



Leaders in International Higher Education

2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Why the Internationalization of
Higher Education Still Matters

The Role of SIOs in Navigating the Uncertain Waters of Student Visa and Immigration Regulations

Presenters:

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Chair:

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Discussion Outline & Topics

- Challenging the Status Quo
- Strategic planning and thought leadership
- Understanding and supporting the work of Designated School Officials (DSOs)
 - Navigating complex regulations
 - Taking on institutional risks
 - Balancing institution/governmental/student needs
 - Rethinking International Student Programs and Services
- Budget and resource allocations

Challenging the Status Quo – Continuously evaluate and re-evaluate:

Organizational structure

- PDSO role & position
- Protect DSOs from “mission creep”
- Elevate department visibility

Regulatory compliance

- Ongoing review of existing policies
- Alignment of institutional policies with federal regulations and current guidance

Process review

- Leverage technology/build technological capacity
- Avoid duplication/redundancy
- Communicate changes

Resource allocation

- Appropriate staffing/cross-training
- Professional development
- Fees for services

Strategic planning and thought leadership

- Consider building visa and regulatory aspects into the strategic plan and goals/outcomes
- Assess and strengthen internal processes to provide systematic and timely communications and immigration advising support to international students and scholars.
- Build related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Align and increase collaborations with appropriate units, in some cases formalize collaborations
- Leverage immigration and visa expertise to be a “thought leader” at your institution
- Advocate for international students and scholars
- Communicate strategically with administration, faculty, staff, and students

Navigating Complex Regulations &

Institutional Risk

Ensure your P/D SOs have access to the latest developments

- Set up RSS feed for the NAFSA Adviser's Manual Home Page
- Share listserv information from AIEA, Presidents' Alliance, ACE, NAFSA ISTA

Build in time to discuss how these developments translate into institutional policies

- Example: late arrival on-campus for classes
- Example: Create a plan for student compliance with vaccine requirements:

Form I-17 Updates

- Reporting educational plans for hybrid and in-person instruction
- Facilitating in-person instruction in a remote environment

International Recruitment Considerations

- Reimagining when, where, and how

Academic Program Delivery

- Restructuring programs to facilitate eligibility for benefits such as CPT, OPT
- Example: Two summer sessions = two semesters of study

Balancing Institution/Governmental/Student Needs

- **Leveraging new guidance/regulations to build in flexibility and efficiency**
 - Digitally signed and electronically delivered
- **Flexibility and adaptability in responding to student needs**
 - Cancelled flights, quarantines, leaves of absence, etc.
 - Allowing students to take online classes, extended deadlines for class enrollment
 - Offering immunizations and vaccinations
 - Developing policies with the student health center to ensure international populations are able to attend school
- **Advocating for reasonable regulations**
 - Continued electronic I-20s

Pivoting Advising and Programming Models

Advising Pivots

- Virtual advising and walk-in sessions absolutely work!!
- Virtual advising allows for greater accessibility to students, regardless of their location
 - Effective for pre-orientation and orientation
 - Increased ability to connect with students in their home countries or those working from other locations within the US
- Track details of students in advisement to improve delivery

Programming Pivots

- In-person workshop vs. webinar delivery
 - Synchronous and Asynchronous
 - Recordings and closed captioned sessions
- Creative engagement:
 - Ice-cream socials? Try ice-cream trucks
 - Incorporate shopping trips, sporting events, local attractions
 - Explore holiday celebrations

Budget considerations and resource allocation

- **Expanding possibility for remote study from abroad**
- **Diverting programming budget to support flexible workspace environments**
- **Rethinking needed technology**
 - Laptops with docking stations and added screens
 - Gmass for personalized mass emails from advising teams
 - Slack for improved communication in remote and hybrid environments
- **Analyze and appropriately fund staffing for your P/DSO units**

Questions & Answers