IU’s bicentennial strategic plan details three components of the continued expansion of IU’s international engagement:

1. Establishing gateway offices in key regions.

2. Fostering university partnerships and institutional connections in 32 countries where IU has strong established ties.

3. Cultivating stronger ties with IU alumni in those countries.

Recent delegations by senior IU officials moved each of these efforts forward. IU President Michael A. McRobbie led delegations to Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and India. Bloomington Chancellor Lauren Robel visited Brazil and Chile, and IUPUI Chancellor Charles Bantz connected with partners in China.
PARTNERSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

TURKEY

Boğaziçi University and IU expanded their existing partnership with a Mevlana agreement, a Turkish government program to provide full funding for exchanges of students and faculty both to and from Turkey.

Middle East Technical University and IU signed an institution-wide agreement making way for more partnership opportunities, especially with its College of Education and its faculty, including many IU alumni.

Ankara University and the delegation discussed their current close ties through IU’s Turkish Language Flagship Program.

TOBB University of Economics and Technology is a young university with a rising reputation and connections with 2,000 Turkish businesses and industries. The IU delegation explored collaboration in business and English language study.

Vehbi Koç Foundation Managing Director Erdal Yıldırım was awarded IU’s Thomas Hart Benton Medallion for his efforts on behalf of education, culture, and health care, core missions of one of the oldest and largest private foundations in Turkey. He earned his master’s degree in philanthropic studies from IU.

Turkish Council of Higher Education Deputy Chairman Saban Calis discussed IU’s activities in Turkey, including the Mevlana agreement and plans for a Turkey gateway office.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Minister Ali Naci Koru heard reports of IU’s long-standing commitment to Turkish Studies and the university’s hopes of extending that commitment with a gateway office and programs in contemporary Turkish culture.

“Today, increased international integration and global interconnectivity are among the major forces driving and shaping our contemporary society. Understanding and responding to these forces is of paramount concern to all of us.”

U.S. Consulate Consul General Charles Hunter was consulted by the delegation on plans for a Turkish gateway office and heard reports on IU’s partnerships and exchanges in Turkey.

President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his two daughters, both IU grads, talked and reminisced with the delegation for 90 minutes.

SAUDI ARABIA

King Saud University enlarged its partnership with IU through an institutional agreement, including plans to increase exchanges and joint research in dentistry and the exploration of possible cooperation in several areas of education and in near eastern languages and cultures.

Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University (the largest women’s university in the world) and its rector, Dr. Huda M. Saleh Al-Ameel, hosted a meeting with IU First Lady Laurie McRobbie.

Ministry of Higher Education Deputy Minister Dr. Mohammad A. Al-Ohali outlined for the IU delegation the rapid growth of higher education in Saudi Arabia and the need for international collaboration.

National Center of Assessment in Higher Education is responsible for measuring Saudi Arabia’s success in higher education. Dr. Faisal Mashary Al-Saud, president of the center, and IU Vice President for International Affairs David Zaret discussed practical ways to share expertise in educational measurement and statistical analysis.
Ministry of the Hajj and Minister Dr. Bandar Al-Hajjar are responsible for the annual visit of more than three million pilgrims each year. Dr. Bandar, an IU graduate in economics, explained efforts to coordinate Saudi Arabia’s higher education with the country’s labor needs and shared his work on Saudi Arabia’s environmental health, as represented in his book, *Energy and Environment in Saudi Arabia*.

**Olayan Finance Company** Chief Executive Officer Lubna Olayan, 86th on the *Forbes* list of the world’s most powerful women and a graduate of the IU M.B.A. program, along with other women in senior positions met with Laurie McRobbie.

*Right: King Saud University in Riyadh is exploring cooperation with IU in the areas of dentistry, education, and near eastern languages and cultures.*

*Left: Meetings at the Ministry of Higher Education focused on the growth of higher education in Saudi Arabia and the need for international cooperation.*

*Left: Dr. Bandar Al-Hajjar (right) is an IU graduate in economics. He oversees the annual Hajj that brings millions to Mecca. Talking with him is IU Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Salman Alani. Several of his former students now teach at King Saud University.*
Ambedkar University Delhi is a new city university committed to serving the needs of Delhi’s high school graduates, numbering 200,000 a year. Designed to complement institutions that specialize in technical subjects, Ambedkar’s initial focus is social engagement through social science and education. One subject of discussion was developing a short-term study abroad program with IU’s Office for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs.

The Times India CEO Ravi Dhariwal met with President McRobbie to discuss training opportunities for Times staff in IU’s new Media School and the Kelley School of Business.

Aga Khan Trust for Culture Director Ratish Nanda spoke with members of the IU delegation about the trust’s mission to revitalize communities, especially in Asia and Africa, and explored the possibility of internships for IU students.

Fundação Getúlio Vargas, a higher education institution offering degrees in economics, business administration, law, social sciences, and information technology management, signed an agreement with the IU Maurer School of Law. Representing IU were IU Bloomington Provost and
Executive Vice President Lauren Robel and Maurer Dean Austen Parrish.

**University of São Paulo** School of Economics, Business Administration, and Accounting officials met with Robel to sign a partnership agreement with the IU Kelley School of Business.

**Universidade de Brasília** officials met with the IU delegation to discuss possible institutional cooperation and exchanges.

**Academia Brasileira de Letras**, the Brazilian Academy of Letters, expressed its satisfaction to the delegation regarding its collaboration with IU. The connection, sealed by a visit of President McRobbie in 2012, has produced important interactions with the IU Cinema, the Lilly Library, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

**CHILE**

**Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile** officials talked with the IU delegation about expanding existing exchanges and cooperation through new programs in indigenous languages, economics and business, and the Media School.

“Connections happen quickly when I represent our campus abroad, and these human-to-human contacts reinforce and recognize the reach and impact of our programs around the world.”

—Provost Lauren Robel

While in Sao Paulo, IU Bloomington Provost Lauren Robel (right) met with IU students Mary Wildeman (journalism) and Julie Daugherty (Spanish and Portuguese). They, along with May Daugherty (political science), were studying at the Pontifical Catholic University.
Sun Yat-sen University officials met with a delegation led by IUPUI Chancellor Bantz to review the active partnership between the two campuses, which has seen the development of a 2+2 program in mechanical engineering, and the exchange of numerous faculty, students, administrators, and staff over the past seven years.

Confucius Institute’s President’s Forum heard from Chancellor Bantz on the activities of the Confucius Institute in Indianapolis.

ALUMNI

IU’s Gateway Offices abroad will assist with the third part of IU’s bicentennial strategic international mission—to reconnect with the university’s alumni around the world. Alumni are IU’s cultural ambassadors abroad; they assist with recruiting top students, with internships and study abroad opportunities for students, and with faculty engaging in research abroad. And many have made important contributions in government, business, and the cultural life of their country. The delegation took part in receptions for IU alumni in Ankara, Istanbul, and Riyadh.

Sami Baroum, alumnus of the Kelley School, was awarded the Thomas Hart Benton Medallion in Riyadh. One of the Middle East’s leading business executives, Baroum completed his Ph.D. in business at IU Bloomington in 1992. He is chair of the Madinah Institute for Leadership and Entrepreneurship, committed to executive education in the Middle East.

When I stepped out of the Riyadh airport into the hot, dry desert sun, I knew immediately that no amount of appropriate attire could disguise my Western looks.

Standing there in my abaya and matching hijab, I felt a sudden and unexpected sense of kinship with the women around me. This was their culture and how they lived, and I was about to learn a lot about the complexity, richness, and dynamism of their lives, and about how the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is changing.

I learned that wearing an abaya—the ankle length, long-sleeved, high-necked garment that is customarily all or mostly black—is the basic requirement, stemming more from cultural traditions than the practice of Islam itself. As a non-Muslim woman, it was not strictly necessary for me to wear the hijab (headscarf) at all times, but it was also clear that doing so would be seen as a sign of respect.

Lubna Olayan welcomed us in her office at the Olayan Foundation, shaking my hand warmly and introducing us to her colleagues. She was the only Saudi woman I met who wore a simple pantsuit and no head covering in the company of men. An extraordinary businesswomen and innovative philanthropist, Lubna has charted her own path forward. After completing her M.B.A. from the Kelley School of Business in 1979, Lubna became CEO of Olayan Financing Company and
“I discovered that much like in the U.S., philanthropy and volunteerism are becoming pathways into public life for Saudi women.”

a principal of The Olayan Group, founded by her father, Suliman S. Olayan, in 1947.

Like many successful businesspeople all over the world, and particularly in Saudi Arabia, Lubna is increasingly turning her attention to philanthropy. The Olayan Foundation has made a gift to IU to support scholarships, and Lubna herself has devoted time to a number of charities in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. Currently, her interests are focused on Al Fanar, a venture philanthropy organization working exclusively in the Arab world, and Blue Rose Compass, which supports young refugees by preparing them for and securing college scholarships in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

Dania Almaeena came to our hotel on Monday afternoon to share her story. She is the co-founder, along with her sister, of the Jeddah United Sports Company, which focuses on increasing opportunities for women to play team sports. Dania loves basketball, and even with a job in the Ministry of Labor and two young children, she plays whenever she can. When she moved to Riyadh from Jeddah, she started Riyadh United, where women and girls can play basketball, volleyball, and soccer.

As our conversation ranged across her work interests, her passions for social improvement and her commitment to her children, I could have been talking to any other early career woman faced with work-life balance issues and navigating societal expectations. I discovered that much like in the U.S., philanthropy and volunteerism are becoming pathways into public life for Saudi women. Although a generation apart, both Lubna and Dania are examples of how norms may be changing.

Our visit to Princess Nora University on Tuesday morning was one of the absolute highlights of our time in Riyadh. At a capacity of 60,000, it is the largest women’s university in the world, and easily one of the most beautiful educational facilities I’ve ever seen. Covering eight million square meters (about three square miles), it includes 600 high-tech buildings; a medical school and 300-bed hospital; a state-of-the-art library; a mosque, dormitories, and recreational facilities; housing for faculty and their families and pre-K, primary, and secondary schools for faculty children; and a monorail to get people around.

Two other accomplished Saudi women, Maha Alenzy (IU ’04 B.S. in biology and ’06 M.S. in language education) and Nora Aladwani, an education faculty member at King Saud University, hosted dinners for our women’s delegation. The dinners were both wonderful examples of Saudi hospitality and very welcome immersions in women’s culture in Riyadh.

The alumnae present were eager for a chance to reconnect with IU, and all guests wanted to understand more about American higher education and my own role. We discussed a wide range of topics, including the issue of whether women should drive. At least for some in this group of women, the question had logistical, as well as political significance, although they recognized the importance of having the choice. As one of Dr. Maha’s colleagues put it, “Who would want to drive in Riyadh? The traffic is terrible!”

I had speculated that I might find a very different reality “beneath the veil,” and indeed, I had. In the U.S., we are still working toward a more equitable society where merit matters more than gender, and I found that regardless of where Saudi Arabia is today, we have much in common and much to learn from them as they forge a new way forward.