<u>**AIEA 2017 Post-election Roundtable: Collecting Our Thoughts**</u>
A discussion for international educators on the November 2016 U.S. election results.

<u>**I. Understanding What's Happening**</u>
*1. Identifying the challenges. Chaotic mix of **beliefs that challenge the work of
international educators** has entered into widespread discussion. A partial list. What else?*
- globalization responsible for loss of jobs, prominence, sovereignty, culture
- "globalist" as sweeping negative label lumping together wide range of people
- immigration out of control and taking jobs from U.S. citizens;
- immigrants as frequently criminals, freeloaders, or terrorists
- racism, White supremacy, misogyny, dislike of "political correctness"
- xenophobia toward both nations and their citizens
- international relations as a zero sum game
- the rest of the world as dangerous, untrustworthy, guided by false beliefs
- China, Mexico, and Muslim-majority nations as particularly problematic
- U.S. ignored internal needs while supporting nations that take advantage of it
- willingness to pursue further war, torture
- inevitable, violent clash of civilizations, based on religious differences
- rejection of science, climate change, and much of higher education
- desire to restrict the press; openness to fake news, alternative facts
- antipathy toward broad category of "elites" that lumps together Wall Street,
  government, Hollywood, the press, city dwellers, suburbanites, big business, high
  finance, mainstream media, the intelligentsia, and "high" art and culture
- narrow definitions of "real Americans" or "the American people"

*2. Understanding where such beliefs come from. What questions can help us make sense
of them – and lead us to productive responses? A partial list. What else?*
- Who holds these beliefs and attitudes? How large a segment of U.S. society?
- What genuine problems are faced by these individuals and their communities? How
  has global connectivity affected them?
- How has a divisive populism promoted these beliefs?
- How has the U.S.'s long-standing struggle with racism aggravated this situation? Its
  long-standing ambivalence about immigration?
- How has 9/11, decades of war, and terrorism played into this thinking?
- What explanatory frameworks have been available to those who hold these views?
  What do these explanations include, and what do they leave out?

*3. Reframing the Issues. We must disentangle legitimate problems faced by those holding
these beliefs from explanations based on faulty evidence, racism, xenophobia and blanket
condemnation of global connectivity. Our expertise can offer alternative explanations,
which we need to compile, sharpen, and have ready for the work ahead.*
- What factors are needed to fully explain the U.S.'s changing economy and job
  structure, and how it affects all segments of the U.S. population?
- Is there a way to understand undocumented immigration other than as a personal
  choice to break the law? What about its long integration into the U.S. economy?

- What explains the continued virulence of racism in the U.S.? How is it manifesting itself now? How does it hurt all of us?
- What is the full picture of immigration to the U.S. right now? What do immigrants contribute to U.S.? Are they, in fact, taking jobs from U.S. citizens?
- What causes social and cultural boundaries to form, and how can we learn to work across them? What political and economic forces are at work, and how are groups shaped by their interaction with each other?
- What are the many elements of globalization? Why is it happening? What are its pluses and minuses? Why is it important for us to shape it in positive ways? Why is this better done in collaboration with other nations than alone?
- What do U.S. businesses gain from global connectivity? What would happen to jobs and prices, if this connectivity were curtailed?
- What does the U.S. gain from a broad network of international political relationships? What must be considered in altering these?
- What has been the impact of U.S. actions abroad, both for the U.S. and the others?
- Why is the global playing field so uneven? How does this hurt us all? What are the ethical responsibilities of those nations at the top?
- What else?

4. Assessing what impact such attitudes might have for our work.
- Immigration policy/ability of students & scholars to move freely and be in the U.S.
- Protecting, supporting, and attracting international students, scholars
- Support for higher education in general, international education in particular
- International partnerships
- Preparing students for an interconnected world
- Advancing scholarship and science through global collaboration
- Tackling global issues such as climate change, conflict, development
- Advancing equity and justice for U.S. racial & immigrant groups

II. Responding and Taking Action
Based on recent events, beliefs and realities how might we work strategically as SIOs?

1. Immediate Action. *What people and programs with which we are affiliated have already been affected negatively by these beliefs and the policies they are engendering?*
- How did the Executive Order concerning 7 Muslim-majority nations affect your institution, students, & scholars? How did you respond?
- What about the talk of building a wall and deporting undocumented immigrants?
- What about the shifts in U.S.'s international relationships?
- What else?

2. Standing with others at our institutions. *These beliefs and policies affect all who work for inclusion, justice, sustainability, equity, open inquiry, and a collaborative vision for the future. We need to heighten our actions to support, learn from, and stand with others.*
- How can we step up our efforts to collaborate with offices and efforts directed toward these issues?

- How can we best articulate the connection between international education and these other efforts; what might we learn from each other?
- What else?

3. Working against silos and elitism in international education. *Efforts to spread our work more fully across our institutions have new urgency. These activities cannot remain an elite or isolated endeavor. We need to work across divides.*
- How can we best step up our efforts to broaden who studies abroad? To develop global learning for all?
- How can we get into productive dialogue with programs where little global learning now happens?
- How can we reach out to new audiences with our public events on campus?

4**. Connecting with those who feel forgotten**. *We need to find ways to reach out to those who see themselves as left behind by global connectivity. How might we make contact, find common ground, respond to their issues, acquaint them with our perspectives, and work together on activities?*
- What must we learn to understand the impact of global connectivity on their lives?
- How can we articulate our view of global connectivity in terms that make sense to them? Tie it to jobs, community viability, their futures? Offer alternative explanations for what distresses them?
- What kinds of forums or events could start this process of mutual learning?
- What skills of listening and interacting across difference do we need to put to use?
- Where might there be some common ground?
- How can we do this in ways that do not create more division?
- How might this change our own practices and thinking?
- How can we stand with them in addressing the problems they face?
- What else?

5. Keeping international education as a priority at our institutions.
- How might this situation affect the status of internationalization at our institutions?
- What arguments might we offer our institutions as to the continuing value of our work in the present atmosphere?
- How can we be seen as a resource for our institutions in navigating the situation?
- What else?

6. Maintaining international partnerships with renewed vigor. *Such linkages create human connections and build global understandings that can operate on a different wavelength from governmental interactions. How do we keep them going in hard times?*
- How might international academic partnerships be affected by recent events?
- How do we articulate the value and importance for such linkages in the present atmosphere? What will be lost if they decline?
- What works in sustaining such linkages even when relationships among the relevant nations are frayed?
- What else?

III. Final Thoughts

1. Rethinking international education (one more time). *This is a watershed moment. Our work intersects with the public conversations now occurring in challenging ways. We have a role to play, but to do it we must ask ourselves some difficult questions, get out of our silos, become learners as well as teachers, and think once again about the value of what we do. It may be time to do the following. What else?*

- Reflect on how our own actions (&inactions) may have contributed to this situation.
- Make the explanatory frameworks discussed in I.3 part of/equal to intercultural competence in our global learning objectives and spread them widely.
- Examine if certain ways of conceiving cultural diversity add to division rather than transcend it. Move toward frameworks that acknowledge mutual shaping and interaction among groups, as well as how boundaries form in the first place.
- Stand with those who work against unfair exclusion of all sorts; protect and support those who are negatively affected; and openly position our work as about connectivity not exclusion.
- Acknowledge the good and bad of globalization, assess the impact of our own programming in this regard, and make clear that we are looking to increase the good and decrease the bad.
- Articulate a philosophy of global mutuality: how self-interest and group-interest converge, how adjusting inequities benefits us all, and the complex strategies needed to pursue mutual benefit in a world of boundaries and antagonisms.
- Revise our understanding of what we do to include reaching out and learning from groups that feel left behind or hurt by global connectivity – not just working with those who already seek global learning.
- Articulate the value of global connectivity in ways that connect to jobs, safety, communities, and similar issues.
- Recognize the value of the international partnerships in which we engage as counterweights to global divisiveness – and treat them with care.

2. Collective Action. *The forces behind the present questioning of global connectivity are wide and deep. The work to be done is not just about public policy; it is also about public opinion. This work goes beyond what any one SIO or institution can manage.*

- *What might AIEA do? In terms of:*
  - Articulating stands and coordinating direct action on key issues
  - Advocating on behalf of all members, and guiding members in their own advocacy initiatives concerning public policy
  - Articulating the goals, values, and impact of international education for the public; how the higher values we pursue have benefit
  - Serving as a clearinghouse for ideas and information on these topics
  - Collaborating with other organizations, both locally and globally
- What else?

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