



Association of International Education Administrators
Leaders in International Higher Education

Fall 2019 Presidential Message

Dr. Cheryl Matherly, AIEA President



Dear AIEA Members,

I have had the opportunity to present twice since August about the *AIEA Standards of Professional Practice for International Education Leaders and Senior International Officers*. I presented with Darla Deardorff at the annual meeting for the International Education Association of South Africa in Cape Town, and with AIEA Immediate Past President Nell Pynes and EAIE Past President Fiona Hunter at the European Association of International Education conference in Helsinki. In each of these presentations, we focused on the challenges associated with developing and implementing institutional strategy, and we introduced the Standards of Professional Practice as a necessary tool for assessing the knowledge, skills, and personal traits associated with effectively leading internationalization.

I was struck that each of these presentations generated a lively discussion among a very diverse group of attendees. It reinforced that leading internationalization in higher education institutions, regardless of the country, is increasingly complex because the higher education enterprise itself is more complex. Internationalization

includes more diverse functions – study abroad, student recruitment, partnerships, faculty and staff development – in institutions that are dealing with more complex issues- economic, demographic, and political. It also reinforced that AIEA is unique among our peer organizations because of our focus on professional development for senior international officers and those individuals charged with leading internationalization, developing tools such as the Standards and programs such as the SIO Academy.

The new strategic plan for AIEA, “Strengthening Global Leadership for Internationalization,” introduced at the 2019 Annual Conference and adopted by the Board in June, positions the association to respond to these complexities of leading internationalization with a bold mission: to “equip leaders to shape the future of higher education in a global context.” The plan builds on AIEA’s historical strengths but recognizes that the challenges that those in this field are confronting are changing, as are the people who are doing this work.

Consider some of the findings from AIEA’s most recent *SIO Profile*. Fifty-nine percent of the SIOs who responded to the survey did not hold a tenured faculty line. Sixty-seven percent were between the ages of 41 and 60, and 48% were women. The field still lacks significant racial diversity—69% were white.



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Forty-six percent of respondents had been in their positions for less than 5 years, although 39% had been in the field for over 20 years. And respondents indicated that their top knowledge needs included institutional context, international issues in higher education, and leadership.

What does this suggest? The profile of our members leading internationalization is changing as fewer are emerging from traditional faculty roles. While more of our membership are relatively new in their leadership roles, many have still come from within the field and desire very specific knowledge related to institutional leadership.

The three major pillars of the strategic plan position AIEA to effectively respond to what our members identify as their needs. It calls for AIEA to serve members with bold, distinctive programming and services, building on our long history of peer-to-peer learning but also developing new programs that are up-to-date, globally derived, and globally relevant. It challenges us to expand our international engagement—to be North American based yet actively seek to engage a globally diverse and representative group of leaders as part of our programs and leadership. And last, the plan calls for AIEA to develop and enhance strategic partnerships, leveraging expertise from diverse organizations for our mutual benefit.

Over the next several months and at the annual conference (February 16-19, 2020, Washington, DC), you can expect to learn more about the strategic plan and the exciting and timely next directions for AIEA programs, as we position the membership in the association to be essential for higher education leaders. Our goal is that AIEA will continue to prepare members to “lead their institutions and higher education more generally toward the kinds of innovative, transformational, comprehensive internationalization needed for the 21st century.”

Cheryl Matherly
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2019-2020 AIEA President