



AIEA SERIES: FIVE THINGS AN SIO SHOULD KNOW ABOUT...

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What SIOs Should Know about English Language Programs: Intensive, Pathway, and Support Courses

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Campus English language programs (ELPs) have an intrinsic value to HEIS as illustrated by the student support they offer, aiding wider recruitment efforts, and contributing to internationalization and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts—all beyond the revenue they may generate. English language program enrollments fluctuate more drastically than degree-seeking student enrollments given that the time commitment is shorter and decisions are more immediately affected (both positively and negatively) by geopolitical and economic changes, so an understanding of the various ways an ELP can contribute to overall higher education internationalization efforts is as significant as it is complex. Below is a number of key contributions ELPs offer.

1. Recruitment and outreach efforts positively affect the university as a whole and the local community.

- Recruitment efforts for ELPs represent the university as a whole.
 - Recruitment trips complement the university recruitment efforts at no cost to the university when facilitated by a self-sustaining intensive English program.
 - ELP faculty and staff often assist with EducationUSA informational webinars, Facebook Live events, etc., which create positive brand awareness for the entire university.
- ELPs develop customized programming for students at the undergraduate or graduate level, which can lead to additional degree-seeking students.
- Outreach efforts by ELPs expand social media and other digital marketing efforts, which also further positive brand awareness.
- ELPs support the communities where the institution is located given that in some “college towns,” the campus ELP is the only adult ESL resource.
- ELPs actively support local businesses by providing support courses and cultural training.

2. Student support and compliance efforts that impact the entire university.

- ELPs provide support to international students via pathways or enhanced tutoring or support classes for degree students. This support leads to higher rates of retention for degree-seeking international students.





- ELPs collaborate with and provide resources to the university's international office to support all international students on campus.
- ELPs provide testing and requisite classes to International Teaching Assistants so the institution can comply with state-wide English proficiency mandates for ITAs and support undergraduates in the classroom with stronger teachers.
- ELPs serve as a support unit at institutions, similar to a writing center or teaching excellence center, providing tutoring, English language support, and expertise for faculty and staff who work with international students.

3. Strategic alliances to enhance internationalization efforts across the university

- ELPs collaborate with and, at times, advise departments, colleges, and other units across campus in their international outreach.
- ELPs advise university admissions officers who may be considering working with agents on best practices. At many universities only the IEP works with agents, so it is frequently a valuable source for new international students in general.
- ELPs advise university undergraduate and graduate admissions on English proficiency tests, scores, and country or educational exemptions.
- ELPs connect departments with international partners. ELPs nurture relationships with international partners through custom and short-term programming and visits on recruitment trips. Through these partnerships, ELPs can connect departments with partners for deeper collaboration outside the ELP.
- ELPs support the university's Athletics programs, providing language assistance to student-athletes, which in turn helps with student success and retention.





4. Committees, task forces, strategic planning on campus should include ELP leadership

- ELPs contribute to the institution’s DEI efforts and should be included in related discussions. ELP leadership serves as a voice for inclusive teaching practices at the university.
- Campus-wide committees that have a bearing on international students and admissions should include ELP leadership. Conversations about the admissions process, accepted standardized test scores, and services that can support prospective and admitted non-native speakers of English are essential to admissions strategy.
- Since many ELPs are self-sustaining and recruit international students, discussions about housing capacity should include ELP leadership.

5. Entrepreneurial aspect of ELPs that are self-funded

- Flexibility is important to their success.
- ELPs have a level of autonomy on campus that allows for creative programming and thinking to increase enrollments.
- ELPs must be prepared for fluctuating enrollments and should have several ways to fund its salaries and expenses.
- Those ELPs are frequently the most creative and provide excellent pathway opportunities, hence “easing” new international students into the U.S. campus culture and contributing to international student retention.

Resources

- EnglishUSA
- NAFSA Economic Impact Data for IEPs
- Open Doors IEP Survey
- Coming Soon: Bonard/EnglishUSA Industry Data

