



Association of International Education Administrators
Leaders in International Higher Education

2015 AIEA Conference Summary

With a theme of “Leading Global Learning: Envisioning New Paradigms,” the 2015 AIEA Conference was held Feb. 15-18 in Washington DC, United States. Chaired by Dr. Jenifer Cushman of Ohio University, this was the largest AIEA conference to date with over 900 registrants from 40 countries, 83% of whom were Senior International Officers. With 345 presenters, 103 sessions, 29 roundtable discussions, and 9 well-received pre-conference workshops, the conference program provided participants with the rich opportunity to explore relevant issues within international higher education, including partnerships, the role of technology in global learning, regional trends, funding, advocacy, and national strategies of internationalization. When asked the reason for attending the AIEA conference, many participants cited networking, professional development, and updates on critical issues and trends in the field as the leading reasons why they attended. Specifically, one participant said, “It is the leading conference on deeper issues within the field of international education” and another said, “I have always found AIEA events to be of the highest quality, with great networking opportunities and high-quality, engaging panels and discussions.” Deep appreciation is expressed to all who presented and to all who attended the 2015 AIEA Conference.

There were numerous conference highlights cited by participants including plenaries, the high quality pre-conference workshops and sessions, and the superb networking opportunities. By far, the overwhelming highlight of the conference was the closing plenary speaker, Wajahat Ali, summed up by one participant, as simply “amazing. His presentation was a great way to end the conference!” Another participant observed “I have attended the AIEA conference for years. It is simply the best conference for SIOs to share information and connect.” In regard to size, one participant noted that AIEA is an “Intimate conference with senior, engaged attendees, thoughtful sessions, well-chosen venue. Many good meetings and conversations.” Another summed up the general sentiment from the post-conference evaluations that “I liked the small (conference) size of attendees compared to other conferences, as it was easier to find and connect with people.” Others concluded “It's by far the best conference for those of us in international education. “ “It is one of the best networking opportunities for SIOs” and “AIEA is the best professional development for me. Best content. Best community. It's the one ‘can't miss’ conference for me each year,” and another participant stating “this was the strongest AIEA conference I've attended.” The conference received a rating of good to outstanding by 98% of the 221 respondents on the post-conference evaluation.

AIEA was pleased to collaborate for the fourth year in a row with the American Council on Education on co-sponsoring the pre-conference ACE-AIEA Internationalization Collaborative, in which numerous AIEA



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members participated. AIEA was also pleased to collaborate with the following organizations in offering pre-conference workshops: Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), American International Recruitment Council (AIRC), Diversity Abroad, EducationUSA, Institute for International Education (IIE), Institute for Intercultural Communication, National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE), and SUNY Center for Online International Learning (COIL). A special welcome was extended to participants from outside the United States, especially delegations from Ecuador and Eastern Europe (through EEUA).

Another highlight of the conference was the awarding of the Klasek Award to AIEA Past President Gilbert Merx of Duke University for his outstanding service to the field of international education and the presentation of the Rutenber Award, which was also awarded to Gil Merx for his exceptional and dedicated service to the association. This is the first time in the history of AIEA that the same person received both awards in the same year. The Josephson Award for Professional Promise in International Education went to Bethany Galipeau-Konate, a recent doctoral graduate of Shenandoah University, where she is the Director of International Programs. A special thank you to Awards Committee Chair Tom Bogenschield and his 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 in October.)

Excellent suggestions were made as to session topics and plenary speakers for next year's conference as well as other helpful feedback including limiting the number of session choices (one participant observed, "Too many good sessions at the same time makes it hard to choose"), the importance of more strategic sessions on STEM and languages, and the need for more sessions from smaller colleges and community colleges. This invaluable feedback will be carefully considered by 2016 Conference Chair, Gil Latz, and the Conference Advisory Board who will work to incorporate as many of the suggestions as possible into the 2016 conference next year in Montreal, Canada on Feb 20-24. Please note that the Call for Proposals for the 2016 conference will be sent out in April 2015, with an Aug. 15 deadline. The theme of the 2016 conference is "Building a Better World: The Academy as Leader." 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 Jen Cushman, the AIEA Conference Planning committees, all of our extraordinary presenters, volunteers, AIEA staff and interns and the local host universities Northern Virginia Community College, Howard University, and Towson University, 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 Diamond Sponsor, ELS Educational



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Services, and AIEA's Platinum sponsors, Australia's Group of 8 and QS, whose generous support helped make this conference possible.

For links to news articles about the conference, as well as the conference program and finalized list of conference participants, go to <http://www.aieaworld.org/2015-annual-conference>. This page includes links to session materials, conference press coverage, and will soon include photo albums from the event. Appreciation is expressed to those who shared their presentations and/or links with AIEA, as well as those who tweeted while at the conference. (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 Montreal on February 20-24 for the 2016 AIEA Conference!

- Dr. Darla Deardorff, AIEA