

# FORUM

MEMBER  
MAGAZINE

*Discussing international education*



## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL OFFICER

**06** NEW TIMES, NEW CHALLENGES

**29** 360° COMMUNICATIONS

**32** IN CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS MURRAY

**39** WHO IS EUROPE'S  
SENIOR INTERNATIONAL OFFICER?

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# CONTENTS

- 04 EDITORIAL**
- 05 CONTRIBUTORS**
- 06 NEW TIMES, NEW CHALLENGES**  
The ever-changing nature of the international office
- 08 SPAIN'S NEW INTERNATIONAL OFFICER**  
Beyond international recruitment
- 10 BREAKING DOWN WALLS: THE SILO EFFECT**  
Not losing sight of the big picture
- 12 WORKING FAST**  
What makes a good international officer?
- 14 A FAMILY AFFAIR**  
Two international officers, mother and daughter, shed light into the history of the field
- 18 BUILDING BRIDGES**  
Nurturing academic contacts early on
- 20 THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE AS A CLASSROOM**  
International educators can benefit from educating themselves
- 23 LEADERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**  
The pros and cons of academic and administrator leadership
- 26 THE NEW INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUS MANAGER**  
The new frontier for international education
- 29 360° COMMUNICATIONS**  
Doing the work is half the battle, informing others is the other half
- 32 IN CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS MURRAY**  
Founder of International Education Association of Australia
- 36 A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AND SPACE**  
Senior International Officers from 10 countries share their experiences
- 39 WHO IS EUROPE'S SENIOR INTERNATIONAL OFFICER?**  
Who are they and what do they do?
- 42 SEVILLE: A TRUE MOSAIC OF CULTURES**  
The host city for EAIE 2017 is a show stopper
- 46 BLOG SPOT**  
Online news, views and insights
- 47 EVENTS CALENDAR**  
Upcoming events in the field

#### Published by

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Printed by Drukkerij Raddraaier, Amsterdam

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ISSN 1389-0808

Cover photo: shutterstock



## 06

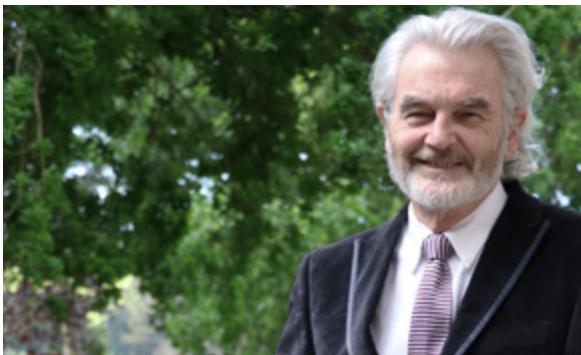
“Ongoing transformations leave their imprint on the job of international officers”

NEW TIMES, NEW CHALLENGES

## 29

“Without well-rounded communication, internationalisation reduces itself to the central international office and the activities of isolated groups”

360° COMMUNICATIONS



## 32

“I firmly believe in the value of sharing our experiences and learning from one another”

IN CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS MURRAY

## 39

“Everyone who identified as a Senior International Officer reported either leading or being involved in strategic planning efforts”

WHO IS EUROPE'S SENIOR INTERNATIONAL OFFICER?



# EDITORIAL

**C**reative. Collaborative. Knowledgeable. Nimble. Specialist. Generalist. Academic, advocate, or scholar-practitioner. Which way (or ways!) forward for the international officer of today and for the future? This is the fundamental question of the current issue of *Forum*, bounded in a discussion of what is needed to effectively manage internationalisation and move our institutions forward into new – both exciting and daunting – territory, as this very volatile 21st century unfolds before us.

The articles in this issue illustrate the many dimensions of the work that international offices and officers need to address, as well as the range of complex circumstances in which professionals in our field must operate. Common threads include the need to anticipate change, deal with ambiguity, and cultivate and sustain productive relationships with many different kinds of actors who have a stake in the internationalisation agenda.

Yulia Grinkevich's piece uses the term *bricoleurs*, which for me captures two crucial ideas relevant to our field. First, there is the constant call to **create**, to build out new programmes and new initiatives as new demands arise. There is a real sense of evolution in the field of international education. We see this, for example, in the context of Nigel Healey's article on the very new role of the international branch campus manager, and certainly in the inter-generational

reflections of (daughter) Sara Marie Ullerø and (mother) Héléne Bernot Ullerö, also captured in this issue. Second, the work of a *bricoleur* is done with whatever materials may be at hand. This requires a keen ability to understand one's context and to leverage the resources at one's disposal. Making the most of relationships – for example, between academics and administrators – is touched upon by contributor Douglas Proctor and others, while working to turn our international offices into 'classrooms', as suggested by Jane Edwards, also builds on this notion of making creative use of the particular resources within our reach.

Our interview with Dennis Murray, a 'founding father' of the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), highlights key issues related to the future work of international education professionals, particularly in relation to creativity, adaptability and "*shared and distributed*" leadership. He also alludes to the notion of being attentive to 'surprises' – a powerful insight in a year that brought us Brexit and a thoroughly tumultuous presidential election in the United States, both developments with potentially profound effects on the global international education community.

Despite – or perhaps precisely because of – the inevitability of unexpected turns in the road, the need has perhaps never been greater to think and plan strategically, and to act on the basis of thoughtful, ethical vision and purpose. This goes



for individuals and for institutions. The EAIE's newly unveiled strategy for the period 2016–2020 provides an important roadmap for our organisation as we seek to navigate the uncertain – but certain-to-surprise! – period ahead. *Forum* and the EAIE's other publications will do their best to contribute to the realisation of the four strategic goals that underpin the Association's vision, and to foster wider conversation about the ways we can improve our individual practice and work collectively to make a positive difference in the world through international education.

—*Laura Rumbley*, Editor  
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# CONTRIBUTORS

## *Yulia Grinkevich*

**Director of Internationalisation, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia**

As a true international educator, Yulia practices what she preaches: she takes her son on international trips so that he can experience different cultures and traditions.

## *Maria Shabanova*

**Deputy Director of the Academic Integration Centre, Office of Internationalisation, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia**

When Maria isn't working with international students and faculty, she likes to get crafty. Currently, she's developing her crochet, embroidery and metal clay skills.

## *Luis Delgado*

**Executive Advisor, General Secretariat of Universities, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Spain**

Besides his work as a civil servant, Luis is a researcher in higher education. He spends the rest of his time very actively: travelling, swimming, cycling, sailing, and playing golf.

## *Totti Könnölä*

**Managing Director, Insight Foresight Institute, Spain**

Totti, who works as an innovation consultant, has over 100 publications under his belt. The more he learns about innovation, the more he sees it as a form of jazz.

## *Erin Paullin*

**Global Officer, Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin, Ireland**

When she isn't at work, Erin, a recent transplant to Dublin, enjoys visiting the city's many comedy clubs and experiencing the renowned Irish humour at its finest.

## *Rosemary Smith*

**Director of International Experience and Exchange, Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University, UK**

Rosemary is a busy woman: she works with students and speaks Japanese, French and some German. Now, she's walking the coast of Wales – which is over 800 miles long!

## *Douglas Proctor*

**PhD candidate, University of Melbourne, Australia**

Douglas is a keen singer and sings baritone in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus. From February, he will be in Dublin and is open to recommendations of a good choir there!

## *Jane Edwards*

**Dean of International and Professional Experience and Senior Associate Dean, Yale University, USA**

Jane is a polyglot in its purest forms, speaking French, Spanish, Portuguese, Welsh and Esperanto. As if that wasn't enough, she has reading knowledge of Latin and German.

## *Laura Crane*

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When Laura has any free time from work these days, she works a little more – on attaining her PhD from the University of Toronto.

## *Nigel Healey*

**Vice Chancellor, Fiji National University, Fiji**

All of Nigel's degrees are from UK universities, yet his most formative experiences are from countries he has lived and worked in (Australia, USA, Belarus, Russia, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand and now Fiji)!

## *Marina Casals Sala*

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When Marina isn't working on international strategy, institutional processes, training in international education, or managing an international office, she enjoys salsa dancing.

## *Vicky Lewis*

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Vicky has lived and worked in France, Germany and Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, at just 18 years old, she spent some time volunteering at a children's home.



# NEW TIMES, NEW CHALLENGES

Often pressured to react to changes in institutional goals and contexts, international officers have become increasingly adaptive. In order to succeed in these complex environments, a key set of competences is in high demand. The authors take us through the past and the present realities of this ever-changing profession.

**G**lobalisation has made higher education complex and diverse, not only in terms of fields of study and research, but also in terms of organisation and structure. It's hard to imagine a higher education institution that can avoid the influence of global trends. These factors have led to a major shift in the nature of academic institutions, thus affecting all spheres of the university life including administrative personnel.<sup>1</sup>

These changes have implications for university administration on the whole – and international officers in particular. They are in the vanguard of a new, continuously changing reality, and are inevitably influenced by it. Ongoing transformations leave their imprint on the job of international officers, and it would be useful to take stock of how the competences and skills required for it developed during the course of its evolution.<sup>2</sup>

We focus on three phases of the work of international officers to show how tasks

and challenges shape the requirements to succeed in this role:

**Phase one:** Once international offices (IOs) began to administer large-scale mobility programmes in the 1980s and 1990s, they started focusing on the implementation of mobility and partnerships. In terms of staff, they relied mainly on two sources of personnel: academics with established connections with partner universities who were facilitating the process, and administrative staff with a proficiency in foreign languages. Several other traits became vital as well: being open-minded, able to work independently and having excellent communication skills. There was little opportunity for specific training, tailored for the work of international officers, and in this sense they were enthusiastic and highly skilled amateurs, 'jacks of all trades'.

**Phase two:** As the number of international students and faculty grew, international officers had to specialise in a specific area of work, such as



Photos: Shutterstock

recruiting students or faculty, managing study abroad programmes and incoming mobility, organising summer schools, *etc.* New sub-divisions within IOs were often created to handle these specialised tasks. Some universities, depending on the institutional layout and context, also attempted to decentralise the functions of the IO. Faculties, departments and other university units got more involved in working with the international agendas of universities – be it in the adaptation of incoming and outgoing students or the initiation of partnership agreements.

Quite a number of international conferences, meetings and other events were designed specifically for international officers, so as to facilitate and support international initiatives and the sharing of good practices. A great emphasis was placed on closely monitoring the international trends of higher education development, in particular, concerning the implementation of international activities of the university. As far as the skills of an international officer are concerned, professionalism came to the forefront as one of the core values, closely connected with constant learning of new trends and being culturally sensitive. Analytical skills similar to those of academic colleagues became crucial, as they allowed international officers to keep up with the growing body of research on higher education trends, data and complex processes.

**Phase three:** In recent years, many universities have decentralised or main-

streamed the traditional functions of the IO, following the need for a deeper integration of internationalisation issues into the regular work of other university units. The concept of ‘embedded internationalisation’ has become a very influential approach, evidenced by the EAIE’s 2013 Institutional Award for Internationalisation going to the University of Helsinki – which implemented this approach. However, the benefits of decentralisation and centralisation of the IO’s work remain an open question. We think the answer heavily depends on the internal and external context of the university, its strategic goals, regulatory environment, institutional culture and complexity.

#### COMPETENCES IN HIGH DEMAND

New goals and complicated challenges demand rethinking the approaches to the work of IOs, and finding new solutions. Whatever structural changes happen, international officers remain at the forefront of reacting to changes and helping to resolve complex issues related to international affairs. Universities are becoming increasingly complex, with each of their parts – academic and administrative – developing their own professional identities and niches. Yet all of them need to come together.

International officers often have to represent the university when meeting with partners, and there are two major competences for which there is growing demand. The first is the ability to perceive the university ‘mosaic’ as a whole,

and conveying a **holistic picture** of it. The second is the capacity of working with other university colleagues and units, becoming **integrators**.

#### FROM AMATEURS TO BRICOLEURS

It is vital that IOs remain in the loop about the university’s strategy and how their work relates to it – aware of the internal and external contexts. There is a great demand for innovative and competent professionals who follow the university’s chosen path of development and propose flexible solutions that take changing contexts and resources into account.

In a way, we’ve come full circle. We’ve reached a new spiral of evolution. Again IOs need to be able to know everything at once. Rather than enthusiastic amateurs, universities now need professional *bricoleurs* who “*shape the beautiful and useful out of the dump heap of human life*”, as Claude Lévi-Strauss said of artists. While our work is not artistic per se, it is also not purely made up of mechanical problem-solving. It requires a creative, heuristic and innovative approach so that from many goals, limitations and opportunities, something beautiful can emerge.

— YULIA GRINKEVICH & MARIA SHABANOVA

1. Altbach P. (2007). *Tradition and Transition: The International Imperative in Higher Education*. Boston College and Sense Publishers.

2. Torenbeek J., ed. (2005). *Managing an International Office*. European Association for International Education.

# SPAIN'S NEW INTERNATIONAL OFFICER

In Spain, the international office is still widely regarded as the domain of international recruitment. While this remains an important aspect, other functions have emerged. The Ministry of Education's internationalisation strategy for Spanish universities promotes a much more holistic approach.

An analysis of job offers for international officers in higher education in Spain leads to the conclusion that their main goal is to support the recruitment of international students. They often work within recruitment teams, managing sales channels for specific regions to fulfil the university's recruitment objectives. Nowadays, however, the concept of internationalisation of higher education should go far beyond student recruitment, the mere mobility of students, or the signing of international agreements. There is much more to a career in international higher education!

#### A WEALTH OF POSSIBILITIES

To name a few activities: there is internationalisation of curricula, brain circulation, internationalisation of research, joint or multiple international qualifications with foreign partners, internationalisation at home, the development of transnational campuses, the creation of international systems for quality assurance, the accreditation and verification of study programmes, competition for the very best students, international rankings, the development of international alumni

associations, the sharing of experiences and good practices, employability and entrepreneurship, and so forth. From this wide view of internationalisation, it becomes clear that the role of the international officer extends far beyond travelling on behalf of the university and marketing the institution internationally.

International offices contribute, for instance, to the building up of joint or multiple international programmes with top foreign universities. They take part in supporting welcome services for international students and staff and in the development of international campuses abroad, among other things. In addition, they can be active in the internationalisation of research by supporting university researchers to take part in international networks, research and innovation. They can help deal with complex international technology transfer agreements that have legal and technical transnational intellectual property rights issues. The wealth of possibilities is endless.

#### SPECIFIC SKILLS

It is undeniable that their role involves competing, on behalf of their universities,





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for the best international students. This is important for many international universities, but even this role has changed. In the past, it was the task of academics to recruit top students. Now, it is a profession in its own right, requiring specific skills and competences. There is a growing need to fully understand intercultural differences between the home university and potential students from different cultures – as their specific needs may neither be fully understood nor satisfied by the international office. Internationalisation is no longer just about trying to attract top fee-paying students or even the overall value of international students to the university. Care must be given to explaining to international students important issues such as the entry criteria, language requirements, cultural aspects, and more.

There is a need for increasing professionalisation in the international office, with additional and different competences from those of academic or research staff. However, increased commercialisation of the international office, with targets for instance in the number of international students recruited, should be prevented. This can increase the pressures

of the work in a wrong or incomplete direction, not fully in line with a broad internationalisation strategy.

#### QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY

In Spain, the 'Internationalisation Strategy for Universities', considers the internationalisation of higher education to be

to their international activities. The role of international offices in Spain is no longer just about recruitment. They contribute to the development of intercultural understanding and knowledge exchange with other countries, as well as the international reputation of the home university. In so doing, they raise the attractiveness and

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### They contribute to the development of intercultural understanding and knowledge exchange with other countries

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the process of integrating an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension into the aims, functions (teaching, learning, research, technology transfer, services) and the delivery of higher education, as an essential factor in the reforms for the improvement of the quality and the efficiency of Spanish universities.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the strategy promotes the development of institutional international offices, widening the job profiles and careers of those managing internationalisation.

The majority of Spanish universities now have structures that provide support

competitiveness of the country as whole in the global competition for talent (students, professors, researchers, professionals, entrepreneurs) and knowledge-related investments within a new global distribution of labour and capital resources. In this new reality, working in the international office can be hugely rewarding and very important for the development of the internationalisation of the universities.

— LUIS DELGADO & TOTTI KÖNNÖLÄ

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1. Ministerio de Educacion. (2014). *Strategy for the Internationalization of the Spanish Universities*.



# BREAKING DOWN WALLS THE SILO EFFECT

That universities are increasingly internationalised should not come as news to anyone working in our field. As international activities expand, however, the needs of different parts of the university tend to grow in complexity. It's easy for departments to lose sight of big-picture institutional goals and for central international offices to be out of the loop of activities taking place at their own universities.

**E**ffective and comprehensive internationalisation is at the forefront of many, if not most, strategic plans within the 21st century university. In our increasingly globalised universities, leaders have recognised the need to implement internationalisation plans to insure that our institutions remain academically and economically competitive. At the same time, internationalisation helps to prepare students and researchers for life and work in a multicultural world with fluid borders. A strong, strategic plan for internationalisation, however, is only as effective as its execution. While university leaders have an invaluable role to play, international officers within the institution perform a key function in embedding internationalisation in all its facets.

#### **DAY-TO-DAY INTERNATIONALISATION**

Many large universities may suffer from the 'silo effect', in which numerous different departments and schools are unaware of developments, ideas and strategies being implemented by other entities on the campus. This can be an especially large problem for internationalisation, which is typically managed by an international or global office at the university. While these offices act as an overarching driver of international services and internationalisation efforts on the campus, their effectiveness can be limited if they are not incorporated into the day-to-day operations of each individual department and generate buy-in for internationalisation activities in the wider campus community of academics, administrative staff and student leaders.



Photo: Shutterstock

To combat this ‘silo effect’, universities are adapting and developing new types of international officer roles to implement comprehensive and holistic internationalisation. These international officers are responsible for making the case for internationalisation to multiple stakeholders within the university and providing a

has, since 2012, created and expanded the role of ‘Global Officers’ who are responsible for implementing the overall global relations strategy on a micro scale. A small cohort of Global Officers work within individual schools at Trinity College Dublin to encourage internationalisation efforts, and to help the schools create their

## Universities are adapting and developing new types of international officer roles to implement comprehensive and holistic internationalisation

pathway for action within their own areas of expertise and responsibility.<sup>1</sup> This strategy allows the international office to in effect put down the roots of internationalisation within smaller departments or schools on the wider campus, enabling new trends and priorities with an international focus to spread from within.

### IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY

At Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin, the Global Relations Office

own international strategies – reflecting the strategic goals of the university.

The role of each Global Officer is varied, complex and dependent on the needs of the schools they work within. For many of the schools, it is a new departure to have an administrative staff role integrated within their school that is specific to the development and integration of international activities. A Global Officer can therefore be involved in non-EU student recruitment and marketing of

programmes, one-on-one student advising, alumni relations and the development and maintenance of international partnerships and exchange agreements.

In turn, faculty, administrative staff and students within a school working with a Global Officer feel more connected with activities related to internationalisation within the university, oftentimes offering ideas and suggestions for improvement that otherwise would have been unheard or unspoken. International students, in particular, now have an advocate within the school and someone who can aid them in navigating a different educational system and guide them to the most appropriate resource. This leads to clear lines of communication between individual schools and the Global Relations Office, making internationalisation efforts more effective, integrated and accessible.

### COMBATTING STUMBLING BLOCKS

When a university is looking to expand or revamp their international officer role, it is imperative to consider how that role can combat the main stumbling blocks to internationalisation. Integrating internationalisation at all levels of an institution, as opposed to segregating these activities to one office or area, while working to create institution-wide buy-in for institutional internationalisation strategic objectives, can and should be a large part of an international officer’s responsibilities. When carefully planned and executed, the role of the international officer, will act as the key force driving forward comprehensive internationalisation across the university.

— ERIN PAULLIN

1. Green, M. & Olson, C. (2008). *Internationalizing the Campus: A User's Guide*. ACE Centre for Institutional and International Initiatives.

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# WORKING

# FLEXIBLE

# AWARE

# SCHOLARLY

# TEACHERS

The work of international officers is challenging, but also rewarding. By being flexible, aware, scholarly and teachers (FAST), international officers can make the most of their professions.

We are in a very privileged position in our roles as ‘international officers’, ‘academic advisors’, ‘student exchange coordinators’, or any title that encompasses the vast array of work that we do. Privileged? Yes, indeed. It is widely acknowledged that a period of study abroad is one of the most formative experiences of the life of a young person. We are all perfectly familiar with the idea that students gain independence, develop competences for future employment, make friends from many different countries, develop language skills, and so many other similar benefits. All are true. We see it ourselves, as we watch our students develop and gain these attributes. We are indeed privileged to be the recipients of enthusiastic and excited messages – we have all heard: *“It was the best year of my life!”* I further feel privileged to have met and worked with so many wonderful people worldwide, engaged in the same sort of work that I do, and with the same approach.

Even if I stopped doing this job tomorrow, my sense of privilege and feeling that I had contributed in some small way would never leave me. But in thinking about the actual day-to-day reality of how we set up these experiences for students, I think several other words sit alongside privilege.

#### **FLEXIBLE**

We need to be flexible. We have knowledge about our own institutions, and we know exactly what students have to achieve while they are studying abroad. In most cases we have developed knowledge of the marking systems used in our partner universities, we have a general awareness of the different styles of teaching, and different rules and regulations associated with the differing classroom environments. In our home universities, we have to be prepared to find a way to make things work, to fit semester-only students into year-long modules without

causing the computer to crash; we have to be able to respond with equanimity to the numerous questions asked by students and colleagues.

We are often heading up a team, so we have to be able to successfully manage and lead co-workers, cope with a high workload and work under pressure. Can we adapt our current programmes so that there is a perfect fit for incoming exchange students? We want to do the

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## Our success revolves around flexibility and 'changing hats'

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very best we can to ensure that our incoming exchange students gain valuable, worthwhile, rewarding academic and social experiences with us. But academic regulations in many universities were not set up with exchange students in mind. Although for decades it has been the case that students studying languages would spend time abroad, this has not been the case across the length and breadth of universities and therefore so much adaptation is currently required to fit the needs of 21st century geographically mobile students. We must work within our regulatory framework to build new foundations. We use the idiom of 'having to change hats'. Another moment, another task, another hat! Our success revolves around flexibility and 'changing hats'.

### AWARE

We must be aware. What is it really like to travel, in many cases, alone, to a different country and university? It is not simply this aspect of travel which has long been in operation, but to make the most of this time with the pressure of knowing that it all counts for their academic result. It is not simply a chance to live abroad and have fun – important as that is.

Can we put ourselves into the position of the student? Have we done this ourselves? If the students know that we have awareness, they will respect our judgement or suggestions. Even as staff members who may not have studied abroad, it is our choice when visiting partners to not utilise taxis but to literally step on the local bus or walk, in order to see the current experience through the student's eyes. We need empathy, awareness, and can also show it.

### SCHOLARLY

We need to be scholarly. We have to have scholarship and we need to be able to promote our scholarship research. What exactly is our area of specialisation? Where is our expertise? Amidst the backdrop of increasing workloads, to also serve as a member of academic faculty, and to produce research is no small feat. Yet we should acknowledge that without realising it, we have developed a wealth of knowledge and this knowledge is to be shared for the betterment of others. Where should scholarship lie? Since I first joined the EAIE, around eight years ago, I have observed much written in the field of research within international education. What a wonderful situation we find ourselves in – limits of time notwithstanding – to be in an

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## We have developed a wealth of knowledge and this knowledge is to be shared for the betterment of others

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environment where our privileged roles also provide much input for research is something to celebrate. It is my firm belief that those of us who deal with this work have something to contribute – but where the time for writing fits in with

everything else could be seen as a source of further study in itself!

### TEACHERS

Finally, we stand as teachers. We are teachers and educators. Certainly meeting with a group of students and talking to them about possible opportunities abroad is a form of teaching. Providing guidance, being advisors and confidantes throughout their time abroad are perfect examples of formative teaching. Students look to us a source of knowledge, and as guides and mentors.

### GLOBAL CITIZENS

We work FAST. We are dedicated professionals, working alongside many other dedicated professionals in various fields. We have the privilege of working with conscientious young people as they embark on their personal development in readiness for their future lives. As we stand FAST, students draw from this. We hold FAST to our principles and thus represent a firm, fast unit on which our students can rely. We have to work FAST, as time is of the essence in our work.

We fulfil all the requirements of flexibility, awareness, scholarship and teaching; through sharing our knowledge and our experiences, and by working together, we can expand and develop our field so that no longer will exchange student activity be peripheral or require adaptation. It will become mainstream and a strong, cohesive element of worldwide education. One that produces dedicated, confident, respectful and positive global citizens who carry these principles fast and firm to the next generation of internationally experienced students in a globalised world.

— ROSEMARY SMITH

# A FAMILY AFFAIR



Photo: Christopher Solett



Photo courtesy: Sara Marie Ullersø

## IR

The field of international education is always evolving. For this issue of *Forum*, we interviewed two women – mother and daughter H el ene Bernot Uller o and Sara Marie Uller o – whose collective professional experience spans several decades. Their careers illustrate some of the intergenerational peculiarities of our field, how priorities (and technologies!) have shifted through the years, and how some things never change.

**H el ene (60) is a seasoned practitioner in international education. She began her career at the University of Oslo as a student trainee and became head of international services for both education and research. Later, she worked in the Netherlands in development cooperation with Africa. She currently works as a consultant at Boston College, USA.**

**How did you find your way into your first position in the field?**

HU: My first ‘real’ position was as an admissions officer, credential evaluator, and student advisor for international students in 1985, at the University of Oslo. The position was fun and varied. It combined counselling international students from the whole world, which was exciting; detective work on academic documents, to make sure they were authentic and to figure out how much their credits were worth; encounters with international credential experts, mostly from the United States; and a few years later, international travel. A dream job!

**What special skills, background, or experiences did you possess that you feel were most relevant to getting your first job in the field?**

HU: I knew that I wanted to work internationally. I had studied English and international political sciences. The international office of a large university seemed like a good place to start. Having already lived in a variety of countries (Austria, Italy, France, Belgium, Norway), I felt very much at ease there. My position

required me to be systematic, thorough, accurate, well-organised, able to network professionally when abroad, and to have attuned social skills.

**What were the main priorities of the office where you first worked?**

HU: Out of a large number of enquiries, we selected eligible international students. Back then, it all happened through ‘snail mail’. We worked closely with social workers, health services, immigration, Norwegian language instructors, and with designated academics at the various schools in order to offer the most robust support system. On a strategic level, the office developed formal guidelines for the admission of international students. It set up a list of basic entry requirements for students from foreign higher education systems and worked constantly on professionalising and mainstreaming procedures to cope with increasing workloads.

**What stood out as the main challenges and goals at your office?**

HU: As the number of foreign applications increased, as well as the number of refugees, we strived to become an expertise centre on higher education systems worldwide. We received good help from invaluable contacts – in particular from USA-based agencies. Further, we spent much time in dialogue with the registrar’s office and the general administration for home students, to transfer international students with permanent residence to them. Despite much good will and understanding, what an uphill effort it was! These were also the early years



of digitisation. I was among the first to use a word processor! We developed the first digital registers and information systems on constantly evolving – and rapidly obsolete – technology, forcing us forever to adjust and adapt. *Les temps modernes...*

**What did you personally find most challenging in your first job in international education?**

**HU:** As a foreigner myself in Norway, my biggest challenge back then was to learn to move around the various services of the university. I had to master the language, the culture, the organisation of the university, its customs, context, disciplines, the structure and development of Norwegian higher education, and the rules and regulations of administration. In addition, I had to familiarise myself with subject areas and programmes radically

Those who came as ‘free movers’ [students who undertake mobility activities independently] were regarded with curiosity and a bit of suspicion. Our marketing materials back then did not encourage students to put themselves through the ‘ordeal’ of learning Norwegian (there were no study programmes in English at the time), coping with the culture shock and the harsh climate of our little country in the far north.

**What does Sara have, as an internationalisation professional today, that you did not have when you first started? How is the profession different?**

**HU:** Sara has two advantages. She has access to a whole infrastructure for professional support and development. Internationalisation has become a recognised field of higher education management,

Sara (33) has been working in international education for the past nine years. She has extensive experience in different scholarship and grant schemes (Erasmus+ and Fulbright) and has lived and worked in both Norway and the USA.

**What is your experience working in international education?**

**SU:** I started out nine years ago, working part-time at the international office at the University of Oslo, counselling students wishing to study abroad. I moved into a full-time position at the Fulbright office in Oslo in 2008 and stayed there until 2015, with a one-year break as an advisor on higher education at the Norwegian Consulate General in New York.

**Where do you currently work?**

**SU:** I currently work at the Office for International Relations and Research Support at the University of Oslo as Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator, where I have been for exactly one year. I was attracted to the possibility of broadening my knowledge of the field and working for a larger and different kind of organisation.

**What special skills, background, or experiences do you possess that you think make you a good fit for your current position?**

**SU:** My current position consists of a lot of information processing. I think being organised and detail-oriented help me keep track of all the nuances in the Erasmus+ programme. One of my main responsibilities at Fulbright entailed direct contact with students and researchers – a part of the job that I thoroughly enjoyed.

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## Internationalisation has become a recognised field of higher education management

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different to my own background. I was expected to provide a seamless interface between ‘international’ and ‘home’. It all ended well: a few years down the road I was leading the international office.

**On a scale of 1–5, how central would you say was the work of your office to the mission and strategic interests of your university at that time?**

**HU:** I would give it a 2, although this sounds harsh. The senior management was appreciative of our work, but in all respects, foreign students were outsiders. They were in need of more tailor-made support and resources than the ordinary system – apart from our office – was capable of offering.

with agreed upon concepts and focus areas, policies and programmes at the international, regional and national levels, associations and networks, training opportunities, resources, and funding. At her university, Sara has an organisation around her that acknowledges the place of ‘international’ in the institution’s strategy and general management, and is staffed accordingly. Her work, together with her unit at the University of Oslo, has a different scale and impact. It keeps her on her toes!

**What’s the best advice you ever received about being a good international officer?**

**HU:** Network!

Fortunately, direct contact and advising of university employees, both administrative and teaching staff, is an important part of my daily work now. Working with friendly and reliable people inspires me, and I hope the same traits are part of the reason why I was a good fit for my position.

**What are the main priorities of the office where you currently work?**

SU: To name a few key priorities, my office provides – among other things: support to the university units regarding institutional cooperation nationally and internationally; management of international cooperation programmes; external funding opportunities; and the coordination of inter-faculty internationalisation initiatives.

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## Making international experiences more available, accessible and attractive will never cease to challenge us

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**What stands out as the main challenges and goals your office?**

SU: I think the goal of making international experiences for students and university staff more available, accessible and attractive will never cease to challenge us. Our current minister of Education and Research once said that we should try to make the option of not going abroad the exception, not the rule. It's a bold statement, but it says something about what our goal should be. Norwegians travel more and more abroad on holiday, but we should strive to find inspiration for our work and education abroad as well.

**What do you personally find most challenging in your current job?**

SU: Coming from the Fulbright programme I knew so well, dealing with the university system which is so much bigger, and the Erasmus+ programme with all its possibilities make every work day different and interesting. And yes, sometimes a little challenging. That said, one does acquire tools to deal with all kinds of challenges, even newness.

**On a scale of 1-5, how central would you say is the work of your office to the mission and strategic interests of your university?**

SU: I'd say 4 – although I want to say 5, of course. Internationalisation is central to the university's strategy. Our rector is a dedicated advocate for student exchange and encourages all students and staff to go abroad, enriching our university with new and experiences. I think the best example for proving my office's contribution to the university mission is the fantastic effort put in place to welcome refugees and asylum seekers to Norway.

**How did having a parent who works in international education influence your career path?**

SU: I started going to mum's office at the age of six or seven, stuffing envelopes with welcome letters for international students bound for the University of Oslo. I ended up working with international education mostly by chance.

Having parents working in the same field can be extremely inspiring and it certainly has been for me. Mum's career path bears proof of many years of dedication and success. I am still so new to it all, it feels. But I have no intention of changing

career paths – perhaps that's the biggest similarity of our paths.

**What's the most important advice you would you give to others entering the profession behind you about becoming a good international officer?**

SU: If you can accept that the field is ever-changing and ever-evolving, I think you'd be off to a very good start. That's also one of its best features – there is so much to learn! Don't forget to enjoy making friends all over the world.

# BUILDING



As someone who began working as an international officer 16 years ago, the author of this article has one regret: not trying to work with academics from the start. As international officers move onto managerial and higher positions, working in isolation is no longer an option. His advice? Start paying attention to academics now.

What it means to be an international officer today can vary greatly depending on the scale of the institution and the particular remit of the office or unit in which the work is undertaken. Indeed, without institutional and local context, the term is so broad that it is potentially devoid of meaning. That being said, certain realities hold true for the international officer regardless of context, and these are equally applicable to new international officers today as they were to those who came before them. This is the case for how international officers engage and intersect with academic staff (faculty) in their institutions. Drawing on the reflections of someone who first became an international officer in 2000, this article contains practical advice for new international officers today on why and how they should spend time building bridges with academic staff in their work.

## THE FIRST ROLE

For most international officers, their first role is a junior one in which they are given responsibility for a small aspect of a much larger endeavour. For example,

advising students on opportunities for outbound mobility, or managing one aspect of a complex admissions process. This was certainly the case for me in my first administrative role in international education, after teaching English in French universities for a number of years. In this junior international position in a large Australian university, I was responsible for answering or re-directing face-to-face and e-mail enquiries at the front counter of the International Centre.

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I very rarely got to speak with academic staff unless they happened to be asking for directions to somebody's office in the International Centre

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Many of these enquiries related to the international student admission process, or to opportunities for exchange and study abroad. However, others related to international student wellbeing and welfare. I quickly learned the ins and outs of which enquiries needed to be referred to others and which I could answer myself. Before long, I knew the answers to many of the questions I faced on a daily basis

and felt confident that I was doing a good job. With my prior experience teaching English abroad, I also sensed that I had a solid understanding of the concerns and queries of international students on my campus.

In hindsight, there was a big gap in my knowledge at this early stage in my career. This role only really brought me into contact with students and with other professional staff, and I very rarely got to speak with academic staff unless they

happened to be asking for directions to somebody's office in the International Centre. This wasn't necessarily a problem at the time, as my role didn't require me to engage with academic staff. Indeed, the international work of academic staff felt peripheral to my own responsibilities, so there was little push to engage with it. However, as I would realise later in my career, the academic staff of an



# BRIDGES

institution are often at the heart of its internationalisation agenda – teaching international students, revising their curriculum to incorporate global references and examples, designing outbound study experiences, and conducting their research in a global context.

## DRIVERS OF PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

It was when I progressed into more senior international officer positions that I started to have regular contact with academic staff, initially researching and providing written advice on different national policies for international education or for research collaboration. However, much of this work was still channelled through my line manager. It was only later still, when I took on senior management roles in international relations and partnerships, that I started working daily with academic staff to shape institutional strategy and to secure international outcomes of value to the institution, to its students, and to its staff. It was really only at this point that I became truly alert to the breadth and scale of international academic endeavours in my university.

In the vast majority of institutions, academic staff are the key drivers of international partnerships and collaboration, and yet I hadn't immediately recognised this as a new international officer. Why was that? Maybe I just didn't have my eyes wide enough open, or perhaps this reflected the seemingly rigid silos in which many professional and academic staff work. The different

offices in which I worked as a junior international officer were tasked with the implementation of a particular international programme (or a component of it) and were allocated a budget for this purpose. As such, we were not necessarily encouraged to engage with academic staff about their own international work. Indeed, there was generally very little encouragement for us to conceive of our

Mutual understanding of the different, but complementary, roles played by international officers and academic staff is crucial. Although the silos inherent in institutions can make this difficult, one approach to this is to consider who the internal stakeholders are for your work. By virtue of their roles, many international officers focus on the student or indeed on other members of their local international

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## Mutual understanding of the different, but complementary, roles played by international officers and academic staff is crucial

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work as part of a broader internationalisation agenda for the institution, a small part of the larger picture.

### BROADER UNDERSTANDING

My advice for new international officers today is to seek out opportunities to build bridges with academic staff at an early stage. This may not be immediately relevant to the daily tasks at hand, but it will help to build an understanding of the bigger picture. This broader understanding will be crucial if you are looking to advance your career in international education. Key questions that you might want to ask yourself are as follows: What is my institution seeking to achieve by way of its international agenda? Where does my work fit into this? Who else is contributing to my institution's success in its international affairs? In many cases, the answer to this last question will be academic staff.

office as their principal stakeholders. As I've argued previously, a focus on internal stakeholder engagement between academic and professional staff may well lead to more successful outcomes for the international programmes of your institution.<sup>1</sup> But creating connections between your work and academic staff is not only good for the institution. Building these international bridges on-campus will also deepen your understanding of the institutional agenda for internationalisation and support your career development as you progress from international officer to international manager and beyond.

— DOUGLAS PROCTOR

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1. Proctor, D. (2016). Stakeholder Engagement for Successful International Partnerships: Faculty and Staff roles. In C. Banks, B. Siebe-Herbig, & K. Norton (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships: A Guide to Building Sustainable Academic Linkages* (pp. 95–108). New York: Institute of International Education & DAAD German Academic Exchange Service.

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# THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY

International offices (IOs) have bureaucratic duties. Yet as they develop, grow and professionalise, IOs are increasingly expected to innovate. Reflective practice, which involves reading, knowledge exchange, and treating the office as any other learning environment, has the potential to have a real impact on an IO's performance.



We have all welcomed the professionalisation of international education in recent years – the development of MA programmes, certification courses and diplomas, ethics codes and standards for good practice. But for those who come into administration after years of teaching and research, opportunities may be lost as we bushwhack into the weedy areas of systems management, compliance, and survey design. Can we find a way to bring with us into the office the energy and intellectual curiosity of the classroom?

and implement programmes, while also providing the support for programmes designed by faculty, advising and supporting the faculty, and also serving as primary adviser for students who participate in these programmes. For the director who has experience in the classroom, there are two layers of learning here: staff guide the exploration and experience of students, but they must also themselves learn from whatever resources they can find. ‘Professional development’ might mean improving Excel skills, but it might also mean developing a better understanding of the

plan for exploring big-picture topics of the kind that, in the USA, fill the pages of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In recent years, the employability of our graduates, the need to create a culture of inclusiveness for all our students, and the massive impact of social media and on-line education on student learning would be good topics for office discussion. We then seek out space for such discussion, which can be the equivalent of a seminar: all the tools we have developed in the classroom come into play here. We can read foundational texts and move into pragmatics by using specific vignettes and examples from our daily work.

This shared learning enhances everything we do, and it also makes things much more interesting: we all think about the ways our work fits together and serves our institution’s larger goals, and that is a strong driver for our own commitment. So, for example, if we are planning new summer programming, recognition of the career pressures our students face can lead us to design experiences that will help students understand international workplaces,

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## It is easy to set aside our own learning and forget about the larger questions that first lured us into this work

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### NEW PARADIGMS

We continue to be educators. We are deeply embedded in the design of experiences in and beyond the classroom for young people grappling with a complex and globalised world. Yet it is easy to set aside our own learning and forget about the larger questions that first lured us into this work. What if we were to construct our international education offices not as bureaucracies, but as learning communities inspired by the classroom dynamic, and by the insights derived from research? This might allow us to wade back out of the swamps of logistics to the higher ground of reflective practice – and give us energy to innovate and to create new paradigms of practice.

The staff of an international education office will, in many institutions, design

implications of published research, of relevant theory, of national debates. This is the sweet spot where the practice of the classroom can come into play, shaping the fabric of advising discussions, and enlivening the daily working practice of administration.

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## ‘Professional development’ might also mean developing a better understanding of the implications of published research, of relevant theory, of national debates

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### THE SWEET SPOT

Finding this ‘sweet spot’ can come through a structured process. First, all staff come together to agree on the shared goals of the work of the office, and on a

develop language skills, and gain skill sets interesting to future employers. This is not a matter of pandering to current fads, because the design of these initiatives is driven by use of the research, both



Photo: Martin Dremljuga

in international education and in parallel fields – for example, the anthropology of tourism and developmental psychology.

#### CLASSROOM CULTURE

The easy availability, through the internet, of all these teaching resources makes this reflective management style possible in new ways. Today we can build an office culture that is essentially that of a classroom: people bring things they read into meetings. They question the wisdom of new initiatives that are driven by some special interest among the faculty but unconnected to the institution's curriculum and mission, and they propose new models they have seen presented elsewhere. And then – the greatest reward – they re-calibrate their advising interactions with students.

That is the most important part: in my office, we run workshops in which we use vignettes and examples from our experience, and student comments from evaluations, blogs and *the Yale Daily News*.

We have developed together a model for advising conversations with students that we hope foster self-reliance, thoughtful decision making, and engagement with the community. These are outcomes identified as goals of the educational experience of undergraduates in Yale College; to support them we stepped back from our transactional conversations about deadlines and requirements and health and safety, to frame all our advising within a discussion of the student's goals. We draw on the work of scholars who have clarified for us the complexity of the work of understanding other cultures. We modify the way in which we work with students, and design experiences for them, using the research-inspired tools developed by practitioners within the field of international education.

#### REINVENTING THE ORDINARY

There is nothing revolutionary about any of this, of course. For the most part, we reinvent the ordinary practice of sending

staff away to conferences for professional development. But there are many reasons why all those good intentions we develop while away at conferences rarely result in changed practice at home. If we can step back and re-vision our work together as part of daily office life, the benefit maybe greater.

For the director of an international office who has teaching experience, this is a natural extension of the classroom. It makes everything more focused, more interesting, and pulls staff out of their silos into a shared endeavour. We have also discovered that the same strategy makes work with faculty more rewarding for everyone. Faculty are experts in their own field, but not necessarily in constructing fruitful experiential learning models for programmes abroad, and are often excited by partnership with well-prepared and collaborative international educators. Then the students' learning expands, faculty participation is highly valued, and everyone benefits.

This framework for our daily work is a nice counter-balance to the drumbeat of criticism about the 'corporate culture' that has invaded higher education. Many of the tools we need to do our work well come to us from the corporate world, but we can develop a local culture for their use which is fully integrated into the enterprise of teaching and learning which we all celebrate.

—JANE EDWARDS

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# LEADERSHIP STYLES IN THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

There is certainly not one career path that leads to running an international office (IO). This article highlights how academics and administrators fulfilling the same leadership roles at the international office bring very different qualities to the table. ▶



**A**midst increasing professionalisation in the field of international education, the role of leaders in international offices (IOs) can be of key importance. In a recent Canadian study, two IO leaders were interviewed to find out more about their career paths and how these impact their current roles. One leader was from a large university and the other from a small university. One was an academic on a term-based leadership position (which some would call a ‘blended professional’) and the other was a non-unionised staff leader. Both spoke about their own roles as leaders in university-based international offices and also hypothesised about the other’s role in a similar type of university office.

#### INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

Both academic and staff leaders appeared to be less concerned with developing personal autonomy and more interested in building consensus amongst colleagues in order to succeed with developing and implementing internationally-focused agendas. They noted that this consensus can be strengthened by developing their own expertise, which may be completed by participating in the wider field of international education – including engaging in discourses by attending and presenting at conferences, participating in professional associations and having an ongoing understanding of the current issues, concerns and challenges in the field. Participation in such activities can also be recognised as beneficial for both the individual and their home institution, particularly by increasing recognition and positive reputation.

#### SIMILARITIES AND CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES

Despite the differences in staff and faculty roles in IOs, a number of themes were common to both professionals. Both expressed a passion and excitement for international initiatives and collaboration in education. Both spoke of mentorship from others in order to enter into their current roles, and their own mentorship of others. Both noted their comfort with change, and also suggested that their work was part of a ‘bigger picture’, including political, financial and citizenship agendas. Both described their role in the development and implementation of internationalisation – not as leaders at the top of a power structure, but as facilitators, colleagues or ambassadors who attempt to inspire others. They both use strategic methods for getting faculty on board – *ie* using the institutional budget to create research opportunities that could motivate faculty. And finally, both described their career paths as a part of their larger life stories, whereby their current roles may not be the final destination of their careers. Despite these similarities in their roles, the structure in which each leader works as either a faculty or staff leader also had an impact.

Perhaps it is the differences contrasted on the next page – in how individuals are perceived as insiders or outsiders in their institutions and within the larger field of international education – that help determine their success.

Hiring managers of internationalisation may consider that perhaps it is not an individual’s competences, but institutional structures, that can have a larger impact on the future of university leadership and its internationalisation strategy.

— LAURA CRANE

## COMPARING ROLES

### SITUATION



### POTENTIAL PROS



### POTENTIAL CONS



ACADEMIC LEADER ('BLENDED PROFESSIONAL')	STAFF LEADER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be more 'situated' in the institution, having held various roles in the university, but may not have a strong understanding of internationalisation as a field.</li> <li>• 'Insider' status with faculty members may promote the agenda of international research collaboration and curriculum, leading by example.</li> <li>• May be a term leadership position at the university, so various academics will rotate through the role before returning to a purely academic role; in this manner academic integrity may be implied.</li> <li>• Will have an advanced degree – generally a PhD – in various fields.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be more 'situated' in the field of international education and may have developed a career within this field.</li> <li>• May be considered an 'outsider; from the <i>collegium</i> within the institution, particularly if there is any tension in the areas of academic freedom and management priorities. Any research conducted may be more operationally-focused.</li> <li>• May be a permanent managerial position rather than short term, so there is an opportunity to understand the field longitudinally.</li> <li>• Will have an advanced degree – generally a Masters or PhD – which may be in a related field, such as student services or education.</li> </ul>
<p>• Leaders in both contexts are continually learning in an ever-changing environment, but the status as insider or outsider in the field of international education is quite fluid, while this status of faculty or staff in an institution appears more fixed.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have influence with academic colleagues.</li> <li>• May have a stronger dedication to the institution, since the entire career may be in one institution (due to tenure) in various leadership roles.</li> <li>• May be able to forge direct partnerships based on research activities, which can develop into student mobility and other international activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have influence with other leaders in the field at various institutions.</li> <li>• May have experience in similar roles at various institutions.</li> <li>• May have industry connections or expertise that can help to promote the agenda of international programmes, recruitment, etc.</li> <li>• In a long-term contract that doesn't expire, there is an opportunity to conduct long-term strategic planning and implementation with a long-term agenda.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May enter the role with very little understanding of internationalisation in institutions or as a field. While interested in the topic, there may be an extensive learning period before the leadership role can be effectively implemented.</li> <li>• May only understand the paradigm of one academic institution, so it may be difficult to recognise other contexts.</li> <li>• If academics are unionised, there may be allegiances to other agendas or priorities (eg during work stoppages, adhering to set working hours).</li> <li>• With a role in academia and in management simultaneously, time may be divided (eg, research, teaching) instead of dedicated to the work of the IO.</li> <li>• May have little management experience or skills for managing people.</li> <li>• There may be peer pressure from the collegium to maintain the status quo rather than pushing an international agenda forward.</li> <li>• In term-positions, new incoming leaders may end existing activities or goals in favour of alternatives that meet their own personal research interests and/or agendas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have less influence and/or respect from academics in the institution.</li> <li>• Without tenure, this leader may be more likely to leave the institution; movement may serve to homogenise ideas or goals.</li> <li>• May have difficulty understanding the perspective of faculty members and their conflicting priorities to the institution's desire to internationalise.</li> <li>• It may be easier to fire a staff manager who works to promote an international agenda, particularly in a structure of collegial governance.</li> <li>• May not have an in-depth understanding of the institution.</li> </ul>

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUS MANAGER



International branch campuses are growing in number. Different from their home institutions, these campuses are often far more commercially oriented. The task of setting up and running such a venture should not be underestimated. Largely inexperienced managers who lack support from their home institutions struggle with unique difficulties. Are fully international campuses the final frontier for internationalisation?

The theme of this issue of *Forum* highlights the way in which the globalisation of higher education is impacting how university faculty and administrators work. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the leading edge of internationalisation: the spread of international branch campuses (IBCs). The Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT) at the State University of New York at Albany, USA tracks developments in this form of internationalisation and currently reports 232 IBCs in operation around the world. The table to the right shows the top five home (exporting) and host (receiving) countries. Of the five leading home countries, Russia is the anomaly. With the exception of ENGECON Dubai, a campus of Saint-Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics, all the currently operating Russian IBCs are in Russian-speaking, former republics of the USSR (eg Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan). The other four home countries have IBCs all around the world. The leading host countries are all in the Middle-East and Asia.

#### MINI-ME

IBCs are often characterised as the McDonalds of higher education, 'mini-Me' clones of their more well-known parents. At first sight, the prospect of managing a Mini-Me of the University of Nottingham or Texas A&M seems very

#### TOP FIVE HOME AND HOST COUNTRIES (JUNE 2016)

Source: C-BERT

Home country	No. of IBCs	Host country	No. of IBCs
United States	52	United Arab Emirates	32
United Kingdom	29	China	27
Russia	13	Singapore	13
Australia	11	Qatar	11
France	7	Malaysia	9

appealing. What senior academic would not want to teach and assess a standardised curriculum using seconded faculty, usually on quite a small scale, and invariably in a warmer, sunnier climate with a favourable income tax regime?

Reflecting on the line-up of home and host countries, however, begins to throw up potential problems. Setting aside the Russian IBCs in the former USSR, the leading home countries are liberal market democracies, with traditions of academic freedom that encourage students to think critically and challenge orthodoxy. The top host countries, in contrast, include two hereditary monarchies and a one-party state. In terms of political systems, laws, religion, language and customs, there is a yawning cultural distance between

the home and host countries. The way that students are expected to learn and behave on a campus in Shanghai is a long way from their counterparts on a campus in Southampton. Dig deeper beneath the surface and the characterisation of the IBC as a Mini-Me begins to crumble.

#### FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES

IBCs are established in host countries as private, for-profit education companies. Usually, there is a local majority shareholder, so that the home university is the junior partner to a more powerful corporation. IBCs often start their lives in debt, as the new company borrows money to fund the building of the campus and its start-up costs. To keep operating costs down and compete for students, the IBCs hire local faculty and administrative staff,

so that the common language on campus may not be the language of instruction (normally English). To operate in the host country, the IBC has to register with the local Ministry of Education, which may limit tuition fees, set enrolment quotas and mandate the teaching of certain compulsory courses. The Ministry may also have a quality assurance framework, which requires new forms of reporting by the IBC.

#### SOONER CEO THAN DEAN

Seen in this light, the manager of an IBC is less the provost of a university campus abroad and more the chief executive of a private, for-profit company, controlled by a commercial majority partner, and operating in a very alien cultural, political and regulatory environment. In a recent study, I interviewed a number of managers of UK IBCs in China, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates to better understand the challenges of managing this form of internationalisation.<sup>1</sup>

The research highlights two striking findings. The first was the difficulty of balancing the competing pressures from the IBC's main stakeholders: the home university which wants to maintain academic quality and generate revenue; the local 'joint venture' partner, which wants to maximise operating profit; the host government, which often wants to control tuition fees and the curriculum; students, who want an internationally recognised qualification; and local competitors, who want to take market share from the IBC. Managers have to juggle their staff base (eg using staff hired locally on in-country terms and conditions), their academic workload model (reducing the time and resources available for research) and the curriculum (building in local content) to strike the best balance between the

demands of the different stakeholders. The second finding is that the managers of UK IBCs are often relatively inexperienced and receive little preparation or support for what can be a monumental task. A senior executive at Royal Dutch Shell, battle hardened by regular rotations at subsidiaries in developing countries, would find running an IBC in Beijing challenging. He or she would have not only years of international experience, but would be able to benefit from the support of human resource and finance divisions accustomed to moving goods, employees, and money across borders. The IBC manager, in contrast, often takes on the

in 2014), Carnegie Mellon University (Greece, closed in 2010), George Mason University (United Arab Emirates, closed in 2009), University of New South Wales (Singapore, closed in 2007) and Central Queensland University (Fiji, closed in 2007).

#### THE FINAL FRONTIER

To end on a positive note, the overarching conclusion from my study of UK IBCs is that, despite the considerable challenges, both the managers and their key faculty and administrative staff are committed to the quality of the educational experience of their students.

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## Both the managers and their key faculty and administrative staff are committed to the quality of the educational experience of their students

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role with no prior international experience; indeed, some interviewees reported that they had only limited managerial experience in the UK. The home university gives them inadequate support, either in advance or after they arrive, because their back-office functions have limited experience of operating internationally. The culture of UK universities has been shaped by decades of public funding and nationally-negotiated terms and conditions of employment, not wheeling and dealing on the international stage.

Far from being a sinecure in a Mini-Me campus in a sunny climate, managing an IBC can be extremely challenging and many universities have embarked on such ventures without fully appreciating the risks. C-BERT estimates that 27 IBCs have failed, with high profile casualties including New York Institute of Technology (Bahrain, closed

They showed considerable self-awareness and willingness to learn and adapt to the needs of their host country. The number of students studying at IBCs is growing year-on-year and organisations like the EAIE, which have been in the vanguard of promoting and professionalising the management of internationalisation, need to play their part, by offering training programmes to aspiring managers and administrators of IBCs and creating networking opportunities to share best practice. IBCs are the final frontier in the internationalisation of higher education and there is no going back.

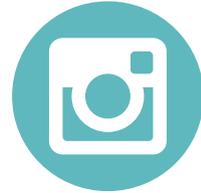
— NIGEL HEALEY

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1. Healey, N. (2016). The challenges of leading an international branch campus: the 'lived experience' of in-country senior managers. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(1), pp.61-78.



As international educators, we know the true importance of having support for international activities at our institutions. This 'buy-in' needs to come from all corners: deans, academics, administrators, and students. With so many different stakeholders at once, a sound communication plan should be an international office priority. ▶



It's not possible to internationalise a university without creating awareness, among all its members, of the importance of internationalisation. Without well-rounded communication, internationalisation reduces itself to the central international office and the activities of isolated groups. It is widely accepted that the international office deals with international students and agreements, but one of its 'hidden' – and most important – functions should be to educate others. In particular, inwards: educating its own institution on the importance of becoming truly international – as part of an internationalisation at home strategy.

#### COMMUNICATION TOOLS

There is no exact formula for doing this, but combining all available, context-appropriate communication tools can be a step in the right direction. Nevertheless, theory is very different from practice. What we have tried to do at Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV) is to put theory into practice by using different communication tools to transmit and reinforce the message that internationalisation is a key aspect of our present and future – and that we all have an important role to play in it. Some of the tools we currently use are as follows:

- An international newsletter
- Social networks: Facebook and Twitter
- Informative videos
- Promotional materials and brochures
- 'Ambassador' and visitor packs
- Merchandising
- Training and events

#### NEWSLETTER

Our 'International Newsletter' is a great tool for communicating everything that the university is doing on internationalisation, in news format. It was first created as a way to inform stakeholders of our strategic internationalisation planning process, but it soon became a bi-monthly reminder that there are many other activities taking place. Within the concept of 'embedded' internationalisation, it's difficult to justify the creation of a parallel newsletter only devoted to internationalisation. Internationalisation should perhaps be integrated in the university's regular channels, the news on the institutional website or its own regular newsletter. Nevertheless, though embedded internationalisation may be our ultimate goal, a lot of institutions are still far from it. At this stage, it can be useful and even recommended to make use of all the available tools to get everyone on board.

Our international newsletter has advanced with the times since its inception

and is now done in English (at an institution where English is the third language), with the purpose of integrating English as one of the languages of the university. The news included also feed the English website and serve not only internally, but are sent to international visitors and the networks of which the institution is a member. The newsletter's editorial is the perfect platform for the leadership to share its viewpoint on internationalisation, strategic vision and directives. Doing something like this sometimes can upset other units of the institution and bother those who want things done like they have always been done. After stepping on some toes, however, newsletters become normalised and even awaited.

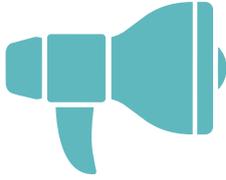
#### SOCIAL NETWORKS

The use of social networks (Facebook and Twitter) also did not come easily, as normally institutional communications are managed by one central communication unit – which does not like to lose control



Universitat Rovira i Virgili

Photo: Commons.wikimedia.org



of communications. Having different departments opening their own Facebook pages or Twitter accounts may be perceived as losing control. After dealing with the initial resistance to change, the use of Facebook and Twitter by the international relations office has yielded very positive results. They have allowed for a more informal and closer contact with international institutions, networks, associations, the university community and students.

The use of closed groups addressing mobility students, for instance, is a great way to communicate with specific target groups in their language, with the type of information they need. The feedback is more immediate and it allows users to also interact easily. For us, Twitter is more institutional and formal. It is used informatively and with the purpose of redirecting messages of international interest. It is primarily aimed at institutions, organisations, administrations, *etc.* Having these open 24/7 channels is obviously more time-consuming for the office, but it certainly brings internationalisation closer to its target groups and makes it more dynamic.

#### VIDEOS

We have also started exploring the use of videos. We, at universities, tend to always use written forms of communication. Nowadays, with the immediacy of news and an abundance of information, looking for more visual and quicker forms of communication may pay off. After realising that the international office had to individually offer information on residence permit procedures to over 100 students per semester, the idea of making a tutorial

video came about. These informative videos are fresh, young, easy and save time for both the user and the office. It is our first experience with tutorials, but it will definitely not be the last.

#### PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

The international office is in charge of promotional materials and brochures for the international market. At many institutions, this is done by a marketing or communications unit – hopefully with the input of the international office for accuracy, though unfortunately this is not always the case. Some of our in-house made materials include a ‘survival guide’ for international students and a who-is-who guide of the international office staff.

As for merchandising, making a difference is not always easy. Our institution is located by the beach, so a Frisbee for incoming international students seemed like the type of original gadget that students would always remember. A fun t-shirt to thank our mentors, and our “U R Very International” motto t-Shirt, are among the products that we produce in order to make internationalisation more visible, bring it closer to the university community, and give it a fresh, cool feel.

#### PURPOSEFUL INCLUSION

One target audience that used to be forgotten is mobile academics – visiting scholars and our professors or staff traveling abroad. For them, we came up with a visitor and ambassador pack. These contain the type of information that they may need to know about the university when they visit it, or the information they can take along when they represent the

university abroad. It was conceived as a little token of appreciation that hopefully makes them feel like true ambassadors, or truly welcome – contributing to a much better experience overall.

Other forms of communication used to bring internationalisation higher up on everyone’s agenda are events and training courses. The organisation of the international staff training week offers external benefits to our international partners, but also gives us the chance to internally discuss and display internationalisation on campus. Using training as a form of communication and as a means of making change happen should be considered. At our institution, we offer a training course on internationalisation to personnel – both administrative and teaching staff – in order to show that everyone has a role to play in the internationalisation process. For outward mobility students, a course on intercultural communication and experience is offered to contribute to the success of their stay abroad, but also to their understanding of internationalisation and why it is important for them.

In the intertwined world we live, communicating internationalisation becomes a 360-degree task, in which we need to be proactive. Not only should we send information out to all users, but we should also aim to receive feedback. Using the various channels offered by today’s communication tools helps us reach the maximum number of stakeholders across the spectrum.

—MARINA CASALS SALA

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IN CONVERSATION WITH

# DENNIS MURRAY

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LAURA MESQUITA  
EAIE

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Dennis Murray is Senior Honorary Fellow of the LH Martin Institute for Leadership and Management of Tertiary Education at The University of Melbourne, Australia, and Director of IDĒON, International Higher Education Pty Ltd. One of the core founders of the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), Dennis actively participated in the professionalisation of the field in Australia. He has extensive international experience, having worked closely with European and North American partners. For Dennis, the future of international offices lies in the hands of adaptable, future-oriented and creative professionals.

**Who is the international officer of today?**

**DM:** The nature of leadership in all kinds of enterprises is changing fundamentally and university leaders aren't immune. The context we operate in is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. While this may have been true in the past also, the speed, frequency and scale of change today are unrelenting and pose special challenges. And, as international education practitioners especially understand, complexity in the global environment is particularly challenging.

Much emerging research attempts to identify the organisational imperatives that universities worldwide need to attend to in order to survive and thrive. Four strike me as particularly important. (1) Universities urgently need to change and to differentiate themselves to stay viable in the longer term. This means that (2) diversity amongst universities will increase – and this can only be a good thing. (3) Different approaches – let's say different 'business models' – need to be found and aligned to each institution's strategic future; no one size fits all. (4) Finally, universities need a flexible and agile workforce. A focus on nurturing specialised and self-renewing academic and professional staff that is responsive to change will be crucial.

In the prevailing management literature, 'creativity' is often said to be the most important leadership quality for enterprises seeking a path through complexity. More than ever, international officers and their teams are enjoined to be creative in finding

solutions to the challenges their universities face. Being creative without understanding the context in which we operate is going to be sterile – or worse, counterproductive. So it is important for international officers to have a good grasp of their own institution and its 'saga', but also the global forces and trends affecting their institution. This means keeping abreast of the broad megatrends affecting our societies, specifically the trends affecting higher education locally and globally.

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**More than ever, international officers and their teams are enjoined to be creative in finding solutions to the challenges their universities face**

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When it comes to leading and managing within the organisation itself, leadership literature points to foreground shifts in attempts to deal with complexity and uncertainty – a move away from the leader as a control agent towards a more diffused, shared leadership amongst senior peers and their teams. As internationalisation becomes integrated into the core functions of universities, and as responsibilities for achievement of strategic outcomes become shared, this shift opens up spaces for international officers to

engage in more creative and collaborative problem solving. The international officer of today is someone who is oriented to the future, willing to embrace and to lead change, able to mobilise and persuade others to contribute collectively and creatively to solutions to complex problems.

**In 2004, you helped establish the EAIE's Australian counterpart: the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA). Why was the time right for initiating a professional association for international educators then, and what changes have you seen in international education in Australia since?**

**DM:** There was a long-standing recognition amongst Australian international education leaders, and particularly amongst international education directors in universities, about the need to professionalise the field of international education. From the mid-1980s, we began interacting with colleagues in Europe and the USA, and we watched with interest and with some envy the activities and achievements of both the EAIE and NAFSA. There were two attempts prior to 2004 to establish a professional international education organisation in Australia. Both faltered, in part because of political opposition from university vice-chancellors and presidents, but also because our professional consciousness was not particularly strong at that time.

This changed in the early 2000s, because of our heightened recognition of the need to support up-and-coming professionals in the field, but also because of the growing political need to influence the Australian government in public policy terms. In 2003, I was able to convene successful exploratory discussions between

senior international leaders to establish a membership-based, multi-sectoral professional association. The initial focus of the fledgling IEAA was on professional development of our growing membership and this has remained core. We quickly established a range of workshops and national symposia focused on critical professional issues and challenges. At the same time, we began engaging as a professional group with the long-standing Australian International Education Conference and eventually become joint presenters of the Conference, responsible for its programme.

Our second and equally important motivation – one that initially we did not stress publically – was to foster a better understanding, amongst our political leaders and with the Australian public, about the value and importance of international education to Australia's diplomatic, educational, economic and social well-being. Our ultimate objective was to advocate for an international education strategy and

Australia's future prosperity and to our successful engagement with the world – including the necessity for tangible support for Australian students to study abroad. The public policy levers, including crucial student visa laws, are actively supportive. This is a change from just ten years ago.

IEAA continues to commission research and promote the benefits of international education, including having large numbers of international students in our midst, to the Australian community. This is critical in a climate of emerging xenophobia in some parts of our society. Another serious challenge is the need to forge greater linkages between Australian education institutions and overseas governments, businesses and industry for research purposes and to help tackle great global questions. Fostering enhanced learning and teaching, particularly to help develop global competence and global citizenship amongst our domestic students, is also a critical challenge.

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## I firmly believe in the value of sharing our experiences and learning from one another

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to achieve bi-partisan political support to advance Australian education's global engagement across the spectrum of teaching, research and service.

Professional development and advocacy, supported by research, remain central to IEAA's purposes. We have been highly successful, especially over the past 10 years in gaining the attention and the tangible support of the Australian government. It now recognises the centrality of internationalisation of our education system to

**Do you think some of the same trends apply to the European context?**

**DM:** I am aware of similar trends in Europe, although our solutions to emerging issues and challenges must be contextualised and applied within our individual communities. I firmly believe in the value of sharing our experiences and learning from one another. Indeed, it is incumbent on us in far away Australia to break out of our physical and mental boundaries to share and to learn from

our colleagues elsewhere. In my own experience, our most fruitful ventures to enhance our understanding and professionalism have been with our colleagues and friends in Europe.

**You do a lot of consultancy-based work for universities. What type of advice would you give to an international officer struggling to get academic staff involved in internationalisation?**

**DM:** There comes a time when we need to make a judgement about what is strategically important in the short and the long term. We need to look for allies, the progressives in our institutions – both academic and professional staff – who, together with us, can move important ideas forward. Ideas are easy. Successfully implementing them is as much the task.

Academic staff are not a homogenous group. Although there are identifiable motivations that will drive their interest and willingness to participate and persevere with you to achieve international objectives, it is often not the tangible motivations (incentives of salary and travel and business return) that succeed so much as the intangible ones (doing a good job, changing the future for a group of individuals or the institution, the pleasure of engaging with others). Don't be overly optimistic, but trust the instincts of the academic community when it operates at its best. Don't hit your head against a brick wall for too long. There is often another solution that you haven't thought of.

**How do you see the role and competences of the international officer evolve over the next 10 years?**

**DM:** I've suggested earlier that the context

in which we operate has changed and will change further. It is no longer the case in Australia that a single individual stands at the head of international activity. With the mainstreaming of internationalisation, multiple individuals and teams have a responsibility for one aspect or another of internationalisation – student mobility, international relations and global affairs, offshore delivery,

Leadership in practice increasingly will be shared and distributed. It will involve fundamental social processes such as personal interaction and the ability to persuade. It will also involve the courage to engage in experiential learning to produce desired outcomes. Competences in these areas will be essential for successful future leaders of internationalisation. Competences must be both broad and deep. We will

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## With the mainstreaming of internationalisation, multiple individuals and teams have a responsibility for one aspect or another of internationalisation

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learning and teaching, international strategy, international work placements, and international research engagement. The roles now are multiple. Responsibility is specific to these functions and to that extent dispersed – in some sense, it is shared across the institution. The issue of specific competences is defined, to a large extent, by specific functional roles and responsibilities. That being said, there are identifiable broad competences that apply regardless of function. Recent publicity around the 2016 World Economic Forum included reference to the top 10 notional skills professional leaders are said to need in 2020 in order to thrive in the fourth 'Industrial Revolution'. The top five skills are: (1) complex problem solving, (2) critical thinking, (3) creativity, (4) people management, and (5) coordinating with others. At least two of these skills are intellectual. At least two (and, if creativity is included, three) of these are people skills.

all need to apply our knowledge across a broad range of situations: strategy, operations, technology, people engagement, business functions, and cultural and geographic arenas. And we will need to ensure that we have deep knowledge in at least one discipline, business function, cultural or geographic area.

**What advice would you give a young professional starting their career in internationalisation today?**

**DM:** I hesitate to give advice at all. But I have found that, to be successful and to enjoy the work, it pays to be passionate (informed by purpose, preferably to achieve something that will benefit others), patient (informed by a willingness to listen and to learn while acting decisively) and flexible (because the world is full of surprises).

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# A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME & SPACE

Senior International Officers have a great amount of experience in the field of internationalisation. They see it change, they see trends ahead of time, and their knowledge can offer inspiration to those with less experience or seniority. Through interviews with eight leaders who have worked in 10 different countries, this article showcases some of the commonalities and divergences in priorities around the world.

In some countries, the international officer role is well-understood, with broadly consistent job descriptions and Master's level programmes aimed at those wishing to progress within the field. In other countries, there is greater fluidity – and career pathways are less explicit. So how do expectations vary in different national contexts? How has the field changed in recent decades? What qualities are looked for in new entrants to the profession and what future changes are foreseen? What advice do experienced international officers have for ambitious new recruits?

#### GATHERING EXPERT VIEWS

As someone who took up her first international office role (in a small Welsh university) in 1994, I am fascinated by the way expectations have changed within my own national context (the UK) during the course of my career. As such, I thought it would be interesting to speak to Senior International Officers from a range of different countries about the changing nature of the role of international officer – and their predictions for the future. This is not a rigorous academic study, but rather an attempt to gather views from a handful of experienced and well-informed individuals, to suggest conclusions to be drawn from these. I engaged with eight Senior International Officers (SIOs) working in a variety of institutional settings. Between them, they had held international relations roles in ten different countries.<sup>1</sup> Many common themes emerged – as well as some variations, often linked to national context.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICER PAST

Most of the SIO respondents had studied abroad themselves before taking up their first role in international higher education. Some had lived abroad for longer periods, some had studied languages or a related subject, some had worked in a commercial environment. One started out as an academic, another as a language teacher. Most emphasised that their language and communication skills, international experience and aptitude for relationship building were important when they entered their first role. A number of them started as Erasmus exchange coordinators and worked their way up.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICER PRESENT

When asked what they looked for in new hires nowadays, there were some variations, dictated largely by national context. Those working in non-English speaking countries stressed the importance of being able to operate in English – and ideally other languages too. International and intercultural experience are highly valued in Slovenian, Polish, Swiss and American institutions. In the USA context, demonstrating the ability to function in a multicultural team is important.

Many SIOs mentioned generic skills such as communication skills, team working, flexibility, creativity, problem solving, numeracy, IT skills and the ability to manage projects. Some look for character traits like tolerance, openness and enthusiasm. The SIO from Spain observed that evaluation of such qualities at interview is crucial. Generally, even for entry-level posts, a Bachelor's degree is now expected. However, the field of study is less important than being able to demonstrate the required skills and personal qualities for the role.

In a few of the respondent's countries, professional qualifications or evidence of specific aptitudes are sought. SIOs from the UK and Sweden look for marketing expertise (and qualifications) for a number of roles. Moreover, in these countries and in New Zealand, there is an emphasis on being able to quantify outcomes, work in a KPI-driven context, analyse complex information and develop resource-based arguments.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICER FUTURE

When asked what changes they expected to see in the next 10 to 15 years, respondents often mentioned the professionalisation of the field. In some contexts, this was linked to commercialisation and greater competition. So, for example, it was suggested that a marketing or sales background may be required for some roles in Spanish universities, and that qualifications in international higher education may be sought by Swiss institutions. Two SIOs working in quite different contexts (New Zealand and Slovenia) commented that passion alone is no longer enough and that, increasingly, a more detached, evidence-based approach

will be required. A UK SIO envisaged an increase in desk-based intelligence-gathering, data-crunching roles.

Growth areas such as online learning and strategic partnerships will need imaginative, flexible, problem-solver types. It was also suggested that future international officers will need a geographical specialism (Asia was mentioned as an area of interest by the SIO from Slovenia) as well as general cultural awareness. The need for academic staff to be part of this professionalisation was mentioned, as the expectation that they engage interculturally (with students from other countries, with partners and research collaborators) grows. One UK-based SIO saw the old UK student recruitment focused model of the international office disappearing – and a broader approach to internationalisation becoming embedded within academic functions.

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## It is advantageous to acquire experience within different types of institutions or different business sectors

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Another UK SIO foresaw less international travel for UK-based staff and greater reliance on in-country staff who can straddle two cultures – possibly individuals who have studied or worked in the UK but wish to relocate back home. A recurrent theme was the need for international officers to engage staff (academic and professional) right across their institution and to communicate compellingly with those in senior positions.

### ADVICE FOR NEW ENTRANTS

I asked the SIOs what advice they had for ambitious new entrants to the field of international education, who aspire to

an SIO role in the future. A key piece of advice was to develop breadth of experience. There were different perspectives on whether it was better to undertake a specialist role in another sector, then transfer

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## Examine your own values; be self-aware, open to change, and reflect regularly on the mental and emotional distance you have travelled as a result of your role

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your skills into a university setting; or to pursue a range of roles within higher education before homing in on a particular specialism. Whichever route an individual takes, it is advantageous to acquire experience within different types of institutions or different business sectors. Experience of studying or working for extended periods in other countries is also valuable.

Once in the higher education sector, employees should demonstrate a thirst for learning – starting with reading up on higher education internationalisation, but potentially including Master's or Doctoral level study in the field. The increasing emphasis on research-informed internationalisation strategies means that evidence of analytical thinking is highly valued.

The SIOs emphasised the importance of understanding the context in which one is operating – institutional priorities, how different functions work together, what competitors are doing, national internationalisation priorities and broader global developments. New international

officers were urged to learn from colleagues, attend conferences and training, volunteer for roles beyond the institution (*eg* regional or national working parties) and get involved (*eg* present a poster at

a conference, ask questions at sessions). Another piece of advice was to examine your own values; be self-aware, open to change, and reflect regularly on the mental and emotional distance you have travelled as a result of your role.

Whilst the precise emphasis of international office roles and the nature of future requirements varied somewhat from country to country, there was a universal sense of professionalisation within the field. The advice for ambitious individuals at an early career stage was fairly consistent: know yourself; understand your operating context; build broad experience; and keep learning.

— VICKY LEWIS

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1. I would like to thank the eight individuals (who have worked in France, Morocco, New Zealand, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA) who generously gave their time to respond to my questions, providing such rich content for this article.

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# WHO IS EUROPE'S SENIOR INTERNATIONAL OFFICER?

The concept of a Senior International Officer is well-known in internationalisation scholarship and practice in North America. It is less clear who fulfils the European equivalent of this function. At EAIE Liverpool 2016, three focus groups were organised to find out who Europe's Senior International Officers are and what exactly they do. ▶

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LEASA WEIMER  
EAIE

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The term Senior International Officer, is most known and researched in the North American context. It is defined as “an individual at a high level of institutional leadership who heads an office dedicated to internationalizing the broad scope of the institution’s programs and activities”.<sup>1</sup> As a way to explore what this term and the scope of what this position means in the European context, focus groups were conducted at the 2016 Annual EAIE Conference in Liverpool.

There were three focus groups, consisting of a total of 23 respondents representing 17 European countries. Respondents

did not officially exist in their institution. A few also expressed that their role was “more of a performer rather than a decision maker; I develop suggestions, but which ones will be implemented depends on top management, ie the vice rector”.

Another participant explained how “problems with the rectorate changing every four years – with different understanding and values of internationalisation as well as networking practices – causes planning problems and sometimes kills years of work and effort”. Thus, it was difficult for this individual to identify as a SIO all of the time, since the strategic work was

Administrators (AIEA) defines the role as, “[...] the most senior professional at a university whose charge includes leading internationalization”. The European position is structured in such a way that multiple people at one institution may be considered a SIO. This may be because of the more decentralised structure of European administration.

#### OPERATIONAL VS STRATEGY

The question of whether the SIO position in Europe is more operational or strategic is related with the local context and resulted in a diversity of answers. Everyone attending the focus groups reported a mix of both operational and strategic responsibilities – the averages were 56% operations and 34% strategy. Some agreed with one another that their job description was written with more strategic duties; however, the reality of day-to-day operations and management took up the bulk of their workload. “If you ask my line manager or read my job description, my position would be 70% strategic and 30% operational. But the reality is the other way around because there is nobody else to run the international office [...] those skills are specific”. Yet, everyone

## Everyone who identified as a SIO reported either leading or being involved in strategic planning efforts

were randomly selected based on their job titles – ‘heads’ and ‘directors’ of international units. The majority of respondents worked in central administration and directly reported to vice-rectors, rectors, directors, vice-presidents and presidents, provosts, or heads of the rector’s cabinet. Most respondents reported having either a Master’s (11) or a Doctorate (10) degree.

#### WHO IDENTIFIES AS A SIO?

While the majority of focus group participants (14) identified with this term and considered their role to be that of a Senior International Officer (SIO), others (5) did not and a remaining few (4) reported that only in some cases would they identify as one. Some expressed that they were not familiar with the term or that the concept

oftentimes dismantled and redefined by the incoming rector. From this discussion, the definition of a European SIO becomes clearer: it is someone who not only leads internationalisation activities and processes, but is also in a position to make or influence decisions regarding the strategic direction of internationalisation.

## The European position is structured in such a way that multiple people at one institution may be considered a SIO

The North American definition of a Senior International Officer focuses in on one key person at an institution. For instance, the Association of International Education

who identified as a SIO reported either leading or being involved in strategic planning efforts.



Photo: Daniel Végel

## CHALLENGES

When asked about the challenges they face in their position, many participants focused on issues related to strategy and planning as well as funding and budget cuts. One participant explained the frustration of being “*consulted too late in strategic planning*” whereas another focused on the challenges of “*getting buy-in for the internationalisation strategy*”. One-third of the participants highlighted the challenges of leading internationalisation in the context of budget cuts and restrictions. Environmental and national challenges were also part of this discussion. A Hungarian participant explained that a “*quickly changing and unpredictable*

*legal background*” was proving to be challenging for their role leading the internationalisation of higher education. A Danish participant shared how “*the political environment did not facilitate internationalisation*”, thus making it important for SIOs to have the skills to make a case for the internationalisation of higher education.

## AN EVOLVING PROFESSION

When asked about changes that have impacted their position during their tenure, a few patterned responses surfaced. Many identified the political context (national, European, and global) resulting in policy changes as impacting their work and

activities. For instance, the new processes that came with the Erasmus+ programme in 2014 and the ever-evolving national reporting requirements impact institutional processes. As internationalisation continues to evolve in Europe, SIOs must follow, adhere to, and work with policy changes coming from both the national and regional levels.

Other participants spoke to the challenges of growth. Participants from Russia and Croatia explained how new positions and activities in the international unit were added over the last few years. Specifically in Croatia the SIO position was new, so everything was still being created. In the Nordic region, participants spoke about the shift of higher education to an export, with the introduction and development of tuition fee programmes. Overall, there was a general feeling that internationalisation was advancing resulting in more strategy, more awareness, and also more work for SIOs.

The Senior International Officer position in Europe is diverse and contextually embedded within the institutional type, size, funding model, purpose, and mission as well as the dynamic national and regional policy environment. This background shapes the specific functions and roles of the position. So, who is the European Senior International Officer? Institutional leaders who lead, manage and influence the strategic direction of internationalisation activities and processes.

1. Dessoff, A. (2010). The rise of senior international officers. *International Educator*, 19(1), 45.



# SEVILLE

## A TRUE MOSAIC OF CULTURES



Photos courtesy: Turismo Sevilla

01



02



03



04

Seville is an enchanting, enthralling city in the deep southern Spanish region of Andalusia. The host city of the 29th Annual EAIE Conference, taking place between 12-15 September 2017, is almost certain to captivate you. In your downtime from the EAIE Conference, don't miss the opportunity to become acquainted with the best that *Sevilla* - and the region as a whole - has to offer.



05



06



07

### FLAMENCO (01)

Considered the home of Flamenco, Seville is *the* place to enjoy the intricate guitar strumming, the melancholic vocal rhythms influenced by the region's long history under Moorish rule, and the beauty of traditional dancers. Local bars, like **La Carbonería**, on Calle Levies host shows in a low-key environment. Theatres and venues such as **Los Gallos** on Plaza de Santa Cruz, **Tablao Flamenco El Arenal** on Calle Rodó, and **Centro Cultural Flamenco "Casa de la Memoria"**, on Calle Cuna, specialise in Flamenco performances for locals and tourists alike. For a deeper look at the history of this mesmerising cultural heritage, be sure to visit the **Museo del Baile Flamenco**, on Calle Manuel Rojas Marcos.

### THE ALCÁZAR OF SEVILLE (02)

Speaking of Moorish influences, the world-famous Alcázar of Seville was once a Moorish palace. Additions and changes to the palace have been made in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, and even as late as the 19th century. Its many influences symbolise the region's different historical phases, preferences, and tastes. It is a larger-than-life, decadent marvel and a UNESCO Heritage Site. Most importantly, it is an absolute must-see for any visitor of Seville.

### SEVILLE CATHEDRAL (03)

Not too far from the Alcázar lies the third-largest church in all of Europe – and the largest Gothic church in the world. The Seville Cathedral is a supersized masterpiece. It was built following the re-conquering of Seville and the demolition of a nearby Mosque – in a not-so-subtle display of new times and new power. A pretty, citrus fruit-lined garden and the Giralda

Tower – the Mosque's old minaret, now used as a bell tower for the cathedral – are all that remain from that period. The cathedral itself is home to the tomb of one of history's most controversial figures: Christopher Columbus. Whether you're attracted to its colourful past, religious function or architectural structure, the Seville Cathedral and its nearby surroundings are sight worth seeing.

### HOSPITAL DE LOS VENERABLES SACERDOTES (04)

Located on Plaza Venerables, this Baroque mansion was once a home for ageing priests. Now, it contains one of Spain's most extraordinary classical art collections. Inside, you will find the Centro Velázquez, which houses a remarkable collection of the Spanish painter's work. The mansion itself could be considered a work of art, and its internal patio is sublime. Be sure to spare some time to take in every detail.

### PARQUE DE MARIA LUISA AND PLAZA DE ESPAÑA (05)

Maria Luisa Park is Seville's main green area. A breathtaking spot, filled with ornamental tiled walls, fountains, ponds, statues and monuments, traditional-looking buildings, and – most importantly, perhaps – several park benches. All of this is surrounded by a luscious range of palm trees, orange trees, flowers, and birds. Plaza de España, built in 1928 for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929, is a peaceful square inside the park. All in all, this two-for-one attraction offers an idyllic location to unwind from a busy day at the conference while basking in the September sun!

### METROPOL PARASOL (06)

The building of this ultra-futuristic structure was completed in 2011. It is a multi-

functional site that accommodates the city's Central Market, a square that often hosts public events, and panoramic-view restaurants. It's impressive and perhaps even a little bit weird, but somehow the Metropol Parasol fits right into Seville's old quarter. Maybe it's the vibrancy and welcoming atmosphere of the city that make it work. Maybe it's Seville's pre-existing potpourri of cultures and architectural styles, spanning centuries. Whatever the case, this beautiful wooden structure warrants a visit – and a fair few pictures.

### FOR THE TASTE BUDS (07)

At some point during your visit, after a day at the conference followed by some sightseeing in Seville, you may find yourself working up an appetite. But fear not: Seville is famed for Spain's most delicious bites. Tapa restaurants are a true experience in this magical city. Try **La Brunilda** on Calle Galera; **La Azotea** on Calle Jesús del Gran Poder; **Enslava** on Calle Enslava; **El Rinconcillo** on Calle Gerona; or just about any local restaurant you come across. You will not be disappointed!

### TRIANA DISTRICT

Just across the Guadalquivir River, you will find the picturesque Triana district. At **Calle Betis** you not only have one of the best views of the city, but also many great places to go for a drink and experience the typical *sevillana*. Inspired by Flamenco music, this hypnotic dance is a local tradition that can be enjoyed at **Lo Nuestro**, on Calle Betis and **Simpecado** on Paseo Nuestra Señora de la O. A word of warning: true Sevillanos begin their nights out after 23:00. You could always have a few more tapas at restaurants such as **Blanca Paloma** on Calle San Jacinto... We won't tell anyone.



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# EAIE BLOG SPOT

In between *Forum* issues, visit the EAIE blog for news, views and insights. Anywhere and at your fingertips! Just grab yourself a comfy seat and start browsing.



27  
SEP

## WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD STRATEGY? WHERE THE EAIE IS HEADING 2016-2020

Who better to tell you about the EAIE's new strategy than the Association's new President?

<http://ow.ly/8RNO306fsoI>



05  
OCT

## INDIGENISING INTERNATIONALISATION: INTERSECTING THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL

What tensions exist between the global and the local?

<http://ow.ly/d1en306fsud>



02  
NOV

## THE EVOLVING CULTURE OF MEASURING INTERNATIONALISATION

Measuring internationalisation is gaining momentum. What are some good practices?

<http://ow.ly/QnaY306fsAM>

# EAIE LIVERPOOL 2016



14  
SEP

## REFUGEES IN FOCUS: DIGNITY IN AID

Opening the 'Refugees in focus' conference track, Kilian Kleinschmidt reminded us to think of refugee students as students first, refugees second.

<http://ow.ly/5nMi306fsKv>



15  
SEP

## THE ART OF EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Ever wondered why some people are so great at connecting with others? There's an art to it.

<http://ow.ly/Rvnp306fsVG>



04  
SEP

## EMPLOYER INSIGHTS: WHAT GETS YOUR STUDENTS HIRED?

In this interactive session, employers explained exactly what they look for in graduates. The results might surprise you.

<http://ow.ly/4JQf306fsZK>

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# CALENDAR

## 15-17 FEBRUARY

**IUNC North America 2017**  
Building the Global HigherEd Community  
[www.iunc.net/conference/view/12](http://www.iunc.net/conference/view/12)

## 19-22 FEBRUARY

**AIEA 2017 Annual Conference**  
Internationalization through Difference:  
Transcending Boundaries  
[www.aieaworld.org/2017-annual-conference](http://www.aieaworld.org/2017-annual-conference)

## 20-23 MARCH

**APAIE 2017 Conference & Exhibition**  
[www.apaie.org/conference/2017](http://www.apaie.org/conference/2017)

## 20-24 MARCH

**AACRAO's 103rd Annual Meeting**  
[www.aacrao.org/professional-development/meetings/current-meetings/2017-aacrao-annual-meeting](http://www.aacrao.org/professional-development/meetings/current-meetings/2017-aacrao-annual-meeting)

## 22-24 MARCH

**EURIE - Eurasian Higher Education Summit**  
[www.eurieeducationsummit.com](http://www.eurieeducationsummit.com)

## 27-28 MARCH

**Spotlight Seminar**  
International marketing strategy: find your market niche and climb to the top  
[www.eaie.org/spotlight-seminar-marketing](http://www.eaie.org/spotlight-seminar-marketing)

## 6-7 APRIL

**EUA Annual Conference 2017**  
Autonomy and freedom: The future sustainability of universities  
[www.eua.be/activities-services/events/event/2017/04/06/default-calendar/eua-2017-annual-conference](http://www.eua.be/activities-services/events/event/2017/04/06/default-calendar/eua-2017-annual-conference)

## 8-12 APRIL

**FAUBAI 2017 Conference**  
New trends on Internationalization of HE:  
Social Engagement and Innovation  
[www.faubai.org.br/conf/2017](http://www.faubai.org.br/conf/2017)

## 24-27 APRIL

**EAIE Spring Academy in Marseille**  
[www.eaie.org/training](http://www.eaie.org/training)

## EAIE SPOTLIGHT SEMINAR

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