

Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA)
**THE SIO PROFILE: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY ON
SENIOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION OFFICERS, THEIR
INSTITUTIONS AND OFFICES (2017)**

Preliminary Analysis and Summary

In Fall 2017, the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), an international professional association for leaders in the field of international higher education, conducted a survey of institutional members considered to be the Senior Institutional Officer (SIO) at their institutions. AIEA adopted the term SIO to describe individuals within an institution of higher education who are charged with leading and facilitating its internationalization efforts. AIEA recognizes that many other terms may be used to reference these leaders, depending on the context and country (examples include International Relations Officer, International Relations Manager, International Liaison Officer, and so on (see www.aieaworld.org). This survey is an update of similar surveys conducted in 1999, 2006, 2011, and 2014 by AIEA. Of the 370 possible respondents, 199 completed the survey. Following is a preliminary summary of some of the survey results.

Internationalization of higher education takes many forms given the wide range of institutional types and variance by size, purpose, and mission (Hudzik, 2011). Increasingly, internationalization efforts are led by Senior International Officers (SIOs), whose actual titles and functions vary by institutional context and approach. The aim of this summary is to follow-up on previous AIEA SIO Profile surveys conducted in 2006, 2011, and 2014.¹ In addition, the 2017 survey contributes new and updated information on the SIO profile, in an effort to provide a snapshot of this leadership position within the professional and academic fields of international education.

The survey was conducted in October 2017 and obtained a response rate of 54%. Of the 199 responses, a total of 198 valid responses were included in the final results. Of those responding, 66% were from public higher education institutions (HEIs), 33% were from private not-for-profit HEIs, and 1% were from private for-profit institutions. Most respondents (all but 24) were from the United States (88%). Over half (57%) were from research universities, 24% from master's institutions, 14% from baccalaureate institutions, and 4% from institutions that offer a combination of baccalaureate, associate degrees and specialized

¹ AIEA SIO Profile surveys: *A Survey on Chief International Education Administrators, their Institutions and Offices* (2006), and *A Survey on Senior International Officers: Individual and Institutional Profiles* (2011 and 2014), respectively.

institutions. In regard to institutional size, about one third of the reporting institutions ranged from 5001-15,000 students (27%), approximately a quarter ranged in size from 15,001-30,000 (23%), and the rest was split between smaller school size ranging from 1001-5000 students (20%) and larger school size of over 30,000 students (21%). Only two institutions had fewer than 1000 students.

Institutional Context for Internationalization. Over half of respondents (61%) reported a centralized internationalization structure. Of those HEIs responding, a little under a quarter (24%) indicated that internationalization was not only in their mission statements but given a high priority at their institutions, and nearly half (47%) of respondents indicated that internationalization was given a high priority in institutional strategic plans. Another third (31%) noted that international goals and activities were mentioned in institutional mission statements with a little over a quarter (26%) indicating that such international goals and activities are not explicitly mentioned in institutional mission statements. Less than half (43%) of those responding have internal internationalization advisory boards, while slightly over one third have no advisory board (37%). One quarter of respondents (25%) reported multiple SIOs at their institutions.

The 2017 survey saw a slight increase in respondents reporting multiple SIOs at their institution (24%). This is compared to the 2014 summary that found 19% with multiple SIOs at their institutions.

SIO Title and Salary. The most common title of Senior International Officers (SIO) from the 2017 survey was Director/Executive Director (38%). The 2017 survey noted a slight increase in the use of the title “Associate or Assistant Vice President/Chancellor/Provost,” with 24% in 2014 while in 2017 this rose to 27%. The third most commonly used title was “Vice President/Chancellor/Provost” at 16%. SIO salaries continue to increase over time. In 2017, the average salary was \$136,090, which is a 12% increase from 2014 (\$122,078), and a 16% increase from 2011 (\$117,411). The salary range for SIOs in 2017 spanned from less than \$75,000 (7%) to above \$200,000 (20%). The most common ranges were \$75,001-\$100,000, \$100,001-\$125,000, and \$125,001-150,000 (with around 20% in each of these ranges).

SIO Reporting Structure. Responses on reporting structure show that most SIOs (71%) report to a Vice President/Chancellor/Provost of Academic Affairs. No other reporting line came close. The next level was at 11% who report to the President/Chancellor or CEO. When asked about any significant changes in the way their institutions structure international programs and offices in the last three years, 54% reported that there has been no significant change. In the 2014 survey, over 53%

reported that there has been significant change in the way their institutions structure international programs with the majority reporting an increased centralization/consolidation and higher priority of internationalization). Only a few SIOs reported a decrease in staffing. In 2017, over half (60%) reported no significant changes in the SIO position at their institutions in the last three years. In general, respondents felt that the SIO position is becoming increasingly important in higher education institutions, with a more strategic focus and expanded responsibilities, particularly in regard to risk management, recruitment, and partnerships (externally focused).

SIO Gender, Age, Degree. In 2017 the gender statistics remained mostly the same as 2014. Half (51%) of the respondents identified as male, 48% identified as female and 1% did not wish to disclose. (In 2014, male SIOs were at 52%, while female SIOs comprised 48%.) In terms of age, a quarter of SIOs fell into the age category of 56–60 (26%) followed by 51–55 (21%). This is compared to 28% and 19% respectively in 2014. The remaining respondents in 2017 fell within a normal bell curve distribution at between 2% and 14% in the following age categories: 61–65 (14%), 46–50 (13%), 41–45 (10%), 66–70 (8%), 36–40 (4%), 71–75 (2%) and Below 36 (2%). The overwhelming majority of SIOs in this survey have a doctorate or professional degree (81%), followed by a distant 3% with master’s degrees, and 2% with bachelor’s degrees. Nearly half (41%) of SIO respondents hold a tenured position at their current institution, which has dropped from the 49% that held tenure in the 2014 survey. Interestingly, a small number of SIOs aspire to become president (6%) or provost (6%) while over half (65%) aspire to remain in an SIO position.

SIO Experience. Of those completing the survey, nearly half (46%) have been in current SIO positions for five years or less, with 23% having been in their current SIO position for 6-10 years, 10% in their current SIO position for 11-15 years and only 3% have been in their current SIO position for 16-20 years. In regard to overall SIO experience, 46% are new SIOs (0-5 years of experience), 26% have 6-10 years of SIO experience, which is similar to those with 11- 20 years of SIO experience (23%) and the remaining 5% had more than 20 years of experience as an SIO. More than one third (39%) have been involved in the international education field for over 20 years as compared to 19% reported in the 2014 survey.

SIO Responsibilities. The top three primary SIO responsibilities are:

<u>2017</u>	<u>2014</u>
International Institutional Relations and linkages/Partnerships (92%)	Linkages/Partnerships (94%)

Strategic Planning for Internationalization (90%)

Representing Institution in Institutional Dealings (90%)

Representing Institution in Institutional Dealings (84%)

Strategic Planning for Internationalization (86%)

These are followed by other primary responsibilities, which include study abroad/exchanges (76%), risk management (71%), faculty-led programs (69%) and international students/scholars (67%). International development and community outreach and engagement were more distant primary responsibilities at 49% and 48%, respectively. Some lesser primary responsibilities included curriculum internationalization (46%), faculty/staff development (45%), and co-curriculum programming (37%). The largest areas of secondary responsibility are “area or international or foreign language studies” (85%), research (66%), branch campuses (63%), grants and/or fundraising (61%), and international service learning & internships (59%).

Staffing and Budgets. There was a wide range of staffing and budgets reported with too much variability to summarize in this report.

Valued Characteristics for SIOs. Understanding institutional culture and context was the most valued knowledge area by SIOs (78%). This is followed very closely by knowledge of international issues in higher education (76%), followed by leadership knowledge (55%), current and world affairs (21%), business principles and practices (24%), and cross-cultural theories/methods (16%). The most valued experiences were those of academic administration (72%) and managing an organization (70%), followed by managing budget/finance (51%) and overseas living experience (32%). Meanwhile, the most valued skills of an SIO were interpersonal skills (70%), followed by planning/visioning skills (57%) and intercultural competence (51%). The top two personal characteristics valued in SIOs were vision (57%) and energy/passion (48%), followed by diplomacy (45%), entrepreneurship (32%), creativity (30%) and flexibility (30%).

SIO Priority and Emerging Issues. SIOs overwhelmingly noted that the number one challenge (1) was that of resources, with a majority stating that financial resources was a chief priority. The other five issues rounding out the list of top six issues for SIOs include (2) international enrollment management—specifically numbers of international students; (3) increasing the number of students and programs for study abroad; (4) U.S. political and immigration policies; (5) “buy-in,” importance/awareness of international education on campus and (6) health-safety risk management.

Brief Discussion/Conclusions. Given the data reported on the survey, the current and future situation for SIOs still looks promising with SIOs reporting increased prominence and relevance of the position at their institutions. Of those responding to this survey, nearly half were female (48%) and the majority of respondents were from the age categories from age 41 to 60 (67%), meaning that the prevailing image of an SIO being a male in his 60s is no longer the norm. However, the profession lacks racial diversity with 69% of the respondents marking white, 10% marking black, 5% marking Asian, and 5% marking Latinx. Given that 50% of those completing this survey have been in their current SIO positions for five years or less, AIEA is encouraged to continue to provide professional development targeted to those new to their current positions. In addition, given that nearly half of the respondents (39%) have been in the international higher education field for 20+ years, AIEA may consider providing further advanced-level professional development for more experienced members. Any professional development for SIOs should take into account the top three reported SIO responsibilities of partnerships, institutional representations and strategic planning for internationalization, as well as the top three needed knowledge areas reported from this survey: knowledge of institutional context, international issues in higher education, and leadership knowledge and the top three skill areas as interpersonal, visioning and intercultural competence. In addition, the most valued experiences by SIOs were academic administration, organization management, and financial management. The consistently top pressing issue for SIOs (in the 2014 and 2017 surveys) remains (lack of) resources.

The information gathered from this survey presents a snapshot of a current Senior International Officer, including demographics, salary and title information, reporting structure as well as other information such as responsibilities, perceived challenges, and needed experiences, skills, and knowledge. This is by no means a comprehensive SIO survey and there are numerous limitations including involvement of only current members of AIEA, most of whom are US-based, so this provides a limited and biased view of leaders in campus internationalization. In particular this includes those who are more inclined to complete an online survey. This preliminary analysis needs further in-depth analysis to gain deeper insights into SIO positions. Further research will also inform ways AIEA can strengthen its contribution to the field, support the profession, and professionals. In addition, it is hoped that when combined with other data, higher education institutions may be able to develop grounded guidelines regarding hiring, compensation, and supporting campus internationalization efforts.