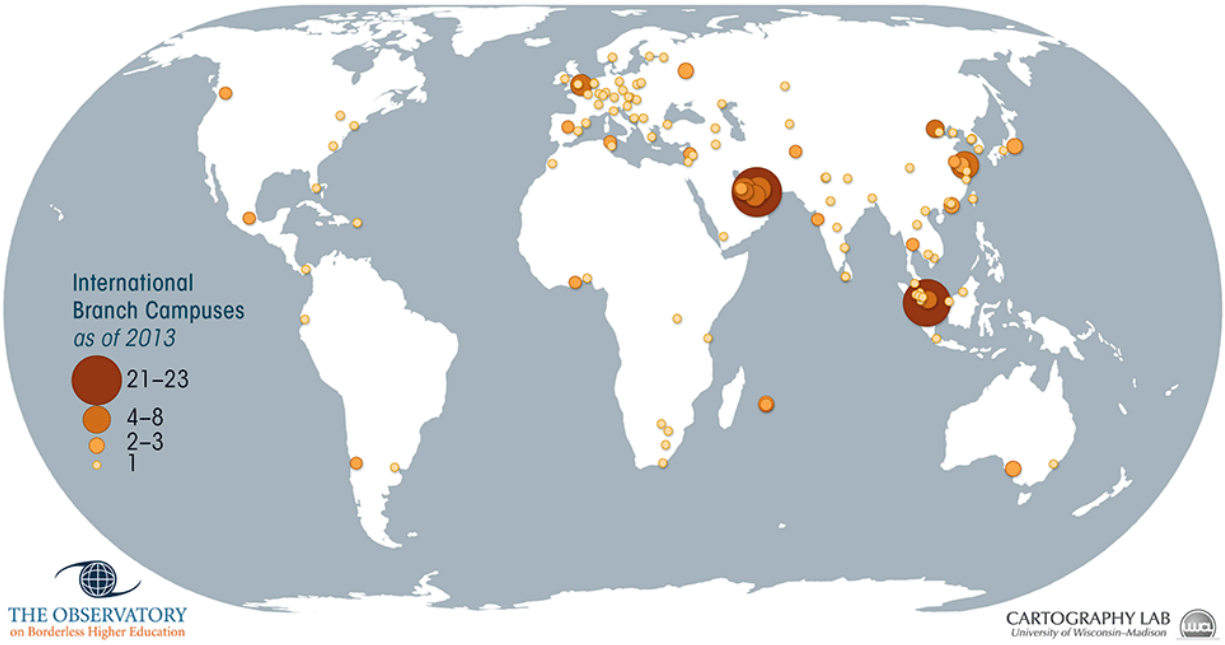
# Creating affiliation between Cross River University of Technology (Nigeria) and a North American (Canadian) university





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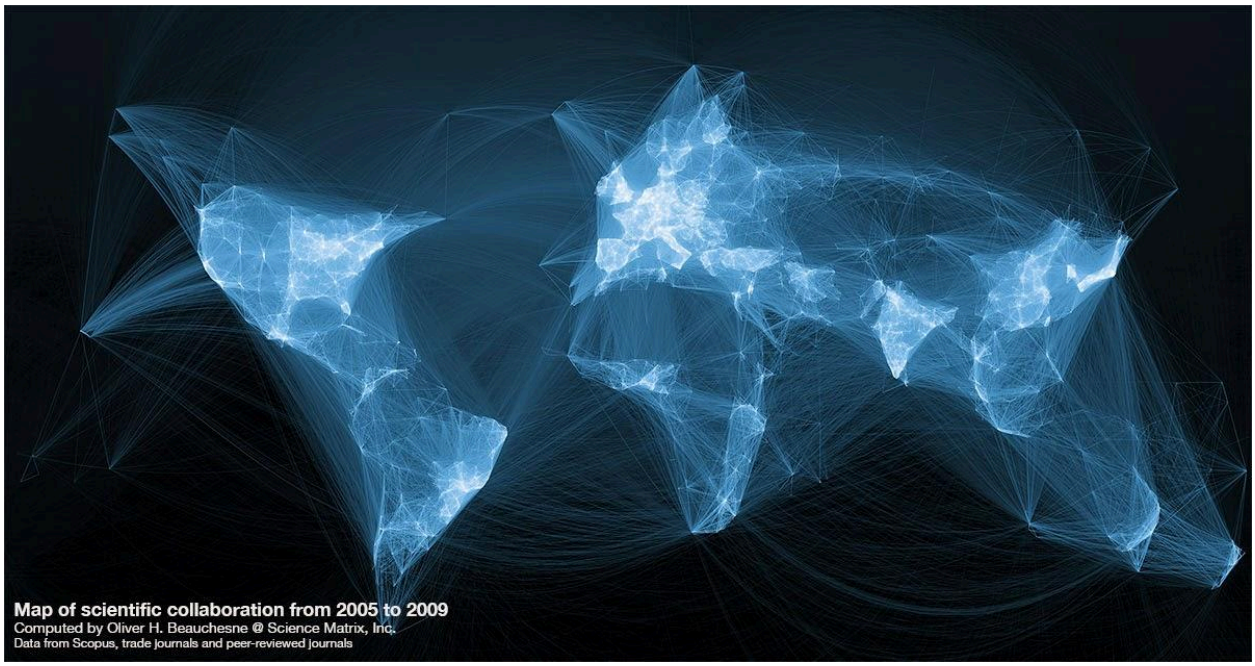
## Executive summary

Cross River University of Technology may find it difficult initially to achieve formal affiliation with a Canadian university, nonetheless, it can still enter into other kinds of partnerships which prepare it for stronger links down the road. These partnerships which may or may not require formal written agreements provide valuable recognition and identification with Canadian (and other leading international) universities.

These types of preliminary links include: remote student exchanges (i.e. email exchanges, photo exchanges, possible live streaming or the sharing of taped lectures and discussions), remote evaluating of curriculum, faculty training through electronic means (videos, email, phone etc), and use of digital/online teaching and learning resources such as lecture videos and readings from leading world universities, open educational resources (OER), massive open online courses (MOOC), virtual labs, online discussion forum, electronic grade books etc.

These early collaborations can act as stepping stones to much stronger links in future such as joint research, student and faculty exchanges, credit transfer etc. Also, these linkages can be made at a fine-grained level with individual students/faculty/staff, or at a more general-level such as a course, course group, dept, faculty or with the entire institution.




## Introduction

***The business of universities is ideas: the creation of ideas through research and the dissemination of ideas through education and application. Increasingly, the business of universities is as much across as it is within borders, and not just in the free flow of ideas but in the global flow of students and scholars who generate them. There are fewer workable restrictions on the global circulation of ideas than in almost any other area of trade. With the increasing flow of students and scholars worldwide, it becomes easier to talk about the free trade of minds. With easier travel and the internet providing near instantaneous access to hundreds of millions of idea generators throughout the world, more and more minds flow across borders physically and virtually—with the mode of transportation chosen sometimes having little practical impact on outcomes." John Hudzik*** [(1)]

Today, higher institutions all over the world recognize the need to internationalize their activities. The Cross River University of Technology (CRUT) is no exception. In this report, we shall look at several available options for internationalization and provide some recommendations.

**Affiliation**

Wikipedia defines affiliation as, *"An affiliated school or affiliated college is an educational institution that operates independently, but also has a formal collaborative agreement with another, usually larger institution that may have some level of control or influence over its academic policies, standards or programs."* [(2)] Many universities however maintain different types of links with other schools such as exchanges etc which are not as comprehensive/binding as affiliations.

For example, the University of Alberta (UAlberta) is formally affiliated with about a dozen colleges in Canada[(3)], but also " *involved in more than 400 formal teaching, research and student mobility agreements with governments, organizations and collaborating institutions in over 50 countries.*[(4)]" The requirements for becoming an affiliated school are usually strict such as:

> *"2. The University of Alberta shall enter into a new or renewed affiliation agreement only if the agreement:*
>
> *c. demonstrates achievement of established academic, administrative, financial, facilities, and support criteria;"* [(5)]

Whereas, the requirements for agreements are much broader and inclusive.

For the rest of this report therefore, we shall not limit our discussion to affiliation but rather refer to the much wider sets of links (and agreements) that universities may undertake.

## Types of links between universities

Edelstein & Douglass in 2012 published a leading paper on this subject, where they grouped some of these links that universities make into clusters so as to *"contribute a meaningful and relevant approach to thinking about issues and problems faced by university leaders as they make strategic choices about which international and global policies, programs, and relationships they pursue."* [(6)]

### Clusters and Modes of Engagement

**Cluster 1 – Individual Faculty Initiatives**

Research Collaboration

Teaching and Curriculum Development

Academic Program Leadership

Sanctioning Authority

**Cluster 2 – Managing Institutional Demography**

International Student Recruitment

Recruitment of Foreign Academic and Administrative Staff

Visiting Scholars and Lecturers

Short Courses, Conferences and Visiting Delegations

Summer Sessions, Extension Programs and Language

Acquisition Programs

**Cluster 3 – Mobility Initiatives**

Exchange and Mobility Programs

Study Abroad Programs, Internships, Service Learning,

Research Projects and Practicums

**Cluster 4 – Curricular and Pedagogical Change**

Incremental Curricular Change

Foreign Language and Culture

Cross-Cultural Communication and Intercultural Competence

New Pedagogies and Learning Technologies

Extra-Curricular and Student Initiated Activities

**Cluster 5 – Transnational Engagements**

Collaboration and Partnerships with Foreign Institutions

Dual, Double and Joint Degrees

Multi-site Joint Degrees

Articulation Agreements, Twinning, Franchising

Research Intensive Partnerships

Strategic Alliances

Branch Campuses, Satellite Offices and Gateways

**Cluster 6 – Network Building**

Academic and Scholarly Networks

Consortia

Alumni Networks

**Cluster 7 – Campus Culture, Ethos, and Symbolic**

Action

These types of links may or may not always require written agreements. Although, the majority do. In the case where a written agreement is necessary universities typically undertake agreements which may be loosely grouped into two kinds: legally and non-legally binding. Such legally binding agreements include memoranda of agreement, affiliation agreements etc, whereas non-legally binding documents include memorandum of understanding and letters of intent. [7]

**Caveat**

In the case of CRUT, it might be more meaningful to go the route of establishing links which require non-legally binding agreements, and with time build up the relationship between it and the Canadian university that may lead to much deeper links (and legally binding agreements) with time and commitment.

Two important reasons, why this should be considered are first, schools consider the rankings of the other institution to inform their decisions for linkage. For example, in an internal form for UAlberta faculty and staff proposing a linkage with another institution, one section to be completed says, *"Please describe the institution in relation to its peers nationally and internationally, Is the institution in the top 5% of institutions in the country? Include relevant benchmarks or rankings information, such as QS Top Universities, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Academic*

*Rankings of World Universities. Please note other information about the institution that you consider relevant."* [8]

The UAlberta is generally in the world's top 100 Universities [9][10][11][12], so this very high bar of being in the top 5% of the country's universities (which in the case of Nigeria means the top 5 or 6 universities) is to be expected, although this requirement can and may be waived under certain circumstances. Using available rankings CRUT is in the bottom quartile (at 88th of 113) Nigerian higher institutions. [13]

The second reason is that, as a whole western attitude towards African universities self-improvement initiatives are generally negative. *"Regarding the African sub-continent, writers like Bjorn Hettne reflect upon efforts to generate a 'pan-African regionalism' [educational linkages and coherence] but argue that this tends to be what he calls 'shadow regionalism'. By this he means lots of rhetoric, pomp and ceremony and not much that materializes out of this."* [14]

## Suggestions/Recommendations

With the above considerations, my first suggestion is that the CRUT might consider initially starting with a non-binding agreement containing minimal and easy to fulfil requirements.

Here are two samples of such links between Georgia State University (USA) and Western Cape University (South Africa) faculty of Arts; and between Georgia State University (US) and Universite Pedagogique Nationale (UPN) (Democratic Republic of Congo), Faculte des Lettres et Sciences Humaines (see full copies in the addendum).

*"Based upon mutual understanding between Georgia State and the University of the Western Cape, the two universities have identified the following areas of common educational interests to expand the extent of their budding relationship: students exchanges (i.e. email exchanges, photo exchanges, possible live streaming or the sharing of taped lectures and discussions) in literature and creative writing classes…joint creative writing publications in student or scholarly publications produced at the two universities".* [(15)]

*"Based upon mutual understanding between Georgia State and the Universite Pedagogique Nationale, the two universities have identified the following areas of common educational interests to expand the extent of their budding relationship:*

*-Evaluate the English language teaching curriculum at UPN*

*-Support the training of UPN faculty in regard to the development of online education courses*

*-find sources of funding for such projects**

*No Georgia State students will be involved in this collaboration, and Georgia State faculty will not travel to Republique Democratique du Congo, under this agreement. Collaboration will take place electronically and/or by phone."* [(16)]

Second suggestion, is to develop links which may not necessarily require any written agreement but which nevertheless, confer valuable and identifiable links between CRUT and world ranked universities. These links have been shown to improve teaching and learning and can thus improve

the local (among its Nigerian peers) ranking of CRUT. This include the use of digital/online learning resources from highly rated schools/instructors such open education resources [17], Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) [18][19], OpenCourseWare (OCW) [20], virtual learning labs and simulations [21], such as Labster[22], and Obafemi Awolowo University FGPA lab [23] and other collaborative tools such as online discussion forum, social media, Skype and electronic grade books etc. Some of these resources are provided free and for use by other instructors/schools while some require different types of licensing.

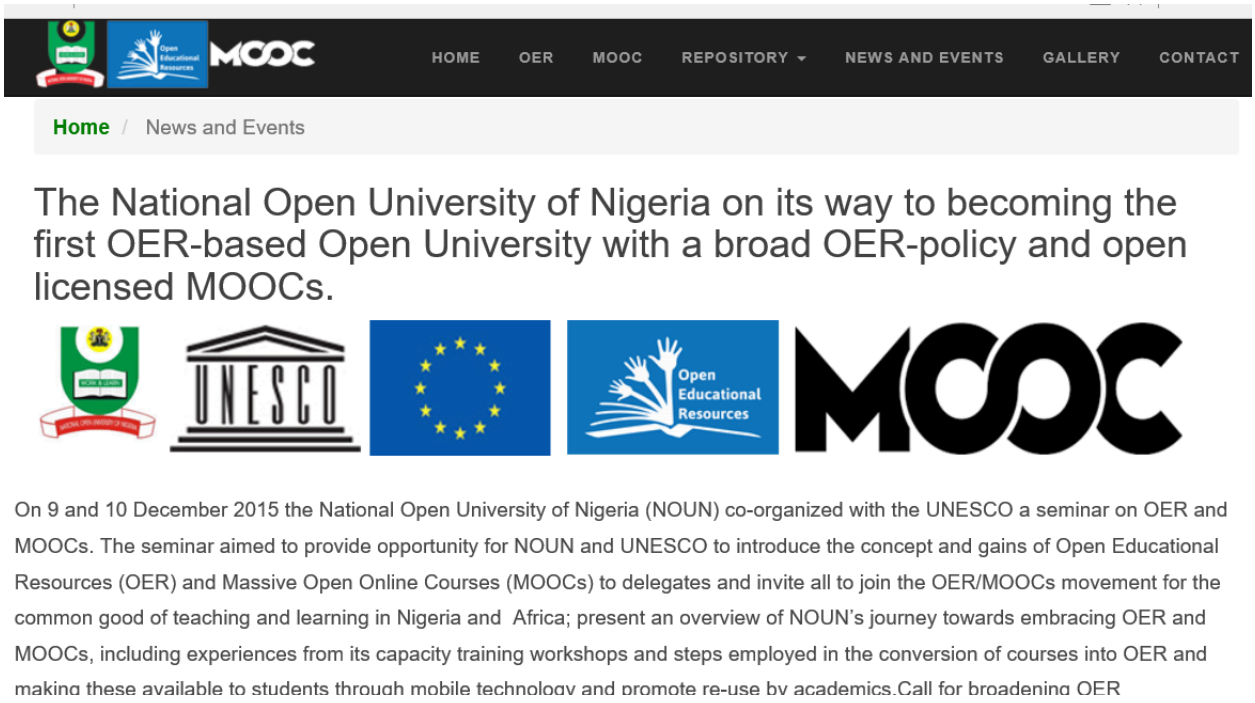
## OER and MOOC

Digging deeper into a suggestion for linkage, that is, the use of OER and MOOC to improve teaching and learning (and by extension university ranking), and to create cross-cutting linkages with other institutions, students and faculty.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia [24] and Jordan [25] have incorporated MOOCs for academic and industrial study, the US has licensed some MOOCs for teachers and veterans[26][27]. Other countries and international organizations such as the US State dept's YALI (Young African Leaders Initiative)[28], World Bank's Open Learning Campus[29] and the World Health Organisation's (Pacific Region) POLHN[30] are using OER/MOOC to accelerate development. Many leading academic institutions and organisations such as edX[31], Khan Academy[32], Microsoft[33] are providing free educational content which other academic institutions, organisations and individuals are consuming to open access to high quality learning to anyone, anywhere[34] in the world free. The Open University of Nigeria is pioneering using OERs and MOOCs with support from UNESCO[35][36]. In Rwanda, Kepler University is using

MOOCs together with live facilitation to provide degrees. Kepler's results have been amazing.

> *"The Kepler program has had significant impacts on their students' critical thinking, cognitive skills, English language skills, and computer literacy relative to traditional Rwandan universities." - IDInsight* [37]




***UNESCO and the National Open University of Nigeria with UNESCO premiering OER/MOOCs in Higher Ed.***

## Conclusion

As Hudzik said, "the business of universities is ideas: ideas creation and ideas dissemination"[1]. In today's digital age, the traditional limits that provide barriers to teaching and learning are less powerful. This is where I believe CRUT can utilize these superhighways of information flows and unprecedented access to knowledge to leapfrog the gap between higher ranked universities and itself. It can, through technology, provide modern

teaching and learning possibilities (and environments) such as online learning, virtual labs and real time communications to advance the school into excellence in 21st century skills and the knowledge economy.

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# Addendum

Appendix 1. Letter of Intent to collaborate between Georgia State University (USA) and University of the Western Cape (South Africa) [15]

Appendix 2. Letter of Intent to collaborate between Georgia State University (USA) and Universite Pedagogique Nationale (Democratic Republic of Congo) [16]

Appendix 3. Sample of an affiliation agreement between The University of Western Ontario and Brescia University College, Huron University College, and King's University College [38]