AIEA Leaders in International Higher Education

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State engagement in higher education internationalization efforts: What should international officers know?

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INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the world, the internationalization of higher education is increasingly influenced by government policies and initiatives. The fact that national governments engage in the internationalization of higher education is likely not a surprise to many readers. The United States created the Fulbright exchange program nearly 70 years ago. Government sponsored entities like Germany's DAAD and the United Kingdom's British Council provide support for and intelligence about international activities of colleges and universities. More recently, many developing nations have begun to authorize government support of internationalization activities ranging from Brazil's Science without Borders program, providing scholarships for 100,000 Brazilian students to study in a foreign country, to the Qatar Foundation's efforts to bring western educational experiences to Qatari citizens by importing campuses from the US and UK.

While there has been some effort to track national government engagement in this area, there has been little attention paid to what is occurring at the level of sub-national governments, like states.

This brief is intended to be a primer on the broad areas in which state governments influence international higher education.[i] The issue of how and when SIOs can engage in international higher education policy is particularly complicated in federalist nations like the United States with multiple dimensions of government actors: federal, state, and public higher education systems, to name a few. The focus is on the United States, though similar trends are emerging around the world. For SIOs at institutions within the United States, it is important to understand the ways in which the state and federal governments interact with internationalization activities. Readers outside of the United States should be able to extrapolate themes to their own contexts as well as gain a better understanding for how government interests bolster or hinder their engagements with the US.?

HOW STATES SUPPORT HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION:
A FOUR-PILLAR APPROACH

In a recent report, *States Go Global*, we suggest that the limited but increasing state government involvement in the international programming of colleges and universities is frequently tied to the state's commitment to stimulating economic development.[ii] Using national survey data, review of the grey literature, and state-level case studies of Maine, New York, Oregon, and Texas, we identify four distinct approaches used by states to advance international higher education engagements: 1) developing an international higher education policy agenda, 2) strategic planning and goal setting, 3) international exchanges and study abroad, and 4) collaborative and innovative research programs.

Pillar 1: Developing an International Higher Education Policy Agenda

This first pillar of action takes advantage of a fundamental characteristic of state level governance: the ability to shape and advance important current issues, bringing them to the foreground of public discussion. Tools include passing legislative resolutions, gubernatorial proclamations, and establishing state-wide international education consortia. For example, as of 2011, 23 states adopted a resolution supporting international higher education. In addition, 25 states are using a key organizational model, the Study State model, which pools government and institutional resources to promote their state as an educational destination to foreign students. (This program is discussed in more detail below).

Pillar 2: Strategic Planning and Goal Setting

State level strategic or master plans for higher education have begun to include international dimensions. In our survey of state-level officials, of the 25 respondents, seven affirmed that the state's higher education strategic plan included an international education component.[iii] In a similar study of the strategic plans of 38 state systems of higher education, 12 included a substantive reference to internationalization activities.[iv] While not yet a predominate trend, inclusion of higher education internationalization in state-level planning processes appears to be occurring and possibly increasing.

Pillar 3: International Exchanges and Study Abroad

States coordinate exchange and study abroad programs in several ways. A common approach is for state systems to form partnerships with individual institutions or governments abroad. For example, Chile and the University of California (UC) system signed an agreement to establish the Chile-California Program on Human Capital Development.[v] This program, which builds on a decades-old relationship between Chile and the state of California, provides Chilean students with the opportunity to attend masters and doctoral programs at any of the campuses within the UC system. The students' education is paid for by the Chilean Bicentennial Fund for Human Capital Development. The joint agreement also provides a framework for joint research projects between Chilean and UC scholars. Our research suggests a positive relationship between the number of state-level higher education internationalization efforts and the number of foreign students in their state and the number of domestic students studying abroad.

Pillar 4: Collaborative and Innovative Research Programs

Some states have created programs, such as Global Washington and the Global Michigan Initiative, that foster research and innovation by recruiting high-skilled immigrants, connecting researchers and companies with international networks, and harnessing university assets to help build relationships with developing nations. In addition to promoting domestic business growth, global initiatives emphasize international cooperation and cross-border partnerships to address economic, health, and environmental issues at home and abroad.

PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHT:
THE STUDY STATE MODEL

Our research suggests that a primary impetus for those states that support international higher education is the linkage between it and the state's economic competitiveness. An example of a program that merges these two important policy agendas is the "Study State" initiative. The "Study State" model was developed by the United States Commercial Service (USCS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. USCS estimates education and training to be the fifth-largest services export in the United States, bringing over $22 billion in annual revenue. As of 2013, there were 25 states operating such programs.

The purpose of these initiatives is to pool resources of multiple entities to brand the education sector in each state and market to students outside of the state, with an emphasis on attracting and recruiting international students. Some programs work to facilitate campus and faculty collaboration as well as to capitalize on opportunities made available by state and federal governments. Most Study State programs are membership based, where the members are dues-paying higher education institutions. They often involve both the public and private sectors, including colleges, universities, and other educational training facilities. To date, most Study State initiatives engage with four-year colleges and universities, although there is a growing number that include community colleges and high schools. This development reflects a growing trend in the internationalization of community colleges as well as growth strategies for high schools in very rural districts that are looking to offset declining enrollments by recruiting high school students from other countries.

WAYS FORWARD

Moving forward, states will only become more internationally engaged as their economic success is more and more tied to economic realities outside their borders and those of the United States. To this end, some states are likely to recognize that assets exist within higher education to bolster their international efforts, and there will be increasing questions about what higher education institutions can do to support states in these areas—similar to questions being posed about how colleges and universities can act as economic drivers in the domestic context. With this future in mind, higher education leaders would be well served to begin to consider such engagements so as to guide these coming discussions rather than allow them to be driven by their state leadership. Some questions to consider are:

- Has my state approved a resolution in support of international education?
- Has my state incorporated international dimensions in its higher education strategic plan? How can I be involved in that process?
- Is there a state sponsored student exchange or study abroad relationship with another country that my campus can benefit from?
- Has my state developed a network of excellence and innovation in global research?

[i] This AIEA Issue Brief is based on recently published research. To see the full report, *States Go Global*, please visit the Rockefeller Institute of Government at www.rockinst.org/pdf/education/2014-05-28-States_Go_Global.pdf

[ii] See also J. E. Lane and T. L. Owens, "The International Dimensions of Higher Education's Contributions to Economic Development," in *Universities and Colleges as Economic Drivers: Measuring and Building Success*, ed. J. E. Lane and D. B. Johnstone (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 205-238.

[iiiiii] J. E. Lane, T. L. Owens and P. Ziegler (2014). *States go global: State government engagement in higher education internationalization*. Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute of Government.

[iv] J. E. Lane, "The Systemness of Internationalization Strategies: How Higher Education Systems Are Aiding Institutions with Globalization," in *Higher Education Systems 3.0: Harnessing Systems, Delivering Performance*, ed. J. E. Lane and D. B. Johnstone (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), 261-282

[v] U.S. Department of State, *Chile-California: A Partnership for the Twenty-First Century*, 2014, http://tinyurl.com/luy9lax.

AIEA
Leaders in International Higher Education

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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