



AIEA PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

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International Experiences at the Core

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President and Vice-Chancellor





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Name: Roseann O'Reilly Runte

Title: President and Vice-Chancellor, Carleton University

Time served as Provost: Seven years (July 1, 2008)

Carleton University is located in Canada's capital city of Ottawa. Carleton offers 65 programs of study in areas as diverse as public affairs, journalism, aerospace engineering, environmental science, architecture and international studies. More than 2,000 brilliant professors and staff members constitute a diverse and dedicated team serving 28,000 students.

Roseann O'Reilly Runte is President of Carleton University. She has led several other institutions in the U.S. and Canada over the last three decades. She is a scholar in the field of French and Comparative Literature and has written on economic and cultural development while receiving the poetry prize from the French Academy in Paris. She has been President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Foundation for International Training and has served on a number of boards including the National Bank, Jean Coutu Pharmacy, LifeNet, SunGuard, the Virginia Industrial Development Agency, and the Telus Community Foundation, to name a few. She has received the Order of Canada, the French Order of Merit, a number of honorary degrees, and a number of awards for her work for the environment, intercultural understanding and women's leadership.



Taking into account all of the demands and constraints facing higher education today, how would you describe internationalization's role in higher education in general and at your institution more specifically?

It is more important than ever to offer our students knowledge and understanding of global issues. We live in a world made smaller by rapid transportation and technological advances in communications. International experiences offer students the opportunity to succeed in global markets. In turn, our students will make positive contributions to the social, economic and cultural development of the communities in which they will reside. We must not view these experiences as frills, but as core activities, an essential part of our programs. The problems we face today are massive and cannot be solved by a single nation acting alone. Environmental, economic and socio/cultural/political issues transcend borders and require international solutions. North America has the potential to lead the world positively, making sustainability a reality. To realize this opportunity and the challenges it poses, requires graduates to have the ability to think globally.

At Carleton University we have accepted this challenge and annually welcome students from more than 130 nations around the world to our campus. We have implemented a major in Global and International studies which includes opportunities for study abroad. Researchers, entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs share international partnerships.

Higher education has traditionally been associated with preparing students for work, life, and citizenship. How can internationalization contribute to this preparation?

We learn to know ourselves and to appreciate our own country when we meet others with different languages, cultures, experiences and when we travel elsewhere. Students with international experience and understanding will be well suited to serve their own communities and country. When we understand that others think differently, we learn how to negotiate, how to appreciate our own values and possibilities, how to explain them. We can admire National Geographic programs and be inspired by great books without leaving our homes.

How do you see the role of the college/university president in internationalization? As the president of your institution, who else do you turn to lead internationalization, and what role do these individuals or groups play?

Presidents can play active roles, leading by example. They can speak sincerely and logically and convincingly, outlining a vision. They can garner the necessary resources to implement the vision. They can create a team of point



persons prepared to work together to realize the vision. Presidents can pose symbolic gestures which remind the community of the vision. If a university is to make internationalization a priority, the president must make the case and demonstrate its importance in a time of reduced financial means and many conflicting priorities. It is evident that internationalization can be a thematic unifier, bringing together all Faculties in shared interests and values. At Carleton University, internationalization has been part of our strategic plan, agreed to by the entire university community. Each faculty, department and unit has specific goals relating to globalization. The Vice-President (Research and International), the Vice-President (Academic) and Provost, the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment), the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) all support the vision and work with deans and directors to implement it.

How is your institution measuring internationalization's contribution to meeting its mission?

Each unit has specific, agreed upon goals and targets. These are measured every quarter and published on our dashboard, open internally to all participants. Goals may include numbers of students who participate, their success, their satisfaction, the creation of academic programs and a review of their quality and attraction of students.

What are some of assets and resources your institution has drawn on for its internationalization? How and to what aim are you leveraging these resources?

The University has drawn on endowed awards for travel, contributions from Canada and from other nations and agencies, including, for example, Fulbright, donations from businesses (especially for internships abroad), alumni working overseas and those with overseas experience. We leverage these resources to support individual travel and exchanges, the creation of new academic programs, joint research projects and programs, shared social enterprise endeavours and the creation of global companies through our entrepreneurship programs.

What might threaten progress toward the internationalization of higher education both broadly and at your institution more specifically?

Internationalization could be threatened generally by lack of resources, linguistic and cultural isolationism, and competing concerns of a local nature. At Carleton University, the major threat would be economic as many of the initiatives require special resources. For example, students in Industrial Design and Architecture at Carleton worked with students in Mumbai, India to redesign a slum there. This required resources from both universities, both countries and



the understanding and support of both local communities (to welcome the visiting students and to make their work possible).

What are some of the key ways in which a senior international officers can help the presidents of their institutions advance internationalization?

Senior International Officers are faced with a world of possibilities. We need to focus on a reasonable number. Thus, the SIOs must prioritize the possible avenues to be explored. We need to identify supporters in the faculty and student bodies. We need to keep track of the status and activity of each exchange with the ability to generate reports tracking individuals and groups, successes and failures. These activities would be tremendously supportive. The SIO must have access to the president's calendar and be able to propose meetings and either open doors or ask the president to do this when convenient.

Is there anything else you would like to share with other college/university presidents and their senior international officers?

We must go beyond traditional exchanges to create joint degrees, joint academic programs, research initiatives, joint enterprises and social enterprise activities. We must find innovative ways to make internationalization and globalization part of the curriculum, the daily activities of the campus and the institutional culture. Carlton's Global and International studies, Born Global enterprise development program, the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, the School of Public Policy and International Business program, the activity of researchers in areas such as the nascent International Water Institute, student engagement in Engineers Without Borders and World University Services Canada, language acquisition through extraordinarily innovative teaching initiatives, a long history of international engagement and interdisciplinary scholarship, all contribute to a unique ability to support internationalization, a fact we celebrate daily.



The **Association of International Education Administrators** (AIEA), a membership organization formed in November 1982, is composed of institutional leaders engaged in advancing the international dimensions of higher education. The purposes of the Association are to:

- Provide an effective voice on significant issues within international education at all levels,
- Improve and promote international education programming and administration within institutions of higher education,
- Establish and maintain a professional network among international education institutional leaders,
- Cooperate in appropriate ways with other national and international groups having similar interests.

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