



**ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS**

AIEA Secretariat
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A MESSAGE TO AIEA MEMBERS

Dear Colleagues:

Now that we have finished our busy academic year and are starting our only slightly less busy summer term, I would like to share with you some information and thoughts about the current state of the Association of International Education Administrators.

Our annual meeting this February of 2008 celebrated AIEA's twenty-fifth anniversary as the first association dedicated to the issues that concern the leaders of internationalization in our colleges and universities. The conference provided an opportunity to look back on AIEA's achievements and forward to the current issues of globalization and what they imply for our educational missions.

The conference also marked the first anniversary of the implementation of AIEA's new strategic plan, which was approved by the membership at the 2007 annual meeting. The strategic planning effort was initiated in 2005 by the AIEA Executive Committee (EC) on the recommendation of then-President Stephen Dunnett of SUNY-Buffalo. The plan itself was developed by a task force led by Riall Nolan of Purdue. The task force provided the EC with a report in 2006. During the presidency of Uliana Gabara in 2006, procedures for implementing the report, which required changes in the AIEA constitution, were developed and approved by the EC. These were implemented in 2007 under the presidency of William Brustein. The plan therefore reflects the work of many people, including three ECs, one task force, and three presidents, over three years.

Among the many features of the strategic plan, several stand out. The membership categories were revised to allow more categories of membership, to give all members an equal vote, and to make it easier to join. The plan called for focusing AIEA resources primarily on services of direct benefit to members, such as professional development, networking, and publications. With respect to public policy, the plan called for AIEA to leverage its limited resources by collaborating with other organizations that share AIEA policy goals, such as the Coalition for International Education, the Alliance for Educational and Cultural Exchanges, the American Council on Education, and NAFSA, making use of campus-based AIEA members. The committee structure was

reorganized to consist of three standing committees to be elected by the membership and three advisory boards to be appointed by the President and chaired by EC members. The chairs of the three elected committees were to serve ex-officio with voice and vote on the EC, thus expanding the size of the EC and providing better liaison between the EC and the committees and advisory boards.

After a year it is possible to provide a preliminary assessment of how well the new plan is working, and the answer seems to be: very well indeed. Institutional memberships (of colleges and universities) have grown from 197 in 2006 to 233 as of May 2008, an increase of 18%, and organizational members (such as study-abroad providers) have increased from 25 in 2006 to 39 in May 2008, an increase of 56%. Attendance at the AIEA February 2008 conference reached 433 persons, an all time high and nearly 25% above the previous year. Liaison between the EC and the committees and boards is effective. The publication program has been restarted with a revised addition of John Heyl's book, *The Senior International Office as Change Agent*. AIEA has been well represented in Washington in the effort to collaborate with other organizations on policy goals. Collaborations with associations of international educators in other world area are multiplying, and are reflected in the continuing "dialogue" workshops co-sponsored with those associations.

This is of course, just a beginning. The Membership Committee, led by Sabine Klahr, has completely revised our recruitment materials. The Committee on Professional Development under Mitch Leventhal is working on new programs such as webinars and a fellows program. The Public Policy Board, chaired by Norm Peterson, has been active in Washington. We are optimistic that membership and conference attendance will continue to rise as we offer more services. The rise will generate more revenues and attract more sponsors, which in turn will allow us to provide even more benefits to our members.

AIEA's growth makes it an attractive partner to other associations, and we are pleased at the various positive collaborations or suggestions for collaboration that have come from groups such as the American Council on Education, the Institute for International Education, the European Association for International Education, the Asociación Mexicana para la Educación Internacional (AMPEI), the Forum on Education Abroad, and the International Education Leadership Knowledge Community of NAFSA.

Despite the growth of AIEA, we are well aware that the reward of being an AIEA member stems from the relative intimacy of AIEA in comparison with very large organizations such as NAFSA, MLA, and the disciplinary associations. Our strategic plan called for doubling the institutional membership from about 200 to about 400, which will still leave us a small and collegial organization in which it is easy to meet people, make friends, and get advice. I hope you will help us reach that goal by telling your professional colleagues about this organization that thrives on talking shop, sharing best practices, and being helpful in the common task of internationalizing our institutions. Finally, I would like to thank my predecessors, my colleagues on the EC, our Executive Director, Darla Deardorff and her assistant Suman Bhatia, and my fellow members for making it a joy to be part of AIEA.

Gil Merkx
President, AIEA
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