



Association of International Education Administrators

2011 AIEA CONFERENCE SUMMARY

With a theme of “*Competition and Collaboration in the Global Transformation of Higher Education*,” the 2011 AIEA Conference was held Feb. 20-23, in San Francisco, California. This was the largest conference in the history of AIEA, with nearly 700 participants from 35+ different countries hailing from diverse countries like Brazil, Botswana, China, Finland, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and United Arab Emirates. The countries with the largest representation, besides the United States, were Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Japan and Mexico. Within the U.S., the largest representation at the conference was from California, followed by New York, Washington D.C., Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, and Massachusetts, all of whom had sizable delegations at the conference. Nearly half of the attendees were not AIEA members, with many being first-time attendees. One participant observed, “The increased participation and quality/diversity of sessions made this conference one of the best AIEA has ever held.”

With 302 presenters, over 100 sessions, and 5 well-received pre-conference workshops, the conference program provided participants with the rich opportunity to explore relevant issues within international higher education such as partnerships, recruitment, and regional trends. Key highlights of the 2011 AIEA Conference, based on post-conference evaluations, were the Presidential Plenary with Vivek Wadwha (“fascinating”), the joint AIEA-ISEP Luncheon Plenary featuring Keisha Senter and students through the Clinton Global Initiative University (“absolutely inspiring”), and SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher’s talk (“exceptional and refreshing”) at the Women’s Networking Event. According to the evaluations, there were many other highlights of the conference, including invaluable networking, the many high-quality and in-depth sessions, the innovative Best Practices Showcase, the exhibitors and Exhibit Hall, and the pre-conference workshops. Conference attendees also noted how valuable it was to have international colleagues in attendance, along with funders and program sponsors such as USAID, IIE, EducationUSA, and HED. Participants also commented on the value of connecting with colleagues and exploring internationalization issues in more depth, including gaining new resources and insights for managing partnerships, for implementing internationalization efforts, for integrating international perspectives into majors, and the primary importance of connecting with faculty to advance internationalization. One participant commented that “the sessions were very relevant for the work I do, and I appreciate hearing from SIOs at other institutions” while another remarked, “I came back home with my head full of new ideas. Professionally, this is the finest network in international education since most participants are very experienced.” AIEA was also pleased to collaborate with ISEP in hosting the Wednesday luncheon plenary, which marked the official end of the AIEA conference and the beginning of the ISEP Symposium, in which numerous AIEA members also participated.

Another highlight of the conference was the awarding of the Klasek Award to Robert Slater for outstanding service to the field of international education and the presentation of the Rutenber Award to Riall Nolan for his exceptional and dedicated service to the association. The Josephson Award for outstanding graduate work went to Leasa Weimer, whose work as a doctoral student at the University of Georgia has focused on the political economy and the international student market. Leasa presented her work in a poster presentation in the exhibit hall during the conference. The 2010-2011 AIEA Presidential Fellows were also recognized during the Associational Breakfast, which featured plenary speaker Eva Egron-Polak, head of the International Association of Universities. A special thank you to Awards Committee Chair Susan Carvalho and her committee members for their work on the awards process this year. Members are encouraged to start thinking now about possible nominees for these and other AIEA awards to be given at next year’s conference; a call for awards nominations will go out to members via the AIEA members-only listserv this fall.

Many conference participants submitted online evaluations, with nearly 90% rating the conference as “outstanding” or “very good” (with “outstanding” being the highest possible rating). According to the evaluations, participants attended the conference to learn about new developments and trends in the field, to find possible partners, to meet



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high level decision makers, to connect with colleagues, to meet exhibitors and learn about resources, and to exchange ideas with colleagues from around the world. Comments from participants described the conference as “an excellent forum to meet other leaders” and as “one of the most relevant and effective conferences in international higher education.” One participant echoed others’ comments in stating that the AIEA annual conference is “without doubt the professional development and networking opportunity to which I look most forward each year. The level of sophistication represented in the dialogue is unparalleled.” As to its value, one participant observed, “AIEA is one of the most useful conferences in the field” and “ provides excellent opportunities to learn about new developments in the field that pertain to my work.” And one participant concluded that AIEA’s annual conference is “the most important IE conference of the year!”

Excellent suggestions were made as to session topics and plenary speakers for next year's conference, as well as suggestions for more networking opportunities, for possible opportunities for university presidents/provosts at the conference, and logistical input to make the conference even more useful for participants in the future. And while some concern was expressed at the growing size of the conference, one person said that “I really like the size of this conference” which is “a great forum for exchange and networking.” The feedback from the post-conference evaluations is greatly appreciated, and the 2012 Conference Chair, Donna Scarborough, and the Conference Advisory Board will work to incorporate as many of the suggestions as possible into the 2012 conference next year in Washington DC on Feb. 19-22. Please note that the Call for Proposals for the 2012 conference will be sent out later this spring, with an Aug. 15 deadline. The theme of the 2012 conference is “A More Secure World Through International Education.” We look forward to your participation at next year’s AIEA conference!

Deep appreciation is expressed to all those who made the conference possible including AIEA Conference Chair Susan Sutton, the AIEA Conference Planning committees, all of our extraordinary presenters, volunteers, staff, interns, and the local host universities of San Francisco State University, University of California at Davis, and University of California at Berkeley, which provided the wonderful volunteers at the conference. Appreciation also goes to the conference sponsors and exhibitors for their support of this conference with a special thank you to AIEA’s All-Conference Sponsor Platinum Sponsors, ELS Educational Services and Australia’s Group of 8, whose generous support helped make this conference possible.

Note: For those of you who may want to access some of the presentations (or links to presentations) made in San Francisco, you can find those online on the AIEA website homepage (www.aieaworld.org). Appreciation is expressed to those presenters who shared their presentations and/or links with AIEA. (Note that not all presenters submitted presentation materials for the website but you may want to check back periodically for new additions.) See you in DC on February 19-22 for the 2012 AIEA Conference!

- Dr. Darla Deardorff, AIEA Executive Director

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