



**Association of International Education Administrators**  
*Leaders in International Higher Education*

**A SURVEY ON SENIOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION OFFICERS, THEIR INSTITUTIONS AND OFFICES**

**Executive Summary**

*The AIEA 2014 survey points to a promising outlook of current and future situation for SIOs. Almost all SIOs reported increased prominence and relevance of their position at their institutions.*

In Fall 2014, 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, 2006, and again in 2011. Of the 425 possible respondents, 173 completed the survey.

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.

This summary of the 2014 SIO Profile survey provides updated information on the SIO position at higher education institutions (HEIs) as 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 2014 and obtained a response rate of over 40%. Of the 173 completed responses, a total of 171 valid responses were included in the final results. Of those responding, 60% were from public higher education institutions (HEIs) and 40% were from private HEIs, nearly all from the United States. Nearly half of the respondents (45 %) were from research universities, while 34% were from master's institutions, 15% were from baccalaureate institutions, and 3% offered associate degrees. About one third of the reporting institutions ranged from 5001-15,000 students (32%), a quarter ranged in size from 15,001-30,000 (25%), and the rest was split between smaller school size ranging from 1001-5000 students (22%) and larger school size of over 30,000 students (19%).

*Institutional Context for Internationalization.* Of those HEIs responding, a little over a quarter (26%) indicated that internationalization was not only in their mission statements but given a high priority at their institutions, and 53% of respondents indicated that internationalization was given a high priority in institutional strategic plans. A third (31%) noted that international goals and activities were mentioned in institutional mission statements while 32% indicating that such international goals and activities are not explicitly mentioned in institutional mission statements. Nearly half (46%) of those responding have internal internationalization advisory boards, while one third have no advisory board. In 2014, 19% of



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respondents noted that there were multiple SIOs at their institutions as compared to nearly one-third (29%) in 2011.

*SIO Title and Salary.* There were significant changes in the title of SIOs when compared to the previous AIEA study. In this 2014 survey, the most common title used for SIOs was that of “Director” (46% as compared to 25% in the 2011 survey). This was followed by 24% reporting the use of the title “Associate or Assistant Vice President/Chancellor/Provost.” The third most common title was “Vice President/Chancellor/Provost” at 18%. The average salary of SIOs has increased by 4% to \$122,078 (2014) as compared to \$117,411 (2011). The salary range for SIOs in 2014 ranged from less than \$75,000 (8 %) to above \$175,000 (18%).

<b>Salary</b>	<b>2011%</b>	<b>2014%</b>	<b>Change %</b>	
Less than \$75,000 annually	7	8	1	
\$75,001-\$100,000	33	21	-12	
\$100,001-\$125,000	21	25	4	
\$125,001-\$150,000	13	19	6	
\$150,001-\$175,000	7	9	2	
\$175,001 and above	16	18	2	
Other (please specify)	2	0	-2	
Average*	\$117,411	\$122,078	\$4,667	4%

<b>SIO Title</b>	<b>2011%</b>	<b>2014%</b>	<b>Change %</b>
Director	38	25	-13
Asst/Assoc. P/C	19	24	5
Vice P/C	16	18	2
Dean	8	9	1
Others	19	23	4

*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 5% who report to a VP of another division (other than academic affairs). Over 53% 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



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internationalization, with new positions being created. Only a few reported a decrease in staffing. Over half (53%) reported significant changes in the SIO position at their institutions in the last three 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 O 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. At a personal level, approximately 9% of respondents aspire to become president while only 3% aspire to become provost.

*SIO Gender, Age, Degree.* Of those responding, male SIOs are more prevalent at 52%, while female SIOs comprise 48%. In terms of age, the majority of SIOs were in the age category of 51-60 (47%), the rest were fairly divided at between 11% and 15% in the age range of below 46, 46-50, and 61-65. The overwhelming majority of SIOs in this survey has a doctorate or professional degree (81%), followed by a distant 7% with master's degrees, with 49% having obtained tenure. Three-quarters of respondents hold faculty positions, with half in tenured positions.

*SIO Experience.* 50% of respondent have been in an SIO position for five years or less, with 22% having been an SIO for 6-10 years, 16% had 11- 15 years of SIO experience and the remaining 11% had more than 15 years of experience as an SIO. However, 19% have been involved in the international education field for over 20 years. Less than 7% have been in their current SIO position for more than 15 years, while the majority 61% have been in their current SIO position for 5 years or less.

*SIO Responsibilities.* The top three primary SIO responsibilities are linkages/partnerships, representing the institution in institutional dealings, and strategic planning for internationalization. By far, the largest area of secondary responsibility was area/international/language study programs, followed by Co-curriculum programing, International Service learning/internships and ESL/International training.

*Valued Characteristics for SIOs.* Knowledge of international issues in higher education was by far the most valued knowledge area by SIOs (91%), followed by knowledge of world affairs (39%), business principles and practices (48%), and cross-cultural theories/methods (42%).

The most valued experiences were those of organizational management (71%) and academic administration (72%), followed by budget management (41%) and overseas living experience (39%).

Meanwhile, the most valued skills of an SIO were interpersonal skills (68%), followed by planning/visioning skills (65%) and intercultural competence (55%).

The top two personal characteristics valued in SIOs were vision (66%) and energy/passion (63%), followed by flexibility (41%), creativity (31%), and entrepreneurship (31%).



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*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.

*Implication/Findings.* Of those responding to this survey, nearly half were female (48%) and the majority of respondents were from the age categories from age 41 to 60 (67%), meaning that the prevailing image of an SIO being a male in his 60s is no longer the norm. Given that 50% 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. Thus, these are all topic areas for AIEA to address in professional development opportunities moving forward. 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