Collaboration & Leadership in Action: Designing an Interuniversity Call for Research Proposals

Rodrigo Cevallos
Universidad Santo Tomás

Marcela Valle
Universidad San Sebastián

Society of Research Administrators International Annual Meeting | Seattle | October 17th

Outline

- Learning Objectives
- Background
- Case Study Walkthrough
- Our Experience
- Learnings & Challenges

Learning Objectives

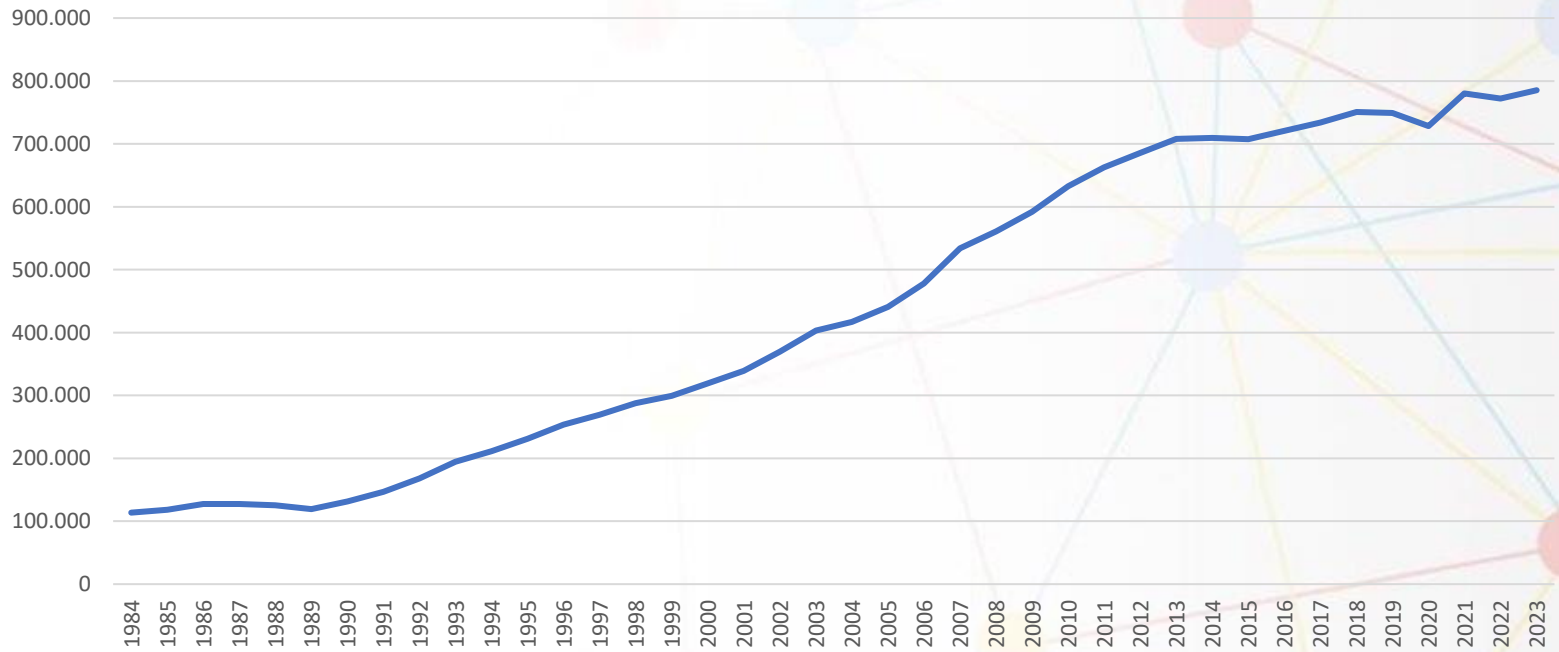
1. Identify the critical features of an inter-university call for research proposals.

2. Analyze the features of an inter-university call for research proposals to obtain the best design for their institution's interests.

Background

Background
Chilean University System

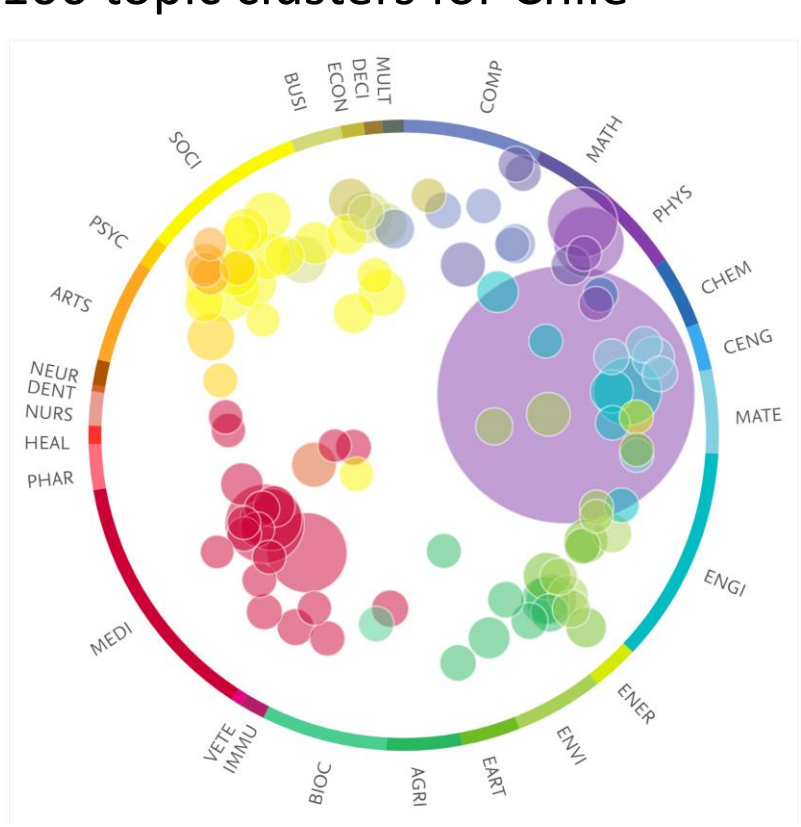
Almost 50% of the students enrolled in a university by 2023 are studying in a private university founded less than 40 years ago.



Source: Unholster + SIES MINEDUC

Background
Chilean Research System

100 topic clusters for Chile



Source: Scival

- Leading country in Latin America in terms of publications per capita
- 40% of the Earth's optical astronomical capacity
- 42% protected coastal marine areas for multiple uses
- 14 bases and refuges in Antarctica
- Structured funding system for individual and collaborative research

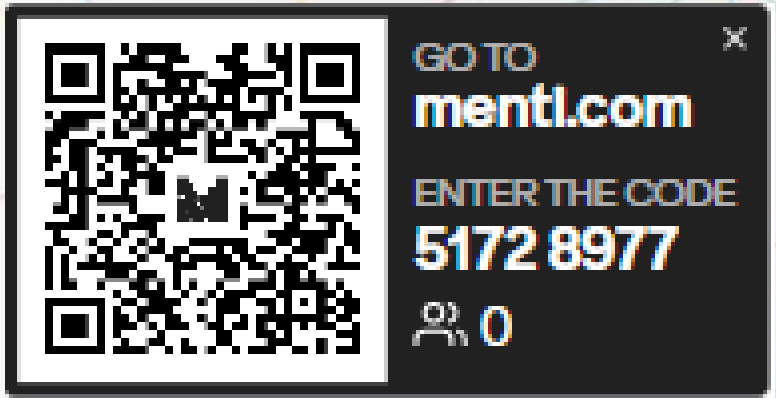
Source: El Estado de la Ciencia 2022 + Marca Chile

Case Study Walkthrough

Aim

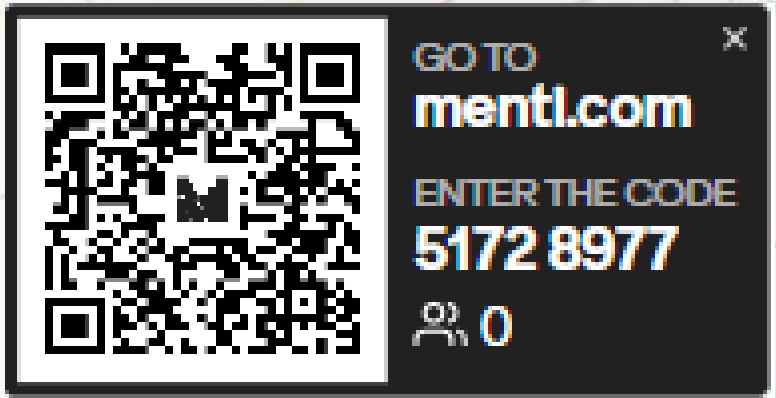
What would be the primary purpose or objective of the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (multiple choice)

1. "To promote collaborative research among universities."
2. "To address research challenges together."
3. "To share knowledge and foster innovation."
4. "To pool expertise and resources for research."
5. "To achieve impactful research outcomes."
6. "To build stronger academic partnerships."



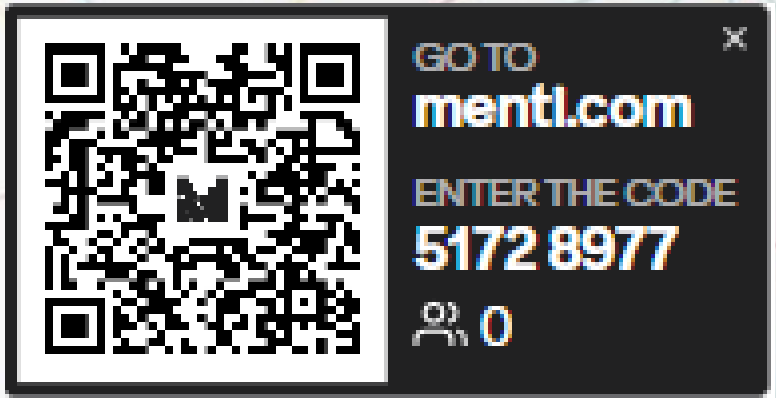
Target Audience

To what audience would you direct the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (open question)



Member Institutions

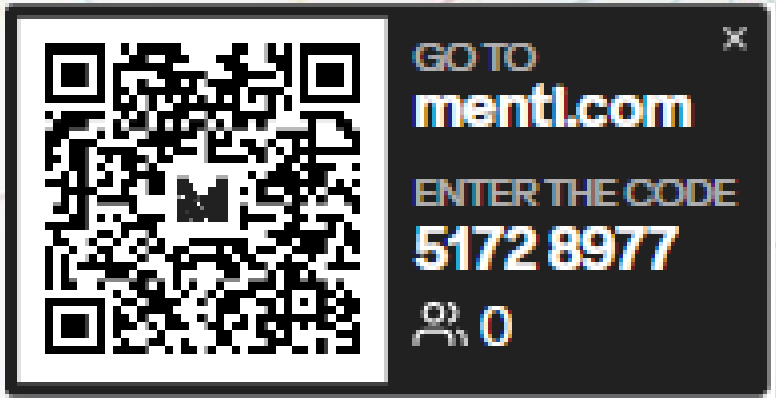
What types of institutions or organizations would you consider inviting to participate in the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (open question)



Funding

What potential sources of funding would you explore to facilitate the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (multiple choice)

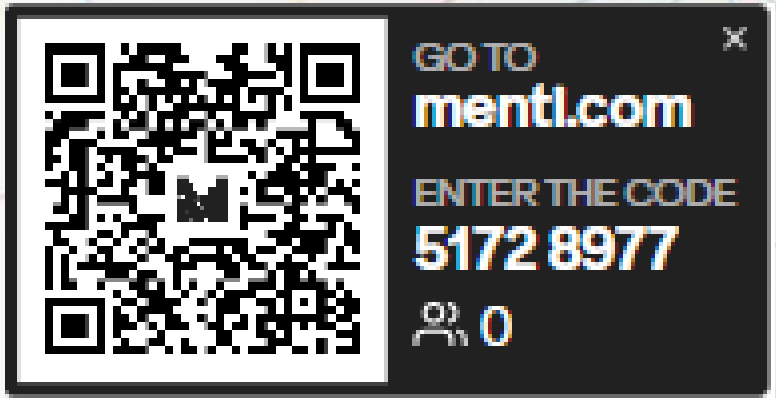
1. "Grants from government agencies."
2. "Private sector partnerships."
3. "Foundation grants and philanthropy."
4. "Academic institution contributions."
5. "International research organizations."
6. "Crowdfunding and donations."



Requisites

What specific requirements or criteria would you set for participants in the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (multiple choice)

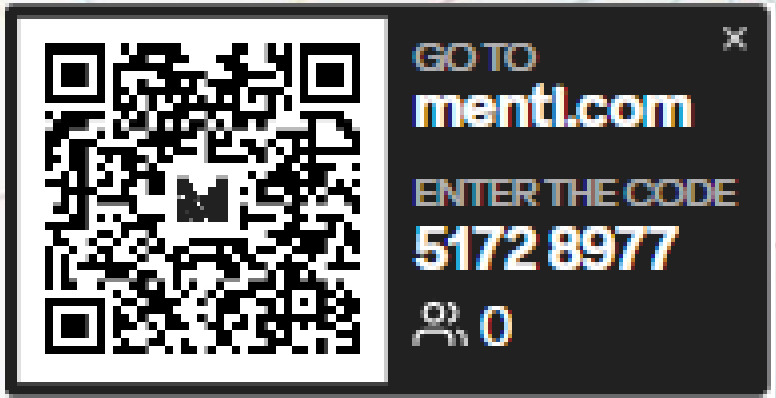
1. "Teams should span different disciplines.“
2. "Matching funds may be necessary.“
3. "Diverse team composition is important.“
4. "Researchers at any career stage can apply."



Commitments

What kind of commitments or obligations would you anticipate from the participating institutions or researchers in the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (multiple choice)

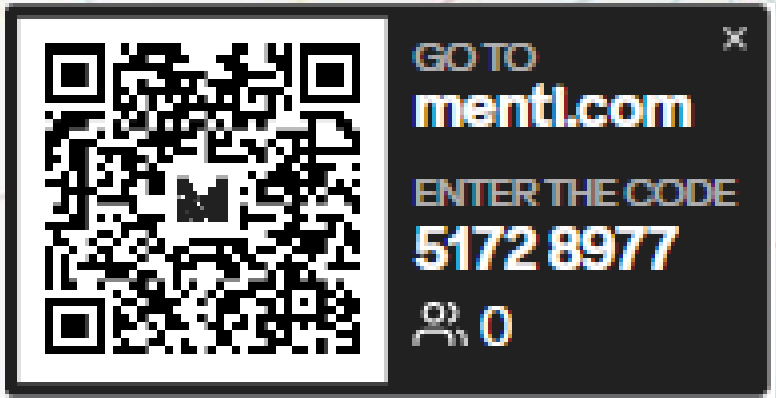
1. "Timely project progress updates."
2. "Active collaboration and teamwork."
3. "Adherence to project timelines."
4. "Sharing research findings."
5. "Regular communication with project partners."
6. "Publication of research outcomes."



Expenditures

What categories of expenses or costs would you permit to be covered through the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (multiple choice)

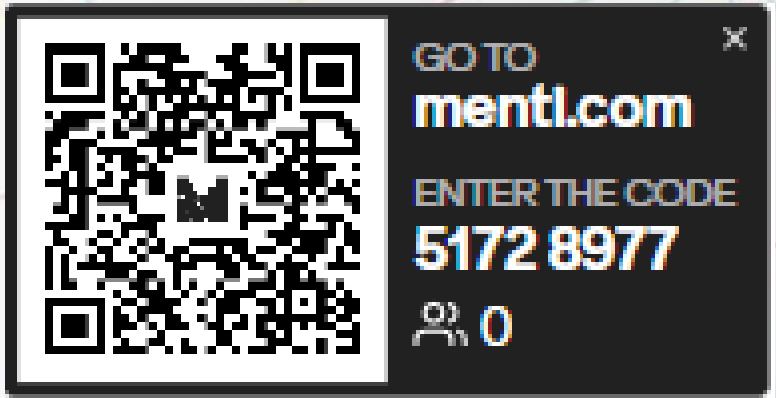
1. "Research equipment and materials."
2. "Travel and accommodation."
3. "Personnel and salaries."
4. "Data collection and analysis."
5. "Publication and dissemination."
6. "Administrative and overhead costs."



Evaluation

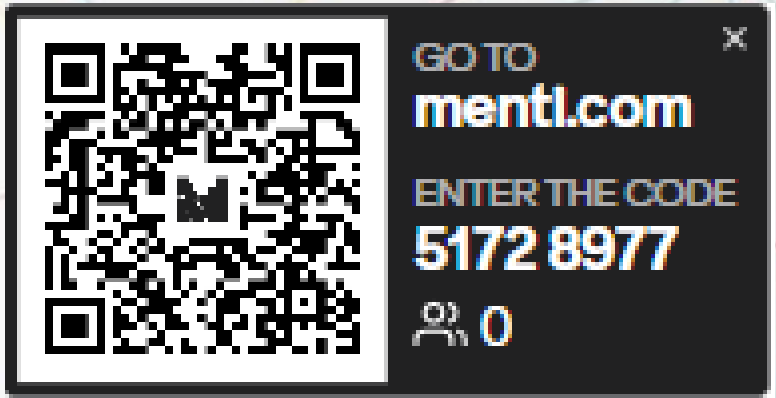
What specific aspects or criteria would you use to assess and evaluate each proposal submitted through the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (multiple choice)

1. "Research objectives and relevance."
2. "Methodology and approach."
3. "Team qualifications and expertise."
4. "Budget and resource allocation."
5. "Expected outcomes and impact."
6. "Project timeline and feasibility."



Allocation

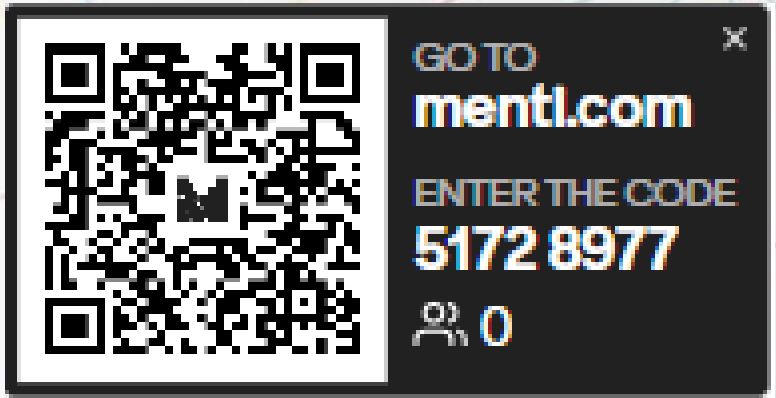
How would you define the criteria for the selection of projects within the interuniversity call for collaborative research projects? (open question)



Monitoring

What are the potential monitoring options you would consider for tracking the progress of collaborative research projects within the interuniversity initiative? (multiple choice)

1. "Regular project reports."
2. "Milestone assessments."
3. "Progress meetings."
4. "Online project management tools."
5. "Scheduled updates."
6. "Final project evaluations."



Group activity

Discuss with those around you the various characteristics you would consider for an interuniversity call and explain the rationales behind your choices (10-15 minutes).

Our Experience

Brief History

In early 2022, during the first in-person meeting post-pandemic, the General Directorates of Research (DGI) analyzed collaboration among the universities within the group and their potential areas of synergy (publications, centers, and scientific-technological equipment).

Source: UANDES 202201

Based on the diagnosis obtained, the DGIs decided to propose to their universities the possibility of launching a call for a collaborative research initiation competition. After approval, the call was launched in September 2022, receiving 49 applications, which were later evaluated, leading to a decision meeting in April 2023, where 11 proposals were awarded.

Source: USS 202304

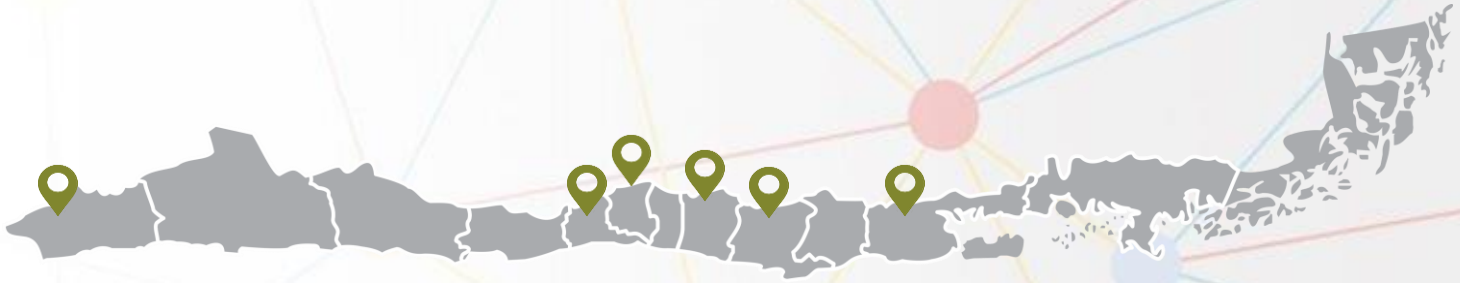
Instrument

- Seed fund aimed at collaborative research for young researchers.
- Cumulative benefits for each university's participation.
- Requires student involvement.
- Requires signing the Singapore Declaration.
- Involves dissemination and outreach efforts.
- Sets specific conditions for each university.

Source: UDD

Results

- 49 proposals with 123 participations
- 11 funded projects with 28 participations
  - 6 projects to be developed fully or partially outside the Metropolitan Region
  - 7 projects → 2 U's, 2 projects → 3 U's, 2 projects → 4 U's
  - 15 male directors and 13 female directors
  - +/- USD 150.000



Learnings & Challenges

Learnings

- Starting from a first draft (even if it has flaws) is highly preferable to starting from scratch
- There are many tasks to be done; choose some and proceed
- Joint development will take much longer - in everything - than doing it alone
- The new leadership will require a deep and systematic induction from the original leadership

> “if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together”

Challenges

- How to position the initiative beyond the original leadership
- How to maintain the interest of all participating universities and manage the renewal
- 2nd Edition was launched in September 2023

Source: USS 202309

Collaboration & Leadership in Action: Designing an Interuniversity Call for Research Proposals

Rodrigo Cevallos
Universidad Santo Tomás

Marcela Valle
Universidad San Sebastián

Society of Research Administrators International Annual Meeting | Seattle | October 17th