Session Description: This panel introduces the gains, objectives, and challenges of geographers and related scholars working with/in institutional frameworks such as the Organization of American States (OAS) via Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and others to strengthen research and education across the Americas. We will begin by introducing the panelist affiliated institutions and the cross fertilization between these institutions and AAG, before reviewing successful projects led by AAG members, and sharing strategies to obtain institutional funding for future projects. This panel continues a long running set of sessions organized at AAG Annual Meetings that focuses on a theme of importance for facilitating collaboration among geographers and geographic institutions across the Western Hemisphere under the title of Geography in the Americas.
Objective. Notes compiled with the potential to write an article (Chronicle of Higher Education?) or book on collaboration.

Partial list of Organizations/Programs mentioned:
- UNEP
- ARIUSA
- NASA
- AAG
- NSF
- Oxfam
- Interamerican Development bank
- Canadian IDRC (International Development Research Corporation)
- Organization of American States (OAS)
- Pan American Health Organization (Virtual campus)
- Pan American Institute of Geography and History
- CIFOR
- IEI

Initiatives exist to foment collaboration:
- NSF has Catalizing International Collaboration grants $25,000-40,000.
- Brazil is investing money in developing research abroad
- Chile is too. CONICIT?
- Ecuador (Go Teach) program brings 100 teachers in 2dary education to KSU for ESL classes. Objective is that these
- KSU has increased % of Brazilian students exponentially with the hope these students will be the international collaborative faculty/professionals of the future
- UN’s South to South collaborative office
- UN sustainable development program
- UN Eye on Earth summit
- UN forum for university sustainable
- UN Green Universities initiative
- ARIUSA: http://ariusa.net/es/ Alianza Redes Universidades Sostenible (looking to bring in Caribbean and Brazil). ARIUSA has links to Spain
- MyCOE (My Community Our Earth) as a model sustainable partnership
- Foundation of the state of Sao Paulo (FundSP) looking to connect with north

Considerations of working on international inter-institutional collaboration
- Letters to live by: BPx3- Be Patient, Be Patient, Be Patient
- Need to educate institutions and staff regarding complexities of international work
- Develop a detailed understanding of how your institution works and how the partner institution works?
  - Legal office
  - Accounting/Financial office
  - Politics
- Lawyers and accountants become involved with different agendas and needs
- Your institution needs to understand how to send $ to partners internationally. What are the challenges?
- You and your immediate partner may have a shared purpose, but what else is shared? How can that overcome distinct cultures, bureaucracies etc…
- Signing agreements between organizations necessary but sometimes difficult
- Federal agencies differ in how they engage abroad. Be sensitive to this.
- Read the management literature. Much to be learned.
  - “Collaborative advantage”
    - Can do more/better/something unique working together than one can alone
    - Lack of infrastructure in your institution can be compensate by collaborative work
    - Lack of expertise in your institutions
    - Lack of resources
- “Crossing boundaries” projects bring complexity and challenges. 2 to focus on
  - Politics and inequalities
    - These have to be managed, as they cannot be resolved in the time frame of a collaboration.
Uncertainty and surprise

- International collaborative projects are rife with these. One will always be adapting to unforeseen issues.
- See these as opportunities rather than just setbacks/challenges
- Consider consulting Evelyn Waugh’s Muddling Through

- Branding key… message consistent and well marketed to target audiences
- Research coordination networks. Appear to be undertheorized and there are opportunities in the NSF
- Collaboration is dynamic
  - Partnership changes
  - Institutions evolve
  - Personnel changes: but follow your contacts who will cycle between NGO, GO, and academic positions
- Climate change, disease, pollution and other “wicked problems” as not knowing borders… this fosters collaboration
- Collaboration in itself builds
  - organizational capacity
  - opens doors and builds network ties
  - Funders talk to funders
- Once agreement runs, you now represent your organization: “you become the hinge, the tension point”
- Ethics has much to do with inequality
- Approach of putting salaries up on the wall so there are no financial secrets
- Collaboration requires $ & time
- Try and identify what others want out of collaboration. Ask “what do you want out of this?”
  - $: US academics often less focused on this, but can be MUCH more important consideration outside of US academia
  - credit
  - visibility
  - authorship
- But not everyone knows what they themselves want.

Higher education plays a particularly important role in sustainability given future generation training. Will your collaboration impact interdisciplinary work, tenure and promotion, graduate students... others.

**Additional references for consideration:**

- UNEP Report (co-authored Ligia Castro, Graciela Metternicht) on LAC Region

- Building Bridges Across Sectors, From practitioners sourcebook, by Synergos Institute

- World Bank’s Report on Higher Education in Latin America - Directions in Development

- Extensive listing of International Development Organizations (Kent University)
  [http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/InternationalDevelopmentOrganisations.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/InternationalDevelopmentOrganisations.htm)

- Extensive listing of research grant mechanisms and programs representing cross-disciplinary and team-based funding opportunities, by NORDP
  [http://www.nordp.org/funding-opportunities](http://www.nordp.org/funding-opportunities)

- Clinton Global Initiative - 2013 Meeting in Latin America ("moving beyond discussion to drive cross-sector action")

- See also AAG’s Geography in the Americas resources at [www.aag.org/americas](http://www.aag.org/americas)

[Notes by D.Salisbury, M.Caldas, P.Solis, 2014]