



Association of International Education Administrators
Leaders in International Higher Education

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AIEA Recognizes Dr. Denis Simon with 2020 Charles Klasek Award for Outstanding Service to the Field of International Higher Education

Washington, DC (February 18, 2020)—The Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) is pleased to name Dr. Denis Fred Simon, Executive Vice Chancellor at Duke Kunshan University, as the 2020 Charles Klasek Award honoree. The award recognizes his service as a scholar and researcher, educator and mentor, senior administrator and advisor, organizer and advocate within the field of International Education.

Conceived as a tribute to Charles Klasek’s outstanding contributions both to AIEA and to International Higher Education, the Klasek Award is presented each year at AIEA’s annual conference to individuals with a record of long-standing and exceptional service to the field. “Chuck” Klasek was a founding member and the third president of AIEA in addition to his achievements at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Simon has had a long and distinguished career in higher education, beginning with his graduate student years, when he taught as a lecturer at San Francisco State University and the University of Maryland (Taiwan campus), and moving on to post-doctorate positions at MIT, Tufts, Rensselaer, ASU, SUNY, the University of Oregon, and Penn State before settling in at Duke Kunshan University in 2015. Along the way, Simon moved from teaching to administration and become a driving force for campus internationalization. His dedication to international education has been reflected in his work over the past four decades. From his first visit to Asia in 1976, and mainland China in 1981, Denis has developed an extensive network of professional relationships throughout business, government, and academia in the region, and has utilized this network to contribute to the development of Sino-US collaborations in education, S&T, and innovation. Although his focus over the years has been on relations between the US and China, he has also worked actively to promote higher education initiatives and cooperation with many countries and regions including Italy, Israel, Myanmar, Brazil, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and India.



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One noteworthy achievement is the SUNY China 150 project, which was launched immediately following a devastating earthquake in Sichuan, China in 2008. The program was conceived and implemented while Simon was the Provost of the Levin Institute at SUNY, and brought 150 Chinese students from the badly damaged earthquake region to 22 SUNY universities for one year of academic study. The then Vice Chancellor of SUNY stated later that the project “created a strategic opportunity for the State University of New York and China to collaborate on education, research, and, therefore, on mutual understanding to everyone’s benefit.” The Vice Chancellor also stated that no one involved in the project except for Simon foresaw the positive benefits of such a program.

The work Simon has done within academia has been supported through his extracurricular activities, such as taking on adjunct positions at research centers such as the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, heading campus task forces under the auspices of the Institute of International Education, editorial board membership for industry publications, industry consulting that bridged Sino-US relations, and serving as advisor for internationalization to the President of a major Chinese University. He has also been active in government service, sitting on the committees of numerous agencies, academies, and international organizations supporting the development of Far East-West relations, international cooperation in the field of technology, and international innovation.

Somewhere in between all of these academic and professional activities, Simon has also found the time to disseminate his research and studies through presentations and publish extensively, with dozens of books, journal articles, chapters in edited volumes, conference proceedings, and book reviews to his name. While much of his writing has been in the area of science and technology, especially as it relates to Sino-US relations, he has also published work on issues involving innovation (creating innovative talent pools, innovation policies, and modernizing markets), strategic development, and global competitiveness.

About AIEA:

The Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) is a member organization that equips leaders to shape the future of higher education in a global context.

AIEA advances strategic transformational approaches to internationalization of higher education; empowers those who lead such efforts; convenes global conversation on key issues; and partners with other organizations around the world to develop sustainable, forward-looking perspectives.

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