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## **Listserv Summary: Housing Strategies for Growing International Student Populations**

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**September 2016**

An inquiry was made to the AIEA listserv asking for insight regarding how other institutions are able to provide housing for a fast growing international student population. The inquiry asked how other AIEA members found solutions to deal with the problem of limited housing available for first year international students planning to live on campus.

### **Summary of Responses:**

There were nine responses to this inquiry which all indicated facing similar problems. The general response was to push back the housing deadlines and allow international students to pay their deposits before they received their I20s. This means that the deposits had to be refunded if the student was not able to attend for reasons beyond the student's control (i.e. not getting a visa). Another theme of the responses was the need to communicate often within bound students and the need to collaborate closely with the residential life office.

The most comprehensive response is included below:

*A public university, comparable in size and scope to [removed], that I once worked for had very similar policies. Freshman and second year students were of the highest priority and international students (degree-seeking and non-degree seeking) came in at the bottom rung. Policy makers cited the same concerns as sometimes international students just don't show. An empty room is expensive. We approached the situation with the following strategies:*

- a. Highlighted the additional tuition revenue that international students brought in each FY.*
- b. When Housing put forward a proposal for instituting a housing reservation fee/security deposit we jumped on board quickly, advocated for it and partnered with Housing in pushing it forward. This in turn created good will.*
- c. We then proposed a pilot by which we booked, in advance, a specific number of rooms with the agreement that we, the international center, would keep them full from semester to semester. This timed out well as this was when the BSMP students were starting to come in consistently and in larger numbers.*

*This seemed to work to a degree though housing exchange students and ESL students was still very unpopular. It's a frustrating scenario as on one end of things you're pressured to bring in more and more international students....while on the other end.... knowing that you need to house them somehow and that current policies don't support what you're being pressured to do. I think it does get better over time and once Housing sees some consistency. One consistency in*

*this in both cases, front-end and back-end, decisions are being made based on finances. So it's important that that is language be included at all times and that there is stated empathy for Housing's concerns.*