

What Now? What Next?

Kristine Billmyer, President

The November election is now behind us. Some of the previous "known unknowns" are now known. The US will have a republican administration and a more strongly republican legislature for the next four years. Executive Branch changes to the two Cabinet posts arguably of the greatest importance to IEPs, the Secretary of State and Attorney General, have been made. The US is still enmeshed without an exit strategy in military action in Iraq that continues to tarnish our image abroad. Unfortunately for US IEPs, however, the election outcome has not signaled better times ahead or even brought about clarity on many of the key US foreign and domestic policy issues that we had hoped for.

So, what now? As we take stock of the current situation we may find some comfort in one recent unrelated post-election revelation. On November 10, 2004, the Institute for International Education (IIE) released its 2003-4 statistics on international enrollments in US institutions of higher education. This report showed the very first official overall decline in foreign enrollments in US degree-granting institutions of higher education since 1971. Prior to this release, US higher education community acknowledged the IEP enrollment downturn and its potential consequences for degree-granting institutions. But it was not until IIE released its report that the clear and present danger for degree-granting programs officially became a clear and present reality. Will higher education communities now come together and advocate with a single voice? Will the powers that be understand that if the US does not respond with an appropriate action, the consequences will be felt far

beyond the hallowed halls of US academia? The arguments in favor of a reconsidering US policy are even more plentiful now. Not only will US higher education suffer intellectually and financially as the US begins to lose its preeminence as the most desired destination sought by international students and scholars. So too will American high tech, scientific and knowledge industries that depend on the vital flow of intellectually gifted graduate students and scholars to the US will be devastated when the flow becomes a trickle. Furthermore, the balance of trade will continue to shift unfavorably. US losses resulting from the growing tendency to outsource routinized work and offshore the production of commoditized goods to low wage powerhouses (C. Shadle, *Continuing Higher Education Review*, Vol. 68, 2004) will be further exacerbated if the US also loses its position as the number one developer of intellectual capital. The US must act quickly to shore up its position in the international market as provider of these knowledge,

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From the President

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innovation, and creativity goods. We have lost ground in the last 3 years by closing our doors to international students and scholars at exactly the same moment that other countries have opened their doors to the intellectual resources these individuals bring to the commons and to the foreign capital they invest in higher education infrastructure.

If the US higher education community can come together and work in common cause, the US may finally heed our warnings and regard these frightening statistics as a national imperative to act with purpose and resolve. In this event, IEPs would certainly benefit from the much more powerful advocacy effort that US institutions of higher education can mount. Unfortunately, there are too many "unknown unknowns" to predict with any confidence.

What next? Organizations like AAIEP that advocate for US IEPs must be prepared to contribute to a united effort if it occurs or mount a successful

campaign of its own. So AAIEP is at an important crossroads. We must make some fundamental decisions about where our organization should be putting most, if not all, its efforts and resources in the next 3-5 years. We must review, debate, and decide whether AAIEP's original mission, by-laws, and infrastructure set out over 15 years ago is still able to serve the current and future needs of US intensive English programs in a world that has fundamentally changed since AAIEP's inception. Lest we allow the setbacks to obscure our vision of a better future, we must also remind ourselves of the significant gains US IEPs have made in the last five years, including an emphatic shift toward accreditation and all the advantages associated with benchmarking professional standards. We must recognize the value of employing best practices and how it serves as a bulwark against inroads made by international competitors. We have already redirected effort and resources to advocacy and outreach, but much more must be done in these critical areas.

Fortunately the current AAIEP board has already begun a close review of AAIEP's current position and is poised to re-envision its future. At the October board meeting in Philadelphia, board members started work on the development of a new strategic plan with the help of Joe McVeigh of Middlebury College. Over the next few weeks AAIEP will be soliciting ideas and feedback from members on the most urgent needs facing US IEPs. We will also be engaging members in a dialogue about AAIEP's current mission and infrastructure. Among the many issues AAIEP we will be evaluating and debating is how best to advocate for our sector of international education, whether professional lobbyist services are desirable, how to better fund initiatives, and how we might achieve better outcomes and economies with the help of professional accrediting organizations.

We look forward to our "conversations" with you and to the promise of a brighter and better future for US intensive English programs. ■

From the Central Office

Jon M. Leyland, Director, AAIEP Central Office

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE: New Members & New Associates

AAIEP would like to offer a warm welcome to our newest member programs:

GSU Intensive English Program

Dept. of Applied Linguistics/ESL
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA

English Language Center

Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

Center for English Language & American Culture (CELAC)

University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM

Boston School of English

Boston School of Modern Languages
Boston, MA

AF International School of Languages

Westlake Village, CA

With these five new members, AAIEP now has 273 intensive English programs, with members in nearly every state of the union.

Add another address to the AAIEP listserv

AAIEP would like to remind all member programs that they can now add an additional email address to the AAIEP listserv – all you have to do is let us know. We suggest that you provide the email address of your program's associate director or other important administrator. If you're concerned about getting more spam (i.e. junk mail), don't worry: addresses

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NAFSA Events, 2004 and 2005

Judith Snoke, Vice-President Elect, Outreach

At NAFSA 2004, AAIEP hosted a successful networking reception/workshop that brought AAIEP program directors face-to-face across the table with advisors and agents from around the world. More than 40 member programs registered for the event and about 30 advisors and agents attended. OSEAS Advisors were especially well represented. This reception was a highly cost-effective way of bringing together AAIEP program directors and overseas agents while both were attending NAFSA.

Study in the USA and **BMI** sponsored the AAIEP Reception at the James Joyce Pub where members and agents had another opportunity to meet and mingle. The combination of good beer, good fellowship, abundant food, beautiful weather, and lively Irish music made for a memorable evening.

While at the James Joyce Pub, agents and advisors who had attended the Networking Workshop were eligible for a drawing for one of more than 30 scholarships offered by participating AAIEP programs. The scholarships were much appreciated by the agent who won them. Several OSEAS advisors indicated that the scholarships would be used as door prizes to boost attendance at education fairs in their home countries.

Central Office

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provided for the listserv are not made public.

Don't forget to update your program's profile!

Please remember to keep your program's profile on the AAIEP web site up to date. To do so, just go to the main page (www.aaiep.org) and click "LOGIN" on the left side of the screen. If you can't find your username and password, just contact the AAIEP Central Office (info@aaiep.org). ■

AAIEP Member School Functions at NAFSA 2005 in Seattle

Agents and Advisors Networking Session

Building on the success of the 2004 Networking Session, AAIEP member schools will be able to sign up for a similar session at the May NAFSA Conference in Seattle. AAIEP will arrange for a room where participating schools can set up individual tables with seating. Participating member schools will pay an affordable fee to fund the event and benefit AAIEP. Those schools that offer a scholarship will receive a fee reduction. Agents and OSEAS advisors who attend and visit the schools' tables will be eligible to participate in the drawing for scholarships offered by AAIEP schools. This event is designed to give school

directors exposure to agents and advisors attending NAFSA without the expense of attending an international fair.

AAIEP Reception for Members and Guests

A representative of the board is now working with the centrally located Seattle Art Museum to plan the AAIEP Reception for NAFSA 2005. The affair will be located in the Grand Staircase area of the museum where a collection of Chinese tomb sculptures is displayed. This will be an elegant cocktail and hors d'oeuvres event. Members and guests will have the opportunity to mix and mingle from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. on June 1st. For information about the Seattle Museum: <http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/> ■

Institutional Associate Members

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an opportunity to meet with selected Study Abroad Agents from various countries in one convenient venue. For two days, in scheduled appointments, new contacts can be established and existing relationships reinforced. Contact: Ms. Diana Forman

Email: icef-usa@icef.com

Web: <http://www.icef.com>

IEFT - INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FAIRS OF TURKEY

IEFT fairs attract schools from around the world to Turkey's largest cities every spring and fall to inform thousands of interested visitors about programs available for study abroad. IEFT fairs invite high schools, language schools, Au Pair companies, vocational training institutions, education publications firms, colleges and universities to present their programs. Contact: Ms. Anita Kuehnel

Email: info@ieft.net and anita@ieft.net Web: <http://www.ieft.net>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE TO THE U.S./SPINDLE PUBLISHING CO., INC.

Spindle Publishing produces the International Student Guide in English and Spanish. Articles help international students make academic plans. The International Student Guide (English and Spanish editions) is distributed through advisory offices of Fulbright Commissions, U.S. Embassies and Consulates, and other bi-lateral exchange programs and foundations. The International Student Guide can also be accessed online at (<http://www.educationguide-use.com>).

Contact: Mr. Naresh Dewan

Email: info@spindlepup.com

Web: <http://www.spindlepup.com>

LIDGET GREEN ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Lidget Green is a small assessment company that provides a full range of assessment services to U.S. education, but with a strong emphasis on testing English as a second language. We are particularly interested in placement testing.

Contact: Dr. Gary Buck

Email: gary@lidgetgreen.org

Web: <http://www.lidgetgreen.org>

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ADVOCACY: Results and Directions

Donald R. Back, Vice President, Advocacy

With the Presidential election now over, it is time to assess the direction of AAIEP advocacy given Republican control of both the executive and legislative branches. Members will recall that earlier this year AAIEP VP Advocacy Karen Decker and VP-Elect Outreach Beata Schmid approached House Democrat Barney Franks to ask for his support in lowering the SEVIS fee for short-term ESL programs. Representative Frank's office responded by initiating a letter and circulating it among other House members, a number of whom signed on in support. While the letter was successful in drawing attention to the post-September 11th plight of Intensive English Programs, no Republicans signed on. Going forward, with a highly partisan, Republican-led Congress in power, our direction needs to shift somewhat to have some chance of furthering our association's aims.

In July we informed members of the introduction of Senate Bill 2715, the "International Student and Scholar Access Act of 2004", by Republican Senator Norm Coleman of Minnesota. Developed with the help of the Alliance and NAFSA, the ISSAA contained several important provisions for language schools: 1) it would have reformed the SEVIS fee process by instituting a reduced fee for short-term study, 2) it would have required that guidance be issued to consular officers on granting waivers of personal appearance in order to minimize delays for legitimate travelers while permitting more thorough interviews of visa applicants in appropriate cases, and; 3) it would have amended Section 101(a)(15)(F)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act by striking 'having a residence in a foreign country which he has no intention of abandoning' and inserting 'having the intention, capability, and sufficient financial resources to complete a course of study in the United States'. The bill will not be acted upon in the Judiciary Committee before Congress adjourns this year and therefore will die on the vine. AAIEP is supportive of the bill and will work with NAFSA and the Alliance when the time comes to lobby for its reintroduction next year.

In the meantime, AAIEP is undertaking a couple of projects to focus and further our advocacy aims. The first is to build a legislative, regulatory and policy agenda for the organization - a clear mandate as to what change we want to affect. Using this document as a basis, we will build tools for our members to enable them to both more effectively and better represent the association in their own advocacy efforts. The second project is to look into the possibility of contracting a lobbyist or a lobbying firm based in Washington to help us to work toward achieving the goals set out in our advocacy agenda. The chief benefit of engaging a lobbyist, should it be determined financially feasible, would be to better connect with lawmakers

and policymakers by putting a consistent, professional, informed face on AAIEP.

On the regulatory front, the chief attention for the fall was directed at the SEVIS fee rule, which went into effect on September 1st. AAIEP advocacy in this area included summarizing the rule for the membership soon after its release, preparing an information handout on the fee for prospective students in cooperation with NAFSA, participating in meetings with DHS/ICE to anticipate fee implementation issues, providing resources to the membership on the fee rule, and assisting members with resolving problems as the rule was rolled out. AAIEP responded to several complaints from members about consular officials who were uninformed on the new fee procedures, with a positive outcome in most cases thanks to the intervention of the Department of State's consular liaison in Washington.

A number of schools have expressed concern about the recertification rule anticipated later this year. DHS/ICE has released little information on this rule, "Requiring Recertification of All Service-approved Schools for Enrollment in SEVIS", to the public. The

advocacy team will monitor developments and will get out reliable information as it becomes available. According to its June 2004 regulatory agenda, DHS is working on two other rules which may impact IEP enrollment: "Limiting the Use of D/S for Certain F, J and M Nonimmigrants" and "Limiting the Period of Admission for B Nonimmigrant Aliens". There have been no developments to date on the release of either of these rules.

Most member concerns of late have revolved around visa issuance. We continue to receive complaints about visa denials for individuals seeking to come to the U.S. solely for the purpose of language study. The Department of State publishes a cable entitled "The Challenging Work of Student Visas" to the field every year to remind consular officials of provisions for issuing student visas. AAIEP feels that some of the information in the cable is misleading and may be contributing to denials for language study. We are lobbying DOS to make changes in the cable that should improve the situation. Also, AAIEP receives a considerable number of e-mails from members about students denied on the grounds of 214(b), the provision in the Immigration and

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Dealing with Agents: Some Tips Concerning Agents and Referral Fees (Commissions)

Tadashi Yokoyama, Chairman of the Board, *The Princeton Review of Japan*

Study abroad agents vary in size, service line-up, fee structure, operating philosophy, and ownership structure. When establishing a long term relationship with agents, here are few points to keep in mind regarding some fees that agents most likely desire to receive or have exempted.

1) Exemption of Application Fee

Not only does this "pay" the agent but it avoids agents needing to produce a check, when service fees in Japan, for example, may be as high as \$25-\$30. It also saves the agent time to process the application without delay, as they don't have to issue an invoice to client and wait for money remittance, and arrange a demand draft (money order) and wait a few days for it to be delivered.

2) Commission paid for initial booking.

It is common in the U.S. that commissions are paid only for the period initially booked, although more and more schools have been agreeing to commissions on "extended" study. Most schools pay a percentage on tuition only, although some do pay a smaller commission on housing. The rate usually ranges from 10-20%. I have seen as high as 30%.

3) Commission on initial booking and extended stays by the students referred by agents.

More common in non-US. schools. Some

schools pay the same rate and some pay "reduced" rate for extended study after the initial booking. The rate normally ranges from 10-20% here also.

Instead of going into the details of what other factors agent usually want, or in particular what I used to want, I'll conclude with the following comments on commission issues.

1) Know the agent fee structure you are dealing with.

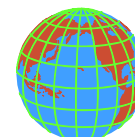
If they have service fees charged to students, they are less dependent on commissions. Money is nice but things like "speed," "assured housing," and "no mistakes on airport pick-up" are often much more critical. One complaint/trouble wipes out the \$200 commission, for example. However, if the agent revenue solely relies on commissions, they are likely to be more dependent on commissions from schools.

2) Establish relationships with reliable agents and don't get into money battles!

Commission should be what you feel comfortable with. Don't try to catch more of the agent share by offering 5% higher than your competitors. What happens then is that when the competitors match you, you'll be forced to up it again to keep your edge. If you try to win by money, you will eventually lose by money.

As an education business operator myself, when I see a very high commission, I can't help but to ask myself questions such as "What else are they spending money on?" or "Wouldn't they do better if they lowered the tuition by 10% instead of raising the commission by 10%?" or "How much are the teachers being paid?"

I know things are not so simple but these are just my quick thoughts. Since I am somewhat removed from the agent business I am probably a little more objective than I was seven years ago. Agents can be really good partners if you choose them like you chose your job or spouse, but if you choose them unwisely they can take control of your student flow and become hard to get away from.



Yokoyama has been an active member of NAFSA and AACRAO since 1987. He has been a regular presenter at international education conferences in major destination countries. Before joining The Princeton Review of Japan, Yokoyama was in charge of International Services at ICS (Currently Ryugaku Journal), where among other things he started the annual AAIEP-ICS Study Abroad Fairs.

Advocacy

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Nationality Act that requires applicants for most non-immigrant visas to prove they do not have immigrant intent. The best way to combat 214(b) denials is by better preparing visa applicants. We hope to issue a member advisory on this topic in the spring of next year. AAIEP would like to thank its members

for their participation in the IIE data collection process for Open Doors. AAIEP participation in the data collection was reported to have been quite good. We will be putting out a flash survey in early December to collect information on the current state of the industry. Also, a number of AAIEP board members will be

participating in both Alliance and NAFSA-sponsored Advocacy Days early next year. Finally, I am pleased to report that many of the informational e-mails issued by Advocacy are now posted on the AAIEP website in the "In the News" section (<http://www.aaiep.org/general/news.htm>).

Raising Standards

Jim Hamrick, Vice-President, Standards

Part of a recent meeting of the AAIEP Executive Board was devoted to strategic planning. Considerable discussion arose over our organization's primary strategic goals. At one point the discussion leader asked board members to jot the organization's primary mission on a note card. One board member scribbled the following:



The board member's intention was to demonstrate that AAIEP and its members have two primary, and interrelated, objectives: enhance the quality of member programs and reduce barriers that hinder prospective students from enrolling in our programs. Although this diagram may not be a complete, or accurate, representation of AAIEP's strategic goals, I think it provides an interesting perspective on how our association should be thinking about professional standards in the post 9/11 era.

No doubt much of AAIEP's activity since 9/11 has been in the area of advocacy. At no time in our organization's history have we had greater need to press our concerns before policy makers. Although we have yet to see significant victories in our efforts to shape policies related to foreign student access, we have made progress in terms of both our strategies and our strategic alliances with policy makers and sister organizations. We are in a good position to influence future policy.

As our capacity to influence policy has grown, however, we have become increasingly aware of a significant limitation: IEPs continue to be perceived as marginal organizations. Even those friendly to the IEP cause believe that there are a number of IEPs that operate without sufficient oversight or without strong academic standards. It is difficult if not impossible to persuade a policy maker to remove barriers to access to American IEPs if that policy maker questions the legitimacy of intensive English study or of the IEP industry. The reality OR the perception of inadequate academic and professional standards puts all of our association's advocacy efforts at risk. A single news story on an IEP that operates as an "I-20 mill" could potentially undermine our best advocacy efforts.

How can AAIEP raise its standards in such a way to enhance the perception of its members in the eyes of policy makers? I don't believe that there are any quick fixes for enhancing the reputation of the IEP industry or AAIEP. Changes in perceptions are likely to occur as a result of incremental steps that enhance our industry's image. These steps include

demonstrating to policy makers that AAIEP takes its standards seriously, and showing policy makers that we do not allow sub-standard organizations to join our membership. The quality of our entire association is bounded by the quality of the weakest member program.

It is obvious that board members and staff of AAIEP must lead in the area of raising standards. But member programs also have an important role to play. In most cases, industry standards are raised not so much by external regulations or professional standards, but by individual organizations adapting and changing in an effort to keep up pace with the industry. Put another way, AAIEP can raise or change its standards, but real improvement will occur when member programs step up to the plate and commit to quality instruction and operations. The following suggestions are steps that that individual IEPs can take to enhance their own quality, and promote quality among other programs.

- Seek advice. Use the AAIEP listserv and professional meetings to gather information about what other programs are doing well, and then emulate those practices.
- Share your program's "exemplary practices." If your program has built a better mousetrap, share that with other programs by submitting it to the exemplary practices page on the AAIEP web site: <http://www.hass.usu.edu/~ielihandouts/aaiep/index.html>
- Seek accreditation. Programs that go through the accreditation process benefit from self-study processes and external reviews. Many program directors tell me that accreditation is too expensive. If that is truly the case, there is no reason programs can't aim to operate according to CEA or ACCET standards—in that way an IEP will be ready for accreditation once funds are available.
- Put students first. Most quality improvements can be framed in terms of "how is our program serving the bona fide needs of our students?" Programs that seriously deal with this question on an ongoing basis will see steady changes and improvements in their curriculum, faculty, and student services.
- Take your PSA seriously. Use the process of producing your program's PSA as an opportunity to examine operations and make changes. Don't just submit something that is good enough to get by.
- Promote AAIEP membership. Encourage other IEPs to join AAIEP and UCIEP. Promote your program's membership on your web site, in your program's promotional literature, and with overseas educational advisors. Promoting AAIEP shows that you care about standards.

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STUDY IN THE USA

Study in the USA, based in Seattle, Washington, publishes valuable resources for students, their parents and advisors seeking information about U.S. education. We publish seven annual regional magazines and three for boarding and summer school students. Visitors to our web site can browse hundreds of program descriptions and access helpful articles. Contact: Ms. Peggy J. Printz
Email: publisher@studyusa.com Web: <http://www.studyusa.com>

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Standards

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None of these suggestions will result in dramatic changes to the fact or perception of the quality of AAIEP or its member programs. But our industry is facing unprecedented challenges. AAIEP's own reputation for quality can be best enhanced by many incremental steps that member IEPs undertake to improve the quality of their programs. ■

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BMI / C&S Associadas publish, organize and market a range of publications and events worldwide. Currently, the group organizes Latin America's leading International student recruitment fairs: Expo-Estudiante in the fall and Salao do Estudante, the international education fairs of Brazil. The group also markets Editora Abril's Guia do Estudante series worldwide, including Cursos No Exterior, sold on newsstands in Brazil. Contact: Mr. Samir Zaveri
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ESL Directory provides a free searchable database of ESL programs and English language schools worldwide. Free listings are available to English schools to promote their programs directly to their students. Contact: Mr. Ross Mason
Email: rmason@esldirectory.com
Web: <http://www.ESLdirectory.com>

FPP MEDIA, INC.

Online study abroad guides, student fair organizer, agent workshop organizer, assist institutions in recruiting schools. Contact: Mr. Daniel Ripple
Email: fppusa@fppmedia.com
Web: <http://www.fppmedia.com>

GLOBAL STUDY PUBLISHING, LTD.

Global Study, a stylish, full-color international education magazine is distributed to 100+ countries, educational institutions, advising centers, USIS offices, etc., mostly in the 20 countries sending the most students including Japan, Korea and Brazil. Of the 100 pages, 80% contain practical articles; only 20% advertisements.

Estimated readership: 100,000 people worldwide. Contact: Ms. Anna-Maria Vojin
Email: info@globalspl.com
Email: anna@globalspl.com
Web: <http://www.globalstudymagazine.com>

HAWAII PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Our company's core business is education, counseling and recruitment. Our business activities include recruiting, promotion, marketing, education publishing, and trade exhibition promotion. Contact: Mr. Erick Kish
Email: evkish@hpdevelopment.com and evkish@us-academics.com
Web: <http://www.hpdevelopment.com>

HOBSONS

Hobsons is an international recruitment solutions company. Since 1974, we have published education and career guides in print and online, reaching 2.5 million students in 160 countries worldwide. Mission: Whenever a student or young professional around the world is choosing a course or employment, a Hobsons' product or service will be used. Contact: Mrs. Daniela Locreille
Email: dlocreille@hobsons-us.com
Web: <http://www.collegeview.com/college/niche/international>

HOTHOUSE MEDIA

Business-to-business magazines and conferences that facilitate international student recruitment, via professional student recruiters, for language schools, high schools, colleges and universities. *Language Travel Magazine, Education Travel Magazine and Alphe Workshops*. Contact: Mr. Scott Wade
Email: mail@hothousemedia.com
Web: <http://www.hothousemedia.com>

ICEF STUDENT RECRUITMENT WORKSHOPS

ICEF organizes international student recruitment workshops in Miami, Moscow, Beijing, Los Angeles, Tokyo and Berlin. ICEF Workshops provide

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