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1. Annual Conference ReCentGlobe Research Centre

Panel Discussion

**Beyond the Traditional Core Missions of a
University: What Competencies of Academics
Play a Role in the Successful Implementation
of University-Business Collaboration?**

Panellists

Prof. Dr. Claudia Nelly Berrones-Flemmig

Mr. Christopher Boafo

Prof. Dr. Yonni Cuero Acosta

Mr. Gunnar Kaßberg

Mr. Ralph Nyadu-Addo

Prof. Dr. Md. Noor Un Nabi

Prof. Dr. Utz Dornberger (Moderator)

**ReCentGlobe
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28.04.2021

14:45 – 15:45

German Time



Zoom-Link

<https://uni-leipzig.zoom.us/j/64319545751?pwd=Vk9QK3k1dnVtQ0VPRmVIWXFERjVyZz09>

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In recent years, collaborations between universities and business firms are proliferating. This essential mechanism seeks to advance the interests of universities, business, and societies (Orazbayeva et al., 2019). We attribute this development, amongst others, to the falling government resources for higher education on the one hand, as well as the increasing market competitiveness and growing demand for new products on the other hand. Anon (1974) defines university-business collaboration (hereafter termed UBC) as interactions between all parts of the higher education system and the industrializing economy. Literature emphasize that most UBCs are operationalized at the level of individual academic departments rather than at the level of a school or the entire university (Rybníček and Königsguber, 2019). This suggests the need to understand “how the attitude and skills of [successful] UBC practitioners emerge” (Orazbayeva et al. 2019, p.73).

Most studies have categorized UBCs into academic engagement and commercialization (Perkmann et al., 2013). On the one hand, academic engagement highlights the importance of academic scientists’ involvement in contract research, collaborative research, consulting, and informal relationships for university-business knowledge transfer. On the other hand, commercialization of academic knowledge covers academic entrepreneurship (e.g., spin-offs, incubators), as well as the patenting and licensing of inventions (i.e., intellectual property creation). A central common finding indicates that academic engagement is practised by a far larger proportion of academics than commercialization. Researches highlight some key findings on academic engagement (e.g., D’Este and Patel, 2007; Perkmann et al., 2013). Firstly, academic engagement is more autonomously driven by individuals, while less organizationally embedded. Secondly, academic engagement is positively correlated with individual characteristics that define senior and scientifically productive individuals. Thirdly, academic engagement appears to be an effective tool for mobilizing resources for universities projects. Finally, the individual characteristics of academics have a stronger impact on UBCs than the characteristics of their departments or universities.

In the light of the above, it is noteworthy to understand what factors play a role in a successful collaboration of academics with industries. Achieving a common answer is far from reaching as literature suggest that countries with dissimilar higher education systems, dissimilar phases of economic development, and different national innovation systems will show varying patterns of UBCs and varying antecedents and consequences (Perkmann et al., 2013). At the same time, universities vary because of their histories, values, aspirations, and perceived reputation (Lebeau and Cochrane, 2015). Therefore, applying “a one-size-fits-all approach [of UBC] is problematic given the considerable differences in the capability of universities to transfer their knowledge, and of regional businesses to absorb that knowledge” (Pugh, 2017, p.990).

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The complexity of understanding this subject motivates seeking the views of diversified academics from across countries in the Southern and Northern hemispheres. Among others, some salient questions which intersect with the current discourse in academia and industry will be discussed in our panel:

- 1) **What channels** of university-business collaboration exist in your university?
- 2) **What incentives** are provided by your university or country to motivate academics to collaborate with business?
- 3) **What competencies** of academics play a role in the successful implementation of university-business collaboration?
- 4) **Could university-business** collaboration's intentions be taught at graduate schools?
- 5) **Does the practice** of university-business collaboration conflicts with the core duties of academics in teaching and research activities?
- 6) **How will be** the future of university-business collaboration in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic which is resulting in a global economic crisis?

References

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