AIEA PROVOSTS' PERSPECTIVES

OCTOBER 2024

Jennifer Lundgren • University of Missouri-Kansas City

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

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Name: **Jennifer Lundgren**

Title: **Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor**

Time served in role to date: **4 years**

Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), one of four of the University of Missouri System campuses, is a doctoral research-intensive public university offering academic programs across 10 schools and serving over 15,000 students. The University is located in the Kansas City metropolitan area that is among the most entrepreneurial cities in America with a population of more than 2.4 million and a diverse portfolio of industries and businesses.

Dr. Lundgren holds a BS in Psychology (Oklahoma State University) and an MA and PhD in psychology (clinical; University at Albany – State University of New York). Upon After she completed her postdoctoral training at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, she joined the faculty at UMKC, where she has served as Chair of Psychology, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. Her research focuses on the assessment and treatment of eating disorders.

1. What role do you envision that the International Office plays in contributing to your institutional mission and strategic goals and objectives?

Internationalization is an integral part of our university's strategic plan (2018-2028) and institutional goals. Our strategic plan is based on four pillars: Student Success, Discovery, Community Engagement, Inclusive Excellence, and Reliant People, Process, and Infrastructure. We have two divisions within International Affairs: Study Abroad and Global Engagement (SAGE) and the International Student Affairs Office (ISAO), both of which contribute directly to these pillars. For example, ISAO supports the recruitment and onboarding of new international students, SAGE facilitates educational and research exchange opportunities for both students and faculty, and both provide resources for best practices, policies, and procedures that enhance student and faculty global experiences while keeping safety at the forefront.

As we developed our strategic plan, we were intentional about the role of internationalization, both within our campus community and in the way we prepare our graduates to live and work as they pursue their careers after college. Soon after we launched our strategic plan in 2018, we engaged in the ACE Internationalization Laboratory. Although the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted that work, the aspects that we were able to accomplish allowed us to see where gaps in our organizational infrastructure created barriers to achieving our strategic goals. Both divisions of International Affairs, under the leadership of the Director of International Affairs, Dr. Mark Daly, have worked diligently to improve processes and set a vision for internationalization that is designed to improve student and faculty experiences, while also helping us reach our strategic goals.

2. What is the potential for your campus internationalization to grow? What resources does your international office need?

Our campus has significant opportunity for internationalization growth and, like many universities, has experienced periods of both rapid growth in incoming students and quick declines in enrollment as geopolitical and job market factors have influenced student decision-making. A primary aim for our campus is to improve infrastructure so that we can expand both incoming and outbound experiences for

students and faculty, independent of larger external forces over which we often have little control. Examples of resources we are trying to build include: 1) new models for international marketing and recruitment, 2) improved student onboarding experiences that ease the transition to our campus and the larger community and promote academic success both during and after graduation, 3) support for faculty research collaborations, including faculty and student research exchanges, 4) increased opportunities and infrastructure for study abroad and other international experiences for students, and 5) training for administrators, faculty, and staff on best practices in international academic partnerships and research collaboration so that we more effectively impact internationalization efforts on campus.

Like all initiatives, the resource needs are time, appropriately trained staff, visionary leadership, and funding. I feel very comfortable with our leadership and staff, although more staffing will be needed as we grow. We have a strategic investment funding process that allows for financial support to test new strategies before making longer-term investments that might not yield desired results.

3. Has the role or importance of internationalization at your institution changed over the past five years? If so, how? How do you see it changing in the next five?

The role of internationalization has changed significantly over the past five years, and this has been intentional. We recognized that there was a desire from both faculty and staff to prepare students to live and work in a global environment and that internationalization was not only a desire based on our values but an imperative as an urban-serving institution in a large metropolitan community. Over the past several years, we have transitioned our internationalization efforts from decentralized, ad hoc efforts initiated by individual faculty or deans to campus-wide infrastructure to support faculty and deans as they grow and improve study abroad opportunities, initiate academic or research partnerships, recruit new students, and improve curricula. Over the next five years, I envision us moving from capacity building toward the development and implementation of innovative and entrepreneurial efforts regarding internationalization. In particular, I anticipate that internationalization will expand into our research and technology transfer goals.

4. Given the many constraints and challenges, including the multiple disruptions that COVID-19 has wreaked, what are some of the continuing obstacles you and your institution face in pursuing internationalization? What opportunities and benefits did COVID-19 present? What are some of the lessons learned?

COVID-19 revealed significant challenges in our campus internationalization infrastructure. Key observations included: 1) a need for a clear understanding of international staff and leadership roles and responsibilities—both during periods of business as usual and during crisis management and 2) a need to empower international staff and unit leaders to engage in proactive problem-solving, based on their professional expertise and best practices. The benefits of the pandemic were that it forced us to critically evaluate our international processes, policies, and priorities. In conjunction with both the pandemic and our interrupted ACE Internationalization Laboratory self-assessment, we identified new opportunities and set priorities and goals for excellence. Importantly, university leadership, including the Chancellor, Provost, Vice Provosts/Vice Chancellors, and Deans, have had to understand internationalization at a deeper level. We are working to ensure that support for internationalization efforts is campus-wide and that we eliminate the siloing of international affairs that had been evident for several years prior to the pandemic.

5. Who are the most important internationalization stakeholders you work with at your institution and why?

The most important stakeholders for internationalization efforts on our campus are our students and faculty. Internationalization efforts directly support their educational and scholarly pursuits, as well as the greater job market needs of our region, state, and nation. International Affairs, comprising the divisions of Study Abroad and Global Engagement and the International Student Affairs Office, work hand-in-hand with our divisions of student success, student affairs, faculty affairs, research services, and the academic units.

6. What are some of the key ways in which senior international officers can help individuals in your role advance internationalization at their institutions?

One of my first lessons in the role of Provost was understanding the role of the senior internationalization officer (SIO), along with the divisions they lead. The pandemic, along with our ACE internationalization work, advanced my learning curve and helped me see quickly that the SIO is a key member of the leadership team. Over the last six months, we have welcomed a new SIO who reports directly to me (Dr. Mark Daly). We collaboratively set priorities around: 1) educating our campus community about best practices in internationalization efforts, 2) ensuring that internationalization efforts are strategically linked with our university goals/mission, 3) infusing innovation in our initiatives, and 4) demonstrating that our internationalization efforts are of value both to our university and broader external communities.