Dear Sir / Madam

We are pleased to contact you in relation to a new initiative in the field of anti-corruption studies. The Anti-Corruption Academic Initiative (ACAD) is an academic project led by a group of anti-corruption experts, coordinated by Northeastern University and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and supported by a wide range of other academic and international institutions including the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Bar Association.

The twin aims of the initiative are to promote the inclusion of anti-corruption and integrity issues in educational curricula and to provide practical support for those who wish to draw on it. To achieve those aims, the initiative is developing a comprehensive set of academic anti-corruption tools including a menu of anti-corruption topics which teachers can integrate into their syllabi, examples of anti-corruption courses and modules as well as materials such as bibliographies, case studies and case-law. These resources will be made available free of charge to the academic community so as to support teachers in developing and introducing anti-corruption courses in their own college, school or department in all academic disciplines, with a particular focus on law, business, international relations and social sciences.

We attach a document below providing a summary of the ACAD initiative and the progress that has been made in its development to date. Having developed a draft outline laying out the possible substantive scope of the project (attached), we are now seeking the views of potential users of this resource before proceeding to the full production of academic materials. To that end, we would be extremely grateful if you could take the time to consider the project outline and use the questionnaire attached to provide us your views on the potential utility and relevance of this initiative to your work.

Furthermore, should you be interested in collaborating with the ACAD expert group in relation to the production of academic materials as part of this initiative, we would welcome your suggestions as to how you would like to contribute.

Please send your completed questionnaire to n.passas@neu.edu by 30 March 2012.

Yours sincerely,

Nikos Passas (Northeastern University) and Dimitri Vlassis (UNODC)

On behalf of the ACAD expert group
The Anti-Corruption Academic Initiative (ACAD): An Overview

ACAD is a collaborative academic project which aims to produce a comprehensive anti-corruption academic support tool composed of a menu of academic modules, syllabi, case studies, educational tools and reference materials that may be integrated by universities and other academic institutions into their existing academic programmes.

In doing so, ACAD seeks to encourage the teaching of anti-corruption issues as part of courses such as law, business, criminology and political science and thereby address the present lack of inter-disciplinary anti-corruption educational materials suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

ACAD was launched in Boston in May 2011 and is led by an expert group comprising a wide range of academics, governmental experts and officials from international organisations. Northeastern University and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) along with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Bar Association (IBA) are supporting this project.

Each anti-corruption course topic produced as part of the ACAD initiative will be accompanied by a detailed bibliography of suggested readings, and, at a later stage, a teacher’s manual to aid faculty members in using the material in the classroom. This material is intended to be multilingual and compatible with and adaptable to a variety of legal systems (common law/civil law/Islamic law), education models and traditions, also duly taking into account the needs of educational institutions in developing countries.

ACAD is designed as an open source tool and the material will be offered online, free of charge, to interested educational institutions, who will also be encouraged to contribute to and further develop the content. ACAD does not intend to create a wholesale, rigid curriculum but rather seeks to provide a menu of thematic topics which academic institutions may choose from and, with the support of the ACAD group, integrate into their existing academic programmes.

Substantively, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, as well as other relevant international and regional instruments, will serve as a point of reference for the initiative, alongside national legislation and other applicable regulations and standards.

ACAD: The Curriculum Outline and consultation

As a first step in the process of creating the intended Menu of Anti-Corruption Topics, the ACAD expert group has produced a draft outline, detailing the substantive breadth of the materials that may be produced as part of the ACAD initiative. The outline of this thematic menu covers a broad range of topics and includes units addressing the issue of corruption from a legal, social science, international relations and business administration perspective.

A copy of this thematic menu produced by the ACAD expert group is attached for your information.

The ACAD expert group is now seeking the views of selected academic institutions, including universities, business schools and other higher learning bodies, with a view to refining the outline and ensuring that all possible topics of interest are included, before proceeding to the development of substantive tools and materials.