successful partnership between universities and implementing organizations** to facilitate innovation and research responsive to on-the-ground programs & priorities.
- 3 biggest **obstacles to building mutually beneficial partnerships** between universities and implementing organizations.
- 3 most important **core competencies** that engineers and technical specialists must have as next generation development practitioners.

# Session Format

Interactive group activity to rank from most important to least the most popular responses from initial survey:

- Characteristics of successful partnership (10 mins)
- Core competencies (10 mins)

Share top 3 in plenary (10 mins)

Sharing of experiences: overcoming the most cited obstacles to mutually beneficial partnership (10 mins)

Q: What are the most **important characteristics of partnerships between universities and implementing organizations** to facilitate research and innovation responsive to on-the-ground programs and priorities?

Rank from MOST important to LEAST.

Strong, open, regular  
**Communication**

**Common Goals**  
& vision, interest

**Transparency**  
regarding each party's  
goals

Clearly defined  
**Roles &  
Responsibilities**

Value proposition &  
**Clear Benefits**  
to both parties

**Faculty  
Leadership**  
& designated university  
team, with incentives &  
acting as bridge persons

Q: What are the most important core competencies that engineers and technical specialists must have as next generation development practitioners?  
Rank from MOST important to LEAST.

Ability to  
**Look Beyond  
Technology**  
and apply *appropriate  
technology*

**Flexibility**

**Communication  
Skills**

**Cross-Cultural  
Skills**

Ability to understand  
complexity &  
**Think in  
Systems**

**Humility**  
& listening & learning  
from others

# Overcoming Obstacles

**Most commonly cited obstacles to mutually-beneficial partnerships between universities and implementing organizations:**

1. Divergent time scales
2. Bureaucracy and administrative & legal obstacles (IP, contracts, etc.)
3. Misalignment of priorities
4. Miscommunication & poor communication
5. Funding & resource constraints
6. Workloads, time constraints, and limited face-time for collaboration

***Share an example from your experience of overcoming one of these obstacles.***