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Foreword

U.S. universities and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) have an
dependence history of collaboration in development assistance, and of frustration with aspects of their
relationship. Collaboration has been based on mutual recognition of the need to access the
broad range of U.S. intellectual resources to help address developing country problems; the
shared frustration has been based on mutually perceived shortcomings in collaborative efforts.
Numerous factors contributed to U.S. university/AID conflicts, including different approaches
to development assistance, differing bureaucratic styles, mistrust of each other's commitment
and/or technical capabilities, and intrusion of politics into some aspects of development aid.

New opportunities for U.S. university involvement in foreign development assistance,
however, are arising from new initiatives in AID and in other development assistance
organizations. AID's growing emphasis on sustainable agriculture, natural resource manage-
ment, and maintenance or improvement of environmental quality offers U.S. universities new
areas of specialization and, thus, fresh areas of participation in development assistance.
Intensifying efforts to achieve mutual benefits from development assistance for developing
countries and the United States also offers U.S. universities involvement in “second
generation” development projects.

In addition, AID and U.S. universities are developing new, multi-institutional collaborative
relationships involving a wide sphere of U.S. universities, private sector organizations, and
Federal agencies. Benefits of such expanded collaboration may include: potential for
increased university participation in development assistance, economic and strategic
advantages of pooling knowledge and resources and of sharing risks and costs, the possibility
of garnering increased political support for university involvement in development assistance,
and broadening educational opportunities for U.S. and developing country students.

The House Committees on Foreign Affairs and Science, Space and Technology requested
the Office of Technology Assessment to review the constraints and opportunities to U.S.
university involvement in foreign development assistance related to agriculture, natural
resource management, and protection of environmental quality. The Subcommittee on
International Economic Policy, Trade, Oceans, and Environment of the Senate Foreign Affairs
Committee and Senator Tim Wirth supported that request. This background paper discusses
the legacy of 40 years of U.S. university/AID collaboration, and examines new opportunities
for U.S. university participation in development assistance.

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study, authors of contracted papers, and reviewers of draft materials. We are especially
grateful for the time and effort donated by representatives of universities, private
organizations, and Federal agencies who provided materials and information to keep OTA
informed on the ever-changing relationship between U.S. universities and AID. As with all
OTA studies, the content of the report is the sole responsibility of OTA.

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