

AIEA Summary of presentation
Monday, February 22, 2016

**“Pathway Programs: What Should University Leaders Know?”
Gretchen M. Bataille (Navitas) and Michele Hawkins (Florida Atlantic University)**

Nearly fifty colleagues joined Michele Hawkins and Gretchen Bataille for a discussion of pathway programs. After a brief introduction defining the variety of pathway programs and a focus on the creation of the pathway program at Florida Atlantic University, audience members eagerly asked questions that led to a broader understanding of the model and the results. (Sample questions attached.)

It became clear that in the increasingly competitive environment for recruiting international students, many universities are creating their own pathway programs or turning to external partners to enhance campus efforts. The most recent Open Doors report that cites a 10% increase in international students from 2013-14 to 2014-15—that represents nearly one million international students studying at colleges and universities in the US. There is no sign that the number of international students wishing to study in the US will lessen.

Pathway programs are designed to recruit international students and provide them with a specialized first year of study designed to address English proficiency if needed, provide cultural orientation, and have students complete a year of academic coursework. Although pathway students often enter with less than the requirements needed for direct entry, by the end of the first year, these students are fully prepared to matriculate at the partner institution. Institutions can create their own pathway programs and do their own recruiting, but generally an external partner can ramp up recruitment efforts more quickly, increase the diversity of the student pool and ensure that orientation and instructional activities are instrumental in retaining students at the institution.

The program at FAU began with broad involvement of all constituents. The administrative leadership came from the provost’s office and contacts were made with other universities to ask questions and seek advice. Three major factors were considered: Reputation, faculty control of the curriculum/governance, and costs/time involvement. The FAU experience has been positive because the program combines worldwide recruitment and marketing reach with a comprehensive, supportive and local academic program that gives students the skills and experience they need to successfully progress to a degree program at FAU. Current enrollment includes students from Asia, Europe, Africa and South America and represents 36 countries. This diversity of perspectives is essential in preparing the entire student body for success in today’s global economy. An unintended finding is that the direct international admits have increased as well. The Pathway students are achieving positive academic outcomes.

Institutions considering a pathway program must weigh costs and benefits. Benefits may be financial, but most certainly there are cultural benefits for domestic students studying alongside an increasingly diverse group of international students. Although most universities are expanding study abroad, the reality is that a small fraction of students will participate in these programs. To ensure that all students have opportunities for global experiences, pathway programs provide a means to achieve that goal.



1. How do presidents and provosts demonstrate leadership for the establishment of pathway programs on their campus?
2. In what ways do pathway programs impact the internationalization of domestic students?
3. What are the expectations of international students who attend universities in English-speaking countries?
4. How well prepared are our faculty to teach students from multiple countries and cultures?
5. What role does the university's financial situation have in the decision to create a pathway program?
6. What is the role of campus-based Intensive English Language programs in preparing students for pathway programs?
7. How does the SIO integrate campus activities for mainstream international students with pathway program students?
8. How is success measured in a pathway program? For participating international students? For domestic students?
9. What are determining factors in partnering with a private company versus a university DIY approach?
10. Why offer a pathway program to attract international students?
11. How will/do faculty members accept a private entity involved in the delivery of academic programs on their campus?