



# AIEA PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

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Harvey Kesselman • *Stockton University*

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## PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

Name: **Harvey Kesselman**

Title: **President, Stockton University (Galloway, New Jersey)**

Time Served as President: **8 Years**

**Stockton University** consistently ranks among the nation's top public institutions. Stockton offers the academic, technological, and cultural advantages of a large institution combined with the community spirit of a small liberal arts college. Stockton is noted for combining an outstanding interdisciplinary approach to graduate and undergraduate education. Located one hour from Philadelphia and two hours from New York City, the university offers unique living and learning environments throughout southern New Jersey, including the 1,600-acre Galloway campus in the Pinelands National Reserve and Stockton University Atlantic City, which is housed on the iconic Atlantic City Boardwalk just steps from the ocean. With over 9,000 undergraduate and graduate students and nearly 700 full-time and part-time faculty members, Stockton offers more than 160 undergraduate and graduate programs in its seven academic schools, in a primarily in-person learning environment. Stockton thrives as a distinctive institution, providing a diverse, values-based, student-centered environment of exceptional teaching and learning. With a student to faculty ratio of 17:1, Stockton is among the Top 100 Public National Universities according to the most recent 2023 U.S. News & World Report College Rankings

**Dr. Harvey Kesselman** presides over Stockton University as its fifth President. Dr. Kesselman is the only sitting university president to have been in the inaugural class of the very institution he serves. Throughout Dr. Kesselman's more than four-decades-long tenure, he has successfully held leadership positions within virtually every major division of the university, including Provost and Executive Vice President, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Dean of the School of Education, making him the best-versed ambassador of Stockton University.

As one of New Jersey's most prominent and highly regarded educational leaders, Dr. Kesselman's sphere of influence reaches well beyond southern New Jersey. Throughout the entire pandemic he served as chair of the New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC), recently served as co-chair of the student success working group for the NJ State Plan for Higher Education and sits on Governor Murphy's Dual Credit Commission.

This paper was written in collaboration with Dr. JY Zhou.



Name: **Jiangyuan Zhou**

Title: **Director of Global Engagement/SIO, Stockton University (Galloway, New Jersey)**

Time Served as SIO: **3 years**

**Dr. Jiangyuan Zhou** is the Director of Global Engagement and SIO at Stockton University. Her research and work focus on internationalization, global learning, and assessment. She publishes and presents her research and work in peer-reviewed journals and international conferences. She teaches, consults, and leads workshops on internationalization on various campuses. She also serves in leadership positions in several international education organizations. She holds a doctorate in Educational Theory and Practices from Binghamton University-SUNY.



## 1. How would you describe the role of internationalizing higher education today?

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With the development of globalization, higher education institutions establish policies and practices to meet the needs of students and society. We recruit international students from throughout the world, build programs to send domestic students abroad, attract global talents to teach or conduct research on campus, partner with international institutions, organizations, and governments, and empower faculty and staff to explore the world and address global challenges collaboratively. With comprehensive internationalization, colleges and universities actively engage with the world, purposefully expand institutions' global impacts, proactively lead social change movements, and effectively contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In the past years, we have witnessed myriad challenges: growing racism and inequality at a global level, geopolitical tensions, a record-high number of refugees and displaced populations, global economic struggles, and climate change, on top of a global COVID-19 pandemic. Internationalization of higher education holds an unparalleled position to respond to these challenges by cultivating and educating the campus community to understand global perspectives and responsibilities, preparing the next generation to develop a sense of agency towards more democratized local and global societies, and advocating for a peaceful, sustainable, and equitable future.

## 2. How do you think internationalization helps students, faculty, and staff?

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Internationalization is higher education's response to the globalized world and brings numerous tangible and lasting benefits to the entire campus community. Through inbound and outbound mobility and virtual exchange, students can develop global citizenship through communication with people with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds in home and host communities, broaden disciplinary knowledge in a global context, and grow career readiness through in-person and virtual global internships. In the past decade, Stockton University has recognized the inequality in participation in international education programs and has advocated for "global learning for all." We purposefully designed global initiatives to embed global learning opportunities across disciplines in every student's academic and life experience at Stockton.

Faculty members can engage with colleagues and students around the world through research collaboration, academic exchange, and international fieldwork.



These initiatives and activities enable faculty members to bring private practices and reflections to public actions and movements to a global level.

Internationalization further empowers faculty members to decolonize the curriculum, create and implement innovative and inclusive pedagogies, and develop critical dialogue and engagement with local and global communities to bring about social justice and change.

Internationalization provides valuable opportunities for staff members to develop professional skills and expand their network on and beyond campus through deep and reciprocal collaborations. With the increasing competition for limited resources, staff members may find new resources or have access to relocate and share existing resources through partnerships. Stockton University has designed various professional development opportunities to develop more awareness of internationalization on campus and encourage faculty and staff members to expand and deepen engagement with internationalization to reap the full benefits on campus.

### **3. How do you see the role of senior leaders and the president in particular in internationalizing higher education?**

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In the recently published American Council on Education Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses report, “presidents, faculty, and SIOs were perceived as the most vital catalysts for internationalization, at 49 percent for faculty and 47 percent for presidents and SIOs” (Soler, Kim, & Cecil, 2022, p. ix). This increasingly critical role of presidents and senior leaders in advancing the internationalization of higher education demonstrates that internationalization has moved to the core mission of higher education and requires intentional planning and coordination at senior administrative levels.

With the benefits and resources internationalization brings to the campus, presidents and senior leaders set institutional priorities, engage all stakeholders, diversify the campus, build campus-wide strategies and tactics, and affirm the value of international education. More importantly, senior leaders are the leading voice to advocate for national and state policies on immigrants, refugees, displaced people, disadvantaged populations, and marginalized communities.

### **4. How is your institution measuring internationalization’s contribution to meeting its institutional mission?**

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Stockton University has been recognized by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as an institutional model and leader in measuring the internationalization of higher education, especially in global learning assessment. We always emphasize the importance of using data to navigate the dynamic internationalization system as well as inform our practices and make decisions.

Other than tracking the numerical data of students, faculty, and staff mobility, Stockton has designed a variety of tools and practices to assess global learning outcomes in the curriculum, which is the core of internationalization. More than a decade ago, the entire Stockton community worked together and identified “global awareness” as one of ten essential learning outcomes. Global awareness is defined as “the appreciation of the world as an interconnected, interdependent system encompassing political, socioeconomic, and environmental interactions” (Stockton, 2015) and is examined at three consecutive developmental levels. We tracked global learning in individual courses and found that 48 percent of all courses have chosen global awareness, knowledge of other cultures, and diverse perspectives as essential or important course learning outcomes. Stockton also offers summer institutes for faculty members to discuss and share curriculum internationalization practices and assessment methods.

## **5. What resources are necessary to make internationalization sustainable in higher education?**

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We have seen challenges in developing the internationalization of higher education on campuses in the past years. To develop sustainable internationalization during the current global crises, we need to make sure that internationalization is recognized as an integral part of the ecosystem of higher education: it is embedded in the institutional mission, vision, and priorities, and members of the entire campus community see themselves as stakeholders of internationalization.

Technology plays a growing important role in advancing internationalization. We see innovative practices in virtual recruitment fairs, international teaching and learning collaborations, as well as virtual global internships. It is particularly critical in addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice issues in international higher education. Technology enables us to engage a diverse group of students, especially traditionally underrepresented groups to participate in global learning activities, bring previously unheard voices to help us present a more complete picture of the campus community, and advance social justice values through effective internationalization initiatives. Our global talents – both students and scholars – bring new knowledge and diverse perspectives to the campus,



which is another key resource to help us not only sustain but also succeed in our internationalization efforts. Deep, flat, and reciprocal collaborations and partnerships with domestic and international institutions, governments and organizations, and the U.S. and global foundations are other valuable resources to sustain and advance internationalization.

## **6. What might threaten progress toward the internationalization of higher education broadly and at your institution specifically?**

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Being higher education's response to the globalized world, internationalization is quite sensitive to the changes in close-by and far-away societies. The convergence of the major global crises we have witnessed since early 2020 has taught us to stay vigilant in identifying and preparing for potential challenges and threats toward the internationalization of higher education.

Due to the large-scale geopolitical tensions around the world, institutions need to adjust international recruitment plans to diversify the international student population to avoid the risk of relying heavily on a small number of sending countries. Global diaspora has reached the highest record in history with more refugees and displaced people around the world. The alarming growth of nationalistic and populist ideologies and anti-globalization mindsets in many countries reaffirms the urgency of the internationalization of higher education. The issue of racism and inequality on an unprecedented global level is another threat to the development of the internationalization of higher education and requires our immediate attention. These challenges and catastrophes have been amplified by the ongoing global pandemic, which we are still combating as we try to figure out a new normal in international mobility.

One threat specific to the US higher education is the intense competition for international students in other countries. International student numbers have been decreasing in the US in the past years, while the other top destinations – UK, Australia, Canada, and China – have been actively recruiting with much more student-friendly policies on visas, financial incentives, and career pathways as well as a more positive picture with a safe and welcoming society and more stable and predictable policies on international education.

## **7. What do you see as an ideal intra-institutional relationship for advancing internationalization?**

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Global collaboration and partnership play a crucial role in advancing internationalization: it touches students, faculty, and staff across disciplines and is directly related to all types of internationalization activities, including international teaching and learning collaboration, curriculum and program development, student and faculty exchange, research collaboration, and so on. An ideal intra-institutional relationship requires strategic planning in understanding goals and needs, evaluating resources and capacities on both campuses, and preparing short-term and long-term plans to measure the sustainability of the partnerships. One key component in evaluating the effectiveness of global partnership is the uniqueness and impact of resources brought to both campuses, such as creating new resources (i.e., expanding academic program offerings on one campus) and sharing existing resources (e.g., co-teaching, online teaching, and mobility programs using on-campus housing). We see an ideal global partnership as an approach to expand the current capacity to achieve goals through strategic planning and reciprocal collaborations. Institutions proactively consider their partners in the planning process and share a sense of responsibility to each other in advancing internationalization on both campuses.

We also need to be innovative in expanding the benefits of global partnerships. Stockton University focuses on attracting global talents to diversify the faculty and staff population. We share our job postings with partner universities and invite their graduates to apply. This approach brings students' post-graduation careers in the package of global partnerships, which was rarely considered in global collaborations.

## **8. Is there anything else you would like to share with other college/university presidents and their senior international officers?**

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Be creative and think out of the box. Internationalization does not always require extra resources. We can start by identifying and utilizing existing but hidden resources on campus. For example, we can use students' existing linguistic and cultural knowledge to internationalize the curriculum in the classrooms. We also need to provide more and regular professional development and engagement opportunities to empower faculty and staff members to continue to be driving forces in advancing internationalization on campus.





## REFERENCES

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*Stockton Essential Learning Outcomes Map.* (2015). Retrieved November 11, 2022, from [https://stockton.edu/elo/documents/2015\\_ELOMaps\\_NewBrand.pdf#page=6](https://stockton.edu/elo/documents/2015_ELOMaps_NewBrand.pdf#page=6).



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