

**Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA)
A Survey on Senior International Officers: Individual and Institutional Profiles**

Executive Summary

In Fall 2011, the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), a national professional association for leaders in the field of international higher education, conducted a survey of institutional members considered to be the Senior Institutional Officer (SIO) at their institutions. This was an update of a similar survey conducted in 1999 and again in 2006. Of the 270 possible respondents, 184 completed the survey. Following is a summary of the survey results.

Internationalization of higher education takes many forms given the wide range of institutional types and variance by size, and others by purpose and mission (Hudzik, 2011). Increasingly, internationalization efforts are led by Senior International Officers (SIOs), whose actual titles and functions vary by institutional context and approach. The aim of this summary is to follow-up on an AIEA 2006 survey--A Survey on Chief International Education Administrators, their Institutions and Offices-- and to add and contribute new and updated information on the SIO profile, in an effort to provide a snapshot of this leadership position within the professional and academic fields of International Education.

The survey was conducted at the end of 2011 and obtained a response rate of over 50%. Of the 184 completed responses, a total of 172 valid responses were included in the final results. Of those responding, 65% were from public higher education institutions (HEIs) and 36% were from private HEIs, nearly all from the United States. Most (59 %) were research universities, 33% were master's institutions, 16% were baccalaureate institutions, and 3% offered associate degrees. In regard to institutional size, about one third of the reporting institutions ranged from 5001-15,000 students (33%), another third ranged in size from 15,001-30,000 (30%), and the other third was split between smaller school size ranging from 1001-5000 students (16%) and larger school size of over 30,000 students (21%). Only 2 institutions had fewer than 1000 students.

Institutional Context for Internationalization. Of those HEIs responding, nearly one third (28%) indicated that internationalization was not only in their mission statements but given a high priority at their institutions, and 60% of respondents indicated that internationalization was given a high priority in institutional strategic plans. Another third (30%) noted that international goals and activities were mentioned in institutional mission statements with nearly another third (32%) indicating that such international goals and activities are not explicitly mentioned in institutional mission statements. Nearly half (45%) of those responding have internal internationalization advisory boards, while one third have no advisory board. Nearly one-third (29%) of respondents noted that there were multiple SIOs at their institutions with the most frequently mentioned titles being Assistant or Associate VPs/Directors.

SIO Title and Salary. There was little change in the title of SIOs when compared to the previous AIEA study. In this 2011 survey, the most common title used for SIOs

was that of “Director”, as reported by the majority at 46%. This was followed by 25% reporting the use of the title “Associate or Assistant Vice President/Chancellor/Provost.” The third most common title was “Vice President/Chancellor/Provost” at 17%. The average salary of SIOs has increased by almost 20% to \$117,411 (2011) as compared to \$96,775 (2005). The salary range for SIOs in 2011 ranged from less than \$75,000 to above \$175,000.

SIO Reporting Structure. As for reporting structure, most SIOs (65%) report to a Vice President/Chancellor/Provost of Academic Affairs. No other reporting line came close. The next level was at 10% who report to a VP of another division (other than academic affairs). Over 64% reported that there has been significant change in the way their institutions structure international programs and offices in the last five years, with the majority reporting an increased centralization/consolidation and higher priority of internationalization, with new positions being created. Only a few reported a decrease in staffing. Nearly two-thirds (59%) reported significant changes in the SIO position at their institutions in the last five years, with the majority noting the creation of a new position or a higher level title. The majority of respondents observe that the SIO position has become more central, prominent, expanded and relevant at higher education institutions, with more emphasis given to student recruitment/enrollment and workforce preparation. This majority also see the growing importance of the SIO position in the future, with an ever increasing complex and institutional-wide role.

SIO Gender, Age, Degree. Of those responding, male SIOs are more prevalent at 55%, while female SIOs comprise 45%. In terms of age, SIOs were fairly even divided at around 18% in the following age categories: Below 46, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, with a slightly higher percentage (20%) in the 61-65 age category. The overwhelming majority of SIOs in this survey has a doctorate or professional degree (81%), followed by a distant 17% with master’s degrees, with 39% having obtained tenure.

SIO Experience. Of those completing the survey, 43% have been in an SIO position for five years or less, with 28% having been an SIO for 6-10 years, 21% had 11-15 years of SIO experience and the remaining 8% had more than 15 years of experience as an SIO. However, 33% have been involved in the international education field for over 20 years. Less than 5% have been in their current SIO position for more than 15 years, while 60% have been in their current SIO position for 5 years or less.

SIO Responsibilities. The top three primary SIO responsibilities are linkages/partnerships (89%), representing the institution in institutional dealings (85%), and strategic planning for internationalization (83%). These are followed by other primary responsibilities which include study abroad/exchanges (79%), faculty led programs (64%), and international students/scholars (63%). Dual degree programs and branch campuses were more distant primary responsibilities at 55% and 51%, respectively. Some even lesser primary responsibilities included community outreach (48%), faculty/staff development (45%), and curriculum internationalization (44%). By far, the largest area of secondary responsibility was area/international/language study programs at 84%, followed by ESL/International training at 65%.

Staffing and Budgets. There was a wide range of staffing and budgets reported with too much variability to summarize here.

Valued Characteristics for SIOs. Knowledge of international issues in higher education was by far the most valued knowledge area by SIOs (89% of SIO respondents), followed by knowledge of world affairs (47%), business principles and practices (42%), and cross-cultural theories/methods (33%). The most valued experiences were those of organizational management (74%) and academic administration (64%), followed by budget management (46%) and overseas living experience (45%). Meanwhile, the most valued skills of an SIO were interpersonal skills (74%), followed by planning/visioning skills (62%) and intercultural competence (46%). The top two personal characteristics valued in SIOs were vision (65%) and energy/passion (63%), followed by flexibility (42%), creativity (33%), and entrepreneurship (32%).

SIO Challenges. The overwhelming challenge named by SIOs completing the survey was that of resources. Other challenges frequently mentioned include personnel/staffing, faculty/admin. “buy-in,” decentralization, balancing constituency demands, securing institutional commitment, and institutional leadership turnover.

Brief Discussion/Conclusions. Given the data reported on the survey, the current and future situation for SIOs looks promising with SIOs reporting increased prominence and relevance of the position at their institutions. Of those responding to this survey, nearly half were female (45%) and respondents were nearly evenly spread across age categories (from below age 46 to over age 66), meaning that the prevailing image of an SIO being a male in his 60s is no longer the norm.. Given that 43% of those completing this survey have been an SIO for five years or less, AIEA would do well to provide increased professional development targeted to newer SIOs. Such professional development should take into account the top three reported SIO responsibilities as partnerships, institutional representations and strategic planning for internationalization, as well as the top 4 needed knowledge areas reported from this survey: international issues in higher education, world affairs issues, business principles/practices and cross-cultural theories/methods, and the top three skill areas as interpersonal, visioning and intercultural competence. In addition, the most valued experiences by SIOs were organizational management experience and academic administration.

The information gathered from this survey is by no means comprehensive, as only current members of AIEA were involved, so this provides a limited and biased snapshot of leaders in campus internationalization. Another limitation of the study was that the questions were kept largely the same as the past AIEA surveys for comparability. More data are needed and in a more consistent basis in order to develop better benchmarks to assist higher education institutions on information regarding hiring, compensation, and structuring their campus internationalization leadership endeavors.

- *Compiled by C.K. Kwai and D. K. Deardorff*