

# 'IE Generation' Leaders Reflect (III)

AIEA Interviews Highlight 'Arc of Change' in International Education

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*This is the third discussion of recent oral interviews conducted by Dr. Joan Gore on behalf of AIEA (Association of International Education Administrators) with senior leaders in international education. The leaders included in this posting are: Hans de Wit (Netherlands), Nico Jooste (South Africa) and Sylvain St-Amand (Canada). View the full interviews at [the AIEA website](#).*

Three leading non-US international educators interviewed by AIEA in 2016 - Hans de Wit (Netherlands), Nico Jooste (South Africa) and Sylvain St-Amand (Canada) - bring both new and familiar perspectives to speculations on the future of IE. Indeed, the discussion with de Wit (Center for International Higher Education, Boston College) focuses in part on the persistent diversity of IE and why we call it a "field" and not (yet) a "discipline." View the full interviews [here](#).

**Internationalization "Models."** One theme that emerges from Joan Gore's conversations with these scholars/practitioners is that "models" of IE institutional strategy are self-defeating if slavishly copied from one institution to another. Far more important is the intentionality of the effort, the focus on institutional mission and senior leadership support over time to launch a truly transformational process.

Jooste, Senior Director of International Education at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, points out that many South African universities, emerging from the international academic boycott because of the country's apartheid policies, were able to develop their own internationalization strategies without government interference or imposed models. Although Jooste and his IE colleagues learned from "best practices" around the world in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they ended up building grass roots approaches institution by institution.

**Ethical Questions for SIOs.** Each of these IE leaders poses an essentially ethical question for themselves and for the field.

For Nico Jooste, the key question focuses on what kind of graduates an internationally minded university wants to help develop. Can they "straddle the local and the global" as they move into the world of work. More than this, will they act responsibly in the "global commons" we all act in now - that is, in a world where virtually all of our actions have global consequences.

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For Hans de Wit, the key issue is the quality of the education an internationalized institution wants to offer its students. This quality will depend on whether the institution is asking such questions as: What is our relation (as institutions and as international educators) with society? What are the consequences - both intended and unintended - of our actions in an interconnected world? de Wit suggests that the increasing commercialization of IE, in particular, raises these kinds of questions on a daily basis.

Sylvain St-Amand, Director of the Office of International Relations at the University of Quebec in Montreal, poses a somewhat different ethical question for IE: How can the international educator best function as a change agent? By leading a "center of excellence" (in Jim Collins's *Good to Great* terms) - a centralized office with expertise in all relevant areas of international management - or by helping to "internationalize" additional players (colleges, departments, centers, administrative offices, etc.) across the institution by sharing staff and resources? St-Amand currently pursues the latter path.

St-Amand highlights an ethical (and practical) challenge that Jack Van de Water (Oregon State University) foresaw two decades ago as internationalization began to emerge as an institutional priority. Is the SIO prepared to share some of his/her "turf" and authority in the interest of broader ("comprehensive") participation in the internationalization process?

Perhaps Hans de Wit summarized best why international education as a field continues to attract both theoretical and practitioner focused research and reporting: In IE, he says, "there's never a dull moment."

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