



AIEA PROVOST PERSPECTIVES

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Preparing Undergraduates for Careers in the 21st Century

Mark L. Greenberg • *Drexel University*

Provost and Senior Vice Provost





PROVOST PERSPECTIVES

Name: Mark L. Greenberg

Title: Provost and Senior Vice Provost, Drexel University

Time served as Provost: Six years (as of July 2014), retiring from the position as Provost and Senior Vice President, September 1, 2014.

Drexel University is a private institution that was founded in 1891 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With more than 23,500 students, Drexel is an academically comprehensive, globally engaged urban research university, dedicated to advancing knowledge and society and providing every student with a valuable, rigorous, experiential, technology-infused education, enriched by the nation's premier co-operative education program.

Mark L. Greenberg earned his bachelor's degree in English from Queens College of the City University of New York and his master's and doctoral degrees in English Language and Literature from The University of Michigan. At Drexel, Greenberg served as Professor of English, Dean of undergraduate education, and Founding Dean of the Pennoni Honors College. He also served as interim Dean of the School of Education, supervisor of the Drexel-School District of Philadelphia Partnership, and as director of graduate studies in the English Department. He assumed the position of Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2008. Greenberg has published three books and more than 30 articles or chapters in books and delivered more than 80 invited presentations and keynote addresses on 18th and 19th century British literature, literature and technology, and literature and science.

Greenberg was a Trustee and Vice President of the Board of Trustees at Germantown Academy, where he also chaired the Trustees' Education Committee. He serves as a Trustee of the Wistar Institute and of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University and on the Ambassadors Board of the Science Leadership Academy (a Philadelphia magnet high school) and has served on the Board of Directors of the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust.

Note: Julie Mostov, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives and Drexel University's Senior International Officer, interviewed Provost Greenberg for this piece.



Given all of the demands and constraints facing higher education today, why did your institution decide to internationalize?

This was an easy decision for us. We are focused on making sure that our undergraduate students are prepared for successful careers after graduation; careers in the 21st century are global. Even if our students do not choose careers in international finance or global engineering, they will need to understand the contemporary global climate and be able to navigate markets, industries, trends, and challenges that are highly affected by international factors. It follows that we would see cross-cultural understanding as an essential student learning priority and embrace internationalizing experiences that facilitate and encourage global competency in a Drexel education. We are also a research university; research is global. In order for our faculty to build competitive research portfolios and publication records and our students to gain the foundations they will need to conduct scientific exploration, it is natural that we would promote international research opportunities, targeting and building upon existing faculty and alumni partnerships, leveraging, creating, and enhancing international initiatives that are strategic and effective.

Has the role or importance of internationalization at your institution changed over the past five years? If so, how?

The role of internationalization has become increasingly important as a result of our faculty engagement and research partnerships, as well as the thoughtful and strategic leadership of our Senior International Officer, our Director of Study Abroad and our Deans. Over the next five years, we will create additional sites of engagement driven by faculty, student, and alumni connections. Our internationalization strategies will continue to be based on our partnership model, stressing mutually beneficial collaboration with specific partner universities, other institutions of higher learning, government, and industry. We expect that these sustainable partnerships will become increasingly stronger and impactful and involve multiple departments and colleges, as well as multi-level activities from virtual global classrooms and faculty-led travel integrated courses to research workshops and collaborations on major grants.

What were some of the main challenges you and your institution faced in pursuing internationalization? What are some of assets you and your institution drew on for this work?

Challenges: Great ideas, talented faculty, teachers and researchers are constrained by resources. The outcomes of our first research platform with Hebrew University were limited by the available funds for transnational research projects. In a survey of outcomes, faculty investigators were



enthusiastic about the intellectual and scientific benefits of their collaborative research, but all responded to our survey that the project funds were too little to lead to greater and more sustainable outcomes. We have worked to solve this constraint by bringing in another partner, the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and jointly seeking philanthropic sponsors.

Drexel’s calendar presents another significant constraint – few schools use our quarter system, which together with the co-op program¹ means that Drexel students have only one summer vacation after freshman year and only short breaks in between quarters. We have overcome these calendar constraints by working creatively with our international partners, being entrepreneurial, innovative, and flexible. For example, we have turned our short breaks into opportunities for travel-integrated courses with short trips before or after the term or standalone intensive “break-ins” during the intersessions. In addition to these international experiences, we have developed a successful program of global classrooms through which faculty include students and colleagues from our partner institutions in their classrooms virtually, providing our students with virtual opportunities for problem-solving and collaboration with students from other parts of the world. And, we have been leveraging the international features of Philadelphia to help build a vibrant global culture in West Philadelphia.

What is an example of an internationalization effort on your campus that was not completely successful? Why was that the case, and what did your institution learn from it?

We had students in Egypt during the Arab Spring, and a few of them were caught up in the protests and arrested. While they were released and sent home relatively quickly, this was a potentially very dangerous and risky situation. Stemming from this, we developed a number of new policies on safety measures, contingencies plans, and comprehensive emergency planning. We have a more robust safety committee and a special travel warning committee that reviews all proposed programs in countries with travel warnings. Another example was our attempt to create credit-bearing summer abroad programs for rising sophomores, as a way of increasing opportunities during students’ one free summer. When we could not get the costs low enough to be competitive or accessible to students, we focused on the travel integrated classes or “break-ins” described above with great success.

¹ Drexel’s co-op program is unique in including three six-month work experiences within a 5-year curriculum. After the freshman year, students are either in class or on co-op. As part of our internationalization strategy, we are working with alumni, funders, and employers to create and support co-op positions abroad.



Conversely, please discuss an example of an initiative that did work, and why.

One of our successful initiatives was to create a joint research center at the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute (SARI) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). We worked with one of our alumni, the President of the Shanghai branch of CAS, and SARI colleagues to establish a joint Drexel-SARI Center, where we could build collaborative research projects with researchers from our respective institutions. We have developed a number of cooperative projects there, producing joint publications and creating opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student engagement, external funding, and international conferences and workshops. We have also invited alumni and friends to gather at the joint Center. Shanghai Technical University, Shanghai's newest research university, also under the auspices of the CAS, is being built right next door. We expect that this will increase the level of collaboration emerging from the Center. The joint Center has provided an excellent model for us in building initiatives based on complementary strengths and human resources.

Who are the most important stakeholders you work with regarding internationalization at your institution?

Our most important stakeholders are the students, deans, faculty, alumni, and our leadership in the Office of International Programs. The latter includes our SIO (Vice Provost for Global Initiatives), our Assistant Vice Provost for Study Abroad, and their staff. Our SIO also works closely with our Vice Provost for Research in initiating and sustaining our global research strategy and programs. We have an active Council of International Programs composed of representatives from each college or school and related offices, such as the English Language Center, the Steinbright Career and Development Center (for international co-ops), the International Student and Scholars Services office, and the international recruitment and admissions team. This Council helps to enhance the visibility and inclusivity of internationalization efforts. Alumni have been particularly important in developing international co-op positions.

What are some of the key ways in which senior international officers can help individuals in your role advance internationalization at their institutions?

SIOs can help Provosts advance internationalization by imaginatively developing programs and opportunities for engaging faculty and students; promoting international research partnerships based on a deep understanding of the institutional interests, strengths, and opportunities of the university and its partners; and by keeping abreast of trends and forging innovative pathways for implementing internationalization strategies. A key benefit that the SIO can



provide is as a nexus of relationships, knowledge, opportunities, and those seeking opportunities. This drives great programs.

Is there anything else you would like to share with senior international officers or fellow chief academic officers?

The Institution can realize multiple benefits by selecting able people to lead internationalization efforts. Capable leaders are critically important: if you create the right environment, you can facilitate the global engagement of faculty and open up exciting research opportunities for both faculty and students. With creative leadership, students are going to want to take advantage of opportunities to study and/or work abroad. It's about relationship-building across the university and with appropriate, strategic partners in the community and abroad.



The **Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA)**, a membership organization formed in November 1982, is composed of institutional leaders engaged in advancing the international dimensions of higher education. The purposes of the Association are to:

- Provide an effective voice on significant issues within international education at all levels,
- Improve and promote international education programming and administration within institutions of higher education,
- Establish and maintain a professional network among international education institutional leaders,
- Cooperate in appropriate ways with other national and international groups having similar interests.

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