Introduction

My career in international education traces its origin back to a fortuitous seating arrangement in my high school English class. In 10th grade, I sat next to a German exchange student and due to a shared love of grunge music and European fashion, we developed a friendship that ignited my curiosity about the world.

When I eventually found my way into college admissions in the late 90s, I was warned that international recruitment was a specialty niche and there was a danger of being boxed in. There weren’t many entry-level positions so I started out as a domestic admissions counselor, put in some time on the road, and slowly worked my way into roles with increasing international focus.

Times certainly have changed. As my career has developed, so has our profession. Today, I work in a large international affairs office of specialist professionals who report to an SIO (senior international officer). Dozens of international education position listings flood my inbox each week, graduate programs in international education have emerged, and I regularly meet bright, young professionals who are eager to enter this field.

The expansion of our profession has made an impact. At the time this book goes to press, international student enrollment in the United States has broken the 1 million barrier for the first time in history. More students than ever before are choosing this country for their studies. I might be tempted to suggest that globalism is having its heyday. At the same time, we’re witnessing a worrying resurgence of nationalism and xenophobia in our country and across the globe.
These may feel like uncertain times for our profession, but international education has always been at the mercy of geopolitical conditions. While the ebb and flow of student traffic has fluctuated over the last several decades, the general trend has always been upward. One step back. Two steps forward. Worries about the political landscape should not hold us back. They should propel us forward.

I recently attended a seminar for international student recruiters wherein the presenter asked for a show of hands. “How many of you love your job?,” she asked. Every single hand went up including mine. There was no gasp of surprise. It was the expected answer—but it struck me. It’s been 17 years since I first pondered the possibility that someone might pay me to travel the world and talk to students. My enthusiasm for this work has not faded. It seems that it does not fade for most of us.

This casual confidence we have in our commitment to international education is exceptional and it is our strength. We are a profession of passionate, determined, idealistic individuals. We are those who help to open minds, bridge cultural divides, forge understanding, and make meaningful connections. We are those who facilitate a modern diplomacy that is carried out, not by diplomats, but by thousands and thousands of students and scholars around the world. At a time when the talk is of building walls, we are, and we will continue to be, those who open doors.

How to Benefit from this Book (or... Who Should Read This Book)

If you picked up this book, the odds are that it was written for you. Whether you are new to the field of International Enrollment Management (IEM) or well established, you likely face the challenge of being overwhelmed with choices and goals while underserved with time and resources. In this bustling information age, we often struggle to find order among the daily deluge of tips, ideas, and guides that stream across screens. This book was designed to provide you with the tools to build a robust, precise, and effective recruitment strategy that reflects the goals and challenges of your particular operation. It is meant to serve as both a primer and a lasting resource.

In planning the content of this book, the contributors were mindful that many of you work in one-person offices and are responsible for everything
from overseas travel to I-20 issuance. In each chapter, we provide a scalable plan to help guide your choices in accordance with available staffing and budget. We also considered the growing tier of SIOs across the United States. As international enrollment rises higher on the list of institutional priorities across the United States, new leadership positions are needed to drive the growth. My hope is that newly appointed SIOs as well as other executive leaders who find themselves newly responsible for international recruitment will find this book essential to understanding the nature of the work we do, including the time, skill, precision, and training involved.

This book is divided into two distinct areas: 1) preparing to recruit and 2) strategies for recruitment. We also include a few areas of specialization. In the first section, the authors will walk you through the history of international recruitment, ethical considerations, the variety of essential tools needed to succeed (and how to acquire them), and the building blocks for the creation of a comprehensive strategic plan. In the second section, we explore strategies—new and old—for reaching international students.

Newly added to this edition are chapters 7, 12, and 13, which introduce recruitment for diversity, recruitment of international students at U.S. secondary schools, and recruitment via conditional admission and pathway programs. Our conditional admission pathway programs chapter is supplemented by Appendix A, compiled by Evelyn Levinson of American University, which offers an assessment tool for any institution considering a partnership with a third-party pathway provider. Those who work specifically within intensive English programs, community colleges, or graduate admissions will notice additional chapters designed to offer tips that focus on their particular needs and goals. The book concludes with an essential guide on how to measure the success of our endeavors.

While reading this book (or even skimming the table of contents!), you may find yourself feeling overwhelmed at times. Each topic presented here is valuable but I urge you to resist the temptation to rate your institution on the totality of this book. A successful recruitment operation limits its focus to the mastery of just a few strategies. When in doubt, return to the principles outlined in chapter 5 related to creating and maintaining a strategic plan.
My final recommendation is that you consider picking up the companion book, *Managing a Successful International Admissions Office: NAFSA's Guide to International Admissions* (2017), edited by David L. Di Maria of Montana State University, which will help you complete the operational side of your strategic plan. The carefully selected content provides a comprehensive overview of issues related to international admissions.

In closing, I thank you for choosing this book and making a contribution to the evolution of international enrollment management.

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