LEADERSHIP AND CONTEXT FOR COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION: SENIOR INTERNATIONAL OFFICER PERSPECTIVES

by

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ABSTRACT

ELENORA HAAG. Leadership and Context for Internationalization: Senior International Officer Perspectives. (Under the direction of DR. MARK D'AMICO)

In 2022, just over half of higher education institutions surveyed by the American Council on Education (ACE) reported having a Senior International Officer (SIO), described as an administrator who manages overall internationalization activities. The SIO, along with the president of an institution, has been identified as the most important catalyst for campus internationalization. Institutional context, including structural, cultural, and environmental aspects, can be highly influential in determining the extent to which internationalization, led and facilitated by the SIO, is realized. This basic qualitative study examines the intersection of leadership and institutional context as mediators of the internationalization process, a perspective which is lacking in the current literature on the SIO role.

To better understand the perspectives of SIOs on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization, this study is guided by theoretical frameworks drawn from the field of higher education internationalization as well as organizational culture and by the following research questions: (1) How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives? (2) How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals? Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 participants currently working in an SIO role at a university receiving a national award for internationalization. Strategic planning documents serve as a secondary data source. A qualitative thematic analysis of the interview and documentary data was performed using an inductive coding process. Findings suggest that the roles of strategist, networker, and advocate are key to the SIO's successful navigation of institutional context. Furthermore, the specifics of each institution's distinctive context may be

more influential for the SIO's role than any commonalities between institutions of the same type, as defined by size, funding model, or Carnegie classification. The variation between the different institutional types, environments, and cultures may ultimately be less important than the extent to which SIOs are able to understand their own institutional mission and strategy and its wider context and adapt accordingly. Implications for professional practice include a renewed focus for SIOs on the strategic alignment of internationalization with the institutional mission, the development of sustainable cross-campus networks to raise visibility and manage perceptions, and a willingness to experiment as a way of demonstrating value to the wider campus community. This study adds to the growing literature on the SIO role by filling a gap on the influence of institutional context and culture on this important leadership position and forms a basis for future directions in research that can add a fresh perspective through alternative participant samples, research designs, and theoretical frameworks.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of higher education can be seen as a response to the broader process of globalization (De Wit, 1999). While globalization is the context of economic and social trends tending toward greater integration and interaction on a worldwide scale, internationalization describes the policies and practices of academic institutions to manage the challenges of a globalized environment (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Specific initiatives undertaken by colleges and universities as a part of internationalization may include programs for international students, branch campuses overseas, language study, globalizing the curriculum, global living-learning communities, and certificates of global citizenship. An analysis of the discourses of three leading higher education professional associations (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the International Association of Universities [IAU], and the European Association of International Education [EAIE]) showed a shared emphasis on globalizing the curriculum, facilitating international student and scholar mobility, and developing international research partnerships as key elements of internationalization (Buckner & Stein, 2020). While it has been noted that "curriculum and co-curriculum take a backseat to student mobility in terms of stated priorities for internationalization" (American Council on Education [ACE], 2017, p. vii), the importance of "internationalization at home" (Knight, 2014, p.77), which includes a focus on developing students' intercultural skills on campus through extracurricular activities and partnerships with community cultural groups, should be recognized.

Motivations for individual institutions to internationalize can vary depending on institutional missions and priorities, but the rationales for pursuing internationalization can be characterized as academic, political, economic, or cultural/social (De Wit, 1999). While the origins of higher education internationalization following the Second World War lay in political

and cultural rationales, the growing primacy of economic rationales in an environment of increased commercialization and declining public funding has long been recognized (Knight, 1994). In this context, some commentators suggest that "earning money is a key motive for all internationalization projects" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 292), an outlook that has encouraged, until very recently, an increased reliance on the tuition dollars brought in by burgeoning numbers of international students on U.S. campuses. These economic imperatives, combined with shifting geopolitical tensions – in particular with China, the number one sending country for international students – have given rise to more recent headlines in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* suggesting a crisis in internationalization, such as "How International Education's Golden Age Lost its Sheen" (Fischer, 2020), and "Has Internationalization Hit a Brick Wall?" (Fischer, 2019).

Against this backdrop, individual institutions continue to develop and implement internationalization initiatives in accordance with their own strategic needs and priorities. The latest available pre-pandemic data from the ACE's *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* study, which monitors progress in internationalization in institutions of higher education at five year intervals, shows that between 2011 and 2016, support for internationalization at the institutional level increased through improved operational and human resources structures, as well as greater prevalence of an articulated commitment to internationalization in strategic plans and supporting policies (ACE, 2017; Brajkovic & Matross Helms, 2018). While a further iteration of the ACE survey, carried out in 2021, showed these measures holding steady or declining slightly, the unique circumstances and time frame of data collection make it difficult to interpret how these results fit into an overall trend (ACE, 2022). Since 2003, NAFSA: Association of International Educators has recognized institutional

achievement in systemically advancing aspects of comprehensive internationalization by awarding the annual Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization (NAFSA, 2022). Similarly, the International Impact Awards for Global Engagement, Research, and Teaching and Learning are conferred by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) for achievement in inclusive approaches to internationalization (APLU, 2022). Key in realizing these successes in internationalization is the senior international officer (SIO), defined as "the most senior campus administrator with an explicit international portfolio" (Heyl & Hunter, 2019, p. 5). This position has gradually been increasing in prominence since it first emerged in the 1990s. A survey by the ACE (2022) showed that 55% of institutions currently have an SIO or equivalent. The characteristics and actions of this individual, combined with the influence of the institutional context and environment in which internationalization takes place, are factors that will determine the success or otherwise of international initiatives on a campus.

Statement of the Problem

The ACE (2017) has described comprehensive internationalization as "a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate international policies, programs and initiatives and positions colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions" (p. 1). The imperative for institutions of higher education to respond to the challenges of globalization not just by offering area studies and study abroad programs, but through an institutional commitment to sustainably mainstreaming global perspectives, has been recognized by scholars and practitioners since the 1990s (Altbach & Peterson, 1998; De Wit, 1999; Knight, 1994). However, many higher education institutions continue to face significant challenges to the practical implementation of the internationalization goals articulated in institutional mission statements (Brajkovic & Helms, 2018; Legreid, 2016). These challenges

often arise from contextual and environmental factors such as a misalignment between the goals of the central administration and individual departments (de Haan, 2014; Edwards, 2007), miscommunications and misunderstandings about the meanings and purpose of internationalization (Jiang & Carpenter, 2014; Kusumawati et al., 2020), or a lack of necessary funding and resources at the institution (Hser, 2005; Jiang & Carpenter, 2013).

As part of a commitment to comprehensive internationalization, many institutions have created a senior international officer (SIO) position on their campuses (Dessoff, 2010). The exact job title may vary from campus to campus, but the concept is the same: an individual at a high leadership level who is charged with leading and facilitating the institution's comprehensive internationalization efforts. The ACE's *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* report (2017) showed that among all institutions surveyed, the SIO was seen as the second most important catalyst for campus internationalization, after the president of the institution, but among doctoral institutions the SIO was regarded as the top catalyst. However, it has also been observed that when responsibility for internationalization is shared or added on to other responsibilities, it is less likely to receive the necessary attention (Brennan & Dellow, 2013). Building consensus and developing synergies among a diverse range of stakeholders has been identified as one of the SIO's most crucial roles (Brennan & Dellow, 2013; Deardorff & Charles, 2018; Heyl, 2007; Hudzik, 2011). Thus, the individual in the SIO role is explicitly tasked with managing the challenges inherent in his or her institutional context which can be barriers to the success of internationalization processes.

While a small number of studies have explored the roles of senior international officers in institutions of higher education in general (Deschamps & Lee, 2015; Tran et al., 2020), and many others have focused on challenges to the implementation of internationalization policies

(Billingham et al., 2013; Cantu, 2013; de Haan, 2014), there is a lack of research on SIO perspectives on their roles in managing these challenges within their specific institutional contexts. This institutional context, including structural, cultural, and environmental aspects, can be highly influential in determining the extent to which internationalization is realized (Knight, 1994). Previous studies have examined the impact of organizational culture on internationalization (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009; Bartell, 2003; Yonezawa, 2017) and internationalization in specific types of higher education institutions such as community colleges (Butler, 2016; McRaven & Somers, 2017). Organizational culture is one aspect of the broader institutional context or setting in which the SIO operates and in which internationalization processes take place. This culture of an organization or institution in higher education has been described and defined in different ways. For example, Tierney's (1988) framework for organizational culture identified six dimensions that describe how decisions are made, how leaders behave and how information is communicated. An institution's culture may also be shaped by its broader context including its history and traditions, goals and mission, type of institution whether public or private, religious or secular, large or small, and its geographical location and setting. Internationalization is the *process* which takes place in the *context* of a specific institution and is led and driven by an *individual*, the SIO. This study will attempt to address a gap in the literature by considering the nexus of *process*, *context*, and *individual*, by examining the impact of institutional culture on comprehensive internationalization, as viewed from the SIO perspective, specifically in institutions that have been recognized for their achievements in this area. The future development of campus internationalization depends both on institutional and individual characteristics and the interactions between the two. The knowledge gained from my research will be used to identify effective implementation practices

and suggest future improvements in the adaptation of internationalization policies to different institutional contexts.

Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization.

Research Questions

(1) How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives?

(2) How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals?

Conceptual Framework Overview

Two models inform the conceptual framework for this study, one in the internationalization of higher education institutions and one in organizational culture. Both of these theoretical frameworks guide the overall design of my study, my data collection through interviews including specific questions on the interview protocol, and the analysis of my data and identification of emergent categories and themes. Knight (1994) proposed the Internationalization Cycle to conceptualize the processes by which an institutional commitment to internationalization is translated into a comprehensive and practical strategy (see Figure 1). This model conceptualizes the internationalization process in a university as a cycle formed of a series of interconnecting and flexible steps (Awareness, Commitment, Planning, Operationalize, Review and Reinforcement). As the leader of internationalization on a campus, the SIO is key in

the planning and implementation of each of these steps. Furthermore, this framework references a "supportive culture" which is the focus of my second research question on institutional context.

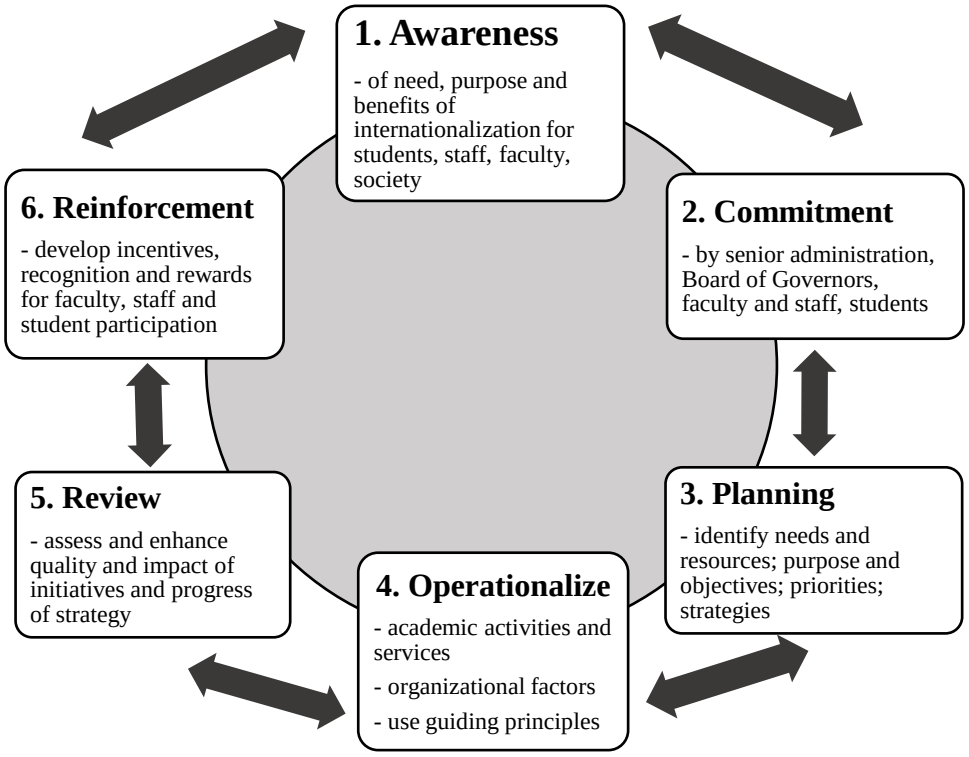

Figure 1

Internationalization Cycle (Knight, 1994, p. 12)

Tierney (1988) proposed a framework of six key dimensions of culture in the context of colleges and universities which should be taken into consideration when assessing organizational performance (see Table 1): Environment, Mission, Socialization, Information, Strategy, and Leadership. Mission and Environment are particularly relevant to my second research question on how organizational context and culture are associated with the SIO's implementation of internationalization goals, while the dimensions of Strategy and Leadership share my focus on the role of the SIO as a leader and decision maker (research question 1). I have taken Tierney's dimensions into consideration also when designing my interview protocol, specifically in

questions asking about others' expectations of the SIO role (Leadership), active involvement in strategy and implementation (Strategy), and the place of internationalization in the strategic plan (Mission).

Table 1

A Framework of Organizational Culture (Tierney, 1988, p. 8)

Environment:	How does the organization define its environment? What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)
Mission:	How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there?
Socialization:	How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated? What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information:	What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?
Strategy:	How are decisions arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership:	What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders?

These two models taken together form the conceptual framework for my study, combining approaches from research on higher education internationalization and on organizational culture.

Overview of Research Methodology

This is a basic qualitative study of an exploratory nature using data collected from semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The primary goal of generic or basic qualitative research is to uncover and interpret participants' understandings of their experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014), and the approach is based on the belief that "knowledge is constructed by people in an

ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience or phenomenon" (p. 23). A generic qualitative approach has also been characterized as in part pragmatic since it involves "skillfully asking open-ended questions of people and observing matters of interest in real-world settings to solve problems, improve programs or develop policies" (Patton, 2015, p. 154). This approach is appropriate for my study because of the data collection (interview) and data analysis (thematic coding, constant comparison) methods I will use as well as the goals of the study (to draw conclusion about the most effective practices in the field and make recommendations for improvements).

My research design also has some elements of phenomenology since this approach "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 57). This approach is applicable to my study's research design, since I intend to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of individual participants regarding the larger phenomenon of internationalization in higher education. However, phenomenology is distinct from generic qualitative research in that "while phenomenology seeks to discover the shared essence of meaning of a process or phenomenon, generic qualitative inquiry seeks to uncover the individual meaning of a process or phenomenon from the perspective of the participants" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 1373).

I have used a purposeful sample of interview participants who met specific criteria. Participants must be individuals in a senior international officer or equivalent position (actual job titles can vary between institutions) at an institution which has been selected by a relevant professional association to receive an internationalization award, such as the NAFSA Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization or the APLU International Impact Award, in the past 10 years (2013-2023). My sample of 11 participants was thus drawn from a wide variety

of contrasting institution types with the only common criterion being that they are internationalization award winners. This enabled me to identify and focus on institutions where comprehensive internationalization is valued and thriving, while drawing comparisons between the varied institutional contexts and settings represented. Semi-structured interviews lasting 60-90 minutes were carried out online via Zoom with each participant. After recording on the Zoom videoconferencing platform and transcription using Temi online software, a qualitative thematic analysis was carried out using a constant comparison coding process to identify themes and categories. In addition, a document analysis of relevant institutional strategic plans or mission statements was carried out for data triangulation.

Significance of the Study

This study makes a significant contribution both to the practice and research of internationalization in higher education. It adds to the still very limited body of research on the role of the SIO in internationalization processes while connecting this with scholarship on contextual and cultural factors which can help or hinder internationalization. This study thus contributes a deeper understanding of the relative influence of the individual SIO vs. institutional context and how they interact with one another.

The emphasis placed on internationalization by colleges and universities in future years will wax and wane according to the political climate and financial constraints, but several factors indicate that strategic internationalization will continue to play an important part in higher education institutions in an increasingly globalized marketplace. On the one hand, awards such as the NAFSA Simon Award for Campus Internationalization, which has recognized between five and eight institutions of higher education every year since 2003 for advances in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives, demonstrate that many

institutions are committed to internationalization processes and are seeing success in this area (NAFSA, 2022). On the other hand, survey data shows that there is still a long way to go for most institutions in terms of meeting comprehensive international goals (ACE, 2022). In the aforementioned survey, slightly under half (43%) of responding institutions' mission statements specifically refer to internationalization or related activities, while 36% include internationalization or related activities among the top five priorities in their strategic plans (ACE, 2022). This means that more than half of institutions have *not* incorporated or integrated internationalization into the heart of their institutional ethos, which is regarded as the hallmark of comprehensive internationalization (Hudzik, 2011). With internationalization in higher education still evolving, in practical terms this means that there is a broad scope for institutions to learn from examples of success in the field. This study provides access to the voices of SIOs on how contextual influences shape and inform their implementation of internationalization goals, providing findings which could be beneficial for institutions in identifying effective practices and future improvements in the adaptation of internationalization policies to different institutional contexts.

I hope that my study will benefit the field of international education and those who work in it by identifying effective practices in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization plans which can be used by others as models, as well as by suggesting ways in which institutional culture can be understood and harnessed to enable senior international officers and their staff to succeed in their internationalization efforts.

Delimitations and Assumptions

Delimitations are aspects of the study that are deliberately set by the researcher as controlled boundaries for the scope of the study. For example, the criteria for selecting my participant sample are delimitations. Most importantly, the institutions selected are all winners of an internationalization award such as the NAFSA Simon Award for Campus Internationalization or the APLU International Impact Award, so they represent recognized achievement in implementing internationalization initiatives. This means that the experiences of SIOs in these institutions may not be transferable to institutions which have been less successful in campus internationalization or are less committed and able to carry out these initiatives due to a lack of expertise, resources, or infrastructure. My rationale for this choice of sample is that they represent an easily identified group of institutions which are highly likely to provide rich material for a study on SIOs and internationalization due to their recognized experience in this area, while also representing a broad cross-section of different sizes, types, and locations of institutions from which I could draw some meaningful comparisons in terms of differences in institutional culture. Another delimitation is that I am focusing solely on the perspectives of the SIO at each institution, which means that as high-level administrators they are likely to have more of a broad overview and top-level understanding of how internationalization works, while the experiences of faculty, program managers, advisors, or international students, who may have different insights into institutional culture and the day-to-day work of internationalization, are excluded. However, in this study I have deliberately chosen to focus on the perspectives and roles of this one individual in each institution, as the leader of overall internationalization. In addition, the timeframe for data collection (Spring-Summer 2023) and the methods of data collection (1.5 hour Zoom interviews) are delimitations. The data collected reflects the issues

and concerns of SIOs at this particular point in time which may be influenced by current political or social events or government policies. I set an ideal maximum time of 1.5 hours for each participant interview as a reasonable amount of time to gather meaningful responses while not placing too much demand on participants' time.

Some assumptions that I operated under while carrying out this study include the assumption that participants will answer interview questions openly and honestly, and that they have a good understanding of the operational, structural, and cultural aspects of their institutions, specifically as they impact the pursuit of strategic internationalization initiatives. For this reason, I have set the criterion that participants must have worked in their current roles as SIO or equivalent for at least one full year.

Another delimitation is the chosen research design. As I developed this proposal for my study I did consider and later rule out some other possible designs and sampling strategies. Originally, I considered using a multiple case study design, which would have included many more interviews at each institution with staff involved in internationalization at different levels, in addition to the SIO. While this would have tackled some limitation issues by including non-elite perspectives, I quickly realized that the intended focus of my research questions on the SIO perspective and role specifically, rather than a comparison of different institutions, demanded the design and sampling strategy I have described here. Once I had settled on my research design, I also considered alternative sampling strategies based on a group of peer institutions or one region of the country. However, I ultimately decided that richer and more relevant data could be collected from institutions that have been recognized as excelling in the area of internationalization.

Definitions of Terms

The role of the senior international officer and the process of internationalization in higher education are the focal points of this research study. Various definitions of these key concepts have been employed by scholars and practitioners; the following commonly used terms are defined below as they are understood in this study:

Internationalization: A widely used definition of internationalization which I have adopted as a basis for my understanding in this study is "the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/learning, research and service functions of an institution of a university or college" (Knight, 1994, p. 3). An important note on this definition is that internationalization is understood as an ongoing process rather than an end goal.

Comprehensive/strategic internationalization: This term describes a more intentional approach employed by many institutions to connect and integrate different international initiatives and programs into an overall strategy. According to the ACE (2017), hallmarks of comprehensive internationalization include articulating internationalization as an institutional goal and developing a strategic internationalization plan. In addition, for internationalization to be comprehensive it should extend broadly through an institution, bringing change on a deeper level to a departments, programs, and policies (Olson et al. 2005), and be fully embedded in the structure and culture of an institution, both aligning with and enriching core institutional missions (Hudzik, 2011).

Internationalization plan: This is a strategic planning document developed by the office or unit of an institution that is responsible for international programs or services. The development of this written document has been seen as one of the elements of key ingredients in the internationalization process (Knight, 1994). A new strategic plan may be developed every

five years or so, and the document may include specific, measurable strategic objectives and goals in various areas of internationalization such as globalizing the curriculum or increasing international research partnerships.

Internationalization initiatives: This covers a wide variety of programs, course offerings, or policies which are undertaken under the umbrella of internationalization and may include study abroad programs, intercultural training for faculty and staff, joint degree programs with universities in other countries, a global living-learning community on campus, and support services for international students, to name just a few (Knight, 1994). These activities may be undertaken independently at different levels and in different units of an institution and may often not be connected into a coherent whole.

Senior international officer (SIO): An SIO is a college or university administrator whose primary responsibility is to lead and promote internationalization activities (Association of International Education Administrators [AIEA], 2017), also defined as "the most senior campus administrator with an explicit international portfolio" (Heyl & Hunter, 2019, p. 5). It is important to note that actual job titles and functions may vary by institutional context and approach.

Organizational/institutional context: For the purposes of this study, I have understood context as the broader setting or environment in which a higher education institution operates. The organizational context may include organizational structures and hierarchies, relationships with external entities, geographical location, financial circumstances, institutional characteristics and priorities, as well as the institution's history, mission, and internal culture.

Organizational/institutional culture: In order to incorporate the varied descriptions of higher education institutional culture used by scholars, for the purposes of this study I have understood this term broadly as the collection of commonly accepted values, expectations, and

practices that inform policy and behavior for individuals at an institution (Schein, 1992). Schein (1992; 2010) has detailed how an organization's culture arises from shared assumptions about its mission, strategy and function. In Bolman and Deal's (2017) symbolic frame for making sense of organizations, culture "forms the superglue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise to accomplish desired ends" (p. 242).

Organization of the Study

This chapter began with an overview of the current state of internationalization in higher education institutions and the key components of internationalization, as well as a statement of the research problem which explains the importance of the senior international officer (SIO) role in leading and implementing internationalization within varied institutional contexts. Chapter 1 also included the research purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, overview of research methodology and design, significance, delimitations, assumptions, and definitions of key terms relevant to this study.

The remainder of this research study is organized into four additional chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter 2 reviews literature in relation to this topic by further exploring the definitions of and contexts for higher education internationalization, key trends and debates in internationalization, the role of senior international officers and other leaders, and institutional context and culture as environments where internationalization takes place. This chapter also includes a more detailed explanation of the two theoretical models which form the conceptual framework for the study.

After the literature review, Chapter 3 provides details of the study's methodology and research design and the rationale for these choices. The researcher's positionality and role in this study are addressed, and planned procedures for sampling, data collection, and data analysis are

explained in detail. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the data analysis, identifying major common themes in the data. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the findings as they relate to the research questions, the conceptual framework, and the literature review. Chapter 5 also includes implications for practice and recommendations for future research. This is followed by a bibliography of referenced literature and appendices.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The ACE (2017) has defined comprehensive internationalization as "a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate international policies, programs and initiatives and positions colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions" (p. 1). The imperative for institutions of higher education to respond to the challenges of globalization not just by offering area studies and study abroad programs, but through an institutional commitment to sustainably mainstreaming global perspectives has been recognized by scholars and practitioners since the 1990s (Altbach & Peterson, 1998; De Wit, 1999; Knight, 1994). However, many higher education institutions continue to face significant challenges to the practical implementation of the internationalization goals articulated in institutional mission statements (Brajkovic & Matross Helms, 2018; Legreid, 2016).

As part of a commitment to comprehensive internationalization, many institutions have created a senior international officer (SIO) position on their campuses (Dessoff, 2010). The exact job title may vary from campus to campus, but the concept is the same: an individual at a high leadership level who is charged with leading and facilitating the institution's comprehensive internationalization efforts. While some studies have explored the roles of SIOs in institutions of higher education (Brennan & Dellow, 2013; Deschamps & Lee, 2015; Kumari, 2017; Tran et al., 2020), and many others have focused on challenges to the implementation of internationalization policies (Billingham et al., 2013; Cantu, 2013; de Haan, 2014), there is a gap at the intersection of these two themes: the perspectives of SIOs on institutional efforts to turn policy into practice. Furthermore, the culture or climate of an institution can be highly influential in determining the extent to which internationalization is realized (Knight, 1994). Previous studies have examined the impact of organizational culture on internationalization (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009; Bartell, 2003; Yonezawa, 2017) and internationalization in specific types of higher education

institutions such as community colleges (Butler, 2016; McRaven & Somers, 2017), but there is a lack of research on the impact of institutional context on the SIO's perception of their role in successfully pursuing comprehensive internationalization. The knowledge gained from my research will be used to identify effective implementation practices and suggest future improvements in the adaptation of internationalization policies to different institutional contexts.

Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization.

Research Questions

(1) How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives?

(2) How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals?

Table 2 provides key themes and sub-themes in my review of the literature on internationalization in higher education and how it is shaped and viewed through the lenses of key leadership positions as well as organizational cultures and contexts.

Definitions of Internationalization in Higher Education

Frameworks for Understanding Internationalization

The policies and practices of internationalization in higher education have been defined and imagined in different ways over the past several decades. One definition that has gained ground and been cited by many scholars in the field is that "internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/learning,

Table 2

Leading for Comprehensive Internationalization in Higher Education: Themes in the Literature

Category	Sources
Definitions of internationalization in higher education	Frameworks for understanding internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Buckner & Stein, 2020; De Wit, 1999; Hudzik, 2011; Hudzik & Stohl, 2012; Knight, 1994; Knight, 2014; Ledger & Kawalilak, 2020; Schoorman, 2000; Zhou, 2016) Global and historical context (Altbach & De Wit, 2015; Altbach & Peterson, 1998; De Wit, 2002; De Wit, 2020; De Wit & Altbach, 2021; Knight & De Wit, 2018) Rationales and motivations (Buckner, 2019; De Wit, 1995; De Wit, 1999; Engel & Siczek, 2018; Knight, 1994; Knight, 2004; Warner, 1992)
Key trends in higher education internationalization practice	Student mobility (Anderson, 2015; Bataille, 2017; Castro et al., 2016; Douglass & Edelstein, 2009; Institute of International Education [IIE], 2023a; Knight, 2012; Peterson & Helms, 2013; Siczek, 2015) Transnational education (Jibeen & Khan, 2015; Knight, 2012; Knight, 2013; Knight, 2015; Loke, 2022; Mahani & Molki, 2011; Tierney & Lanford, 2015) Measuring internationalization participation and outcomes (ACE, 2017, 2022; Ayoubi & Massoud, 2007; Brajkovic & Matross Helms, 2018; Childress, 2009; De Wit, 2010; Knight, 2008; LeBeau, 2018; Olson et al., 2005; Olson et al., 2006)
Debates and difficulties in internationalization	Overcoming challenges in implementation (Billingham et al., 2013; Cantu, 2013; de Haan, 2014; Eddy et al., 2013; Edwards, 2007; Ghazarian, 2020; Gieser, 2015; Hser, 2005; Jiang & Carpenter, 2013; Jiang & Carpenter, 2014; Jin et al., 2020; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Legreid, 2016; NAFSA, 2020; Taylor, 2004; Urban & Palmer, 2014; Warwick & Moogan, 2013) Ethics in internationalization (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011; Buckner & Stein, 2020; George Mwangi & Yao, 2020; Knight, 2012; Patel & Lynch, 2013; Stein, 2017; Vavrus & Pekol, 2015)

Table 2

Leading for Comprehensive Internationalization in Higher Education: Themes in the Literature (continued)

Leadership in internationalization	Senior international officers (AIEA, 2020; Brennan & Dellow, 2013; Deardorff & Charles, 2018; Deschamps & Lee, 2015; Dessoff, 2010; Di Maria, 2019; Heyl, 2007; Heyl & Hunter, 2019; Heyl & Tullbane, 2012; IIE, 2023b; Kumari, 2017; McRaven & Somers, 2017; Neys, 2015; Tran et al., 2020) Faculty as leaders of internationalization (Agnew, 2013; Appe, 2020; Bogotch & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2010; Criswell & Zhu, 2015; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Nyangau, 2020; Ray & Solem, 2009) Shaping policy and advancing the field (Smithee, 2012; Soobrayen Veerasamy, 2020; Teichler, 2009; Van der Wende, 2007)
Culture and context for internationalization	Understanding higher education culture (Agnew, 2012; Bartell, 2003; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Butler, 2016; Heyl, 2007; James & Derrick, 2020; Johnstone & Proctor, 2018; Renc-Roe & Roxå, 2014; Schein, 1992; Schein, E.H. & Schein, P., 2017; Sporn, 1996; Stier, 2004; Tierney, 1988) Institutional context and internationalization as organizational change (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009; Ahwireng & Pillay, 2020; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Butler, 2016; Coryell et al., 2012; Diabate, 2017; Johnstone & Proctor, 2018; Kondakci et al., 2006; McCormack, 2013; Sporn, 1996; Yonezawa, 2017)

research and service functions of a university or college" (Knight, 1994, p. 3). This definition characterizes internationalization firstly as a process – a means, not an end – and secondly as permeating all aspects of an institution's activities so that it is truly entrenched in the organization's culture. Knight (1994) envisions this process as a cycle with six stages: Awareness, Commitment, Planning, Operationalize, Review, and Reinforcement (see Figure 1 under Conceptual Framework in Chapter 1).

Other scholars have described internationalization in terms of the activities that higher education institutions practice: these can include programs for international students, the setting up of overseas branch campuses, and the integration of global content into the curriculum (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Internationalization in higher education has been viewed as a response to the forces of globalization which demand that students are prepared to compete in an interconnected global marketplace. The rationales for these responses to globalization have shifted at different moments in history between the academic, the social/cultural, the political and the economic, with economic rationales becoming the driving force in a context where higher education is viewed as a commodity (De Wit, 1999).

The concept of "comprehensive internationalization" was first advanced by Hudzik (2011). The term is offered as an organizing paradigm to conceive holistically and systemically of internationalization in higher education institutions, with the intent to "mainstream… international content and perspective, moving it from the campus periphery to a core element of the entire higher education enterprise" (Hudzik & Stohl, 2012, p. 7). Hudzik (2011) builds on Knight's (1994) conceptualization of internationalization, defining it as follows:

> Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units… Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. (p. 6)

The important point is that internationalization is fully absorbed and embedded in an institution's culture and mission at all levels. The term "comprehensive internationalization" was already current prior to Hudzik's (2011) in-depth examination of institutional progress in this area since it had been popularized by key national-level organizations such as the ACE as well as NAFSA: Association of International Educators. A 2006 ACE publication explained comprehensive internationalization as:

> a strategic and integrated approach to internationalization in which institutions articulate internationalization as an institutional goal, develop an internationalization plan driven by sound analysis… and seek to bring together the usually disparate and often marginalized aspects of internationalization (Olson et al., 2006, p. viii)

The ACE Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) conceptualizes comprehensive internationalization as having six pillars: "articulated institutional commitment," "administrative leadership, structure, and staffing," "curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes," "faculty policies and practices," "student mobility," and "collaboration and partnerships" (ACE, 2017, p. 2). Since 2003, NAFSA's annual Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization has highlighted institutions which have achieved exemplary success in advancing various aspects of comprehensive internationalization, explaining that:

> Internationalization is the conscious effort to integrate and infuse international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the ethos and outcomes of postsecondary education. To be fully successful, it must involve active and responsible engagement of the academic community in global networks and partnerships. (NAFSA, 2008, p. 1)

All of these definitions emphasize a systemic and pervasive commitment to internationalization impacting a wide range of people, programs, and processes. However, the concept of

"comprehensive internationalization" does not reflect reality for most colleges and universities, where internationalization consists of a "collection of fragmented and unrelated activities" (Knight & De Wit, 2018, p. 3).

Leading higher education professional associations at the international level, including the International Association of Universities (IAU) and the European Association of International Education (EAIE) have articulated definitions of internationalization that overlap to some extent with NAFSA, emphasizing international student and scholar mobility as well as research partnerships and curricular reforms (Buckner & Stein, 2020). The way these professional organizations view and define internationalization is important because they represent a major source of new research, collection of data, and sharing of best practices on institutional practices in this area. An examination of reports from all three organizations suggests that they share an understanding of the goals and indicators that make up internationalization, which is consistently framed in terms of economic advantages at the individual, community, and institutional levels (Buckner & Stein, 2020). At the same time, definitions often remain vague, with alternative terms such as global, intercultural, or transnational often used interchangeably.

Internationalization in higher education has also been interpreted from the perspective of theoretical frameworks such as dynamic systems theory (Zhou, 2016), and a combination of systems theory and critical pedagogy (Schoorman, 2000). This latter definition by contrast with some others emphasizes pedagogical rather than administrative concerns:

> Internationalization is an ongoing, counter-hegemonic educational process that occurs in an international context of knowledge and practice where societies are viewed as subsystems of a larger, inclusive world. The process of internationalization at an

> educational institution entails a comprehensive, multifaceted program of action that is integrated into all aspects of education. (Schoorman, 2000, p. 5)

While the characterization of internationalization as ongoing, comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated is familiar from other scholars' definitions, the addition of "counter-hegemonic" makes this definition unique. Schoorman (2000) emphasizes the need for curricular reform not only to reflect global perspectives but to recognize the significance of unequal global interdependencies. "Conscientious internationalization" is a framework that argues for an approach to internationalization that is ethics-driven rather than market-driven (Ledger & Kawalilak, 2020). Similar to Schoorman (2020), the authors highlight the need for equity and reciprocity in the formation of relationships in the practice of higher education internationalization. Using the 5Ps model (philosophy, place, process, power, people), they suggest that the aspiration of universities and colleges to internationalize is affected by personal and institutional interests, bringing up ethical conflicts (Ledger & Kawalilak, 2020). The idea of an evolution in current beliefs and ideas about internationalization from being based on values of cooperation, exchange, and mutual benefit to being more dominated by competition, commercialization, and self-interest is a recurrent theme (Knight, 2014).

Of these frameworks for understanding internationalization, those that are most relevant in informing my study are Knight's (1994) internationalization cycle and Hudzik's (2011) organizing paradigm of comprehensive internationalization. Both of these recognize the importance of aligning and embedding internationalization processes within institutional culture as well as the critical role of leadership in achieving internationalization goals, thus directly addressing my research questions.

Global and Historical Context

The impetus for increased international cooperation in higher education can be traced back to the foundation of organizations such as the Institute of International Education (IIE) in the United States in 1919, the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (German Academic Exchange Service, known as DAAD) in Germany in 1925, and the British Council in the United Kingdom in 1934 (Altbach & De Wit, 2015). These organizations were motivated by goals of world peace and mutual global understanding established by the League of Nations in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. This first wave of international educational exchange was further expanded after the Second World War and the foundation of the United Nations, again fostered by ideals of bolstering national and global security and international development (Altbach & De Wit, 2015). The prime example of the coming together of these cultural and political rationales for internationalization in higher education is the Fulbright Program, which was established in 1946 (De Wit, 2002). This program is "perhaps the most visible and successful scholarship program in the world" (Altbach & De Wit, 2015, p. 8) and has enabled the mobility of thousands of students and scholars between the United States and the rest of the world. As the Cold War set in, a move from idealism to ideology characterized further expansion of higher education internationalization efforts driven by federal government support from the National Defense Education Act (1958) and Title VI of the Higher Education Act (1960) (De Wit, 2002). The Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik I in 1957 triggered this federal government support not only of science and technology but of language and area studies in the effort to maintain U.S. dominance and competitiveness on the world stage. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the consequent end of the Cold War in the early 1990s with its accompanying shift in national priorities marked the end of this phase in international education.

Contrasting the development of higher education internationalization in the United States with other regions of the world can be instructive. In the post-Cold War era in Europe, increased international student mobility, cooperation, and integration across borders in higher education has been driven by the establishment of the ERASMUS exchange program in 1987 as well as the 1999 Bologna Declaration of the European Higher Education Area, which harmonized degree structures and credit transfer among European Union member countries (De Wit, 2002). This more strategic approach to internationalization has been partly a reaction to the demands of the global knowledge economy and the role of research-intensive universities within this context (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). This contrasts with the lack of a coordinated national approach or a clear role for the federal government in supporting international education in the United States (Altbach & Peterson, 1998). When delegated to the individual institutional level, internationalization efforts have not been taken up with the same enthusiasm in the United States as in Europe. For example, according to the 2018 *5th Global Survey of Internationalization of Higher Education* by the International Association of Universities (IAU), 90% of institutions globally mention internationalization in their mission statement or strategic plan, but in North America the corresponding figure is only one third (De Wit & Altbach, 2021).

Changes in U.S. visa and immigration policy following the events of September 11, 2001 had a temporary slowing effect on the growth of international initiatives in higher education, specifically on the mobility of international students and scholars into the United States from certain regions of the world. The effect of these policies was that the U.S. was perceived by some as a less welcoming destination for international students and scholars, a situation which competitor countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom were able to turn to their advantage (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009; Hser, 2005). Between 2002 and 2006, new

international student enrollments in the U.S. were stagnant, after which they began to rebound (IIE, 2022). Enrollment of new international students fell again in 2016 following the Trump administration's travel ban and threatened visa restrictions (Fischer, 2019), demonstrating the dependence of this aspect of higher education internationalization on both supportive government policies and global public perceptions. Most recently, government policies restricting international travel and visa issuance in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 brought both inbound and outbound student mobility almost to a standstill (IIE, 2022). While mobility in both directions has largely recovered at the time of writing, a shift in the delivery of at least some components of international education experiences to an online or virtual modality is likely to be permanent (Liu & Shirley, 2021; Paradise et al., 2022).

The shift in the overriding paradigm of higher education internationalization since the 1990s has been characterized as a move from cooperation to competition (Van der Wende, 2001). As universities prioritize revenues, rankings, and reputation in an increasingly competitive context, the more traditional values of international education based on mutually beneficial cultural exchange and cooperation now exist more as rhetoric than reality (Altbach & De Wit, 2021). This shift is characterized by commercial and market-driven concerns in the context of national economic development and competition, which has encouraged a focus on international student recruitment as well as the growth of franchise operations, articulation and twinning programs, overseas branch campuses, and online delivery of courses (De Wit, 2020; De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Other trends in the post-1990 era in higher education internationalization include increased attention to global rankings, a lack of alignment between international aspects of research, education and service missions of institutions, more of a focus on internationalization abroad (study abroad and international student recruitment) than

internationalization at home (infusing global/international elements in the curriculum), and a scattered, disjointed approach that lacks overall strategy (De Wit, 2020).

Rationales and Motivations

Why do institutions of higher education pursue internationalization policies? The motivations for undertaking these types of initiatives have been divided into four strands: academic, social/cultural, political, and economic (De Wit, 1995; 1999). Academic rationales derive from considerations of educational and research quality and reputation as well as student achievement measures, often in comparison with national or international standards (Engel & Siczek, 2018). Social/cultural rationales focus on the benefits to individual learners of engagement with other cultures in a diverse campus environment in terms of developing intercultural competence and global citizenship. Political motivations for internationalization are rooted more in national security or foreign policy concerns, while economic rationales, which have become dominant in recent years, emphasize revenue generation and competitiveness in the labor market. The distinctions between these four categories can be blurred and at the same time new rationales may emerge that do not fall under one of these headings (Knight, 2004). These may include workforce and skills development, the formation of strategic partnerships, and increasing institutional brand awareness internationally.

In addition to these four traditional categories of rationales for internationalization, various theories and frameworks have been used as ways to view motivations for pursuing internationalization both at the institutional and national levels. Internationalization can be framed in two contrasting ways: within a knowledge economy discourse, where students require intercultural skills to participate successfully in a globalized economy, or within the frame of higher education as a commodity, which emphasizes revenue generation and global competition

(Buckner, 2019). Another overarching paradigm used to frame rationales for internationalization is the liberal model (Warner, 1992), which emphasizes global cooperation and understanding. This can be contrasted with the market model, which views internationalization as a means to gain a competitive commercial advantage, and with the social transformation model, which involves a critical examination of social justice and inclusion globally (Warner, 1992).

Rationales and motivations can also be examined from two different perspectives: the institutional level and the national level. Knight (2004) has described what some different motivations for internationalizing can mean in concrete terms at both these levels. At the institutional level, factors that can affect rationales include characteristics such as the institution's mission, student population, faculty profile, location, and sources and levels of funding (Knight, 2004). Research and knowledge production is highlighted as a possible rationale for institutions who internationalize in order to engage in the kind of interdisciplinary, collaborative research across borders that is needed to tackle global challenges in the areas of the environment, public health, and agriculture (Knight, 2004). Overarching rationales for higher education internationalization can also vary greatly at the national policy level. A cross-national comparison of internationalization strategies and the ways in which they are justified and framed focused on Australia, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Engel & Siczek, 2018). This study, based on a review of strategic policy documents, found that in Australia and the United Kingdom, international education was framed primarily in market-based terms as a commodity; the United States was unique in promoting internationalization for national security and defense reasons; and both Canada and Ireland focused largely on economic concerns such as developing skilled labor, creating jobs, and promoting innovation (Engel & Siczek, 2018).

An understanding of what campus internationalization consists of, how it has developed over time, and how it has been interpreted and understood by scholars and practitioners is critical to my study of the intersection of leadership and institutional culture as mediators of success in internationalization. This information is an assumed background to my interviews with SIOs which informs how they perceive and perform their roles within their campus communities and the wider community of international education practitioners. Furthermore, the reasons why institutions and their leaders choose to pursue internationalization initiatives and the implications of these actions are directly relevant to the goals of my study.

Key Trends in Higher Education Internationalization Practice

Student Mobility

Student mobility, both inbound and outbound, has consistently been regarded as one of the cornerstones of internationalization in higher education institutions. With only 1.6% of U.S. students studying abroad due to financial and other constraints, many institutions view bringing in international students as the best way to internationalize their campuses (Bataille, 2017; Peterson & Helms, 2013). Recent trends, including shifts in federal immigration policy, rising tuition costs, and the growing availability of a quality education in their home countries have contributed since 2015 to a slowdown in the previously rapid growth of international student enrollments in the United States, which was further exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021. According to the *Open Doors* report (IIE, 2023a), the total number of international students enrolled at U.S. institutions of higher education in 2021 was 914,095, representing a 15% drop from the previous year. Subsequent years have seen a rebound, with increases of 3.8% in 2022 and 11.5% in 2023, but the total number of international students studying in the United States, at 1,057,188 in 2023, is still below pre-pandemic levels (IIE,

2023a). U.S. institutions are also facing increased competition for the recruitment of these international students from alternative educational host countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada, the latter of which has aggressively pursued more welcoming immigration policies to attract international talent (Anderson, 2015). These countries have increased their market share of international students not only through supportive visa and immigration policies (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009), but through the extensive use of third-party recruitment agents and the setting up of pathway programs, practices which it has been suggested that U.S. institutions should emulate (Bataille, 2017). All of this comes against the backdrop of consistent reductions in public funding which force institutions to exploit alternative sources of revenue, including international student tuition fees.

While many institutions of higher education point to their international student enrollments as evidence of the extent of their internationalization, there is a lack of clarity over how the presence of international students, or outbound student mobility for that matter, fits into the broader agenda for internationalization (Castro et al., 2016; Siczek, 2015). Both the recruiting of international students and the sending of domestic students to study abroad are activities often carried out in isolation by individual departments or units which are characterized by a lack of integration between various international activities across campus (Castro et al., 2016). It has been argued that international students are rich resources for developing global and intercultural competencies for all students, but they are rarely integrated strategically into the teaching and learning environment in order to fully realize this benefit (Siczek, 2015). Thus, the economic rationale for internationalization in terms of recruiting students who pay higher tuition fees is not well aligned with socio-cultural or academic rationales which focus on learning outcomes and developing global engagement. Structured encouragement for intercultural

dialogue and interaction both inside and outside the classroom, as well as more thoughtful faculty support and development in this area, are possible strategies for tackling these challenges (Siczek, 2015).

While a more strategic approach to how diverse international activities fit together as a coherent whole is clearly called for at the institutional level, policy recommendations at the national level echo this sentiment. Douglass and Edelstein (2009) argue that "enrolling international students should be part of a larger U.S. strategy to increase cultural exchange and foreign aid; to expand the public mission of universities as global ventures rooted in national service; and to support the global flow of people, expertise, and knowledge" (p. 14) and that national strategic goals for international student enrollment should be developed and linked to broader policy objectives in foreign relations, economic development, and academic achievement. This recommendation is made on the basis of the economic rationale that the United States is losing market share of international students to competitor countries, and that this is likely to have a significant impact on technological innovation and the competitiveness of the economy as a whole given the outsized contributions of foreign-born, U.S.-educated workers to the engineering and technology sectors (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009). Finally, a more nuanced and complex view of student mobility in all its forms and how it fits into strategic, comprehensive internationalization needs to be developed. Knight (2012) has identified six different categories of student mobility, including internships, research and fieldwork, and transnational collaborative degree programs, which move us far beyond the traditional conception of mobility as international students pursuing a full degree program in another country, plus short-term study abroad programs. The growth of regional mobility to an education

hub such as Malaysia or the United Arab Emirates which hosts branch campuses of an American or European university is one aspect of this broader conception of student mobility.

Transnational Education

A significant trend in recent higher education internationalization practice has been a "vertical shift downwards from student mobility to program and provider mobility" (Knight, 2012, p. 23). This means that rather than moving to another country for the duration of a degree program, students are able to take a joint degree or courses towards it at a branch campus of the overseas university within their own home country. The advantages for the student may include access to the same academic quality program and name recognition of a foreign degree at a lower cost and without having to leave home. The benefits for institutions could include attracting higher numbers of international students and gaining a foothold in an overseas market through a physical presence and increased brand awareness, as well as creating research or study abroad opportunities for the institution's students and scholars. There are various models for how these types of programs and campuses are set up as well as different terminology to describe them. Knight (2015) distinguishes a satellite model (universities with branch campuses, research centers, or management offices in other countries) from internationally co-founded universities (institutions created through a partnership between two or more institutions from different countries). An example of the former might be NYU-Abu Dhabi (founded 2008), while the latter model might be exemplified by Duke Kunshan University (a partnership between Duke University and Wuhan University, established in 2013 in Suzhou, China). The culmination of this trend is the establishment of education hubs such as Qatar's Education City, which comprises branch campuses of eight universities from the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. A related phenomenon under the umbrella of transnational education is the growth in

collaborative or joint degree programs where the curriculum is jointly developed and delivered by partner institutions (Knight, 2012).

Various issues associated with this trend of transnational campuses have been identified. The opening of branch campuses in developing nations by universities from Western countries has been characterized as a kind of academic colonization that seeks to increase influence at the expense of the host community by importing the curriculum and faculty rather than engaging in a meaningful cultural exchange (Jibeen & Khan, 2015). Alongside risks of brain drain and cultural homogenization, it has been argued that international joint degrees may suffer from potential academic fraud or the devaluation of the validity of a qualification (Knight, 2012). Questions around academic freedom may also hamper the success of a joint educational venture, as in the case of the closure of Yale-NUS College in Singapore in 2021 (Loke, 2022; Tierney & Lanford, 2015). The United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) has been the location for multiple overseas branch campuses of U.S. and European universities, which have seen varying levels of success. The Emirati government has allowed rapid growth in the number of these institutions since 2005 with a view both to serving the local population and establishing the country as a global educational hub (Mahani & Molki, 2011). However, some of these branch campuses in the U.A.E. have been very short-lived, such as Michigan State and George Mason, which both closed down in 2009 after less than three years in operation, due to low enrollments and budget cuts (Mahani & Molki, 2011). It has been suggested that a combination of failure to fully recognize cultural and regulatory differences and a lack of understanding of the local education market led to these closures.

Measuring Internationalization Participation and Outcomes

The importance of assessing and evaluating progress in campus internationalization has long been noted by scholars and practitioners, who have also suggested practical guidelines for carrying out such assessments and key indicators that should be measured (De Wit, 2010; Hudzik, 2011; Knight, 1994; LeBeau, 2018). At a national level, the main way in which progress in higher education internationalization in the United States has been tracked and reported is through the *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* survey report which is published every five years by the ACE Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE). Data are collected through a survey sent firstly to chief academic officers/provosts and subsequently to other key constituents including senior international officers, offices for institutional research, and university/college presidents. By assessing the current state of internationalization, this report contributes to a deeper understanding of varying approaches and achievements at colleges and universities across the country. The survey addresses the six key areas which form the pillars of the CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization: "articulated institutional commitment," "administrative leadership, structure, and staffing," "curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes," "faculty policies and practices," "student mobility," and "collaboration and partnerships" (ACE, 2017, p. 2). While the report details concrete findings such as the percentage of institutions who reported having certain policies, some findings are more subjective: for example, while some respondents characterized the current overall climate for internationalization as "demoralizing" others said it was "energizing" (Brajkovic & Matross Helms, 2018, p. 12).

At the individual institutional level, a variety of evaluation and assessment measures are carried out to measure progress towards internationalization goals. Institutional plans for

internationalization can be useful not just as strategic roadmaps but as tools towards the evaluation of internationalization goals (Childress, 2009). Hudzik and Stohl (2012) pointed out the importance of establishing clear goals and accountability measures to ensure that the comprehensive internationalization process is meaningful for each institution. It is what gets counted and measured that becomes most important in setting institutional and financial agendas (Hudzik & Stohl, 2012, p. 13), thus defining the connection between assessment and strategy. In describing clear and measurable goals for comprehensive internationalization, Hudzik (2011) identifies three types of indicators – inputs, outputs, and outcomes – and two main areas: student learning outcomes, and research/scholarship/engagement. Individual institutional measures have been used by some researchers to compare levels of internationalization within and between different universities. For example, a study of the extent to which universities in the U.K. matched their actual international achievements with their strategic internationalization goals utilized standardized and easily accessible measures, such as the percentage of overseas students in each university, the percentage of overseas income, and the percentage of market share of overseas first year students (Ayoubi & Massoud, 2007). The authors also suggested the use of further indicators of internationalization including the number of international partnership agreements, numbers of collaborative research projects, international contacts, the number of international faculty in the university, and number of visits from international researchers (Ayoubi & Massoud, 2007).

Useful tools to measure internationalization which are internationally recognized and applicable in a variety of contexts have been developed over time, perhaps partly in response to the increasing emphasis on accountability in higher education which means that accrediting agencies among others require information on the effectiveness of campus internationalization

initiatives (LeBeau, 2018). It has been observed that “accreditation, ranking, certification, auditing and benchmarking have become key items on the international higher education agenda” (De Wit, 2010, p. 13). The pioneering work on assessment of higher education internationalization was the Internationalization Quality Review Process (IQRP) in 1999 (De Wit, 2010; Knight, 2008; Knight & De Wit, 1999). This tool was the first initiative created for institutions to both develop internationalization strategies and to monitor and review their internationalization plans (LeBeau, 2018). It has been argued that the scholarly literature on campus internationalization using existing assessment tools has placed too much emphasis on (often quantitative) inputs and outputs rather than outcomes; this might include the number of students taking part in an international program or the number of courses offered with a global component, but not qualitative learning outcomes for students. To be more effective and meaningful, assessment of internationalization should rather measure outcomes and impact (De Wit, 2010). Olson et al. (2005; 2006) similarly argue for an approach that integrates global learning outcomes and assessment with numerical inputs.

Each of the sub-sections in this part of the literature review is important background that informs aspects of my study. For example, in my interview protocol for a pilot study in Spring 2022 which formed a key stage in the development of this study, I included questions on how participants define and measure success in internationalization on their campuses as well as asking them to highlight programs or initiatives that they view as models of success and those that posed challenges in implementation. In addition, these were all areas that emerged from the literature as key current concerns in the field of international education. Issues around assessment, student mobility, and joint degrees/branch campuses surfaced to varying extents

both in my interviews with SIOs and in my analysis of institutional strategic planning documents.

Debates and Difficulties in Internationalization

Overcoming Challenges in Implementation

Barriers and challenges to the successful implementation of internationalization processes form a significant component of the scholarly literature on internationalization. Many of these are case studies which are nevertheless potentially transferable to other contexts because they highlight structural or cultural challenges common to many higher education institutions. One key challenge to the successful implementation of initiatives that emerges in the literature is variance in interpretations and perceptions of what internationalization is and what its benefits are (Ghazarian, 2020; Gieser, 2015; Jiang & Carpenter, 2014; Jin et al., 2020; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Legreid, 2016). These variances in understandings of internationalization frequently lead to problems of miscommunication and lack of consensus. A disconnect between the administration and the faculty, or between the institutional/central level and the department/unit level, is another barrier to success that emerges from the scholarship (de Haan, 2014; Edwards, 2007; Ghazarian, 2020; Jin et al., 2020). This could also be expressed as a disconnect or lack of communication between the strategy design aspect and the executive aspect of internationalization (de Haan, 2014), which exemplifies two different cultures of decision-making: managerial and collegial. It also highlights the differences in rationales for internationalization espoused by different stakeholders in the process (Kusumawati et al., 2020).

This disconnect between different levels or units within the university can be characterized as a lack of internal integration and cohesion, which is another critical issue impeding the implementation of international strategies (Jiang & Carpenter, 2013, 2014).

Fragmentation and lack of overall planning and coherence in internationalization can lead to efforts being duplicated, initiatives being limited in time and scale, and confusion on the part of partner institutions (Edwards, 2007). This happens for example when faculty members pursue individual international initiatives based on their own connections, strengths and interests, but without embedding these within an institutional strategy. This issue speaks directly to the definitions of comprehensive internationalization examined earlier which strongly emphasize coordination and integration (ACE, 2017; Hudzik, 2011; Knight, 1994). Finally, a lack of funding and resources emerges as a major barrier to successful implementation of international programs and initiatives not just in the United States but worldwide (Hser, 2005; Jiang & Carpenter, 2013, 2014; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Legreid, 2016).

NAFSA's annual Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization has played an important part in highlighting models of success in internationalizing the campus and in broadly disseminating best practices for the attention of international education professionals and leaders. Recommendations coming out of individual research studies are also a source of ideas and learning for institutions as they set out on an internationalization process or seek to make improvements in existing policies and practices. Some of these recommendations are quite general and connect directly to accepted models of internationalization such as the ACE-CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization (ACE, 2017). For example, some studies have advocated for better support for faculty and staff who work in international programs (Cantu, 2013; Taylor, 2004), which is one of the six pillars in the ACE-CIGE model. This needed support might include not only financial support for faculty to engage in international research or lead a study abroad program, thus tackling the key challenge of limited funding/resources, but also a recognition of international engagement in the tenure and promotion process (Eddy et al.,

2013). The importance of assessment and setting clear student learning outcomes as part of the internationalization process is also given prominence in the research literature (Eddy et al., 2013), linking to the CIGE "pillar" of curriculum and co-curriculum. The recommendation for visible and sustained leadership commitment (Warwick & Moogan, 2013) connects to the two pillars of administrative leadership and institutional commitment. Other recommendations for overcoming challenges and succeeding in internationalization come out of much more specific contexts, such as technology integration as an internationalizing practice (Billingham et al., 2013) or the engagement and integration of international students as cultural resources on campus (Urban & Palmer, 2014). In recent years, the Simon Awards for Comprehensive Internationalization have similarly drawn exemplary practices from specific institutions, including involving alumni in internationalization at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and offering a residential international student peer mentor program at Emerson College (NAFSA, 2020).

Ethics in Internationalization

The increasing commercialization of higher education internationalization has been characterized as a devaluation of international education and a move away from traditional ideals of promoting global peace and cross-cultural understanding (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011). Economic imperatives, including drastic declines in public funding of higher education, have led to the adoption of more market-based strategies that may reproduce structures of inequality and uneven global power relations (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015). Furthermore, the commonly accepted definitions of internationalization, for example as disseminated by international professional associations in the field such as NAFSA, EAIE, and IAU, remain largely disconnected from discussions on ethical responsibilities when engaging cross-culturally, particularly on the

negative impacts of unequal power dynamics between individuals or institutions divided by race, ethnicity, language, culture, or socio-economic status (Buckner & Stein, 2020). This ethical aspect of the practices of internationalization in higher education institutions has led some scholars to draw attention to alternative frameworks which place social justice and equity concerns front and center (George Mwangi & Yao, 2020).

A critical internationalization studies approach can be used to challenge the apolitical character of mainstream approaches to internationalization and highlight the problematic nature of internationalization practices situated within a global capitalist system which tends towards the preservation of existing structures of knowledge, wealth, and power (Stein, 2017). One aspect of this is the flow of international students and scholars primarily from the Global South to developed nations, which has been characterized as "brain drain" that may lead not only to a net loss of skills and knowledge for countries that need them most, but a possible erosion of cultural identities and creeping cultural homogenization (Knight, 2012). The role of international students, the number and diversity of whom on U.S. campuses is regarded as a key indicator of internationalization, can also be seen as ethically compromised when many institutions view them as "cash cows" paying higher tuition rates as well as resources for campus internationalization which primarily benefit the cultural growth of domestic students (Buckner & Stein, 2020). Other scholars similarly argue for a more critical conceptualization of internationalization, with concerns around equity, social justice, and ethics at its heart. For example, Vavrus and Pekol (2015) utilize critical social theory to highlight the structures of inequality underlying many internationalization practices, while Patel and Lynch (2013) propose a "glocalized" approach to the curriculum as a way to engage multiple cultural perspectives in a

mutually respectful exchange between host country and international students, and thus to move away from dominant ethnocentric norms (Patel & Lynch, 2013).

The ongoing debates over difficulties both ethical and practical in implementing internationalization which are highlighted in these sections are central to my study. The senior international officers participating in the study have to navigate these issues and obstacles in their everyday practice as they work towards achieving internationalization goals. My interview questions on perceptions of success and on organizational barriers in particular are directly informed by the literature in this section which reveals contradictions in individual and institutional understandings of the meaning and purpose of internationalization.

Leadership in Internationalization

Senior International Officers

The leadership of campus internationalization processes rests at many institutions with the person appointed to the position of senior international officer (SIO). These individuals are charged with leading and facilitating an institution's comprehensive internationalization efforts from each phase to the next while building on the synergies among these phases (Deardorff & Charles, 2018). The growing prominence of the SIO role at U.S. colleges and universities is an indicator of the increasing emphasis placed on internationalization (Dessoff, 2010). The increased attention being paid to the importance of the SIO role is also exemplified by the creation in 2019 of the IIE's SIO of the Year Award, which recognizes achievement based on criteria such as the integration of international education into the mission and goals of an institution and the development of effective administrative structures to support international education (IIE, 2023b). The responsibilities encompassed in this high-level leadership role are broad and aligned to institutional needs and contexts. A survey of SIOs carried out by AIEA in

2020 showed that the top three responsibilities for individuals in this role were: international institutional relations and partnerships, strategic planning for internationalization, and representing the institution (AIEA, 2020). The exact job title that SIOs carry can vary from campus to campus, as can the administrative leadership hierarchy within which they are housed; "director/executive director" was the most common title for SIOs, held by 36% of respondents, followed by "associate or assistant vice president/chancellor/provost" (29%) and "vice president/chancellor/provost" (14%) (AIEA, 2020, p. 2). The most common reporting structure was that 59% of SIOs report to a "vice president/chancellor/provost of academic affairs" (AIEA, 2020, p. 2).

Some key qualities suggested as necessary for an SIO as a leader include "coalition building for a change agenda, highly effective multilevel communication, leveraging an institution's mission for change, global knowledge, strategic thinking, passion for leading others, and shaping institutional futures" (Heyl, 2018, p. 28). A 2020 survey by AIEA showed that important skills for SIOs include interpersonal skills, planning/visioning skills, and intercultural competence (AIEA, 2020). In addition, the top valued knowledge areas for SIOs were understanding institutional culture and context, knowledge of international issues in higher education, and leadership knowledge. Further studies have suggested other broad qualities of effective leadership for SIOs, including collaboration, trust, and respect (Neys, 2015), maintaining effective partnerships and dissemination of information across campus (Brennan & Dellow, 2013), as well as understanding how to navigate higher education institutions and systems, and a sound knowledge of budgets, policies and regulations in higher education administration (Tran et al., 2020). A multidimensional framework for understanding the SIO role proposed by Di Maria (2019) plotted dimensions of urgency and strategy alignment among nine

major types: architect, diplomat, strategist, adviser, director, firefighter, hobbyist, coordinator, and specialist. Furthermore, an understanding of how to collect and leverage data and an ability to strategically build relationships have been highlighted in surveys and interviews with SIOs as key to success in their roles (IIE, 2023b).

One aspect of interest in the SIO's role as a leader is that they have been characterized as change agents (Heyl, 2007; Heyl & Hunter, 2019). At the same time, they are almost always middle managers in that they are not members of an institution's senior leadership team but report to someone on that team, usually a provost, vice provost, or vice president (Heyl, 2007). This position as a middle manager means that an SIO's executive authority is limited; he or she can only facilitate, not mandate, change. The SIO's legitimacy–defined as the perception that they are qualified, experienced, insightful and respectful–is key to their ability to effect change. This legitimacy is often derived from campus networking and longevity. The change involved in a comprehensive internationalization process has been characterized as "deep, pervasive, intentional, long-term change" that transforms institutional culture by changing underlying assumptions as well as visible institutional behaviors, processes and structures (Heyl & Hunter, 2019, p. 13). According to Heyl (2007), a key element in leading this process of change is hiring the right people and an ability to develop, mentor, and motivate others towards a shared vision and high performance.

In addition to being an agent of change, the SIO is often also called upon to play the role of entrepreneur. In an environment of dwindling resources, SIOs often have to be entrepreneurial in their efforts to fund internationalization initiatives and spend an increasing portion of their time trying to generate alternative sources of funding. Recruiting international students can be an important component of these revenue-generating activities (Deardorff & Charles, 2018).

Mobilizing resources for internationalization in creative ways from a variety of sources internal or external to the university is a key challenge for SIOs (Heyl & Tullbane, 2012). Scholars have characterized this increasing entrepreneurial activity on the part of SIOs as a form of mergers and acquisitions (Deschamps & Lee, 2015). Mergers refer to programs that bring benefit through partner institutions or countries, such as dual degree programs and credit delivery overseas. Acquisitions in this context are activities such as international student recruitment which focus on acquiring resources from other countries. Finally, the leadership role of an SIO is characterized by advocacy. The SIO role has been described as one of constant coalition building, communicating, informing, and rewarding. He or she always has to work through and with others in order to get things done or changed, making communications and advocacy absolutely critical (Heyl, 2007). Indeed, SIOs themselves report the crucial importance of maintaining networks of campus allies and building on the support and advocacy of senior administration such as presidents, provosts, and deans (IIE, 2023b). Faculty members, however, can sometimes be harder to convince of the value of internationalization (Dessoff, 2010).

Faculty as Leaders of Internationalization

It has been argued that the faculty are the "most important variable in comprehensive internationalization" (Hudzik, 2011, p. 30) and "key drivers of internationalization" (ACE, 2017, p. 6). The drive and commitment of faculty is identified as one of two major sources for the push towards internationalization; the other comes from trustees and stakeholders in the pursuit of a strategic plan to increase or maintain competitiveness (Edwards, 2007). Since some faculty may hold positions of power and influence in their individual institutions, their buy-in and commitment are considered essential to the success of planned international initiatives (Ghazarian, 2020). Faculty members engage in and lead a variety of international activities,

which may include international teaching or research, joint publications in international journals, membership in international professional associations, and attending conferences overseas (Criswell & Zhu, 2015). When considering comprehensive internationalization processes in institutions of higher education, two major areas outside of research in which faculty may play leadership roles are firstly, the internationalization of the curriculum, and secondly, study abroad programs. Internationalization of the curriculum, where faculty provide control and direction, is considered an important strategy in increasing levels of on-campus internationalization (Agnew, 2013). For these reasons, the CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization designates "curriculum, co-curriculum, and student learning outcomes" and "faculty policies and practices" as two of its key areas of focus (ACE, 2017, p. 2). In terms of study abroad programs, faculty are also key leaders, with studies showing that faculty are usually the single most important factor in determining whether to establish a new program (Appe, 2020).

The literature reveals factors which both facilitate and discourage faculty from taking on leadership roles in internationalization and reveal how faculty engagement may relate to leadership in internationalization at the SIO or senior administrative leadership level. Four major types of barriers to faculty engagement in internationalization have been identified: a lack of coordination and communication; limits on funding; administrative policies that discourage participation; and lack of support staff to facilitate international activities (Dewey & Duff, 2009). For faculty, the current external focus of most internationalization efforts (on student mobility and international partnerships) is problematic in that it ignores the importance of global learning for all students, which means internationalizing the curriculum; faculty are central to this endeavor since they must have a certain level of global or intercultural competence themselves if they are to enable students to achieve global learning goals (ACE, 2017). Unfortunately, the data

from the ACE's 2016 *Mapping Internationalization* survey indicate that a low priority is given to faculty professional development and to incorporating consideration of international work and engagement in tenure decisions. This means faculty are disincentivized from engagement in internationalization (Agnew, 2013; ACE, 2017; Bogotch & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2010; Criswell & Zhu, 2015; Nyangau, 2020). Professional development for faculty in the area of internationalization is also lacking at many institutions (ACE, 2017). Professional development opportunities to enhance faculty skills in intercultural communication and applying for external research funding among other things has been shown to have a positive effect on engagement in international initiatives (Ray & Solem, 2009). Lastly, lack of access to funding is a major barrier to faculty involvement in internationalization initiatives (Bogotch & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2010; Criswell & Zhu, 2015; Dewey & Duff, 2009).

Shaping Policy and Advancing the Field

Leadership in the internationalization of higher education can be characterized as shared (Smithee, 2012), since it comes also from multiple sources outside of institutions, such as state and national governments, non-profit organizations, professional associations, and research scholars in the field. All of these groups may contribute towards shaping policies in internationalization at all levels as well as advancing knowledge of internationalization trends and practices. At the national level, policy in internationalization has been described as being shaped by multiple actors in a pluralistic process with prominent actors in the policymaking process coming from three main groups: the public sector (federal and state government), the voluntary sector (lobby groups and professional associations), and the private sector (foundations) (Soobrayen Veerasamy, 2020). Leaders of internationalization both within and outside institutions have been described as stakeholders and advocates and can be divided into

four groups: institutional decision-makers such as presidents and trustees; individual institutional practitioners (faculty and staff); government bodies and agencies; and non-governmental groups including professional associations (Smithee, 2012). It is important to note that leadership can come not just from individuals but from organizations and groups. Professional associations such as NAFSA (founded 1948) have for decades played a central role in lobbying and advocating for an overall national policy on international education. Smithee (2012) reports that the ACE has also played an important part in advancing internationalization, for example by articulating and publishing guidelines on internationalization processes. Additional sources of leadership in the field include research carried out both by individuals and foundations/organizations such as the Institute for International Education (IIE), and key journals and publications such as the *Journal of Studies of International Education* (Smithee, 2012).

At the national level, the U.S. government role in higher education internationalization comes mainly in the form of providing scholarship and grant funding for specific programs, rather than in formulating an overall internationalization strategy or policy (Smithee, 2012). By contrast, internationalization of higher education in Europe has been strongly shaped by supra-national policies and strategies governing student mobility (the ERASMUS program) and standardization and credit transfer across borders (the Bologna process) (Teichler, 2009). These policies enacted by supra-national government bodies of the European Union have shaped and led the direction and character of international education from the 1990s onward, giving rise to international education as a "horizontal" rather than a "vertical" phenomenon with the majority of student mobility taking place between E.U. member countries rather than, as previously, from developing to developed countries (Teichler, 2009). The rationale behind these policies was to promote greater European integration; mobility for students outside the E.U. was not a priority.

However, the aim of the Bologna Declaration of 1999 to harmonize different countries' degree structures was partly motivated by the need to attract students from other parts of the world, thus embodying models of both cooperation and competition in higher education (Van der Wende, 2007).

While my study focuses on the experiences and perspectives of SIOs as leaders of campus internationalization, these leaders do not act in a vacuum. They are part of a web of influences and interests which impact their ability to perform their roles successfully in both positive and negative ways. The relationship between SIOs and the central international office they lead, and with individual faculty members within academic departments, can make or break the effective implementation of international initiatives. The tension between leadership at the department (faculty) level and the central administration (SIO) level is a key factor in organizational culture which affects internationalization and is further explored in the next section. At the same time, external groups and individuals, especially organizations such as NAFSA and ACE, lead and shape directions in internationalization policy and practice which both limit and guide the SIO in implementing policies at the institutional level.

Culture and Context for Internationalization

Understanding Higher Education Culture

In this study, I consider how individual SIOs operate within their wider organizational context to achieve strategic internationalization goals. This institutional context is made up of various aspects of the environment such as geographical location, institution size and type, and institutional mission. It has been noted that the SIO's working environment can be a crucial factor in the success or otherwise of internationalization strategies (Di Maria, 2019). Institutional culture, described by Bolman and Deal (2017) as the symbolic frame for understanding

organizations, is one facet of organizational context. E. H. Schein and P. Schein (2017) state that cultures are "learned patterns of beliefs, values, assumptions and behavioral norms that manifest themselves at different levels of observability" (p. 2). Organizational culture can be perceived through what Schein and Schein (2017) call "observed behavioral regularities," "formal rituals and celebrations," "espoused values," "formal philosophy," "group norms," "rules of the game," "identity and images of self," "habits of thinking," and "integrating symbols" (pp. 20-21). Schein (1992) identifies four levels at which culture operates. These four levels are: macrocultures, organizational cultures, occupational subcultures, and microcultures. Internationalization processes within colleges and universities are influenced in different ways by these levels of culture.

The institutional culture, both broadly defined and with specific reference to internationalization, can be expressed in institutional documents and publications such as a strategic plan and mission statement. These documents can be aspirational and idealistic in nature and thus speak to how the institution perceives itself and how it would like to be perceived by others. An institution's strategic plan and goals can be seen as reflections of the institutional mission and culture (James & Derrick, 2020), and expressions of goals in internationalization within those strategic plans can influence aspects of internationalization practice. The SIO is likely to be more successful at an institution where internationalization efforts are clearly aligned with overall institutional strategy (Di Maria, 2019). Differing interpretations and perceptions of what internationalization means have been identified as a stumbling block to successful comprehensive internationalization (Butler, 2016; James & Derrick, 2020; Johnstone & Proctor, 2018). Contradictory ideologies (defined in Stier's (2004) framework as "idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism" [p. 88]), which can be compared

to the differing rationales for internationalization discussed earlier, among faculty and administrators may lead to multiple strategies being pursued (Agnew, 2012). Thus these divergent understandings of internationalization impede needed organizational change. These variable understandings of internationalization are exemplified in some institutional contexts by a tension between local focus and global interdependency (Agnew, 2012). This may especially be the case in public land-grant universities with an explicit mission to support and educate the local area or state. Institutional norms and the vantage points of different faculty members and administrators affect how they interpret elements of the strategic plan that pertain to internationalization (James & Derrick, 2020). An analysis of institutional strategic plans as they relate to internationalization is therefore a valuable counterpoint to my in-depth interviews with SIOs.

Sporn's (1996) organizational culture typology examines the relationship between the distinctive academic culture in a university and strategic management processes. This is relevant to how SIOs make decisions and execute internationalization strategies within their respective institutional contexts. Sporn's proposed typology identifies four types of university culture: "weak, internally-focused cultures," "weak cultures with an external orientation," "strong, internally-focused cultures," and "strong and externally oriented cultures" (Sporn, 1996, p. 55). The tension between subcultures at the department/unit level and the central administration influence how well the university will adapt to change, including processes of change such as the internationalization of an institution. The interplay of various micro-level cultures of individual faculty members working through their own global and local networks to implement international programs with meso-level cultures of a college or university's strategic

internationalization agenda can both constrain and enable success in these initiatives (Renc-Roe & Roxå, 2014).

While several approaches to understanding higher education culture form a useful background my study, my research is guided in particular by Tierney's (1988) framework for organizational culture that identifies six cultural concepts or terms operating in a university culture: "Environment," "Mission," "Socialization," "Information," "Strategy," and "Leadership" (p. 8) (see Table 1). Examining these cultural dimensions through questions such as "How is information disseminated?" (dimension: Information) and "How are decisions arrived at?" (dimension: Strategy) enables researchers to better understand the culture of a specific institution. Tierney's (1988) framework has been used as the basis for other models for understanding institutional cultures in higher education, including those specific to internationalization, such as Sporn's (1996) typology of strength and orientation of culture in adapting to change, and Agnew and VanBalkom's (2009) Cultural Readiness for Internationalization model. I have used Tierney's (1988) dimensions of culture as a reference point for my interview protocol which includes items focusing on perceptions of leadership, decision-making, communications, the institutional mission statement, and the institutional environment as factors mediating the implementation of internationalization initiatives.

Institutional Context and Internationalization as Organizational Change

The context of an individual institution of higher education can be highly influential in determining the success of internationalization initiatives (Knight, 1994). Characteristics of a university such as the type of institution (public/private, research institution/liberal arts college), its size, student population, governance model, traditions, and history can influence the ways in which internationalization processes are perceived and implemented. For example, within the

community college sector, some common factors in internationalization practices that have emerged in the scholarship are sustainability challenges due to a reliance on external grant-funded programs, and the tension between international and multicultural services/programs in the context of a highly diverse domestic student body (Butler, 2016). However, even within this sector, internationalization is highly variable and dependent on individual institutional context. External factors such as the broader geographical and cultural setting of an institution also have an important impact and contribute to institutional context. The interplay between institutional culture and national level higher education culture has been examined in a comparison of internationalization at universities in Australia and the United States (Johnstone & Proctor, 2018). Internationalization processes in both countries were shown to be primarily faculty-driven, but there was also alignment with national policy which focuses on international student recruitment needs in Australia, whereas promoting study abroad was seen as a vehicle of internationalization in the U.S. (Johnstone & Proctor, 2018). This demonstrates how national context is an important element in institutional internationalization processes.

Internationalization in higher education institutions has been conceptualized in Knight's (1994) Internationalization Cycle as a process of step-by-step changes that build on each other. This process is ultimately one of organizational change. Internationalization has also been described as "an organizational change strategy for higher education in its response to preparing students with global competencies needed for success in the 21st century" (Agnew, 2012, p. 474). Furthermore, the SIO in an institution has been characterized as a change agent (Heyl, 2007; Heyl & Hunter, 2019). In this context of the SIO as a leader of change, Bolman and Deal's (2017) frames approach (structural, human resource, political, symbolic) and the ACE-CIGE model for comprehensive internationalization (ACE, 2017) have been suggested as approaches to

organizational change that may be particularly relevant to the higher education setting (Heyl & Hunter, 2019). Bolman and Deal (2017) proposed four frames or perspectives for understanding how complex organizations, including universities, work. The structural frame is based on the belief that efficiency can be achieved through a rational allocation of roles and responsibilities which work together in defined ways to reach established goals (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Coordination may be vertical or lateral, and the tension between differentiation and integration is at the heart of this frame. The human resource frame emphasizes the needs, talents and engagement of individuals and the idea of a good fit between the organization and the individual as being key to success. The political frame views organizations as dominated by competing interest groups and the struggle over and negotiation for scarce resources. The symbolic frame views organizations through the symbols, rituals, and myths that are ways of dealing with ambiguity and bring meaning and purpose to people's work. This symbolic frame deals with organizational culture as understood by Schein (1992). These four frames may be useful ways to understand aspects of the SIO's role within the broader context of a specific institution. Studies referencing Bolman and Deal's (2017) four frames in relation to internationalization include examinations of the role of the college president in internationalization (Diabate, 2017; McCormack, 2013), a study of the student perspective on institutional culture and internationalization (Ahwireng & Pillay, 2020), and a conceptualization of internationalization as an organizational level managerial issue (Kondakci et al., 2006). These are approaches that inform my study.

The institutional cultures discussed in the previous section can be a constraint to organizational change (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009; Sporn, 1996; Tierney, 1988), but certain types of culture within an institution have been identified as more open and adaptable to

successful change. Using Sporn's (1996) typology, a strong and externally oriented culture is most conducive to change since it is flexible and adaptive in responding to its environment and its members share the same attitudes, values and beliefs. The Cultural Readiness for Internationalization (CRI) change model (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009) was designed to operationalize Sporn's (1996) typology of strength and orientation of culture as a way to view the process of internationalization. The model describes factors both internal and external to the university at micro, meso, and macro levels which influence an institution's readiness for the changes brought about through internationalization. For successful organizational change in the area of internationalization, a clear alignment between stated values and actual practices is critical; alignment of values between the micro (individuals) meso (institutional) levels is also key (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009). This connects to the earlier discussion on the gap between internationalization goals as expressed in the strategic plan, and the way internationalization processes play out in reality.

The tension between centralized and decentralized institutional structures has also been noted by scholars as an aspect of institutional context that can be a challenge to the changes demanded by internationalization (Coryell et al., 2012; Yonezawa, 2017). In a decentralized institution, individual colleges, programs, or faculty may work independently on internationalization initiatives with limited collaboration or sharing of information (Coryell et al., 2012). A more centralized structure would be characterized by a university-wide strategic plan in which internationalization is an essential component, and goals and accountability measures imposed by a central international office. Yonezawa's (2017) study of four Japanese universities conceptualized institutional internationalization along a "structure" axis from centralized to decentralized, and on a "culture" axis running from universal to specialized. He proposed that

structure and culture should be considered in a more integrated manner as universities make changes towards internationalization.

These models for understanding higher education culture and organizational change applied to internationalization processes are critical in informing my study of the SIO role within institutional contexts. A key finding from my pilot study carried out in Spring 2022 was that SIOs perceive themselves as navigators of change, highlighting the importance of the scholarship on organizational change as a reference point. In particular, Knight's (1994) Internationalization Cycle which conceptualizes internationalization as a process with key stages is one model that forms the basis for my study. The discussion of higher education culture and internationalization as organizational change in this section of the literature review thus lays the groundwork for the conceptual framework presented below.

Conceptual Framework

As discussed in the previous section, key scholarship in the literature on higher education culture (Schein 1992; 2017), and on organizational theory (Bolman & Deal, 2017) form an essential basis for understanding the role of the SIO in internationalization processes. However, there are two models in particular that I have selected to inform the conceptual framework for this study, one in the internationalization of higher education institutions, and one in organizational culture. Both of these theoretical frameworks guide the overall design of my study, my data collection through interviews including specific questions on the interview protocol, and the analysis of my data and identification of emergent categories and themes.

Knight (1994) proposed the Internationalization Cycle to conceptualize the processes by which an institutional commitment to internationalization is translated into a comprehensive and practical strategy (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). This model conceptualizes the internationalization

process in a university as a cycle formed of a series of interconnecting and flexible steps (Awareness, Commitment, Planning, Operationalize, Review, and Reinforcement). I find this model of internationalization as an ongoing process of organizational change particularly relevant to the key aspect of the SIO's role as a *navigator of change* (preliminary finding from my data analysis in the pilot study) and the characterization of this role as a *change agent* (Heyl, 2007). The first two phases (Awareness and Commitment) speak to the need for a supportive institutional culture (research question 2); the Planning and Operationalize phases connect to the SIO's role in implementation (research question 1); and Review and Reinforcement address issues of assessment and incentives which play into the SIO's impact on the success of internationalization initiatives (research question 1).

Tierney (1988) proposed a framework of six key dimensions of culture in the context of colleges and universities which should be taken into consideration when assessing organizational performance (see Table 2 in Chapter 1): Environment, Mission, Socialization, Information, Strategy, and Leadership. Mission and Environment are particularly relevant to my second research question on how organizational context and culture affect the SIO's implementation of internationalization goals, while the dimensions of Strategy and Leadership share my focus on the role of the SIO as a leader and decision maker (research question 1). I have taken Tierney's dimensions into consideration also in the design of my interview protocol, specifically in questions asking about others' expectations of the SIO role (Leadership), active involvement in strategy and implementation (Strategy), and the place of internationalization in the strategic plan (Mission). Another emergent theme from the data analysis in my pilot study was *communicating and advocating* (connects to Tierney's dimension of Information).

Knight's (1994) internationalization cycle has been widely cited in research studies and utilized by scholars as a guiding framework to understand internationalization (Brennan & Dellow, 2013; Childress, 2009; de Haan, 2014; Smithee, 2012). In studies focusing on the role played by university culture in the internationalization change process, Tierney's (1988) cultural elements have often been used, directly or indirectly, for example through Sporn's (1996) typology of cultural strengths (Agnew, 2012; Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009; Bartell, 2003).

Summary

Defining Internationalization in Higher Education

This section encompasses various conceptualizations and models for internationalization, rationales and motivations for undertaking internationalization, and putting internationalization into global and historical context. These themes inform my study as essential background to how SIOs understand their professional roles within their institutions and the wider field of international education.

Key Trends in Higher Education Internationalization Practice

Two important current issues in the practice of higher education internationalization are student mobility both inbound and outbound, and transnational or cross-border education which includes the establishment of overseas branch campuses and joint degrees in partnership with universities in other countries. In an era of accountability and global rankings, assessment and evaluation of internationalization assumes ever greater importance for institutions. These subthemes highlighting key trends informed the way I created and structured my interview protocol as well as my analysis of institutional strategic planning documents.

Debates and Difficulties in Internationalization

Scholars have used case studies of institutional practices to showcase the challenges of implementing internationalization policies and recommendations for tackling them. Obstacles to successful implementation often arise from conflicts and miscommunications in the perceptions of the meaning and purpose of internationalization. Debates around the ethics of internationalization processes further inform the context in which SIOs must operate.

Leadership in Internationalization

This section explores the key role of the senior international officer (SIO) in the process of internationalization as well as faculty leadership roles and perspectives on internationalization practices. Leadership in shaping internationalization policy and advancing the professional and research field also comes from individuals and groups outside of institutions, such as government and professional associations. The relationships between the SIO and other actors both within and outside of their institution are at the heart of my study.

Culture and Context for Internationalization

Frameworks for organizational culture lay the groundwork for studies of how institutional contexts mediate the implementation of internationalization strategies and the ways in which organizational change can be used as a lens to understand the process of internationalization in higher education institutions. The literature in this section informs the conceptual framework for my study since I have utilized one framework in organizational culture (Tierney, 1988) as well as one in internationalization (Knight, 1994).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction with Research Questions

In order to build a coherent institutional approach to internationalization, a college or university requires "leadership (a) that is senior and influential enough to promote development of an institutional consensus and strategy . . . and (b) that can help facilitate development of synergies across the programming components of internationalization" (Hudzik, 2011, p. 3). This view speaks directly to the role of the senior international officer (SIO) in navigating and managing aspects of their particular institutional context as they implement internationalization initiatives. The SIO must be adept at forming alliances, building cohesion and capacity, while acting as "both an agent of the administration and an advocate for change" (Deardorff & Charles, 2018, p.13). This individual is thus a part of the existing institutional hierarchy or infrastructure, but must also manage the challenges which may arise when attempting to introduce new policies or practices into the existing context. Comprehensive internationalization initiatives can be successful in all manner of institutional contexts, as is well demonstrated by the diversity in the types of institutions awarded NAFSA's annual Simon Award for Campus Internationalization since 2003. Recent winners have included a community college, a military academy, and a private specialist arts college as well as flagship state universities, situated in all areas of the country (NAFSA, 2022).

This study will examine the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization, with a view to answering the following research questions:

(1) How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives?

(2) How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals?

This chapter begins with a description of the research design and methodology and the researcher's role and positionality within the study. Following an examination of ethical considerations, the chapter outlines sampling strategies to recruit research participants, and provides an overview of the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, strategies for trustworthiness and rigor and limitations of the study will be discussed.

Methodology/Epistemology/Design and Rationale

My study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm and a constructivist epistemology, which leads me to examine the complexity of participants' subjective views of a situation as they seek to understand the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013). In an interpretivist worldview, researchers are aware that the way they make sense of others' experiences is shaped by their own personal and cultural backgrounds (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A constructivist epistemology emphasizes the interactive link between researcher and participants and the social construction of knowledge and is based upon the assumption that multiple realities exist that are dependent on context (Mertens, 2020). These characteristics make an interpretivist and constructivist framework appropriate for my study because of my goal of understanding my participants' experiences of implementing internationalization while recognizing my own professional and personal connections to the topic of the study. This is a basic qualitative study of an exploratory nature using data collected from semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The primary goal of generic or basic qualitative research is to uncover and interpret participants' understandings of their experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014), and the approach is based on the belief that "knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience or phenomenon" (p. 23). A basic qualitative approach

has also been characterized as in part pragmatic since it involves "skillfully asking open-ended questions of people and observing matters of interest in real-world settings to solve problems, improve programs or develop policies" (Patton, 2015, p. 154). This approach is appropriate for my study because of the data collection (in-depth, semi-structured interview) and data analysis (thematic coding, constant comparison) methods I will use as well as the goals of the study (to draw conclusions about the most effective practices in the field and make recommendations for improvements). Basic qualitative research has also been described as "not guided by an explicit or established set of philosophic assumptions in the form of one of the known qualitative methodologies" (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 9), but including the four basic requirements of "a declaration of the researcher's position, congruence between methodology and method, a clear articulation of the researcher's approach to rigor, and an explanation of his or her analytic lens" (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 9). I have consciously fulfilled all four of these requirements to ensure the alignment of my study's goals with a generic qualitative approach. After a consideration of a possible multiple case study approach as well as a purely phenomenological approach, a basic qualitative approach was selected as the best fit for my research purpose and a design which is exploratory, interpretive, and pragmatic.

My research design is, however, also informed by some elements of phenomenology since this approach "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 57). The aim of phenomenological research is to provide "fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived" (Finlay, 2009, p. 6). Dahlberg's "lifeworld" approach to phenomenological research is further defined as "the description and elucidation of the everyday world in a way that expands our understanding of human experience" (Dahlberg & Drew, 1997, p. 305). Interpretive phenomenology takes the

position that understanding the phenomenon is an act of ongoing interpretation (Vagle, 2018), and utilizes several methods which are relevant to my study, including "reflecting on essential themes which characterize the phenomenon… describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting" (van Manen, 2001, as cited in Vagle, 2018, p. 64), and "balancing the research context by considering parts and whole" (p. 65). Elements of both interpretive phenomenology and the "lifeworld" approach are applicable to my study's research design since I intend to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of individual participants regarding the larger phenomenon of internationalization in higher education. However, phenomenology is distinct from basic qualitative research in that "while phenomenology seeks to discover the shared essence or meaning of a process or phenomenon, generic or basic qualitative inquiry seeks to uncover the individual meaning of a process or phenomenon from the perspective of the participants" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 1373). This distinction is particularly relevant to my study in which I have chosen to focus on the experiences of *individual* SIOs in implementing the *process* of internationalization.

Researcher's Role and Positionality/Subjectivity

The researcher is regarded as a key instrument in qualitative research, since they collect data themselves rather than utilizing questionnaires or instruments designed by other researchers (Creswell, 2013). My role as the researcher in this study means that I was solely responsible for identifying and recruiting participants, scheduling interviews, carrying out data collection, analyzing the data, and writing up the findings. As part of the data analysis process, I utilized an online transcription service (Temi) and a data analysis software package (NVivo) due to the volume of interview data I collected.

Positionality addresses the relationship between the researcher, the topic, and the participant, including to what extent the researcher is an insider or outsider with regard to the

topic of the study and possible biases or influences on the topic (Jones et al., 2021). Ezzy (2002) points out that since it is impossible to prevent our individual preconceptions and biases from influencing our research, it is better to openly acknowledge the ways in which this might happen. Similarly, Telles (2000) reflects on the challenge of making explicit the links between his past experience as an individual and a professional, and the focus of his research interests. Telles (2000) also sees this reflective process as a "legitimization of my own experiences as a source of knowledge" (p. 258). My research topic on internationalization processes in higher education is inextricably rooted in my professional experiences and interests. Since I have worked for over a decade in universities in different roles within the broader field of international education, including international student recruitment/admissions and study abroad, it is unavoidable that I have developed opinions and beliefs through my own experiences which pertain to the topic I am now researching. For example, I am strongly convinced of the benefits of bringing international students to a campus as a part of internationalization, as well as the effectiveness of centralizing internationalization processes in the person of the SIO. My position as an insider in this professional field as it has developed has given me valuable insights into how institutional structures, cultures, and histories can impact plans and practices for internationalization. In the view of Telles (2000), I have an autobiographical connection to the phenomenon I am studying, since I myself through my work have been a part of the fabric and process of internationalization at the different higher education institutions in which I have worked.

My position as an international education professional could have impacted my data collection or analysis methods as I carried out this research into internationalization practices. I interviewed senior administrators in my field and both my past professional experience and considerations of my future career in the field may have shaped the way I approached and

analyzed these interactions. I cannot separate myself from the topic, since I am embedded in it through my professional work and it is entwined with my professional identity, goals, and values. It is important to recognize this personal connection to the research at the outset of my study. One of my own presuppositions with regard to my research topic is the basic assumption that the role of the SIO is important and that internationalization should be highly valued. I have also observed firsthand how different institutional contexts (large/small, public/private, centralized/decentralized, selective/less selective) can impact decision-making processes and relationships between individuals and units of the organization. The advantages of my positionality with regard to the study are that I already have a reasonable understanding of the role of the SIO and the nature of internationalization on college campuses. I also have connections in the field through my involvement with the professional association NAFSA which may have made recruiting participants easier. The disadvantages are that I may be too close to the subject matter and find it hard to cultivate an objective perspective. In addition to an active recognition that my biases and values may influence all aspects of the study, from participant recruitment to interpretation of interview data, strategies to manage my positionality have included peer debriefing (feedback from my dissertation committee at multiple stages) and member checking of transcripts (sharing interview transcripts with the participants to ensure accuracy).

Ethics/Protection of Human Participants

There are various ethical considerations which may emerge from the process of carrying out qualitative research interviews. Brinkmann (2018) identifies some of these ethical issues, for example the fact that there is a power asymmetry in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and the fact that the data flow is one-way. The interview serves the interviewer's purposes, which may be hidden from the respondent, and the interviewer has sole control over

the interpretation of the responses. These aspects which put the interviewer in a position of power and control may be further exacerbated if there are power imbalances in other respects such as gender, race or socio-economic status. Since I interviewed very high-level administrators in my field, this power differential may in fact work in the opposite direction, causing me as the interviewer to feel anxiety about my performance which may have affected the data collection process. *Elite interviews* have been identified as a specific genre of research interviews with leaders or experts (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018); some of the challenges inherent in this type of interview include a reluctance on the part of the elite interviewees to discuss topics beyond their usual talking points (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) and difficulty for the researcher in trying to conceal the elite's identity (Kezar, 2003). Since the participants are also useful people for me to build connections with for professional networking and future career opportunities, this consideration may also create an ethical or political issue for me. I have addressed these potential issues by making my research purposes explicit to the participants and by clearly stating in my study any ways in which the participants are connected to me in my professional life.

One potential risk for participants in this study is that they do not know exactly how I will represent their stories and their professional work and integrity. While they are anonymized in the report, this may still be a concern for them. Since they are in high-level public-facing positions, misrepresentation or negative interpretations of their roles could impact not only their own reputations but how their institutions are viewed. One way in which I have addressed this potential concern is by discussing confidentiality issues with the participants before the interview and explaining that I will not include either individual or institutional names in my study and will conceal any other identifying details. It is also possible that participants may incidentally benefit from having the opportunity to reflect with me on their experiences in their roles and how

institutional culture and context has helped or hindered them, and thus consider how to perform more effectively.

The process of seeking approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB) is one way in which potential ethical issues with regard to the protection of human subjects have been addressed. As a doctoral candidate I was required to obtain this approval prior to conducting data collection, a process which included detailed statements regarding risks and benefits to participants, obtaining informed consent, issues of confidentiality such as using pseudonyms for participants and institutions, as well as concerns regarding data security and possible conflicts of interest.

Sampling (Techniques, Criteria, Sites/Settings)

I used a purposeful sample of interview participants who met specific criteria. This type of purposeful sampling may also be termed criterion sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants must be individuals in a senior international officer or equivalent position (actual job titles can vary between institutions) at an institution that has been selected to receive an internationalization award such as the NAFSA Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization or the APLU International Impact Award, in the past 10 years (2013-2023). My rationale for using these awards as a central criterion for my sample is explained below in relation to alternative criteria used in previous studies. This criterion provided a population of 57 institutions, from which I selected a sample of 11 participants (thus within the goal range of 8 to 12), which could have been adjusted depending on the point at which I felt that I had achieved my research goals of effectively answering my research questions, finding sources that are rich in data, and reaching a point of data saturation when no new themes were arising. My rationale for selecting these participants is firstly that the senior international officer role is the focus of my study since these individuals are best placed to comment on the processes of

internationalization within their specific organizational contexts. I stipulated at least one year in their current SIO position as I considered this a minimum amount of experience to be able to develop meaningful perspectives on the role and their institutional context. The small number of previous studies on the SIO role have used samples which focus on a similar type of institution to provide a relatively homogeneous group; for example, institutions within the California State University system (Tran et al., 2020), comprehensive research institutions with medical and veterinary science schools (Neys, 2015), community colleges (Brennan & Dellow, 2013; Kumari, 2017; McRaven & Somers, 2017), and public universities representing all regions of the country and a range of sizes (Deschamps & Lee, 2015). This study takes a different approach. Instead of a homogeneous sample, my participants are drawn from a wide variety of contrasting institution types with the only common criterion being that they are internationalization award winners. This enables me to identify and focus on institutions where comprehensive internationalization is valued and thriving, while drawing comparisons between the varied institutional contexts and settings represented. At the same time, a maximum variation sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation of institutions that differ by size (student enrollment), type (for example, private/public, land-grant, liberal arts college), geographic location, population served (for example HBCU or minority-serving institution), and Carnegie classification. I reached out initially by email to a smaller portion of the total sample which included a variety of institution types using the categories mentioned above, and then followed up with further selected recruitment as needed to obtain a varied sample.

I identified the institutions in my population through lists of Simon Award winners on the NAFSA website and International Impact Award winners on the APLU website, and the SIOs at each institution through a search on the institution's website. The identification of the individual

serving in the SIO or equivalent role was confirmed as necessary by contacting the provost's office at each institution. I contacted potential participants initially by email asking if they would be willing to be interviewed as part of my study. This email included a link to a Google form with a detailed informed consent statement for participants to complete as well as a short pre-participant survey to collect some basic background information on each participant and their institution (see Appendix A). A total of 33 potential participants were sent the initial recruitment email, which was re-sent up to three times as needed to give participants adequate opportunities to respond and to ensure a yield of the target number of participants.

Data Collection Techniques

I collected data through semi-structured interviews using Zoom videoconferencing with each of the 11 participants, between April and June 2023. Interviews are a primary method of data collection in qualitative research since they provide "deep, rich, individualized and contextualized data" (Ravitch & Carl, 2019, p. 126) which allow the researcher to make connections between the experiences of individual participants in order to more fully understand the similarities, differences and range of perspectives within a group. The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of 20 questions which explored the participants' backgrounds and views of their leadership roles in internationalization within respective institutional contexts. The questions were grouped into topic areas centering on the SIO role, institutional context, strategic internationalization, and organizational culture. These topic areas align with the main focuses of each of my two research questions (see Appendix B for interview protocol).

The interviews lasted about 60-90 minutes each and were recorded within the Zoom platform and then saved to a cloud-based network (Google Drive). The audio recording of each interview was then transcribed using the online transcription software Temi (www.temi.com). The transcripts generated by Temi were subsequently edited as necessary for accuracy by the

researcher while playing through the full audio transcripts. Verbatim transcription is a word-for-word transcription that enables researchers to closely analyze their data, but at the same creates challenges of bias and interpretation (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). In order to ensure the quality of my data analysis, I should maintain an awareness that transcription is an interpretive act in itself; to ensure reliability and validity of data the researcher should explicitly state the guidelines or procedures used when transcribing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Document analysis was a secondary data collection procedure in this study for the purposes of data triangulation. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for evaluating documents, whether printed or electronic, and synthesizing the data contained in them, as part of a data collection method in qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). Strategic plan documents were accessed from the institutional website for each interview participant, as well as department or unit-level strategic plans for the Office of International Programs or equivalent, if one existed. As part of the institutional website, strategic plans are public documents which are used to "communicate… publicly espoused values and image" (Tracy, 2013, p. 83). My aim in collecting and analyzing these strategic plans was to illuminate aspects of institutional context such as the relative importance placed on internationalization as well administrative structures and budgetary support for these initiatives. Bowen (2009) identifies five specific functions of documentary materials: (1) providing background and context, (2) suggesting relevant research questions, (3) providing additional research data, (4) keeping track of change and development, and (5) confirming data from other sources. As such this document analysis was a way for me to perform some data triangulation with the data collected from my interviews with SIOs.

Instrumentation

The interview protocol of 20 questions was developed from a pilot study carried out in Spring 2022. After testing this original protocol in two participant interviews during the pilot study, important lessons were learned regarding the likely overall timing of the interview, reasonable number of questions within that time frame, and the flow of interview questions; appropriate revisions were made to the questions and the structure of the protocol based on what was learned in this pilot interview process as well as the pilot study data analysis to try to improve alignment between research questions and interview questions. The resulting protocol is divided into four sections which explore key topic areas relating to my research questions. Aspects of the two models which make up my conceptual framework (Knight's [1994] internationalization cycle and Tierney's [1988] framework of organizational culture) as well as my review of literature have also informed and shaped the interview protocol. Questions are organized under the topic areas: (1) perceptions of the senior international officer role, (2) institutional context, (3) views on strategic internationalization, and (4) perceptions of organizational culture. The idea is to move from questions focusing on the concrete practicalities of the role to more abstract and conceptual questions about the place of the individual within the institutional context and the process of internationalization. A semi-structured interview protocol allows for flexibility and tailoring to each situation, since "every interview question does not have to be asked, the sequence and pace of interview questions can change, and additional interview questions can be included" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 239). Questions are designed to be open-ended and non-leading in accordance with the research design of a generic qualitative study that is exploratory in nature, allowing participants to fully express their understanding of their own experiences. The semi-structured nature of the protocol also allows for follow-up questions,

also defined as probing questions or second questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018), which may vary depending on the participant's initial answers. The importance of follow-up questions was one of the most important lessons learned from the pilot study interviews.

A shorter protocol of seven questions was designed for use with my secondary data, which are institutional strategic plan documents (see Appendix C). The questions focused on the purpose and audience for the document, the SIO role and supporting administrative structures, and the institutional context for internationalization, including values and mission. This aligns with the conceptual framework elements of Mission, Information, and Strategy in Tierney's (1988) Framework for Organizational Culture as well as Awareness, Commitment, and Planning in Knight's (1994) Internationalization Cycle.

Data Analysis Procedures

After recording on the Zoom videoconferencing platform and transcription using Temi online software, a qualitative thematic analysis of the interview data was carried out using an inductive coding process to identify themes and categories from the interview transcripts, a method common to many types of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). I was guided by a pragmatic iterative approach to data analysis (Tracy, 2013), which employs primary-cycle coding to generate descriptive codes from words or phrases, followed by secondary-cycle codes to categorize the initial codes into interpretive, analytic concepts. I based my coding process on the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to categorize units of data (words or phrases) in order to draw out common themes. Constant comparison can be described as a continuous process of looking for similarities and differences in data elements, or for patterns and variations by making comparisons between sub-groups of data already identified (Dye et al., 2000). During the course of this process, the criteria for inclusion or exclusion in a category are

gradually refined and become more specific as the process unfolds. In this way codes emerge from the data using an inductive mode of analysis as defined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) to observe a number of instances in order to say something general and to identify patterns across multiple datasets. Data analysis software (NVivo) was employed to assist in this process. In addition, a document analysis of relevant institutional strategic plans or mission statements was carried out for data triangulation.

My first step in data analysis was to closely read my interview transcripts line by line in the NVivo software and highlight phrases or sentences which appeared particularly relevant to my research questions, specifically how the participants viewed their role in internationalization and their engagement with organizational context. These short phrases or sentences formed my basic units of analysis. I then began a comparative, iterative process of grouping these units into thematic categories. Following the guidelines laid out by Charmaz (2014), I attempted in this primary coding cycle to stay close to the data by using gerunds as descriptive codes, for example "engaging with faculty" and "building partnerships on campus." These primary level codes were changed and adapted several times as I went through the processes of refining or combining these descriptive codes. Once all my sentences and phrases were categorized into one of the descriptive primary-cycle codes I created, I entered a secondary cycle which Charmaz (2014) calls "focused coding." My aim was to look for patterns among the primary codes and/or to select codes which seem particularly useful or meaningful. These focused codes were eventually more interpretive and analytic than the primary level codes which were more descriptive.

My data analysis procedure on the strategic plan documents followed a similar iterative process to identify themes and group them together. My starting point for analysis was the full text of the documents, filtered through the seven questions of my document analysis protocol

(see Appendix C). These questions focus on institutional mission and values, the strategic importance accorded to internationalization, and institutional staffing and structures for internationalization. The coding process was done separately from the analysis of interview data as the purpose of this analysis is secondary and for data triangulation. After two cycles of coding to identify strong overarching themes, I compared the results with the data analysis from the interviews to identify any overlap and/or divergences.

Data Quality (Trustworthiness)

Among eight strategies suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) for quality in qualitative research, I have used the following five: (1) peer review or debriefing, (2) clarifying researcher bias, (3) rich and thick description, (4) member checking, and (5) triangulation. In this study, peer review was one of the most important quality-enhancing strategies I engaged in by incorporating feedback from my dissertation committee and chair as well as other faculty at multiple stages in the dissertation proposal process and during a research methods course in Spring 2022 in which I designed and carried out a pilot study. This interaction and feedback from various sources was a strategy for continuously improving my writing, research design, and methodology with each new version of my work.

Clarifying researcher bias is another strategy for quality that I have used. Since my research has phenomenological components, one of the strategies for quality (which can also be described by the term “validity”) most relevant and essential to a study of phenomenological nature is researcher reflexivity. This can be described as a continuous process of reflection on the researcher’s own values and assumptions and how these both shape and are shaped by the research process (Palaganas et al., 2017). I engaged in this reflexivity in the writing of a positionality statement at the outset of my research as well as by continued reflection on the

relationship and interaction between myself as the researcher, my participants, and the subject of my research study.

Referring back to Creswell and Poth's (2018) eight strategies for quality, I have also used rich and thick description in analyzing and reporting my findings, which was achieved through the iterative thematic coding process. Member checking as a strategy for quality involved sharing interview transcripts with each participant to ensure accuracy and asking for their feedback. In this study I also used data triangulation by analyzing documents such as institutional strategic plans and mission statements as a counterpoint to the data collected from participant interviews. Finally, the pilot study I designed and carried out in Spring 2022 as part of an advanced research methods course has proved to be valuable as a strategy for improving the quality and rigor of my final dissertation study, since it gave me the opportunity for several rounds of further feedback and the chance to test out my interview questions and operational aspects of the data collection and analysis process, which has led to revisions and improvements.

Limitations

One possible limitation of this study is the context of the pandemic starting in 2020 which may have affected the participants' responses and may mean that my findings and conclusions may not be meaningful to a broader, "normal" context for the SIO role. The participants found themselves in unusual circumstances in 2020 specifically due to fallout from the pandemic in terms of student mobility and finances, so the themes observed may be quite different than if the interviews had been carried out in non-pandemic times and may be less transferable to other contexts. Although my interviews were carried out in 2023, the effects of the pandemic still figured largely in the participants' responses as they spoke about the most recent years in their roles. Another possible limitation is the nature of the positions that my participants hold; as high-level representatives of their institutions they may feel pressure to

align themselves strongly with an institutional "party line" and it may be more challenging to uncover their personal perspectives. My interview protocol and approach to data analysis were designed with this possible challenge in mind. A possible limitation of my sample is that they are drawn only from "successful" institutions, that is those that have been officially recognized for achievement in campus internationalization. Institutions and SIOs who may have faced more challenges and been less successful in implementing internationalization are excluded. While this sampling strategy has yielded data-rich sources, it is important to recognize that the selection of participants is based on NAFSA's definition of what constitutes "success" in internationalization and may therefore not present a well-rounded or holistic picture of the experience of all SIOs, or even the average SIO.

Summary and Transition

This chapter outlined the design and methodology of a basic qualitative research study with some characteristics of phenomenology, which investigates how senior international officers perceive their own roles within the process of comprehensive internationalization and within the context of their particular college or university. The chapter included a discussion of researcher positionality, ethical considerations in data collection, as well as sampling strategy and rationales. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis of institutional strategic plans have yielded rich, multi-layered descriptive data. Thematic coding of the data and the careful application of strategies for trustworthiness have led to the findings discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings from the analysis of data from both participant interviews and related institutional documents. The purpose of this study was to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization. Eleven participants working in SIO roles at different types of institution were interviewed with the aim of addressing the following research questions:

(3) How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives?

(4) How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals?

The primary data source for this study was the participant interviews. In addition, institutional documents were analyzed as a secondary data source. The chapter begins with an overview of the participants, including basic demographic and professional details, and of their institutions, including an analysis of their Carnegie basic classification, size, and funding model. This is followed by an introduction to the institutional documents and the approach to document analysis. An analysis of the major themes that emerged from thematic coding of the interview data from all 11 participants is then presented. Some of these themes speak more to the SIO role (research question 1), some more to institutional context (research question 2), some to both. My findings are not presented separately by research question but rather by cross-cutting themes. The analysis of documentary data, including institutional and departmental strategic plan documents, which were coded in a deductive way using the protocol in Appendix C, is incorporated into these findings. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings from the

data analysis, including a consideration of ways in which the analysis of documentary and interview data intersect or diverge.

Participants

Eleven participants were interviewed for this study, all currently working in a senior international officer role at a higher education institution that has been awarded either the NAFSA Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization or the APLU International Impact Award between 2013 and 2023. A summary of selected characteristics of these participants can be found in Table 3 below. Nine of the participants were female, and two were male. Three of the participants had over 10 years of experience in their current SIO positions, three had between five and 10 years of experience in that role, and five had less than five years of experience in their current roles. Only three of the 11 participants had a faculty background (which I have defined as being a tenured professor at some point in their careers), while the other eight came from non-faculty/administrative backgrounds. One of those eight came from a government/foreign policy professional background, while the remainder came from an administrative professional background in higher education. In Table 3, I have used the categories Faculty, Education Abroad, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Government to indicate the broad areas of each participant's professional background prior to becoming SIO. The participants' job titles and reporting lines are also included in this table as important elements which inform the performance of their roles within their institutional contexts. The majority of the participants (seven out of 11) reported directly to a provost, with one reporting directly to a president, one to a vice president, one to a dean, and one jointly to both a provost and a president.

Table 3

Selected Characteristics of Study Participants

Participant	Gender	Years in role	Professional background	Job title/rank	Reports to (title/rank)	Institution type (Carnegie basic classification)	Institution size and funding model
Ada	F	5	Education Abroad	Vice Provost	Provost	R1	Large public
Bridget	F	2	Education Abroad	Associate Dean	Provost	Master's M1	Large private
Christina	F	11	Academic Affairs	Associate Vice President	Provost and Executive Vice President	R2	Large public
Dorothy	F	13	Academic Affairs	Director	Dean	Associate's	Large public
Elizabeth	F	4.5	Faculty	Associate Vice Provost	Provost	R1	Large public
Frederick	M	13	Student Affairs	Dean	Vice President	Special focus	Medium private
Gregory	M	3	Faculty	Associate Provost and Dean	Provost	R1	Large public
Helen	F	3.5	Government	Vice Provost	Provost	R1	Large public
Irene	F	1	Faculty	Associate Provost	Provost	R2	Medium public
Julia	F	6	Student Affairs	Vice President	President	Mixed Baccalaureate/ Associate's	Large public
Katharine	F	7	Student Affairs	Vice President and Vice Provost	Provost/ President	R2	Medium private

Table 3

Selected Characteristics of Study Participants (continued)

Note. Enrollment sizes are defined by Carnegie (ACE, 2023): large = 10,000 or more; medium = 3,000-9,999; small = 1,000-2,999. While Carnegie defines any institution with an enrollment of 10,000 or more as "large", the enrollments of institutions thus defined in my sample range from 10,000 to 31,000.

I intentionally selected a sample of participants who represented a variety of institutional types in terms of location, size, Carnegie classification, and other characteristics. The Carnegie basic classification of each participant's institution, as defined by the ACE (2023a), is illustrated in Table 3, along with its size in terms of student enrollment. Four of the eleven participants were from institutions defined as R1 (doctoral universities – very high research activity), three from R2 institutions, and one each from the categories Master's M1, Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's, Associate's, and Special focus. Using the regions defined by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (n.d.), five participants came from institutions in the Northeast region, and two each from the West, South, and Midwest respectively.

Institutional Documents

Strategic planning documents from each of the 11 institutions at which my participants are employed were analyzed using the document analysis protocol (Appendix C). A summary of these documents is provided in Table 4. Ten of the 11 participants' institutions provided strategic plan documents (one, Bridget, provided no current overall strategic plan document, but I substituted the institutional mission statement from the website as part of the document analysis). Most of these strategic plans were publicly available on the institutions' websites. Five of the 11 participants also provided unit or department-level strategic plans for their international or global programs offices. These were not published on the websites of the institutions but rather obtained

directly from each SIO participant. The dates of publication for each document are given in Table 4, and range between 2018 and 2023.

Table 4

Overview of Strategic Plan Documents

Participant	Institutional Plan	International Plan	Notes
Ada	2022	2023	
Bridget	2020	-	No strategic plan document – 2020 mission statement from website was analyzed
Christina	2019	2021	
Dorothy	2021	-	
Elizabeth	2022	2021	
Frederick	2020	-	
Gregory	2022	2021	
Helen	2020	-	No separate international plan – incorporated as section of institutional plan
Irene	2022	-	
Julia	2021	-	
Katharine	2023	2018	

For institutional strategic plan documents, the purpose of the documents is to articulate institutional priorities, set overall goals for the college or university, and develop a plan to achieve these goals, usually over a specified time period such as five years. The plans may include an institutional vision, mission, and core values as well as detailed action items under each larger goal or objective and possible assessment measures. The audience for this type of document is both internal (institutional leadership, faculty, and staff) and external (board of governors or trustees, alumni, donors, academic or industry partners, and others). For department or unit-level international plans, the scope is more limited. These are generally internal documents created for the purposes of planning and setting goals and an action plan within the international programs (or equivalent) office only. The intended audience would primarily be the

leadership and staff of the international office as well as the university leadership (provost or president and their council or cabinet) to whom the SIO reports. These international strategic plans were very varied, ranging from a one-page model for internationalization to a far more detailed 22-page plan with numbered and tiered goals, priorities, and strategies.

I organized my initial analysis of these documents into four themes, which correspond to questions (4) through (7) on the document analysis protocol: SIO role and administrative structures, value of internationalization, place within the institutional mission, and outlook for the future. My findings were then integrated into the themes which emerged from the analysis of participant interviews.

Analysis of Participant Interviews

Seven of the most relevant and significant common themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data are outlined in Table 5, along with selected supporting sub-themes which appear as sub-headings in my analysis. Some of the sub-themes appear under more than one overarching theme. While many of the sub-themes appeared in multiple participant interviews, I also found that some participants spoke at length about specific issues or topics which no other participants mentioned. These differences may be related to the respective institutional contexts of individual participants, as well as to differences in the individual experiences and personalities of the participants.

Table 5

Themes and Sub-themes from Analysis of Interview Data

Conceptual Code	Key Descriptive Sub-codes	
Play a diplomatic role of influence without authority	• Role of president • Vertical relationships • Hierarchy and reporting structure	• Expanding influence • Scope of responsibility
Cultivate collaborative relationships intentionally to amplify effectiveness	• Identifying allies and stakeholders • Lateral relationships • Building trust • Handling opposition	• Faculty as barriers to internationalization • Faculty as facilitators of internationalization • Collaborative approach • Network of support
Integrate international goals through understanding institutional mission and culture	• Aligning with institutional goals • Adapting to institutional type • Unique culture of institution • Cultural barriers to internationalization	• Institutional commitment • Integrating internationalization • Mission of institution • Strategic planning
Adapt to change with flexibility and innovation	• Identifying opportunities • Responding to crisis • Innovative thinking	• Flexibility and adaptability • Leadership turnover • Entrepreneurial approach
Navigate internal and external politics by connecting with stakeholders	• Finding balance • Governance of the university • Advocating externally • State government policies	• Federal government challenges • Geopolitical challenges • Connecting to global context • Navigating internal politics
Manage perceptions and improve visibility for internationalization	• Perception of SIO • Perception of international office • Divergent understandings of internationalization • Demonstrating value	• Explaining what we do • Communicating across campus • Advocating internally • Making progress in internationalization
Balance big picture thinking with operational details to manage a team	• Managing budget • Funding challenges • Generating revenue • Managing a team	• Staffing challenges • Staff development and engagement • Shaping policy

Play a Diplomatic Role of Influence Without Authority

A common theme among the participants was the distinction between the formal authority of the SIO conferred upon them by their job title, rank within the institutional hierarchy, and reporting line to a president or provost, and the informal ways in which they often felt compelled to build their influence in order to achieve their goals. Another way to describe this is to compare the vertical relationship of an SIO with the provost or president to whom they report directly with the many lateral relationships that an SIO develops with other leaders on campus, such as other vice provosts or associate provosts leading administrative divisions of the university as well as deans of colleges. These lateral relationships are built voluntarily depending on the inclination and personality of the SIO and may be vital in cementing an SIO's ability to operate effectively in an institutional context where their formal position alone lacks the necessary authority. Frederick, at a medium sized private special focus institution, described the SIO position as "playing a diplomatic role of influence without authority." This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme "play a diplomatic role of influence without authority" organized by the following sub-themes: role of president, vertical relationships, hierarchy and reporting structure, expanding influence, and scope of responsibility.

Role of President/ Vertical Relationships

Among these vertical (based on authority) and lateral (based on influence) relationships, the paramount role of the president of the university, whether or not the participant reported directly to them, was very clear. In some cases, participants felt that it was more a matter of adapting to the interests and priorities of individual presidents, rather than advocating to them for the value of international initiatives. "You kind of live and die by who your president is… if international is important to them, that's great. If it's not, you can very easily find yourself in, you

know, the outer banks, on that," stated Katharine, who reports to both the president and the provost at her institution. She went on to express her apprehensiveness when there was a presidential transition at her institution as to how the value the institution placed on international initiatives might shift. Christina, reporting to the provost at her large public R2 institution, similarly expressed that she was "nervous" when a president who had been very supportive of global initiatives left and a new president came in, suggesting that the scope and success of her unit will always "change based on leadership [of the institution]." Dorothy, SIO at a community college where she reports to a dean, put her success and progress in internationalization at her institution down to the support of her president: "I really think that's what made us successful is we had the figure at the top was a huge proponent [of international education]."

One interesting point brought up particularly by Dorothy, Gregory, and Irene was that a less close relationship with the president of the institution might actually work in the SIO's favor. In the experience of these participants, a president less interested in global initiatives meant that the SIO had more autonomy in their roles. Gregory, who reports to the provost at his large public R1 institution, expressed it in this way:

> If you've got more pressure from your president or your provost to perform as it were, or if they care more about your performance metrics… then… you've got… sort of a narrower window… of opportunity, or you have… less margin for error.

He suggests that he has more freedom to try new things because he does not feel that his president is keeping a close eye on him due to having other priorities and interests. Dorothy also felt that her relationship with the president her at institution left her with a lot of autonomy in her role, but for a different reason: "Over the years, I think I've proven that I'm trustworthy and that I know what I'm doing. And so… in a way it's good, in a way it's bad that I… have a lot of

leeway.” Irene, who also reports to a provost, echoed this ambivalence when she stated that the autonomy she has in her role could be seen as both positive and negative. Her relationship with the provost she reports to is also characterized by a degree of lack of interest and oversight. While Gregory took this freedom from oversight as a clear positive, he suggested that SIOs can operate most effectively if there is a balance between support and interest in internationalization and a hands-off approach on the part of the president or provost: “Hitting that sweet spot is… crucial because… if your superiors trust you to be responsible, then you can have the type of authority that you want and need to implement your programming.” Gregory thus identified finding this balance in his relationship with the president and provost as key in enabling his success in the SIO role.

Hierarchy and Reporting Structure

Many participants agreed that being in the position of reporting directly to either a provost or president signaled that the institution supported and valued internationalization. The main benefit of this reporting structure was often described as having a “seat at the table” where major decisions are made, having a voice in university-wide issues, and being present in critical meetings with other senior leaders. Elizabeth, SIO at a large public R1 institution, remarked that “global's either… important to an institution, or it's not. And if it's important to an institution, best practices suggest that you're going to report to the provost or the president.” This was echoed by Irene, from a medium sized public R2 institution, who stated, “I report to the provost. I'm on the provost’s executive team. So, I would say that that signals that within the academic mission… it's seen as important… I would say it's seen as highly important.” Participants also described their position in the institutional hierarchy as being an “insider” or among the “inner circle” with regard to the strategic planning and overall direction of the university.

One participant expressed dissatisfaction with a change in reporting structure when a new university president came in, which meant they now reported directly to the provost whereas previously they were on the president's council. The participant interpreted this change as a decrease in support for the SIO position and for internationalization as a whole and said she would continue to lobby for a return to the president's council, which she described as "a seat at the one table that I think I need." Her comment is also an indication of ways in which an SIO's perceived or real authority can wax and wane depending on changes in institutional leadership. This was echoed by Elizabeth, who currently reports to the provost at her R1 public institution. She described a change in the reporting structure of the SIO position prior to her tenure in the job as a "kind of a demotion for the office in terms of priority" which "made it very difficult… just to have any mandate of how to move forward." The same participant argued that the SIO's job title was of crucial importance not just internally within her own university as a reflection of the importance of the role, but also when negotiating partnerships and doing business externally on a global stage.

Sometimes the SIO's job title can indicate something about the history of the position. Bridget, whose job title is associate dean, reporting to the provost at a large private Masters level institution, suggested that "the position title tells you a lot about where the institution was in the past and not necessarily where things actually are in reality." She went on to explain that prior to her appointment in the role, previous SIOs had always been faculty members and that the associate dean title was the only way the institution would allow faculty to serve in an administrative role. The job title therefore reflected her particular institutional context where (a) historically the person in the SIO role was likely to come from the faculty and (b) there was a separation between academic (reporting to the provost) and administrative (reporting to the

president) job titles. One participant actually had a dual reporting line to both the president and provost, and a dual job title as both vice president and vice provost. She explained the rationale behind this as follows:

> These positions need to be at a vice president level because you're dealing with institutional strategy and you've got to be there at the table and at that level... However, because these positions also have by definition so much, kind of line with the academic affairs side to it, that you also need to be under the provost house.

According to this participant, this dual reporting line worked well at her private R2 institution; she did not mention any drawbacks or conflicts in this arrangement. Another participant, Helen, used the phrase "geography is destiny" to describe how, in spite of being a vice provost and reporting directly to the provost, her influence was limited by her unit's location on campus, in a building far removed from the main administrative building, which meant that she was "regularly… not at the table when important decisions are made." This point about the SIO's physical location on campus negatively impacting their ability to be influential where needed was unique to this participant.

Expanding Influence/ Scope of Responsibility

In many cases, the SIO needs to make up for limited formal authority with a proactive approach to increasing their influence on campus through identifying allies, building a network of support, and working collaboratively. This kind of informal influence can take time to develop and demands continuous engagement to overcome the potential disruptions of changes in leadership and staffing across campus. Katharine, who has a dual reporting line to both the president and the provost at her medium sized private R2 institution, described the distinction between authority and influence (my words) as "scope of influence" and "span of influence."

This participant pointed out that while her "scope" of responsibility or influence, in terms of the size of her unit and the number of staff she directly managed, was relatively narrow, her "span" of influence was far broader, extending into all the academic colleges of her university as well as administrative offices such as development, alumni relations, and DEI, among others. She described her ability to be effective in her role as requiring the cultivation of this span of influence:

> The only way I do that is through… my ability to collaborate…, my ability to be persuasive, my ability to link what we do to work… that [is] important to what other people are doing, being at the right table…, all those things that kind of come into… how you have levers and… influence on that.

The ability to be persuasive, understand the needs of others, and build trust and goodwill among key constituencies on campus were widely seen as necessary qualities to be effective in the SIO role. According to Helen, the SIO needs to "get donors on board, get stakeholders on board, and then, working constructively, you know, you need to be able to convince people to fund you." While the SIO's goals in expanding their influence on campus can be financial, building a sense of trust and goodwill over time can also help in a more abstract way, in increasing awareness of the importance of internationalization among other leaders on campus who then become allies. Frederick, at a medium sized private special focus institution where he reports to a vice president, described how he was very intentional over a period of years about trying to find ways to support leaders such as the chief diversity officer in advancing the DEI cause, which meant that:

> When they formed a Board of Trustees committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion, I was invited to have a seat at that table, so that I am actually working with our trustees to

> think about the ways in which internationalization is an integral part of our, the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy.

His experience shows not only that patience and persistence are needed when trying to build influence, but that the SIO can expand their own influence as an individual by utilizing and elevating the voices of other key constituents who can lend support to the advancement of international initiatives:

> Constant working with different stakeholders to make sure that… the provost didn't just hear from me about internationalization, but they also heard from… my vice president for student affairs…, and they also heard it from the dean of the graduate school and so on and so forth. Because if it were just me, I'd get drowned out, probably, like my voice would get drowned out in the noise.

Frederick's point is that he is strategic about expanding his own influence through his relationships with other leaders on campus because he recognizes the restrictions of his own authority. While the SIO is just one person with very real limits on his or her formal authority, strategically building relationships with other campus leaders in this way using patience, persistence, and persuasiveness, as well as an awareness of the needs and interests of those leaders, can result in a network of allies who can serve to amplify the message of internationalization. Frederick went on to explain his strategic and intentional approach to building relationships in this way: "[I have] that diplomatic hat as an SIO that I'm going to continue to build new relationships and show value to my colleagues so that when it comes to the time where I need them as an ally at the table… I've paid it forward, so to speak."

Cultivate Collaborative Relationships Intentionally to Amplify Effectiveness

This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme "cultivate collaborative relationships intentionally to amplify effectiveness" organized by the following sub-themes: identifying allies and stakeholders, lateral relationships, building trust, handling opposition, faculty as barriers to or facilitators of internationalization, collaborative approach, and network of support.

Identifying Allies and Stakeholders/ Lateral Relationships

Expanding their informal influence as described in the previous section depends on SIOs identifying and building strong relationships with key allies and stakeholders both within and outside the university. Just as the voices of these allies can serve to amplify the message of internationalization, these key partners can also act as connectors or gateways for the SIO to influential third parties such as donors, trustees and alumni who can further their cause. Frederick pointed out that this kind of strategic relationship-building across campus at his medium sized private special focus institution is both long-term and continuous in nature due to turnover in leadership roles, particularly provosts and presidents: "I can't rely on my relationships from five years ago to help me accomplish my goals today. I have to be out there generating new relationships and new contexts with new people because there's a constant movement in higher ed." Other strategic relationships require a lot more active engagement on the part of the SIO. According to several participants, the key to cultivating lateral relationships with the other leaders on campus was identifying common goals, priorities, and areas on which the two individuals and their departments or divisions could fruitfully work together. Julia, who reports to the president of a community college, expressed her working relationship with other members of the president's council in this way: "We're coming together as an executive

leadership team to really try and get out of silos and work together on common priorities." This approach was echoed by Katharine, who further emphasized the role that strategic thinking and even psychology play: "It is all about relationship building, and it's all about building a sense of trust… understanding what… other people's needs and priorities are, understanding how they work." This comment underscores the key importance to the SIO not only of being able to build relationships but to align goals and interests with those key allies.

While the SIOs in my study commonly have formal monthly meetings with an executive team of peers from across campus who make up the president's or provost's council, relationships with these peers are strengthened outside of these formal meetings by proactive and intentional engagement by the SIO on shared areas of interest. Some specific lateral relationships that were cited by participants as particularly important and productive because of these shared areas of interest were with the vice presidents/vice provosts for research, for enrollment management, for student affairs, and for diversity, equity, and inclusion. In some cases, these relationships can lead to financial support and sharing of budgets, as described by Helen, SIO at a large public R1 institution:

> The dean of the graduate school's… got me incorporated in her funding model because I help bring international graduate students. I'm in a… joint seed project with the vice chancellor for research… actually [their] office came through with… a big piece of F&A [facilities and administrative] funding, from the research mission because they said, nobody does more to support the research mission than you do.

This comment further highlights the importance for the SIO of identifying allies whose goals are aligned with internationalization goals, whether those are in research or in student enrollments.

Building Trust/ Handling Opposition

While there is obvious strategic overlap for administrators in the areas of international student recruitment and international research partnerships, for some participants the relationship with the DEI office was more fraught. Four of the 11 participants cited difficulties in working together productively with the DEI office on campus, due to tensions stemming in their analysis partly from competing for limited resources as well as from different historical contexts and possible misperceptions of what internationalization is about: “The tension comes from… both areas are often marginalized at institutions. They're not at the center. And so there's a sense that… they're competing for limited resources.” This was how Ada, who has been in her SIO role for five years and has a professional background in education abroad, interpreted the difficulties she had experienced working with the DEI office at her public R1 institution. At the same time, five of the 11 participants spoke about intentional ways in which their international offices had tried to work together with the DEI office by exploiting areas of shared interest. “We haven't communicated our story well on where internationalization meets DEI,” said Christina, SIO at a large public R2 institution. “So… I'm actually in the next week going to have a full-time person assigned to be the DEI person for global initiatives.” Julia, SIO at a community college, said that her focus had been on “building understanding, and then, you can start to do maybe joint programming together, where it's possible or where it makes sense. And there are a lot of activities where it makes perfect sense, where what you're doing can benefit both.” Ada identified culturally responsive pedagogy as an area where DEI and internationalization intersect at her large public R1 institution, adding:

> Sense of belonging…to me that's the area where we most closely overlap because, if the campus is not welcome and accepting of domestic minorities, it's also not welcoming and

> accepting of international identities. And so, the more we can make our campus accepting of differences is going to benefit all.

These observations further demonstrate the importance for the SIO role of identifying common interests and goals as a way to handle tensions or opposition from other campus constituents and thus find ways to work effectively together.

Faculty as Barriers to or Facilitators of Internationalization

Relationships with faculty and deans were seen by all participants as central to their roles, but these relationships could simultaneously constrain and facilitate internationalization. For some participants, considerable time and effort needed to be spent on simply communicating to faculty and departments on what the international office does and what the benefits are, to students, to individual faculty members, and to the campus as a whole. At some institutions, an entrenched culture of "faculty vs. administration" where the faculty have always held a lot of power and are sometimes unwilling to change long-held practices meant that the SIO had to work harder to implement new programming or policies. Bridget, from a large private Masters level institution, described her particular struggles to introduce some curricular and teaching changes for study abroad students and the "animosity and hostility" that had characterized her relationship with the faculty involved. "If I could tell you one thing, it would be that faculty above anything else are interested in what their own personal self-interest is. They're not looking at the interests of the institution," she said. Furthermore, faculty are often more loyal to their discipline or field than to the institution they work for. This aspect of faculty resisting the changes brought about by internationalization because they don't see a benefit in it for themselves or their department was echoed by Frederick (medium sized private special focus institution):

> What benefits my department… if you're a department chair… that's your responsibility to look out for the interests of the department… And academics tend to be very siloed in that… sometimes it's even been said that they have more allegiance with their… scholarship area rather than with the institution, right?

Both of these observations point to a divergence between the ways in which faculty members and SIOs relate to their institutions. For the SIO, understanding this divergence is key to building effective working relationships with faculty members.

The way Bridget handled her sometimes "rocky" relationship with faculty was similar to the approaches taken by some participants to building other types of key relationships on campus, namely to try to understand the motivations of the other party and identify common ground: "You always have to figure out a way to pitch it in a way that addresses, you know, the faculty need to have something in it for themselves." While Dorothy (community college) and Frederick (medium sized private special focus institution) referenced "pockets of resistance" among faculty who were unwilling to globalize their courses ("in curriculum… internationalization or curriculum revision, oftentimes faculty feel like that's their realm and administrators have no business. So that, we've had battles there."), the fact that the "faculty vs. administration" tension came up as such a major issue for Bridget suggests that the difficulties may be related to the particular institutional context at her large private Masters level institution. Bridget herself analyzed the faculty control issue as it related to the characteristics of her particular institution:

> This faculty… has a lot of control… I think… it's easier when you have a larger institution because it's too large for faculty to really coalesce. This is the worst size institution for faculty… because… there's enough of them that they really have a lot of

> power. And… it's small enough that… they can all band together. You get to a larger institution, like a massive state school, they don't have that issue, because… it's so decentralized.

Bridget's analysis of the power dynamics at her institution shows how decentralization at large institutions, which can sometimes be a barrier for an SIO trying to implement internationalization initiatives campus-wide, could also be a positive factor in some contexts for SIOs trying to work effectively with faculty.

Many more participants spoke positively of their relationships with faculty as partners and facilitators in internationalization. Irene, who comes from a faculty background herself and reports to the provost at her medium sized public R2 institution, stated that it had not been difficult for her to get faculty at her institution interested in international issues, since many of them were already involved in internationalization in either their research or their teaching, but what was more of a challenge was trying to show them how the international office could be relevant and helpful to them. Similar to the relationships built with senior administrators on campus, productive faculty relationships can also be leveraged to amplify the value of internationalization more broadly, as Irene pointed out: "We have some great committees of faculty that, like within the schools, and I talk to them, and in a lot of ways, they're the advocates, right?" Christina and Frederick had opposite experiences of how their relationships with faculty were influenced by their previous histories of working at the same institution for many years but in different roles. Christina had spent many years managing faculty-led study abroad programs at the university where she is now SIO, and in the process had built up very close relationships with faculty members, who, she said "know that I'm their advocate." Frederick, however, felt that his current relationships with faculty may be colored by his

previous roles in international student services. “Some faculty who have known me for that time… they remember me from those days. So they think that I sign students’ visas. That's what I do.” These differing experiences in developing relationships with faculty demonstrate how both personal and institutional factors can shape the SIO’s effectiveness in this endeavor.

Collaborative Approach/ Network of Support

An ability to work effectively with others and to build a sense of trust among faculty, staff, and administrators, some of whom may be skeptical about the value or necessity of internationalization, was agreed on by all participants as a necessity for the SIO to be successful. Gregory, at a large public R1 institution, identified this collaborative approach as a hallmark of his institutional culture:

> Our culture is one where we try to work together… we're not big on pretension. We're not big on reputation… the most important thing is to get things done, you know? … very, very pragmatic… that collaborative culture sort of… permeates the whole work environment at the university, and it filters down to the units.

In this sense the existing institutional culture was a facilitator that made Gregory’s job of working collaboratively with others easier. Other participants cited specific examples where a collaboration with another unit or department of the university had been instrumental in helping them make progress towards their internationalization goals. Julia, at a community college, highlighted her partnership with the vice president for DEI on her campus as having enabled her to identify areas where the efforts of these two units were complementary and collaboration was possible. Elizabeth, from a large public R1 institution, had collaborated closely with the associate vice provost in her institution’s center for innovation on shared approaches to international partnerships for student recruitment. Katharine, at a medium sized private R2 institution, cited

the creation of three jointly appointed faculty positions shared between the office of international affairs and various colleges of the university as having brought about a closer alignment between the academic curriculum experts (in the colleges) and the program design experts (in the international office).

These close partnerships with individuals and units on campus can also be multilateral, or more of a network. Irene (medium sized public R2 institution) explained how her advocacy for internationalization was made more effective by working through committees, which formed a network of allies, and how this collaborative approach was also an integral part of her institution's culture:

> We're really… attached to shared governance here. And so it's work in a lot of committees… it's working through those committees effectively, that really makes the advocacy. If I were the one to… go around giving speeches about international learning, I don't think that would really be… the best approach. It's… more a network.

Her comment ties in with Frederick's earlier observation on the efficacy of cultivating allies who will promote internationalization from their respective corners, as well as Gregory's point about the overall institutional culture as an enabling factor for the SIO to work collaboratively. Irene also described the advocacy for internationalization at her institution as being "from the ground up" and coming through the faculty committees, a viewpoint which was echoed by Elizabeth (large public R1):

> Internationalization cannot be top down. Internationalization cannot be the administration telling faculty. It has to be… collaborative – because internationalization will ultimately be driven by faculty and students.

The examples given above show that the importance of working collaboratively was emphasized by SIOs across institution types and sizes. While R1 universities are known for having the highest level of research activity, graduating more doctoral students, and receiving more research funding than R2 institutions, there were no obvious distinctions between participants from R1 or R2 institutions in my study in terms of their engagement and collaboration with faculty, or faculty committees, to advance internationalization goals. Dorothy, who works at a community college, spoke about the International Education Committee which she founded:

> We have over 30 people on it, faculty, staff. We have a lot of… volunteer efforts towards internationalization on our campus because I'm a one and a half person office… so the committee does… a lot of the work… I think that was… essential to being able to grow the program… by having other people on campus involved.

This suggests that Dorothy at her community college, similarly to SIOs at other types of institution, was supported and enabled in her efforts to grow international programs by an institutional culture that valued cooperation and collaboration.

Participants from larger, better staffed institutions similarly emphasized the need to rely on others to achieve internationalization goals. Helen, from a large R1 institution which, crucially, is also the flagship of the public university system in her state and a top-tier public university nationally, recognized how fortunate she was in having the funds for a full team of staff to deliver programs and initiatives which she could certainly not manage alone, and added that this was a key factor, not enjoyed by all SIOs, in enabling her to achieve success in the role. The reasons why SIOs at other institutions may not benefit from Helen's level of funding may be related largely to ranking and research status, but also to more individual institutional characteristics such as the structure and history of the SIO position and international office.

The value of the collaborative mindset was viewed differently by different SIOs. For Julia, working at a community college, it was vital to her to be connected across campus and not working in isolation, to gradually build a network of allies and advocates for internationalization:

> I think, for me, one of the, the best things I can do is… build a team, build relationships. So as an individual, I cannot change the culture of this place, but I can… help and grow individuals who are committed to similar… goals, have similar vision, and together we can do way more than I could ever do by myself.

The idea of attempting through building collaborative relationships over time to "change the culture" of the institution was also addressed by Dorothy, who described the "philosophical opposition to internationalization" at her community college, and by Irene, who spoke of "shifting people's views." Katharine fully espoused the practical value of working in partnership with other units on campus, but also suggested that being *perceived* as collaborative is important: "It is really, really important that what we do be seen as something where we are… working in partnerships with other areas and units [on] campus." This collaborative mindset must also incorporate strategies to effectively handle opposition to internationalization. Where opposition exists, Ada, Bridget, Frederick, and Katharine, representing the spectrum of institution types, all spoke of the need to work on building a sense of trust over time. Frederick explained that:

> It's building trust, but also… momentum building over time. Because if you try to do this in the short term and you get frustrated because things didn't work in year one or two… you're fooling yourself that… you are really that influential, because… inertia and historical context in higher education is very slow to move.

Frederick went on to describe how he had handled opposition to internationalization head-on by inviting "those who… may be at the periphery or naysayers of internationalization… to convene

and to connect and to have a conversation." This shows that the benefits of working collaboratively cannot always be taken for granted but may require active and ongoing engagement on the part of SIO.

Integrate International Goals Through Understanding Institutional Mission and Culture

This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme "integrate international goals through understanding institutional mission and culture" organized by the following sub-themes: aligning with institutional goals, adapting to institutional type, unique culture of institution, cultural barriers to internationalization, institutional commitment, integrating internationalization, mission of institution, and strategic planning.

Aligning with Institutional Goals/ Adapting to Institutional Type

The importance of aligning internationalization strategy and goals with those of the institution overall was mentioned again and again by participants as key in enabling the SIO to perform effectively in their role. This intentional alignment is often addressed most explicitly in the process of strategic planning. Irene explained that this alignment of unit strategy with institutional strategy was actually a mandate from the president's level:

> As the university was putting together a strategic plan, I did too… on international, linking it with the larger plan… I synced it up… All the units did what our, our president refers to as "planning in," you know, how does your plan inward match up with the university's greater goals?... So… there was an invitation to do this.

This shows that at Irene's institution, having a centralized and coordinated framework for strategic planning throughout the units was a factor that facilitated the SIO's efforts to align internationalization with the overall institutional strategy. A necessary first step for any SIO is to develop a deep understanding of the institution they work for: its mission and priorities, its

history and traditions, its strengths and unique characteristics. The participants in this study, whether they came from a public land-grant university, a specialized private institution, or a community college, showed a keen awareness of exactly how internationalization fits in with their institutional type. Frederick, from a medium sized private special focus institution, explained his role in adapting internationalization strategies to his institutional type in this way:

> Because higher education institutions are idiosyncratic, what works for a "research 1" university that has 50,000 students, it's never going to work for a small institution that's specialized and… already internationalized... So I can get best practices and broad… strategy from research, from literature, from external sources, but… my job is to then translate that into the context of my institution.

This observation highlights the heterogeneity of approaches to internationalization by SIOs according to institutional context. Some of my participants had worked at several different higher education institutions, which gave them a different perspective on adapting internationalization to institution type than other participants who had worked for most of their careers at one institution. Bridget compared her experience of implementing certain types of study abroad program at a public institution versus the private institution where she now works:

> You have to work at different institutions to really understand that international ed and what works at one institution is not going to be the way you need to do it at another institution. You really have to adapt it to the profile of the students you serve, the institution you serve.

Bridget's comment suggests that SIOs may benefit from serving in the role at more than one institution, and more than one type of institution, to gain perspective on adapting internationalization to different contexts.

Sometimes incorporating global or international activities can be challenging due to the history and mission of a particular institutional type. For example, a public land-grant university has a mission to serve primarily the students of the state, while a community college has a mission of access again geared towards the needs of the local community and economy. How does internationalization fit into these contexts? Ada, from a public land-grant institution, explained that 70% of her students came from in-state, and 30% from elsewhere (including international students). She saw the role of internationalization in this context as being to ensure that those students have a global component to their education in one way or another, whether that was through a study abroad experience or having an international roommate. Helen, from a flagship public institution, felt a growing pressure from various stakeholders to be both strategic and defensive about keeping global initiatives connected to the service and wellbeing of the state. Dorothy, who works for a community college, explained how she had to "speak their language… talk about the things they care about" when trying to advocate for international education to her senior leadership. For her, that meant providing data to show how participation in study abroad increases retention and completion rates, and how international education opportunities help to make community colleges a viable alternative to the first two years at a university in the competition for student enrollments. Frederick, from a smaller, specialized institution, expressed similar strategies to make himself relevant and useful to the institution's leadership and their goals. He emphasized the importance of listening very carefully to what the president or trustees want to achieve, and then demonstrating how internationalization can be a "tool in the arsenal" or a "means to an end" to help them achieve those goals. He saw his role as trying to "think through, how do I translate the language of internationalization and say, yeah, I love your vision. Here are the ways in which I can help you achieve your vision."

Several participants saw it as an explicit part of their role as SIO to ensure the alignment and integration of internationalization with overall institutional goals, not only in the process of strategic planning but throughout all their activities. “I think that's kind of the key role that I play… is making sure that international is… part of the mission of the college, and we know why we do what we do,” said Julia, SIO at a community college. This was echoed by Gregory (“My particular role is to look at internationalization within… the four pillars that constitute our university's overall mission”) and Irene (“I see my role as saying we need to remember and make sure that… [we are] inserting the international dimension into everything we do… seeing… what the university is working on, and making sure that that's not separate from international.”). Katharine, at her medium sized private R2 institution, had been through a very intentional process of aligning with university strategic goals through participation a few years previously in the ACE Internationalization Lab. She emphasized the importance of being fully aligned to university strategy in order to be effective as SIO:

> You're only going to be effective if [international goals are] aligned with who you are as an institution. Because otherwise… you're doing something that's completely… disconnected with… the priorities, the funding, the policy priority… not only is internationalization important, but I think there's that view that… what I'm bringing into that discussion is relevant because… I'm bringing things that are… advancing university goals.

This ties in with Irene’s comment at the beginning of this section on the very intentional process of aligning her goals with those of the institution, at the request of the president.

Unique Culture of Institution/ Cultural Barriers to Internationalization

Knowing the institution in order to operate effectively within it as the SIO goes deeper than understanding the strategic mission and goals. Participants also expressed the need to understand the ways of working that were unwritten, namely the unique culture of the institution. Participants described both positive and negative aspects of institutional cultures that could either support or hinder them in their endeavors. Perceptions that "international" does not fit or belong with the overall institutional mission for a specific type of institution is one type of cultural barrier to internationalization that has already been mentioned. Dorothy, from a community college, explained the challenges she has faced from this aspect of her institutional culture: "That's a huge obstacle for a lot of community colleges that, you know, leadership doesn't want to commit any resources to this. They just think it's, you know, extra or a luxury or not appropriate at a community college." Julia, also from a community college, cited the prevailing cultural assumption that international was not part of her institution's mission as a "significant hurdle," and her "biggest challenge," stating that she had spent years trying to change this mindset.

Another aspect of an institution's culture that affects the SIO is the decentralization which is common at larger universities. This is also associated with the "silo" effect typical of faculty culture in which there is a lack of communication and connectedness between individual academic departments or disciplines. Ada explained that this decentralization made her job at a large public R1 university more difficult because there were no standard procedures or ways of communicating information to the various colleges, for example in the area of international partnership agreements. Instead, Ada had to spend more time communicating the same information separately and individually to the leadership of each college and figuring out how to

work with them, which she found inefficient. She also suggested that the decentralized culture makes individual colleges or departments less willing work with a centralized office such as the international office: “Each unit has its own kind of culture and there's some… distrust with anyone from outside. And outside might mean from the other college, or from the administration.” Elizabeth, from a large public university, concurred with Ada on the challenges posed by a decentralized structure and the “siloed” culture that resulted from it, saying that this made it difficult to know what was going on in different colleges which were “behemoths” that operated in effect like “mini universities.” One way in which she had tried to tackle this was by creating SIO-like positions within some schools and colleges, which meant she had a central point of contact for everything international within that school or college. Decentralization was not always seen as a cultural barrier; Gregory, from a public land-grant university, expressed a different viewpoint, suggesting that it actually freed him to do his job more effectively, and that people compensated for the level of decentralization by making more of a deliberate effort to collaborate across departments.

Other aspects of knowing your institution were quite varied and specific to individual participants. Katharine described her institution, a medium sized private R2 university, as risk-averse, which made some international partnerships in certain regions or new initiatives such as online global programs a challenge. The emphasis on sustainability proudly espoused by Ada’s public land grant institution sometimes clashed with internationalization goals which involved global mobility (i.e., getting on a plane). Microcultures within the different units under the SIO’s umbrella proved a challenge as she worked to integrate global programs into one office:

> The bumps along the way are because I underestimated bringing different offices together, that each office has its own culture. And I thought, OK, they're all doing

> international work… we're all the same. We all have the same goals, and that isn't it at all. International student services staff… has a very different culture than the study abroad.

This shows that even within international programs broadly defined there can be misperceptions about values and ways of working between the various units of the office. A faculty versus administration mindset (Bridget – large private M1) and a faculty/staff divide (Katharine – medium sized private R2) were also cited as cultural factors that made the SIO's job more challenging.

Institutional Commitment/ Integrating Internationalization

Many of the participants were able to recognize and appreciate the ways in which an institutional commitment to internationalization manifested itself, including through support from the president or provost, which many highlighted as a make-or-break factor for their own success and effectiveness. "When I started this work, I did not have to build institutional commitment. It was there. It was already a part of our ethos and culture... I just had to keep it at the forefront," reported Christina, who reports to the provost at her large public R2 university. This was echoed by Irene, also at a public R2 institution: "There's big commitment to international here… From my perspective, it's keeping it going, keeping it up," and by Ada: "[Name of institution] has long been committed to internationalization. So I don't have to convince anybody that there's value in it. People know that and they get that and that's great." Working within an institutional context where this kind of commitment is taken for granted is clearly a huge boost for the SIO and can be very helpful in enabling them to be effective in their roles. It makes sense that the participants in this study were making these kinds of statements

since they all come from institutions that were recognized by an award for their achievement in campus internationalization.

While many observed that internationalization was "ingrained in the culture," "an organic part of the culture," "essential to our culture," "part of our DNA," or "just baked in," others went further and were able to pinpoint the reasons why this was so. Gregory, who reports to the provost at a large public R1 university, explained that his unit enjoyed secure financial support: "We're very fortunate in that… our unit does get public support… for global engagement, but we also have quite a bit of private funding to pursue… these activities." At Ada's institution, a large flagship public university, the already existing focus on undergraduate education was a "huge benefit for international" which paved the way to talk about opportunities for internationalizing the curriculum and benefitting from the cultural exchange of having international undergraduates on campus. Dorothy and Julia, both SIOs at community colleges, identified support from their presidents as the key factor, the former because of the president "being culturally competent [himself]… having the travel experience" and therefore being invested in the value of international experiences for students, and the latter because the president's "entrepreneurial mindset" had ensured that the international office was supported from a budgeting and operations point of view. Lastly, Frederick credited his institutional type (a smaller, specialized college) with making his job of promoting internationalization easier:

> I think… the fact that it's a business school – business schools, even within large universities are usually more internationalized than other schools. So… it's not lost on me that that helps us significantly… The language of business, it's easy to convince businesspeople of the business case of internationalization because… that's already inherent in their thinking.

His observation highlights two factors which facilitated his job as SIO: the fact that his institution is specialized in one field, therefore perhaps more similar to a school or college within a university, and the specific academic discipline his college focuses on (business), which lends itself easily to ideas about internationalization.

Mission of Institution/ Strategic Planning

As a complement to the findings from participant interviews, my analysis of strategic plan documents from all 11 of my participants' institutions provided some additional perspective on institutional mission and culture as the context within which SIOs are trying to pursue internationalization goals. Question (5) in the document analysis protocol concerns the value the institution places on internationalization and the place of internationalization within the institutional mission. Question (6) is more focused on how integrated or embedded international is within the stated mission and goals of the institution as expressed in its strategic plan. Overall, the institutional strategic plans in my sample give internationalization a marginal place within their strategy and mission. This finding from the documentary data contrasts to some extent with the finding from the interview data that internationalization must be integrated into the institutional mission in order to be successful. Only one of the 11 institutions in my sample (Helen's large public R1 institution) unequivocally enshrines internationalization within its overall strategic plan, and it does this by including "Globalize" as one of eight strategic initiatives in the plan. Some of the other initiatives concern student success, career development, and community building. Elevating "Globalize" to one of the eight strategic initiatives could be interpreted as placing internationalization on an equal footing with these other priorities and ensuring that it is a part of strategic conversations at the highest levels.

Another plan, from Irene's medium sized public R2 university, comes close to this level of embeddedness; although its focus is on other areas (data, democracy), it includes as one of three high-level goals, "Expand Reach", wherein it aims to "address global challenges… extend its influence in the world… forge global connections." One institution which is a community college (Dorothy) consistently includes a global element in several of their strategic goals, making clear links to career and learning opportunities through the college's global partnerships. This suggests that a commitment to internationalization in a strategic plan is not primarily tied to institution type or size, but rather to factors specific to the history of international activities and leadership or structural support for them at each institution. Dorothy's institution, despite being a two-year public community college, had a history and culture of prioritizing international programs and making "international" part of the college's value proposition to students. At other institutions, where "global" or "international" is not integrated in the overarching strategic priorities of the institution as a whole, a goal to do so in the future is expressed in the unit-level international plan. For example, Elizabeth's international plan, from a large public R1 institution, states, "We have the opportunity to leverage current and discover new ways of integrating international dimensions across campus… embed global learning and engagement in the culture of [name of institution] … offer more robust, high-impact, integrated programs that serve all facets of [name of institution]'s mission." It is important when comparing findings from these documents to the interview data to remember the purpose and character of these various strategic plans. It is reasonable to find consistency between the SIO's view as expressed in an interview and the goals of integrating internationalization in the words of an international office strategic plan, since the SIO themselves is likely to have created this plan. With the institutional level strategic plans, it is not unexpected that the international message may be diluted or not as

prominent since the SIO was likely not a key architect of the plan and had limited input into its content. However, the institutional plans are valuable in providing an external view (as opposed to the SIO's internal view) of where internationalization falls in the broader mission.

Adapt to Change with Flexibility and Innovation

This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme "adapt to change with flexibility and innovation" organized by the following sub-themes: identifying opportunities, responding to crisis, innovative thinking, flexibility and adaptability, leadership turnover, and entrepreneurial approach.

Identifying Opportunities

Once SIOs are armed with a deep understanding of their institutional type and culture and how internationalization might fit into it, they need to be able to turn this awareness into action. An ability to spot opportunities, deal with the unexpected, and demonstrate personal qualities such as flexibility, persistence, and creative problem-solving were among the factors mentioned by participants in this study that served them well in their roles in adapting to change in their organizations and in their environments. Identifying opportunities sometimes involved having a well-developed awareness of market needs both in the local community and further afield and connecting this to a budgetary gap or financial demand at the institution. Ada, from a public land grant institution, identified a local community need for workplace English classes for immigrant agricultural workers at a local dairy farm and was able to expand her unit's already existing expertise in teaching English as a second language to meet this need while also generating revenue. For Christina at her large public R2 university, identifying new opportunities was connected to maintaining an awareness of how her institution and the students it served were changing, moving from a traditional emphasis on the undergraduate experience to growing their

graduate programs and research capabilities. This shift prompted her to try to "figure out what our global footprint is and figure out where we can work with that to take us to another level there, maybe get more grant funding in that space." Bridget and Helen, from a large private M1 and a large public R1 institution respectively, described the need to maintain this radar for new opportunities on a global level, being ready to change the regional focus of both study abroad programs and international partnerships as needed in a rapidly shifting geopolitical context. This demonstrates how SIOs across different institution types can be equally affected by changes in the market for international programs and broader policy shifts, and how they employ the same methods in responding to these changes.

Responding to Crisis/ Innovative Thinking

Several participants commented on ways in which the shift to online learning brought about during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 opened up new opportunities which they were quick to take advantage of. Ada pointed out that although the pandemic was "a horrible thing to deal with," it also "opened up a whole bunch of new pathways and opportunities for engagement globally" at her large public R1 university. Collaborative Online International Learning, or COIL, became a widely used alternative to in-person study abroad programs which had to be put on hold in 2020 and 2021 due to pandemic-related travel restrictions. SIOs needed to demonstrate an openness to unfamiliar and untested program formats and a willingness to try something new. Julia, from a community college, described her approach as trying to "adapt and take advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. So be nimble, as much as we can. So what… could we do to support… a model of online learning?" In some cases, experiments with COIL turned out to be very successful. The lower cost of COIL programs as compared with sending students abroad was cited by Helen (public flagship R1), who viewed the pandemic

period as an opportunity to "pause for strategic repositioning" particularly with reference to study abroad offerings, and to grow her institution's previously underdeveloped "internationalization at home" programming. Other participants seized different types of opportunities during the pandemic period; Elizabeth (large public R1) described how she saw the frequent crisis management team meetings during this time as an opportunity to raise her profile on campus, a platform to use to make her voice heard, as her colleagues from other departments realized how valuable her unit's work with international student mobility was. "It was also strategic on my part… I knew that was an opportunity that we had to seize in the way that I… presented it. And I just thought to myself…, I'm not missing this opportunity… because people are listening to me." This is one example of how SIOs were able to turn a crisis into an opportunity during the COVID-10 pandemic.

Flexibility and Adaptability/ Leadership Turnover

The challenges of dealing with the COVID-19 crisis and changing relationships with foreign countries brought the importance of flexibility and adaptability to the fore for many of my participants. Christina, at a large public R2 university, described her approach in this way:

> I think it's always been flexible to go with the flow. Again, you never know what's going to happen in the world. Or faculty come and go, provosts come and go…it's my job to keep things steady, keep an eye on what's coming out there. Change course if necessary.

Her comment speaks to the need for SIOs to maintain a levelheaded prescience in the face of constant change. Pragmatism combined with flexibility was the keynote of Helen's (large public R1) mindset: "When it's blocked, you don't necessarily have to beat your head against that wall. Just see if there's another path you could go down…. and have multiple options available." When relations with a particular foreign country deteriorate, or travel restrictions are

implemented virtually overnight, having these "multiple options" available can save the day. Frederick explained how his medium sized private special focus institution was able to substitute alternative locations for a study abroad program that had previously taken place in Russia and China, describing it as a "reframing… the objective of that program," whose goal was a comparative analysis of cultures. This ability on the part of the SIO to perceive multiple possibilities was extended by Katharine (medium sized private R2 institution) almost to an ability to see into the future, when she expressed that "we're not just looking at… what we're doing today, but we're starting to look out and how do we position ourselves to be ready and to be responsive [to future crises]."

The COVID-19 pandemic was one period when SIOs needed to demonstrate flexibility and the ability to deal constructively with change, but these qualities are also crucial in other aspects of the SIO's role. Bridget (large private M1 institution) observed that "change management" and the conflict it sometimes engendered among "the stakeholders in the way things… are currently being done, [who] are always going to be feeling threatened by change" was a central aspect of her role. Leadership turnover in the roles of president and provost was consistently mentioned as an aspect of change that was outside the SIO's control and could prove challenging to deal with. Sometimes these changes in institutional leadership can also lead to changes in the value placed on internationalization and in the SIO's role or scope of responsibility. SIOs need to be flexible and have a long-range view in order to weather these changes. Ada (large public R1 university) stated that during her five years in the SIO role she has had four presidents and three provosts, "And not just the president, provost, but almost every vice president has turned over… Everyone has an interim in front of their name." For her, one effect of the changes in leadership was that she no longer had a place on the president's council,

which she felt meant she had lost influence. Katharine also described a restructuring which resulted in a demotion of the importance given to internationalization and to her role at her medium sized private R2 university:

> We used to have… a subcommittee of the board of trustees that focused on global affairs. The trustees reorganized and did away with all of their subcommittees, and so we did lose that… but I am working with… the development office at creating an international advisory council... And I think that's going to help some with kind of bringing some of that back up again to… visibility on that.

Katharine's comment demonstrates the importance of resilience and persistence for SIOs dealing with change.

Some participants who had been in their SIO roles for longer had a more relaxed outlook, having learnt strategies to survive changes in leadership. "I've had three provosts during this time, plus a plethora of interim provosts… and their goals change," said Christina, who had served 11 years as SIO reporting to the provost at her large public R2 university. "Leadership seems to impact the ebb and the flow… My job, I think… is to keep it steady across all of this." The challenges of rapid turnover in leadership were also highlighted by Frederick, at a medium sized private special focus institution, who had worked with five provosts in six years. He explained that this made it very difficult for him to have a long-range plan for internationalization, since the overall institutional priorities kept changing. His strategy to deal with this was to spend more time cultivating some of his lateral relationships across the university rather than focusing just on his relationship with the provost, since that was unstable.

Entrepreneurial Approach

Flexibility to deal effectively with change means having an entrepreneurial and innovative mindset as well as being proactive and persistent, reported several participants. Sometimes this entrepreneurialism is explicitly linked to the need to look for new and creative ways to generate revenue or fund existing programs. “I look at everything as kind of a, what way can I make some money in order to do the good work I want to do?” said Ada, SIO at a large public R1 university. Continually looking out for opportunities to provide a revenue-generating service such as a summer school or passport center was also mentioned by Christina (large public R2) as an important part of her role, which she felt well prepared for due to her background in running continuing education programs. She also mentioned working closely with alumni to develop funding for scholarships and study abroad as a part of her role. Dorothy, who works at a community college, emphasized persistence as key in her fundraising activities working with foundations and applying for external grants: “Every year I ask for money. And then [the foundation] finally got tired of me. And so… they gave me some money and now they give me a little more each year.” These findings show that even SIOs at R1 institutions are not immune from the need to be creative in pursuing opportunities for additional revenue, but that this need to fundraise is common across institution types. Innovation is also demonstrated when developing new programs or services or restructuring for greater efficiency. An example of this was a multilateral international consortium of universities created by Frederick at his medium sized private special focus institution, whereby students from member institutions had access to graduate program pathways and scholarships at the host institution. For Katharine, the creation of joint faculty appointments between the colleges of her medium sized private R2 university and the international office was an innovation which fostered greater alignment and collaboration

with these academic units. The overall mindset needed for an SIO to successfully adapt to change was described differently by different participants. “I always say, just try something,” said Julia, SIO at a community college. “Ideas, innovation, that's definitely a big part of our culture.” Dorothy spoke from her experience at a community college where internationalization is not always supported: “It takes… extra persistence and, you know, being a true believer in what you're doing and really… not letting people knock you down. You just have to be persistent… don't ask permission for everything… Just do it.” These comments suggest that a willingness to take risks and sometimes fail is an important factor in the entrepreneurial approach promoted by these SIOs.

Navigate Internal and External Politics by Connecting with Stakeholders

This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme “navigate internal and external politics by connecting with stakeholders” organized by the following sub-themes: finding balance, governance of the university, advocating externally, state government policies, federal government challenges, geopolitical challenges, connecting to global context, and navigating internal politics.

Finding Balance

SIOs play a dual role, leading internationalization initiatives on their own campuses while also acting as important representatives of their institution to external constituents. Several participants expressed the challenges in balancing these internal and external roles and the expectations that come with them. Individuals in the SIO role need to navigate internal politics at their institutions, manage staff, work with faculty, serve on committees, advocate for internationalization, and work with boards of trustees or governors, while also representing their institution within the wider field of international education and through international

partnerships, as well as dealing with representatives of government at the state, federal, and international levels. Participants articulated finding the balance between these roles or how to prioritize them in different ways. Gregory (large public R1 institution) stressed the primary importance of building relationships on campus before looking outward:

> If I were to offer a piece of advice to a new SIO… I would say build your relationships at home first, and then go off and see the world… Don't do the reverse… because that's how you build your constituency. That's how you build… the formative relationships that are going to… allow you to implement the type of programming that your university says it wants.

This piece of advice from Gregory harks back to my section on the crucial importance of building relationships with peers on campus who will form a network of allies.

Frederick, from a medium sized private special focus institution, characterized his role as "wearing different hats." When he is acting as the representative of the institution to external stakeholders such as universities or ministries of education, he is wearing his "diplomatic hat." His purpose as a diplomat for the institution is to "see if there could be potential partnership that will benefit either student mobility, revenue generation, or a strategic angle for joint research… aligned with the mission of the institution." There was a wide variation in how much of their time the SIO spent travelling or on campus depending to some extent on the type of institution and its strategic priorities. For Christina, who spent less time than some other SIOs travelling for work, it was important to maintain her presence on campus most of the time in order to have impact in her role through building relationships with the president and provost and being engaged in campus events at her large public R2 university. At the same time, she felt it was important that the SIO be at all times very well informed about what might be happening in other

locations, such as at the institution's campuses overseas, so that they can take action as necessary.

Governance of the University

One area in which the SIO's internal and external roles overlap is in dealing with the board of governors or trustees. For public institutions, dealing with the state legislature and its actions also forms an important part of their external-facing role. Eight of the 11 participants in this study worked at public institutions. The structures of institutional governance and the ways in which the SIO interacted with them varied from university to university among my sample. Christina explained that she herself was on a university senate by presidential appointment so she had a direct say in business brought before the senate at her large public R2 institution. She also felt that she had a strong ally and advocate in the current chair of the board of trustees, who was an alum of the institution's signature study abroad program and a great supporter of everything international. Gregory, at a large public R1 university, emphasized that his experience in shared governance at his institution, as president of the faculty senate, meant that he had had regular meetings with the president, provost, deans, and other officials before becoming part of central administration himself. "Knowing how to navigate those waters did help me in gaining this current position," he acknowledged. Participants highlighted their roles in communicating with governing boards to promote understanding of and buy-in for strategic international initiatives or bring specific issues to their attention. Frederick (medium sized private special focus institution) described how he had to adapt his style of communication with his board of trustees, because they came mostly from a business background:

> I code shift, because I'm talking to a very business-oriented audience… how do I translate this in having the value proposition or the investment we make in study abroad will have

> dividends in these ways. When I'm in an international education team, I would never use those words.

This ties in with the need for adaptability and flexibility discussed in the previous section, as well as Frederick's previous comments on how his institution's focus on business as an academic discipline facilitated his advocacy for international initiatives.

Advocating Externally/ State and Federal Government Challenges

At public institutions, governing boards are often appointed by the state legislature. Navigating policy shifts at the state level can be a challenging part of the SIO's external-facing role at a public institution. Participants' experiences varied widely from state to state. Ada felt that dealing with the state legislature had been a mostly positive experience, saying that at this level "there's not a lack of awareness of the importance of international. And that is a good place to be," and that "we don't have political interference in [name of state] like some states do. We had a Confucius Institute and never had anybody inquire as to why or never had political pressure." Others, such as Christina, described how new state bills potentially limiting partnerships with Chinese universities or the enrollment of Chinese students have made it necessary for them to engage more with the media on these issues. Other state-level policies that participants have had to keep abreast of and engage with as part of their role include rules on out-of-state (including international) enrollments at public universities, and restrictions regarding curriculum and tenure.

At the federal government level, participants as representatives of their institutions often have to engage with State Department officials on changes in the federal regulations governing immigration and visas for international students and scholars, as well as on broader shifts in foreign policy. One participant, referring to the years between 2017 and 2021, said:

> The previous presidential administration, I believe, had an impact on what we do as far as supporting international students and helping them understand that in spite of what was being seen on the news, that they are welcome here… and it had an impact on our internationalization goals and activities... the political space was toxic for internationalization. I think things are better now.

One specific policy that this participant may be referring to is the Executive Order of January 2017 which banned foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States, which encouraged broad participation in the #YouAreWelcomeHere campaign started by a group of six U.S. universities in November 2016.

Ada, Gregory, and Irene all spoke about the challenges of navigating the changing relationship between the U.S. and China; as representatives of international affairs at their institutions, some participants had received requests for records on their activities and links with China (including hosting Confucius Institutes on their campuses) from federal or state government representatives and had to work closely with the institution's government relations office to handle these. Sometimes federal regulations, such as the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021 which restricted federal research funding to universities that host Confucius Institutes, can have far-reaching and unforeseen consequences that the SIO has to navigate. For example, Helen explained that a prohibition on using Chinese-made telecommunications meant that her institution's researchers in some African countries, where the infrastructure is Chinese-built, were unable to communicate research data.

Geopolitical Challenges/ Connecting to Global Context

Participants described their roles in maintaining an awareness of geopolitical tensions and connecting to the global context in different ways. Elizabeth, who works for a large public R1

university, reported that “World events affect my job every day… we never know what's going to happen on a daily basis… everything's a moving target and everything's dynamic.” Frederick (medium sized private special focus institution) described it as a balancing act:

> Anytime you have geopolitical issues, like between, let's say China and the U.S. or Russia and the U.S… it starts to have ramifications for your students, for your faculty, for people who work in that space. As an SIO…, you have to react to it in a number of ways… let's just think about the ways in which… the invasion of Ukraine started. And if you have Ukrainian students, you need to react, but you also have Russian students, right? And so you have to think about that.

Frederick’s reflection on geopolitical complexities shows the importance for an SIO to be able to consider a problem from all sides and remain unbiased. Dorothy, from a community college, and Helen, from a large public R1 university, both focused on their advisory role to the campus with regard to global politics: “I see myself as being… responsible for giving well-grounded advice about the way the world is evolving and geopolitical, geostrategic risk,” said Helen, while Dorothy explained, “When I can… try to enlighten people using facts… to show people… how interconnected we are and how… what's happening in Russia might affect your gas price at the pump… I think that helps people understand.” Sometimes their role can be more activist, as when Julia, SIO at a community college, engaged with NAFSA (Association of International Educators) to lobby State Department officials regarding revising travel advisories to certain countries in the context of student and scholar mobility. Engagement with important professional associations in the field of international education such as NAFSA can involve policy advocacy of this kind as well as thought leadership and contributions to research and best practices in the broader field of international education. Dorothy’s engagement with NAFSA had focused among

other things on advocating for the community college sector, which she felt was often overlooked in international education, while others had utilized the organization as a platform to learn from other SIOs.

Navigating Internal Politics

While remaining aware of and engaged with state, national and global politics, SIOs also need to navigate internal campus politics. Some participants spoke of ways in which current political polarization in the country generally had impacted their roles on campus. “I've always tried to keep international education apolitical. I think that that's essential to our success in [name of county], which is a very, you know, conservative county,” expressed Dorothy, SIO at a community college. Frederick, from a medium sized private special focus institution, observed that trustees and other stakeholders are “going to bring their political views to their decision-making” and that “decisions are not made in a vacuum”, while Helen, who has a government service background and is SIO at a large public R1 university, described the challenges in trying to find “common ground” on a “politicized” campus:

> It's tricky because then I can feel like I'm disloyal to the administration that's fighting from the right and or disloyal to the faculty who's fighting from the left. And… I'm just trying to deliver on education and research and build some common ground.

This shows that the SIO often needs to maintain a neutral stance while trying to work effectively with those from opposing ideological camps. Other internal political battles were not conservative versus liberal in nature but involved “turf wars” between faculty and administration or in Christina’s case, the unionization of faculty at her large public R2 university:

> As a result of some actions of the provost who resigned, the faculty are now trying to unionize... So how that changes the landscape is completely unknown. So instead of

> [name of participant] setting the salary rates for faculty leading study abroad, it will be a union negotiation… and that's something… we've never had at [name of institution].

Among my participants, the mention of unionization was unique to Christina, but it could be a factor impacting the SIO at other public institutions in states where union activity is strong. As might be expected, my findings show that SIOs at public universities spent more time and energy than those at private institutions engaged externally with the state legislature on policies regulating or restricting their activities in the international programs sphere.

Manage Perceptions and Improve Visibility for Internationalization

Participants indicated that working to improve the visibility of their positions and the international/global programs office at their institutions was often a significant part of their roles. The extent to which participants felt they needed to spend time explaining or justifying their work to internationalize their institutions could be related to various factors including the history of the SIO position at their institution, the culture and mission of the institution, and the internal structures of the institution. This was one area where the analysis of strategic plan documents added more detail to the data gathered from participant interviews. Analyzing institutional strategic plans and unit-level international plans provided valuable additional insights into the overarching theme of the perception and visibility of the SIO role and their work within their institutional context. This theme is related closely to questions (5) and (7) in the document analysis protocol, on the perceived value of internationalization to the institution, and the outlook for the future of internationalization. This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme “manage perceptions and improve visibility for internationalization” organized by the following sub-themes: perception of SIO, perception of international office, divergent understandings of internationalization, demonstrating value, explaining what we do,

communicating across campus, advocating internally, and making progress in internationalization.

Perception of SIO and International Office

Participants addressed both their own perceptions of what the SIO is and does, and broader institutional perceptions of the role, as they saw them. Irene, who reports to the provost at her institution, and Julia, who reports to the president, both commented on how their job titles and reporting lines explicitly signal the importance of the SIO role in the eyes of the institution and its leadership. Elizabeth, who has been in her SIO role reporting to the provost at a large public R1 institution for 4.5 years and comes from a faculty background, added that external perceptions of the importance of the role were strongly influenced by the job title held, and that this was particularly notable working in cross-cultural negotiations with international partners. She felt that there could also be a gender dynamic at play in some situations, when her previous job title was "executive director":

> Especially as a woman… I don't need to be constantly mistaken to be the note-taker and the secretary… because I'm called executive director, which just doesn't have resonance at all overseas… there was kind of a gender dynamic too… if I'm introducing myself and my president, I'm introducing myself as an executive director of the Global Education Office. Sounds to me as though I'm the note-taker and not the thought leader here.

It is worth noting that among my SIO participants, the majority were women (nine of 11). However, Elizabeth's comment suggests that female SIOs may face some gender-related challenges related to the perceptions of their roles, especially when working alongside other campus leaders who are men. Katharine, who has a dual reporting line to both the provost and president at her institution, saw two factors as key to the perception of the SIO role as important

at her institution, firstly her leadership of a centralized office and secondly her role in university strategic planning:

> I think I'm viewed as the person who is really the driver of that kind of role… in strategy… we're viewed as someone who's really a partner and bring these kind of resources… to work on things… together… I think there's that view that… what I'm bringing in into that discussion is relevant because it's aligned with… advancing university goals.

This ties in with my findings on the importance for the SIO of aligning internationalization goals with broader institutional strategy.

Another factor reported as contributing to the perception of the importance of the SIO role was its broad reach across campus, stemming from the leadership of a centralized international office. Gregory, SIO at a large public R1 institution, explained that "I think because… the office has this…wide reach across the university that it… holds a relatively high position." He went on to use an interesting metaphor to characterize his perception of the SIO, describing the role as the "Secretary of State" for the university president. The significance of the SIO's broad reach was echoed by Irene, from a medium sized public R2 institution: "Its importance lies in the fact that the idea spreads across the university… there aren't a lot of people in the… provost's executive team whose work is completely across campus… it kind of diffuses the role in some ways, but also says it belongs everywhere." Frederick felt that in the context of his medium sized, private, special focus institution, the SIO role was seen as important as a focus for accountability in internationalization and a place where people can go with questions and concerns about pursuing an international initiative. Other participants felt that it was their own efforts over time and the increased activity of the international office in terms of student mobility

that had raised the visibility of the SIO role and the importance attached to it. Bridget, at a large private M1 institution, suggested the role "will probably take on more prominence as, you know, things grow… and there's more action happening," linking this specifically to generating more revenue and impacting more students. Dorothy, who had been in her position for 13 years at a community college where she had had to work hard to promote international programs, felt that her college leadership valued her because "over the years, I think I've proven that I'm trustworthy and that I know what I'm doing." These findings suggest that there was some difference, at least among my sample, between perceptions of the SIO role at an R1 or R2 institution, where it was seen as important because of its broad reach, and at other types of institutions, where more effort had to be put in to prove the value of the position to leadership.

Divergent Understandings of Internationalization

Not all perceptions of the SIO and the office that they lead were positive, according to some participants. Sometimes this was due to a lack of awareness among campus constituents or a misperception of what internationalization is and why it should take place. Dorothy, SIO at a community college well known for its international programs, admitted that:

> I mean, probably, honestly, most people on campus don't know what an SIO is. They've never heard that term… But I think the job I do is essential to the college. It's essential to our culture… I think the role is essential, but not necessarily the title of SIO.

This suggests that the concept of the SIO is less mainstreamed at community colleges than at four-year colleges or universities, which makes sense given the historical mission and character of this type of institution. Ada, at a large public R1 institution, expressed doubts as to how far the SIO role was recognized or valued at the cabinet level for contributions beyond bringing in more international students, while Helen, at a similar type of institution in another state, also voiced

some doubts about her perceived value by leadership: “In theory, I'm always at the table, but it does feel like, you know, the elevated study abroad lady sometimes.” In fact, Helen did not come from a study abroad background, but from government service. Her comment speaks more to the perception of the SIO role and what it does rather than anything personal about her as an individual. She went on to suggest that the location of her office on campus, far from the provost’s or president’s offices, felt like a “marginalizing geographic decision,” adding that she felt that “I don't know that everybody always appreciates what I do in that, because I'm kind of so alone and not part of a big joined-up conversation because it's not what this campus does.” Frederick, who had worked for 13 years in the SIO role at his medium sized private special focus institution, spoke of his feeling that he was sometimes not taken seriously by faculty at his institution due to his background working in international student services for many years, and due to a “larger lack of awareness of what is internationalization, and how it could benefit… oftentimes it's almost… surprising to faculty that there's a whole body of research and scholarship on internationalization.. that there are expertise and… you can draw from that.”

Participants expressed varying levels of confidence that the role and purpose of the global affairs/international programs office that they headed was well known across campus. “Everyone here knows we do international, every faculty member, every staff member, they know that's what we do, who we are,” stated community college SIO Dorothy. Faculty at Bridget’s large private Masters level institution were perhaps less well informed: “Eventually faculty get around to finding out what we do… faculty are… really becoming more involved with this office and becoming more aware.” Ada felt that faculty at her R1 institution were aware of the existence of her office, but didn’t appreciate the full scope of the services offered and how it could benefit them: “They don't necessarily see… the benefit… of going through and working with a central

international office… in the full way that I think we can be a connector… and a facilitator, but they know that we're there and start to… interact with us when they think they might need something." These findings demonstrate that difficulties with the perception and visibility of the SIO role and the function of the international office are not limited to one type of institution and can exist regardless of reporting structures or levels of institutional funding.

Demonstrating Value/ Explaining What We Do

These differing contexts of the perception and visibility of the SIO role and the international programs office at participants' institutions influenced their approaches to advocating for and communicating the value of their work, and thereby raising the profile of international programs and initiatives at their institutions. Some felt that convincing others of the need for and value of internationalization formed a significant part of their role. Irene, SIO at an R2 institution, stated that "I would say that I'm putting a lot of time into… making our profile more visible internationally and… creating a mindset about… international perspectives as important in everything we do." Julia, at a community college, described this kind of advocacy work to demonstrate the value of her work as a "significant hurdle… an uphill road… really tough" and "the biggest challenge" of her role, characterizing her efforts as "opening up the mindset of folks that a community college *can* have international, and we *can* be global." She went on to explain that one contextual factor that has improved the perception of international programs at her college in recent years was the changing demographics of the surrounding community they served:

> Before, when it was predominantly white… constituents that we were serving locally, maybe it was harder to make the case that… having a global education, interacting with people from other countries, different cultures, different languages, was relevant,

> important… now we can make the case for it's critical. It's critical to getting a job in the global workforce… you need to be able to understand others, be able to work with others… productively in a team.

In this case, the SIO's job in promoting internationalization had been facilitated by an environmental shift outside of the institution. Julia had been successful in demonstrating the value of her work not only in providing a global perspective for students but in revenue generation for the campus and in acting as a "sandbox" for innovation in new programs which could then be upscaled as needed. It seemed that Julia felt considerable pressure in her role to justify her strategies and actions: "I have to be ready at all times to say… this is why we do what we do. This is why we do what we do for our whole campus, all students on campus… I've always got my little pocket speech." Dorothy, also at a community college, still felt the need to constantly push for the value of internationalization even though her college had in many ways already internalized this viewpoint: "I think that's something that is like my primary mission… most people buy into it at this point. But… I do see myself as constantly proselytizing about the importance of this." This suggests that even in institutional contexts where internationalization is broadly valued, SIOs sometimes feel they need to continually maintain momentum in promoting the importance of their work.

Even at better resourced and more internationally experienced R1 institutions, participants expressed this feeling of pressure to constantly demonstrate the value of what they do. "I would say that… I am primarily an advocate for internationalization in every aspect of my job," said Gregory. This was echoed by Elizabeth, who explained that: "I think… in many ways… that's my single biggest role is an advocate and a thought leader… I oftentimes find myself… pushing the office of the president or our enterprise marketing and communications, to

make statements in support [of internationalization]." Helen, also at an R1 public institution, was concerned with always making clear how internationalization serves the people of her state: "Our global mission needs to be immediately clear to the people of [name of state] … but I work hard on that… to make sure that what we're doing here is of value, broadly." Bridget, at a private institution, expressed a similar experience of working hard to improve perceptions of international programs, "convincing the rest of the institution and meeting people in different areas, to just assuage them and explain to them why that these are good initiatives and why this is going to benefit the institution. That's what I spend a lot of my time doing."

The efforts of SIOs to demonstrate the value of internationalization at their institutions are linked to the value placed on internationalization in the strategic planning documents that I analyzed. Five of the 11 participants in my sample provided unit-level international strategic plans. The existence of an international strategic plan separate from the institution's overall strategic plan could be seen as in itself some indicator of the value the institution places upon internationalization and the activities of the international programs/global affairs office. However, the implications are not clear-cut; it could also be argued that an SIO/international office feels more of a need to produce an internationally focused strategic plan in an environment where the international or global element is missing from the institutional strategic plan, in order to increase their visibility on campus or justify their value to the institution. As described above, the specific goals listed in international plans can indicate what is currently missing in terms of internationalization infrastructure and resources and therefore perhaps suggest an undervaluing of internationalization at an institution.

Overall, the value placed on internationalization within these university-level strategic plans was not high, a finding which is consistent with the doubts expressed by several

participants about the extent to which their wider campuses were aware of the SIO role or the value of internationalization. For the institutions in my sample which are public, their institutional strategic plans were in keeping with their missions to serve their local and state populations in that they prioritized concerns around the local/state workforce, economy, and environment. In these cases, it appears that internationalization is seen as marginal, mentioned only in scattered references to "the world", being a "global leader" or serving the community "locally and globally." There is some acknowledgment that the institution exists in a broader, interconnected world where internationalization could be important, sometimes with reference to research endeavors, as in Ada's institutional strategic plan, at a public R1 university ("We will be globally recognized for a transdisciplinary, integrative approach to environmental, plant, animal, and human health"), and sometimes with reference to effectively preparing students for the world and the workplace ("As we prepare students to participate in a global society" - Christina).

Institutional plans which do suggest that they place a higher value on internationalization include statements recognizing the ways in which internationalization is embedded in the institution's character, history, and activities, and express a commitment to supporting this embeddedness. For example, Katharine's institutional strategic plan, for a medium sized private R2 university, states, "Our students, faculty, and staff come from around the world and our educational and research activities span the globe. A global lens is essential in all that we do," while Bridget's mission statement, for a large private M1 university, (there was no full strategic plan available) asserts, "Valuing the community's international heritage, the University attracts students, faculty, and staff from around the world with diverse backgrounds to facilitate intercultural awareness and understanding." A few of the department-level international strategic

plans, as might be expected, go into much more explicit detail about why internationalization is valuable to the institution. They do this by highlighting current international program successes and the contributions they make to their institutions. “[The global programs office]’s value proposition is in its role as a connector – between faculty and international partners; between international students and enrollment; between domestic students and global learning opportunities” is how one international plan expresses this. Katharine’s international plan, at a medium sized private R2 university, articulates specific ways in which currently existing international partnerships, community connections, and global networks add value for the institution and its students. This finding from the documentary data supports the interview findings that some SIOs feel they spend a lot of time and effort on explaining and justifying the value of internationalization to others on campus.

Communicating Across Campus/ Advocating Internally

Some participants highlighted specific aspects that needed to be communicated better in order to demonstrate their value and improve the perception of their work across campus. Elizabeth suggested that “I think that's really important… for people to be able to see us carry things out to fruition… and to have confidence in the work that we do.” In response to some criticism of the way his predecessor in the SIO role had run the office, Frederick observed that “What's key there is to make sure that… your unit is responsive to people's needs.” Both Katharine (R2 private institution) and Gregory (R1 public) highlighted the economic contributions of international students to the local community and region as an important way to demonstrate value. Christina, Gregory, and Katharine all spoke about the need to be “storytellers” for internationalization and to be more intentional about using student profiles and experiences to more effectively tell their institutional “story” and how internationalization fits

with the values of the institution. All three of these participants reflected on the need to be more proactive in promoting their work to the campus community in this way.

Several participants mentioned the first year of the COVID response, starting in March 2020, as a period when they were able to capitalize on the opportunity to demonstrate their value to the campus community and bring about a new appreciation for their work among peers and campus administrators, whether it was in bringing study abroad students home safely, catering to the specialized needs of international students, or ensuring the campus community and stakeholders were well informed and resourced on the latest developments worldwide. This was a surprising finding that runs counter to the narrative of the COVID pandemic as an unmitigated disaster for international education, as Elizabeth explains:

> For us, COVID was a game changer, for my role, and our office. Because… a lot of people talk about how international education sort of constricted… or… contracted, or however you want to say it. But… I felt as though that was the global education office's moment, where we demonstrated [our importance] to the institution… that was the beginning of the change for our office, because I think that was where the thought leadership was really demonstrated. Whereas before, we'd been very transactional… And this time we were so proactive… because we had to be. We just had an opportunity to demonstrate it really explicitly.

This observation supports the finding that SIOs must be able to turn a crisis into an opportunity, as discussed under the theme “adapt to change with flexibility and innovation,” and also provides an example of the ability to reframe a negative experience in a positive way.

Both Gregory (large public R1) and Frederick (medium sized private special focus) spoke about the intense weeks and months they had spent as members of their institutions’ COVID

crisis response teams led by their presidents, and how this had helped to raise their profiles among campus leadership and develop an appreciation for their expertise and value to the institution, as Frederick explained:

> I was the go-to person and I had a seat at the table for the crisis response team… And so once you show value there, so the president now feels free to… call my cell phone if issues arise, instead of going through my boss, who happens to structurally be between me and the president, understands that I'm actually ultimately going to be the one that's accountable.

This is also an example of how the vertical relationships and reporting hierarchies described in an earlier section can sometimes be enhanced by more informal pathways for influence and communication. Katharine (private R2) echoed the sentiment that the COVID experience had provided the opportunity for her to demonstrate her own and her office's ability to "make some really fast pivots" and "bring people together with different expertise… to rapidly… support the needs of international students… All of a sudden, everybody's working together in some really non-traditional ways." During a challenging period, these SIOs were able to make themselves indispensable and improve the way the work of internationalization was viewed by others on campus.

Making Progress in Internationalization

Another aspect of managing perceptions and improving visibility for internationalization that was elucidated by the document analysis is the idea of progress in internationalization over time, which intersects with the protocol question regarding the outlook for the future of internationalization. It is the nature of strategic plans that they do not report on what has already been achieved but rather express goals for the future. The five department-level international

strategic plans analyzed in my sample set out in varying amounts of detail the ways in which internationalization initiatives could be expanded or improved. In general, these expressions indicate that there is ambition and scope on the part of the SIO and the international office at these institutions to make internationalization a bigger and more integral part of the university's operations. While some goals for the future are very broad, such as increasing study abroad opportunities, others focus on a specific program or service that is needed, or new ways of engaging. For example, Ada's international plan has a goal focused on fundraising: "Unique donor opportunities/creative fundraising: Develop new and creative opportunities to inspire giving and to create revenue streams to support efforts." Gregory's international plan similarly includes a goal specifically mentioning fundraising from international alumni and study abroad alumni. Both Ada and Gregory work for large public R1 institutions. In more than one plan, the outlook for the future development of internationalization includes plans for better integration into and cooperation with other departments and units of the university, as well as improved marketing and communications to the campus community to elevate the visibility of the international programs office. While these five international plans suggest an outlook of growth for internationalization, we should also pay attention to the fact that six institutions in the sample did not have a separate international plan. This may indicate that there is more work to be done at these institutions to improve perceptions of internationalization. However, it is not clear that there is any correlation with institution types since the six institutions without an international plan are both private and public, two-year and four-year, research intensive and not.

Balance Big Picture Thinking with Operational Details to Manage a Team

This section presents the findings related to the overarching theme "balance big picture thinking with operational details to manage a team" organized by the following sub-themes:

managing budget, funding challenges, generating revenue, managing a team, staffing challenges, staff development and engagement, and shaping policy.

The SIO is a senior administrative role tasked with leading overall strategic internationalization. Participants spent a great deal of their time on big picture issues such as strategic planning, but at the same time some indicated that the budget management and HR management aspects of their role were considerable, requiring them to shift between macro and micro viewpoints of their work. The extent to which participants were involved in day-to-details varied according to their institutional context. For example, Dorothy, who is the SIO at a community college and has only one part-time staff member working for her, stated that:

> I basically do everything! So from high level things to low level things… in a single week, I might be in DC at a meeting with… the State Department about Fulbright... and in that same week I'm here… picking up an international student and taking them to the store.

By contrast, Helen, who is SIO at a large public R1 institution, has a large staff to handle the practical and logistical elements of international programming and spends a lot of her time on strategic planning and the external-facing aspects of her role. For some other participants, working on the details of policy, programming, curriculum, and data reporting and assessment were requirements of the SIO role.

Managing Budget

Budget management is one area cited by participants as one of the biggest challenges of their roles, which also required shifting between big-picture planning and granular details. Funding and budgetary challenges faced by these SIOs also speak to their different institutional contexts. Of my 11 participants, three worked at private institutions and eight at public colleges

or universities. While there were some funding issues common to the public university funding model, there was also variation in how the SIO's unit was funded within each university, and this financial context affected the SIO's role in different ways. Christina and Dorothy, both of whom work for public institutions, referenced cutbacks in state subsidies in recent years which had forced them to seek out alternative sources of funding for their offices, including relying more on tuition and fees, fundraising from alumni, and requesting scholarship funds from the university foundation. Julia and Irene, also both from public institutions, spoke about the lack of state funding for their offices. "There's a different budget process for… my area than there is for the others on campus… because we have no state funding," said Julia. She explained that the international programs services and the salaries of all the staff in the international office were funded by the tuition income from international students. While Irene's office did get some funding from the state, it was not sufficient:

> I would love to see a greater level of financial support… we're not entirely self-funded here, but a lot of our funding… for initiatives definitely comes from private money. So that means, I need to fundraise… it comes from fees that students pay… some of our staff positions are… base-funded by the state and others… depend on an endowment… To be successful, we absolutely have to… rely on private monies.

Irene's comment ties in with the finding that SIOs need to be entrepreneurial and innovative in their approach to ensure the continued operation of their units.

For Ada, at a large public R1 institution, the funding situation had encouraged her to "get entrepreneurial and find other ways to have revenue injected into what you do." One example she gave was providing workplace English instruction for companies for a fee to bring in revenue to support the unit's other activities. Helen, also at a public R1 institution, felt that her

office was better funded than some of her peers at other institutions, including receiving some state funding, as well as having "a committed group of donors who gives me my operating money, which is unrestricted for me to be able to use," a situation which had enabled her to successfully implement some of her internationalization goals. At the same time, she had had to spend a lot of time dealing with issues that arose from accepting restricted donor funds whose expectations were then not able to be met. For Gregory, at a public R1 institution in a different state, receiving both public and private funding for global engagement activities was a key factor in enabling his success. The private funding in his case had come from a local family company which had been very successful in international development and engineering and had made large donations to the university specifically to support international programming:

> Because… those funds are endowed, it allows us to create research scholarships, study abroad scholarships… but also to fund colloquia… speakers… cultural events… all around issues related to global affairs… as a result, we have a lot of flexibility, that maybe some other… equivalent units, that other institutions wouldn't have.

For Gregory, this reliable material support for international initiatives was an important part of the institutional context which enabled him to be effective in his role.

Funding Challenges/ Generating Revenue

Another aspect of institutional context that affects the SIO's ability to be effective from the financial point of view is being part of a state university system with multiple campuses. For Ada, being part of a larger system meant her unit was able to stay afloat financially during the pandemic when international student numbers were down:

> They had some strategic reserves at the system level. The university didn't. But the [name of institution] system, which has three campuses, us, we're the main one, a small regional

> campus… and a huge online campus only… that makes enormous amounts of profit. And the board just squirrels it away, and then when they decide what to invest it in… they invest it. And in this case, they propped us up.

By contrast, Christina, from an R2 public university that is part of a state university system, felt that her institution was disadvantaged since most of the resources tended to flow to the dominant and much larger flagship R1 institution in the system. Being a revenue-generating, self-supporting unit of the university can also cut both ways, according to my participants. Julia, from a public community college, cited revenue generation as one of the main purposes of the international programs office:

> We have… provided significant contributions to campus in terms of financial contributions... many buildings on campus have significant funding… from international revenue… we're self-support, revenue generating… the good side of that is that, when times are good, we have innovation dollars… we can do different things, creative things, and if we don't have students, we don't have jobs… And so there's risk in that… I worked at a private university… It's the same thing. If you don't have students, you're not going to have a job.

Julia's observation demonstrates how being a self-supporting unit can be a double-edged sword, leading to financial precariousness, but also to the opportunity to contribute in valuable ways to the broader institution.

Bridget, from a private university, spoke of the pressure she felt to generate revenue in order to raise the profile of her office: "Oftentimes international can be easily overlooked and not prioritized… But I think when… you can really figure out a way to generate… a large amount of revenue… then it's much… harder to ignore." Christina, from a public R2 university, felt that her

background working in continuing education helped her to be more entrepreneurial and spot opportunities for revenue-generating programs and services such as a passport center and global summer schools. She explained the challenges she faced in having to juggle multiple competing financial demands in an environment of budgetary cutbacks and increasing costs:

> What's most challenging for me is, at some point we have to give up something… Where are our priorities and… where do we focus?... it seems like in every budget crisis… our staff or our budget has been cut, and then we never get those positions back. We never get the budget back. And it seems like we've just been winnowed down to nothing. And it's hard.

For Christina, bringing in more international students was one way to deal with these financial challenges, by increasing income from the higher out-of-state tuition, since the state restricted tuition increases for domestic/in-state students. However, Dorothy, at a community college in another state, did not benefit from recruiting more international students due to the specific funding model in her state which meant that the institution did not keep the out-of-state tuition paid by these students.

Managing a Team/ Staffing Challenges

In addition to budget management, human resources management was another area which required SIOs to handle both fine details on a day-to-day basis as well as broader overall strategies. Some of the operational details that demanded the SIO's attention included restructuring the staffing of their offices due to stretched budgets and managing the consequences of inadequate staffing, sometimes by personally taking on additional administrative duties on a temporary basis. Two of my participants, Christina (large public R2) and Katharine (medium private R2) expressed surprise at just how much time and effort they as

SIOs spent on personnel issues. “It's kind of amazing to me… I sometimes feel like… my world is sort of split between… the big picture thinking… and then… getting pulled back into that much more… operational side of supporting the staff, supporting my directors,” said Katharine. Christina agreed that “I think my biggest surprise as a leader in higher education… was how much HR type work is involved… coaching staff…, replacing positions as they leave, staffing strategies.” For both Christina and also for Irene (medium public R2), their response to tight budgets for staffing meant they had to take a critical look at their current employees and reassess some priorities. “I'm looking at that whole team and going, is everybody in the right position? Do we need to fill in other places?” explained Christina, while Irene added that “I'm in the process of changing the nature of some people's positions… because there isn't money for more people… I'm assessing what people are good at, what we need most and making those shifts from within.” Dorothy (community college) and Elizabeth (large public R1) expressed similar challenges due to being understaffed.

One aspect of my approach to document analysis protocol was to ask what the strategic planning documents tell us about the SIO role and supporting administrative structures. The findings speak to some of the sub-themes that appear in this section, “balance big picture thinking with operational details to manage a team,” including those that relate to the management of human resources and budgets and how the wider campus community perceives the international office, as well as to the theme “manage perceptions and improve visibility for internationalization.” None of the institutional strategic plans analyzed in my sample provided any explicit description of the SIO role or administrative structures which support internationalization. This is not unexpected since the institutional plans are designed to address higher-level goals rather than operations at a granular level. However, some of the department-

level international plans that I was able to access do have something to say on this topic. Only one of the five international strategic plans explicitly mentioned the senior international officer role. This particular international plan (from Christina, at a large public R2 university) was a one-page document based on the ACE six pillars of internationalization (ACE, 2017), one of which is "administrative leadership, structure, and staffing." The international plan in question incorporates this pillar but provides only general headings ("Senior International Officer/ Reporting structures/ Staff and office configurations/ Institutional/Divisional/ Departmental Support"). Ada's international plan sheds some light on how the international office, as an administrative structure, sees its role within the (large public R1) university: "We see ourselves as both an initiator and a supporter; as a planner and an executor; and as leader and a partner." The emphasis is on the support services that the international office provides to the campus community. In terms of structure and staffing, the plan sets out very general goals to further develop the academic infrastructure for their programs and services, as well as staff professional development opportunities.

The overall lack of information on the SIO role and the international office in the documentary data could be interpreted as supporting the interview finding that participants often felt that their work was not as visible or as well understood across campus as might be desired. At the same time, it could be said that strategic plans are not the place for this type of information. One inference that could be made from the goals enumerated in strategic international plans is that these are aspirational targets that have not yet been achieved. This could suggest that funding or support from leadership has not been available to realize these initiatives. Since these strategic plans are not reports of what has been achieved but rather plans for the future, they could indicate what is currently missing from the structure or staffing of the

SIO's unit. For example, Elizabeth's international plan provides very specific strategies for improving the structure and staffing of the office: "Create an international student recruitment unit within the Global Education Office" and "Secure funding and hire a Director of Global Student Recruitment and staff to support the department." This does complement the interview findings that the SIO's role includes managing operational issues of understaffing and staff turnover caused in part by budgetary challenges. The same plan at one point very explicitly states what is lacking in their current structure: "While it is clear that increasing the international student population at [name of institution] is critical, very little structure exists around how this is done." Further inferences can be made about the need for greater collaboration with departments and units across campus, and for improving the visibility of international office services and programs, from Elizabeth's and Gregory's international plans, both from large public R1 institutions. It could be said that the explicit needs for working collaboratively and improving the visibility of internationalization voiced by the interview participants are supported by sometimes more implicit data in the strategic documents which set out aspirational goals for the department.

Staff Development and Engagement

Two specific HR areas that participants felt they were having to spend significantly more time on in their SIO roles since the COVID crisis starting in March 2020 were challenges related to remote working polices and improving staff engagement and morale. Ada, from a large public R1 university, characterized the desire for increased flexibility to work remotely among her staff as "a real shift in culture… a generational shift." She went on to say that a number of her staff had left due to being restricted to only two days working remotely each week. Several participants noted similar trends and commented on how this absenteeism made their jobs in

creating a cohesive team and strong engagement among staff much more difficult. “Ultimately the… post-COVID environment has made some things challenging because we're not all in the offices simultaneously at the same time,” stated Frederick, SIO at a medium sized private special focus institution. Both Irene (medium sized public R2) and Katharine (medium sized private R2) observed that their roles in supporting and developing their own staff had expanded due to decreases in morale during the COVID era and reflected on their own uncertainty about how to handle these challenges. “We have struggled a bit since COVID to kind of keep that sort of shared sense of purpose. I think that really did take a toll… on us, and we're really working to kind of come back together on that,” was Katharine’s relatively upbeat assessment. Irene explained:

> It was the best workplace culture I had ever experienced with incredibly talented, optimistic people. COVID hit this hard. Really, really hard. They're still the same good talented people, but they are more stressed than they were before… we have retreats, I send out regular… questionnaires about how are you doing? I've got an open door for all the staff, no matter what your level is. So… I'm listening, trying to be responsive to what people want.

This comment suggests that SIOs’ role in staff engagement may still be evolving as the full after-effects of the COVID period continue to play out in the workplace in the coming years.

The repercussions of the pandemic did hit international educational staff particularly hard in some ways, notably because student mobility in both directions was all but halted, causing a drop in income from these programs and deep uncertainties about the future of jobs in the field. Due to ongoing hiring freezes at many institutions, some positions which fell vacant have never been refilled. Katharine, at her medium sized private R2 institution, felt that during this period

she as a manager of her team had taken on much more of a role in mentoring or coaching some of her staff due to these professional and emotional challenges:

> I certainly felt very much that this was sort of my role during that, as we're trying to sort out all the upheaval in the field… and how this is going to impact everything from the university's global work to just whether or not… we were going to ever be back at the point of [being] active in this space again. Really helping people… come through and see that and learn how to kind of read opportunities and how we… think about… change.

Finally, Katharine also highlighted her role as a kind of bridge between university level strategic decision makers (the big picture) and the international education office staff (day-to-day operations) in terms of helping them to understand how their individual work fitted into the overall institutional goals, which she saw as an important part of maintaining engagement among staff. “One of the things I find… particularly a challenge… is how to help the staff that… reports to me… to begin to also see some of those big picture issues so that we can be getting their work and things that they're doing kind of aligned with that.” Frederick, at a medium sized private special focus institution, expressed a similar viewpoint about his role in mentoring staff:

> I think an SIO needs to… effectively both create space for conversation, but also create resources so that team members… understand the context in which they're going to work and thrive… helping them lift their heads up and look at the field of international education and where it's going, and making sure that we are cutting edge and understanding what… the upcoming trends are.

Both Frederick’s and Katharine’s comments provide good examples of the SIO’s role as a connector between their staff’s day-to-day operational responsibilities and broader developments in the professional field of international education.

Shaping Policy

Internationalization of the curriculum, one of ACE's six pillars of comprehensive internationalization (ACE, 2023b), was another area where the role of the SIO encompassed both detailed aspects and broader strategy. Christina, who has an academic affairs background and is SIO at a large public R2 institution, explained that "our Gen Ed requirements have… a global focus. So I work a lot in bringing that global focus into the general education requirements with various offices." Participants across institution types, from community colleges to R1 research universities, also mentioned their roles in curriculum development. Frederick, at a medium sized private special focus institution, described his role in globalizing the curriculum in this way:

> Sometimes the advocacy is around… curriculum development. So if the entire undergraduate curriculum is going through a revision, you need to make sure that you have enough allies, but also you're advocating for the fact that… language learning is being deprioritized, perhaps, or, you need to be able to voice that.

Here Frederick highlights again the need for allies and the feeling that his voice alone may not be enough. Christina, who reports to the provost at her large public R2 university, describes how her seat on the university senate meant that she was able to bring her perspective to other academic policy issues such as midterm grading policies. In this position, she was also able to bring a global perspective to policies affecting faculty at her institution. "I made sure that the tenure policies had something in there to reward or recognize faculty who were doing global research… leading study abroad, things like that. Just embedding that focus into everything." Similarly, Gregory as SIO had a seat on the Council of Deans at his large public R1 institution, giving him the opportunity to have a voice in "university business. So what's going on with the budget, what's going on with the legislature, what's going on with… new communication initiatives on

campus, or… troubleshooting around issues like… DEI or political upheaval." Gathering and presenting data for the purposes of assessment and accreditation was another area in which the role of the SIO balanced an understanding of everyday details with broader strategy, as explained by Christina, who reports to the provost at her public R2 institution:

> Accreditation wants assessment plans this time of year… I have to have my assessment results ready for every single office and the Global Initiatives… What were the goals? How are you assessing the goals? What artifacts can you give us to show you how those goals were met? Huge part of my job right now.

This is a perfect example of how the SIO's role encompasses connecting specific details to broader overall strategy.

Summary

This chapter presented findings from semi-structured in-depth interviews with 11 SIOs from a variety of different higher education institution types, along with the analysis of strategic planning documents from all 11 institutions, with the aim of better understanding the SIOs' perceptions of their roles and engagement with organizational context. Through thematic coding of the interview data, seven overarching themes emerged: play a diplomatic role of influence without authority, cultivate collaborative relationships intentionally to amplify effectiveness, integrate international goals through understanding institutional mission and culture, adapt to change with flexibility and innovation, navigate internal and external politics by connecting with stakeholders, manage perceptions and improve visibility for internationalization initiatives, and balance big picture thinking with operational details to manage a team. While these common themes appeared across interviews, my findings also show the extent to which participants' experiences are distinctively shaped by their individual backgrounds and personalities as well as

the conditions and constraints under which they work in each of their institutions. Even when comparing SIOs at the same institutional type, such as a large public R1 university, the differences between participants' experiences was far more pronounced than any similarities, illustrating the heterogeneity of U.S. institutions of higher education in different states. Leadership turnover, the character of cross-campus relationships, the history of internationalization and the SIO role at each institution, and the mindset and determination of individual SIO were all factors which influenced how participants perceived their own roles and their working environments.

Integrated into these thematic findings was the analysis of documents which was organized by four a priori codes based on the document analysis protocol: SIO role and administrative structures, value of internationalization, place within the institutional mission, and outlook for the future. As a way of triangulating data, the analysis of documents was only partially successful. In many of the institutional strategic plans, internationalization was only marginally present, while less than half of the institutions represented in this study had a separate international plan which could shed more light on the SIO's role. Since the documents were aspirational in nature, they did not necessarily reflect the current reality of internationalization at each respective institution. The findings from document analysis were most relevant to the themes *manage perceptions and improve visibility for internationalization initiatives* and *integrate international goals through understanding institutional mission and culture*, since these themes speak to the centrality of the SIO's efforts to align international goals with overall strategic goals, and to raise awareness and understanding of their own role, of the international office, and of comprehensive internationalization more broadly.

In Chapter 5, these findings are discussed in relation to the research questions, the conceptual framework, and the review of literature. This is followed by implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Increasing attention has been paid in recent years to the nature and importance of the role of the senior international officer (SIO) in higher education institutions (Deardorff & Charles, 2018; Dessoff, 2010; Di Maria, 2019; Heyl & Hunter, 2019; Tran et al., 2020). Regular reports and surveys carried out by professional associations in the international education field have provided information on how SIOs themselves perceive the challenges inherent in their roles and the characteristics needed to succeed (ACE, 2022; AIEA, 2020; IIE, 2023b). While 43% of institutions in a survey carried out by the ACE (2022) reported that they now explicitly reference internationalization in their mission statement, the pace of progress in international initiatives had slowed even before the COVID-19 crisis of 2020-21 and universities face persistent challenges in implementing internationalization strategies (Ghazarian, 2020; Jiang & Carpenter, 2014; Legreid, 2016). Institutional models of success in campus internationalization recognized by NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the APLU can provide a basis for rich data on the intersection of leadership and institutional context as mediators of success in internationalization, a perspective which is lacking in the current literature on the SIO role.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization. A basic qualitative study was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 11 participants and an analysis of documentary sources for data triangulation. Findings were developed through inductive analysis and thematic interpretation of both interview and documentary data. The research was guided by the following questions:

(1) How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives?

(2) How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals?

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings based on the interview and documentary data described in Chapter 4. This is followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the conceptual framework for the study and key points of alignment or divergence with the scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Implications for professional practice and recommendations for future research are offered before the chapter concludes.

Summary of Findings

Of the two research questions which guided this study, the first focused on the SIO role and the second on the organizational context within which the SIO operates. Thematic findings from participant interviews and analysis of strategic planning documents spoke to both questions in ways that illustrated how difficult it is to separate the role from its context. Findings also suggest that the specifics of each institution's distinctive context may be more influential for the SIO's role than any commonalities between institutions of the same type, for example as defined by size, funding model, or Carnegie classification.

Participants perceived the building of relationships as central to their roles. The impetus for developing a network of relationships across campus with faculty, departments, and administrators often stemmed from what was felt to be a lack of actual authority deriving from their job title or position within the institutional hierarchy. Despite reporting to either the president or provost of the institution, participants felt that their roles were often not well understood by others and that their authority was limited and dependent upon their individual efforts to build trust, communicate the importance of their work, and engage collaboratively with others. The SIO role was also seen as having a significant external-facing aspect which varied in

importance between the different participants. Participants from both public and private institutions needed to be adept at building relationships with governing boards and handling the repercussions of changes in federal policy but those from public institutions often perceived more restrictions on their roles stemming from state government policies.

Participants characterized their engagement with organizational context as an important part of the strategic planning process. All agreed on the imperative to align internationalization goals with overall institutional strategy and mission if they were to be effective. Findings from the documentary data showed wide variation in the institutional commitment to internationalization as expressed in strategic plans. Sometimes there was a gap between the reality of the SIO's role and the ambitions for internationalization articulated in strategic plans at either the institutional or department level. More often, the absence of either an international strategic plan or the embedding of internationalization in the institutional plan accorded with the participants' perceptions that they needed to advocate constantly for the benefits of internationalization in order to raise awareness and understanding of their roles and their work among other campus constituents. Further aspects of organizational context that impacted the SIO role included insufficient funding, which often encouraged innovation and entrepreneurial approaches on the part of the SIO, invisible cultural barriers to internationalization, which varied according to the history and philosophy of the institution, and dealing with sudden and unexpected changes, such as leadership turnover within the institution and wider geopolitical changes stemming from the global pandemic and U.S. foreign policy.

Participants reported that managing perceptions, and misperceptions, of what internationalization is and why it might be important for the institution formed a significant part of their roles which was also closely connected to how they engaged with their respective

institutional contexts. While some recognized that their ability to perform their jobs effectively had been facilitated by an already existing supportive culture for internationalization at their institution, a larger number of participants indicated that they were constantly engaged in advocating for, justifying, and explaining international initiatives and strategies to audiences and stakeholders on and off campus, often in an environment where they were competing for scarce resources with other units and other strategic priorities. One perhaps surprising finding was that within the context of the COVID pandemic which had many negative impacts on internationalization in higher education, many participants had found new and valuable opportunities to effectively demonstrate the value of their roles and their work.

Discussion

The discussion of findings from the study is divided into four sections, the first of which considers ways in which the two models forming the conceptual framework for the study are reflected in the findings, while the following three sections highlight selected findings in relation to the existing scholarly literature in the thematic areas of the SIO as a strategist, as a networker, and as an advocate for internationalization within their institutional contexts.

Conceptual Framework

Two models taken together form the conceptual framework for my study, combining approaches from research on higher education internationalization and on organizational culture. Knight (1994) proposed the Internationalization Cycle which conceptualizes the internationalization process in a university as a cycle formed of a series of interconnecting and flexible steps (Awareness, Commitment, Planning, Operationalize, Review, and Reinforcement). Tierney (1988) proposed a framework of six key dimensions of culture in the context of colleges and universities which provide a useful lens through which to assess organizational performance:

"Environment," "Mission," "Socialization," "Information," "Strategy," and "Leadership" (p. 8). This study aims to address a gap in the literature by considering the nexus of *process* (represented by Knight's internationalization cycle), *context* (represented by Tierney's dimensions of culture), and *individual* (represented by the SIO participants).

Internationalization Cycle: The Process

Knight (1994) notes that Awareness, the first stage in the internationalization cycle, consists of "creating awareness of the importance and benefit of internationalization for students, staff and faculty" (p. 12). My findings show that participants perceive the creation of this awareness and the transition to the Commitment phase ("building commitment to the process of integrating an international dimension into teaching, research and service functions" [Knight, 1994, p. 12]) as fundamental to their roles. Several participants felt that they spent a disproportionate amount of time and effort on managing perceptions and improving visibility for internationalization, which corresponds to the Awareness and Commitment phases of the internationalization cycle. According to Knight (1994), this institutional commitment should be expressed in both concrete (i.e. financial) and symbolic ways and needs to come not just from senior administrators but from a broad base of faculty, staff, and students. This aligns with participant perceptions that building a network of allies and collaborative relationships across campus was both necessary and effective to achieve success over time in internationalization.

In the third phase, Planning, goals, priorities, and strategies are identified and tailored to the unique characteristics of each institution to create a strategic plan for internationalization (Knight, 1994). Findings from this study strongly support the notion that an SIO's success will be significantly influenced by their ability to understand institutional mission and culture and align their internationalization goals accordingly within this framework. The supportive culture

to integrate internationalization which forms the background to the internationalization cycle (Knight, 1994) manifested for participants in various ways that included the nature of their reporting relationship and support from the president or provost, integration of international goals in the institutional strategic plan, secure funding streams for international initiatives, and institutional structures such as campus-wide committees and taskforces which allowed them to amplify their voices and cultivate allies. The second half of the internationalization cycle (Operationalize, Review, Reinforcement) was less prominent in my findings. This could be because participants primarily characterized their roles as setting internationalization in motion on the front end in terms of strategy and leadership, while their staff in the various units such as education abroad or international student services are responsible for the operational details of implementation.

Organizational Culture: The Context

The purpose of Tierney's (1988) framework of organizational culture is to provide an interpretive guideline for higher education administrators in minimizing conflict and fostering shared goals to improve effectiveness through a better understanding of their institutional culture. Thematic findings of this study showed that these values of minimizing conflict and fostering shared goals were perceived as central to the SIO role, exemplified by cultivating collaborative relationships, navigating internal politics, and integrating internationalization through an understanding of institutional culture. Tierney's (1988) six dimensions of organizational culture (Environment, Mission, Socialization, Information, Strategy, and Leadership) form a guiding framework for analyzing an institution's culture and are further defined by key questions, for example under Mission: "How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions?" (p. 8). These questions on mission were particularly relevant

to my analysis of institutional strategic documents and of participants' perceptions of how to integrate and align their goals within a broader institutional framework in the strategic planning process.

Further dimensions in the framework reflect key themes from my findings on the intersection between the SIO role and the institutional context and were a valuable aid in interpreting the data. The dimension of "Environment" can be understood in the terms of this study as institutional context, and participant perceptions that relate to the question "What is the attitude toward the environment?" (Tierney, 1988, p. 8) were evident throughout the major themes in my findings, from responding to local community needs to dealing with the state government and navigating the funding environment. "Information" (sub-questions: What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?) is one of Tierney's (1988) dimensions of culture that is relevant to both the interview and documentary data in this study and to the thematic findings on perception and visibility of the SIO role and of the work of internationalization. The formal and informal ways of communicating information in an institution are a part of the organizational culture that participants reported as sometimes enabling and sometimes hindering their ability to perform effectively. Finally, Tierney's (1988) observation that "all effective and efficient institutions will not have similar cultures" (p. 17) is borne out by the finding that the distinctive features of each institution and the way the SIO role functions within it were more notable than any commonalities among this diverse group of institutions that have all been recognized for achievement in internationalization.

The Strategist and Institutional Context

This study examined participant perceptions of the nature of the SIO role and the influence of institutional context and culture on the performance of that role. Several key

strengths and skills highlighted by my SIO participants are discussed in the existing scholarly literature and policy reports, notably the ability to manage change, to build relationships, and to be innovative and entrepreneurial (Dessoff, 2010; Heyl, 2007; IIE, 2023b). There is also some alignment between the literature and my findings on the contradictions between the SIO's job title and position in the institutional hierarchy, and their actual authority to effect change (Heyl & Tullbane, 2012; IIE, 2023b). This contradiction was described by one participant as "playing a diplomatic role of influence without authority," and by another as the distinction between her "scope of influence" (evidenced by the small size of her unit) and her "span of influence" (the broad extent of her involvement across campus). My findings show that participants strongly believed that the level of their roles, embodied in their direct reporting lines to the provost or president, indicated that they were valued by the institution and gave them a seat at the tables where important decisions are made. At the same time, many of them emphasized that they would be unable to function effectively without the strategic cultivation of other relationships to build a network of influence.

Leaders such as SIOs may have multiple sources of power, including what Bolman and Deal (2017), based on the work of others including French and Raven (1959), conceptualize as position power and personal power. Heyl (2007) describes the former as executive authority and the latter as legitimacy. What has emerged strongly from my findings is that, driven by this contradiction between their position power and their personal power, the SIO must above all employ a strategic approach, firstly to developing relationships whether with the presidents or provosts to whom they report or to other leaders and units on campus, and secondly to intentionally integrating internationalization goals within the broader institutional mission. To have the best chance at success in these endeavors they must be "masters of institutional culture

and change agents" (Heyl & Tullbane, 2012, p. 4) while ensuring clear alignment between internationalization efforts and institutional strategy (Di Maria, 2019). Survey data from AIEA (2020) supports this finding, reporting that an understanding of institutional culture and context was the most valued knowledge area by the SIOs who participated in the survey. Several participants described how they had been able to harness aspects of their institutional culture, such as entrepreneurialism or openness to collaboration, to their advantage, showing an understanding of events in organizational culture such as rules of the game, climate, and habits of thinking (Schein, 1992).

The institutional context which forms the SIO's working environment can thus be a highly important element in the success of internationalization efforts (Di Maria, 2019; Knight, 1994), but the significance of different institutional contexts as a factor in performance has not been well documented. There was some alignment between my findings and the existing literature on aspects of institutional context and culture as constraints to internationalization and therefore to the performance of the SIO role. The decentralized nature of larger universities can sometimes be an obstacle to communications and policies coming from a centralized international office (Coryell et al., 2012). Tensions between the interest and priorities of faculty and of administrators can also make the SIO's job more challenging (de Haan, 2014; Edwards, 2007; Ghazarian, 2020; Jin et al., 2020; Renc-Roe & Roxå, 2014). However, my findings suggest that the variation between the different institutional types, environments, and cultures among participants was less important than the extent to which participants were able to understand their own institutional mission and strategy and its wider context and adapt accordingly. For most participants, this meant strategically integrating their own goals with their president's or provost's priorities. The ability to identify appropriate allies and opportunities and to leverage

them in the interests of advancing internationalization is at the heart of the strategic approach described by my participants. Adapting effectively to frequent leadership turnover and rapid shifts in the level of support for internationalization at all types of institutions was a further factor that emerged from my findings but was not discussed in the literature. Commonalities between SIO approaches and the challenges they faced across all institution types were more significant than any parallels that could be drawn between similar institutional contexts.

The Networker and Institutional Context

In the structural frame proposed by Bolman and Deal (2017), organizations operate through vertical coordination, which is characterized by the direct reporting relationship of a manager to his or her subordinates, and lateral coordination, which consists of more informal, flexible, and ad hoc contacts and exchanges. As understood in the political frame, coalitions form within organizations in circumstances when priorities align (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Both vertical and lateral coordination, as well as the formation of coalitions or alliances, were noted by participants as significant to the performance of the SIO role. What emerged from the findings was that even where the SIO's relationship with their president or provost was strong, the ongoing cultivation of multiple lateral relationships was absolutely necessary for the SIO to be effective. Where vertical relationships were less than ideal, whether because the president was not particularly supportive of internationalization or because there was frequent turnover which made the relationship unstable, this acted as a catalyst for the cultivation of other connections across campus which would serve the SIO's goals in implementing a comprehensive internationalization strategy. For example, within one participant's institutional context, a relative lack of interest and oversight from his provost was a catalyst for him to build other

campus relationships, which in turn was facilitated by an institution-wide culture of collaboration and cooperation.

Some participants commented that the payoff for time and effort spent building alliances and networks on campus that serve the cause of internationalization may not materialize until years later, demonstrating the need for a strategic, long-term approach to relationships and the overlap between the role of the SIO as a strategist and as a networker. The development of these multiple lateral relationships has been expressed as stakeholder engagement (Dietrich, 2019), coalition building and campus networking (Heyl, 2007), and maintaining networks of campus allies (IIE, 2023b), and has been linked with the effective sharing of information across campus (Brennan & Dellow, 2013). Several participants made the connection between identifying allies on campus and then leveraging them to augment their own messages about the value of internationalization, demonstrating the convergence with the SIO role as an advocate and communicator.

Two recent international education policy reports based on surveys with SIOs show a trend towards multilateral leadership in campus internationalization (ACE, 2022; AIEA, 2020). Twenty-three percent of respondents to the AIEA (2020) survey reported that there were multiple SIOs at their institutions, which seems to contradict the conception of the SIO as the individual person leading and facilitating internationalization efforts. This connects to the data from only one of my participants, who described having “mini-SIOs” in some of the colleges and schools of her large, decentralized institution. Data from the ACE (2022) showed this movement towards multilateral leadership in the increased engagement of multiple campus stakeholders, including teams of senior leaders other than the SIO, as important drivers of internationalization. Some participants did note the importance of working through committees and taskforces

composed from representatives from across campus to amplify their own voices with regard to internationalization initiatives, as well as the value of leveraging their seat at the table on a president's council or similar. This is supported by data on the importance of SIOs working collaboratively with task forces, working groups, and advisory boards composed of both faculty members and university leadership (IIE, 2023b). The goal of this networking on the part of the SIO has also been framed as the building of a community on campus among the different individuals and units that contribute to internationalization, so that disparate groups view themselves as allies rather than competitors in the internationalization effort (Merkx, 2018). This was certainly the case for some participants who relied on working through cross-campus committees in a joint effort to promote engagement in internationalization.

My findings showed that notable facets of institutional context that aided the SIO in networking and building relationships in all types of institution included what was described as a collaborative culture, while constraints for some participants included an administration-faculty divide and a decentralized institutional structure. The challenges for SIOs of building productive relationships with faculty varied depending on personal factors such as the SIO's own professional background, as well as contextual factors such as the history of shared governance at the institution. It has been noted that faculty are often more loyal to their discipline or field than to the institution they work for (Manning, 2017), creating a "silo" effect which may also make it more challenging for the SIO to identify common goals with faculty engaged in their own international activities.

The Advocate and Institutional Context

The ability to advocate effectively for the necessity and value of internationalization to different audiences on and off campus has been recognized as critical to the role of the SIO

(Heyl, 2007; Pynes, 2018). Advocacy in this context may involve explaining, justifying, and defending internationalization to various stakeholders. The role of an advocate is closely connected to the roles of strategist and networker, since effective advocacy is not just about communicating, but communicating with intention, and to the appropriate target audiences and stakeholders. My findings show that the role of the SIO as an advocate, just as with the roles of strategist and networker, crosses the boundaries of multiple thematic codes. Several participants revealed the synergies between their roles as advocates and as strategists when they spoke about adapting their communications to different audiences in order to highlight an alignment of values. This might include using selected student profiles to tell their institutional "story" or emphasizing the economic contributions of international students to the local community.

One of the key drivers of the SIO's role as an advocate according to my findings was the need to combat misperceptions of internationalization within the institution. This is turn is shaped by contextual factors at each institution such as the shared assumptions and values that contribute to organizational culture, which Schein (1992) termed "espoused beliefs" (p. 25). Among my participants, these shared institutional values which SIOs had to engage with in their advocacy for internationalization variously included a commitment to sustainability, a tendency towards risk aversion, and what was described as a "philosophical opposition to internationalization." Whether attitudes towards internationalization acted as barriers or as facilitators for the SIOs in my study was not necessarily dependent on the type of institution (size, private or public, Carnegie classification), but more often on characteristics unique to the specific history and mission of each institution. For example, one participant from a community college, a type of institution which is not commonly known for a commitment to international initiatives due to a historical mission and purpose to serve the local community above all,

described how her institution's integration of and commitment to internationalization had developed over the years based on strong support from leadership. At the same time, she felt the need for constant advocacy on her part to maintain this momentum and to combat misperceptions coming from external stakeholders regarding the role of internationalization in a community college context. Other participants too felt that they were dealing in their institutional contexts simultaneously with support for internationalization from some quarters and resistance to it from others. For example, one participant felt driven to advocate for the meaning and value of internationalization specifically in response to opposition or misunderstandings from the office for diversity at her institution. At the same time, she had enjoyed a great deal of support and appreciation for internationalization from her president. This variance in interpretations and perceptions of what internationalization is and what its benefits are is a key challenge to the successful implementation of initiatives that emerges in the literature (Ghazarian, 2020; Gieser, 2015; Jiang & Carpenter, 2014; Jin et al., 2020; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Legreid, 2016). Lack of awareness about internationalization among campus constituents emerged from my findings as perhaps a greater driver of advocacy for SIOs than outright opposition to international activities.

My findings also showed that at publicly funded institutions, the SIO's advocacy for the value of internationalization formed a substantial part of their external-facing activities dealing with the state legislature and governing boards, but the extent of resistance to internationalization varied widely by state. For example, a participant in one state felt that she was frequently called upon to explain and justify her institution's links to China due to state government policies, whereas an SIO in another state felt she had a positive and supportive experience regarding her state legislature's attitude to international activities. This suggests that geographical location is

one contextual factor that can affect the extent and nature of the SIO's role as an advocate for internationalization. This is a factor that has not been widely explored in the literature.

Implications for Professional Practice

The findings of this study have three main implications for professional practice to be considered by leaders in higher education internationalization and their institutions. The first implication is the *importance of strategically aligning internationalization within each institution's mission and overall strategic plan*. The heterogeneity of U.S. higher education institutions emerged clearly from the findings. While institutions can be classified into categories by size, funding model, research activity, and other characteristics, each university or college forms a unique context for internationalization influenced by its history, culture, and mission. While all the participants in this study worked for institutions that had won awards for achievement in campus internationalization, success looks different in each context. For the SIO, the priority should therefore be to align their own goals intentionally and strategically within the goals of their institution as a whole and its leadership. This means that the SIO should be involved in institutional level strategic planning at all stages, which may be achieved through cultivating positive relationships with the institution's leadership and leveraging positions on groups such as the president's council or equivalent in order to amplify their voice at the table where strategic decisions are made.

Specifically, my recommendation for institutions arising from this implication is that the SIO should always be invited to be a key member of the institutional strategic planning committee, whether this process takes place at three-year, five-year, or even ten-year intervals. The SIO should always develop and publish an internationalization plan for his or her unit or office in close correlation with the institutional strategic planning process. My findings showed

wide variation between participants who were specifically tasked by their presidents to create a unit plan that "synced up" with the institutional strategic plan in a coordinated and centralized way, and others (six out of 11) who had no unit-level international plan. My analysis of strategic planning documents showed not only that most of the institutions represented in my sample had no separate international plan, but that only three out of 11 had embedded internationalization in any significant way in their overall strategic plans. While my participants spoke at length about the importance of aligning their goals with institutional strategies, my findings show that there is in fact a long way to go for most institutions in making this alignment an official part of their strategy.

The second implication for practice arising from this study concerns the *development of sustainable networks with campus colleagues* so that the SIO can broaden their sphere of influence to advance internationalization in a reliable and continuous way. Ten out of 11 of my participants already report directly to top leadership at their institutions (seven to the provost, one to a vice president, one to the president, and one to both the president and the provost), and they indicated that support from the top is often a key ingredient in their ability to be effective leaders of internationalization. However, my findings showed that in many cases the SIO's influence and ability to realize their goals were constrained by frequent changes in top leadership at their institutions. As a way to offset the potential negative effects of leadership turnover on the SIO's role, individuals in this position should focus more on cultivating lateral relationships among faculty, deans, and leaders of other units or divisions on campus to form a network of support. Findings from this study suggest that the intentional cultivation over time of a network of support comprised of individuals at different levels and areas of the institution was beneficial for the SIO's personal power and longevity in the role. A specific recommendation arising from

this implication is that SIOs should form a permanent cross-campus committee on internationalization which is inclusive and broad-based and serves as a platform for a sustainable, long-term network of support for internationalization. Not only would this network serve to bolster and broaden the SIO's influence but it would also combat the lack of awareness about internationalization that emerged from my findings as a key challenge for SIOs.

Finally, the results of this research support the idea that SIOs should be *willing to experiment and seize opportunities.* For participants in this study, the impetus to take this open-minded and innovative approach often arose from unfavorable circumstances, such as the travel restrictions during the COVID pandemic and increasingly tight budgets for state-funded institutions. However, unexpected benefits often resulted from the SIO's willingness to be flexible and try new things. By staying ahead of the curve on trends in the field, SIOs enhance their ability to react quickly to new developments and spot opportunities as they arise. Examples from my findings include Ada's matching of a local community need for workplace English training with her unit's expertise, and Helen's expansion of previously underdeveloped virtual learning opportunities in response to COVID-related travel restrictions. The benefit for SIOs is that trying out new programs and services to meet a need can not only generate revenue but also provide opportunities to actively demonstrate their value to the institution. Another participant described her unit as a "sandbox" for innovation in new programs which can be scaled up to the institution level if they prove successful. My recommendation in this area is that SIOs should actively solicit suggestions from across campus for new programs or services that meet a need. This could be done through the recommended cross-campus committee on internationalization or through an annual survey of units and departments. In this way the SIO can maintain an awareness of developing opportunities for innovation that will demonstrate their value.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined the perceptions of SIOs from colleges and universities that have won awards for achievement in campus internationalization. The fact that they worked for award-winning institutions was the one characteristic that connected the participants who in other ways had diverse personal and professional backgrounds and institutional contexts. Possible avenues for further research could include focusing on SIOs from non-award-winning institutions, or on the effect of winning an internationalization award on the SIO's role. Drawing participants from non-award-winning institutions would provide a different perspective on the nature of the SIO role and its challenges in an environment where internationalization has not been as successful or as valued, which could provide insights for professional practice of particular benefit to institutions and leaders who aspire to expand their international initiatives. Participant sampling strategies for such a study could focus on leaders of internationalization from one particular type of institution where internationalization may be less advanced, such as designated minority-serving institutions or access institutions. The NAFSA Simon Award for Campus Internationalization and the APLU International Impact Award are granted in recognition of achievement in this area but also with a view to encouraging further development of international initiatives. Future research could also examine what kind of effect winning one of these awards has on the perception and practicalities of the SIO role. This goal may be served by a longitudinal study which examines changes in the SIO role over time.

Another suggested direction for future research is using alternative research designs, such as a single case study which would include more in-depth perspectives from multiple individuals from a single institution who work alongside the SIO in internationalization. Alternatively, a quantitative or mixed methods study could analyze existing datasets, such as the surveys on

campus internationalization and the SIO role carried out by ACE and IIE, or new survey instruments, to provide more breadth of information about the SIO role. Utilizing alternative theoretical models, such as Di Maria's (2019) multidimensional framework for understanding the SIO role, Mestenhauser's (2015) hologram of seven frames of reference for international education, or the ACE-CIGE six pillars of internationalization (ACE, 2017) as part of the conceptual framework for a study on the SIO role may also yield new insights. Finally, a slow shift in the profile of SIOs particularly with regard to their professional backgrounds and experiences that has been noted by scholars and practitioners (Dessoff, 2010; Di Maria, 2019; IIE, 2023b; Tran et al., 2020), as well as by participants in this study, might form a basis for further study investigating how the differences between faculty, administrative, and other routes into this role influence their performance within their institutional contexts.

Conclusions

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to better understand the perceptions of senior international officers (SIOs) in higher education institutions on the nature of their roles and their engagement with institutional context in their work to advance internationalization initiatives. Through the thematic analysis of interview data from 11 participants, drawn from institutions that varied by size, type, funding model, geographical location, and Carnegie classification but connected by their status as award winners in the field of campus internationalization, in addition to documentary data from institutional strategic plans, findings were presented under seven conceptual codes. Theoretical frameworks drawn from the field of higher education internationalization as well as organizational culture served as a lens through which to view the findings. In the discussion of the findings, three facets of the SIO role which

crossed multiple conceptual codes (the strategist, the networker, and the advocate) were selected for further consideration in the light of the existing scholarly literature.

The unique characteristics of each SIO and of their institutions, even if institutions were of the same type or classification, formed distinct institutional contexts for each participant. Implications for professional practice emerging from the discussion of the findings showed that a mastery of institutional context and culture should be the essential first step enabling an SIO to embed internationalization within the institutional strategy, build key relationships, and advocate effectively for the value of internationalization. Furthermore, the strategic cultivation of sustainable networks of stakeholders and allies across campus should be pursued to counteract the potential constraining effects of leadership turnover, lack of support from leadership, or lack of visibility. This study adds to the growing literature on the SIO role by filling a gap on the influence of institutional context and culture on this important leadership position and forms a basis for future directions in research that can add a fresh perspective through alternative participant samples, research designs, and theoretical frameworks. The role of the SIO and the importance of internationalization in higher education will continue to evolve in an environment of shifting priorities for institutions and changes in national and global politics. Insights from this research can serve to support current and future SIOs as they navigate their institutional and external professional contexts.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM AND PRE-PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Title of the Project: Leadership and Context for Comprehensive Internationalization: Senior International Officer Perspectives

Principal Investigator: Elenora Haag, Ed.D. candidate, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mark D'Amico, Professor of Higher Education, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know

- The purpose of this study is to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization.
- You will be asked to take part in an online interview conducted using Zoom.
- If you choose to participate it will require 60-90 minutes of your time.
- There are no significant risks to you from taking part in this research.
- You will not personally benefit from taking part in this research but the study results may help us better understand how SIOs navigate institutional context in implementing internationalization plans.
- You may choose to withdraw from participation at any point.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this study.

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization. This study will consider the nexus of *process*, *context* and *individual*, by examining the impact of institutional culture on comprehensive internationalization, as viewed from the SIO perspective, specifically in institutions that have been recognized for their achievements in this area. The knowledge gained from my research will be used to identify effective implementation practices and suggest future improvements in the adaptation of internationalization policies to different institutional contexts.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study.

You are being asked to be in this study because you meet the eligibility criteria of being an individual in a senior international officer (SIO) role at an institution which has won the NAFSA Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization between 2013 and 2023.

What will happen if I take part in this study?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a very short initial questionnaire to gather basic background information about your professional role and your institution. Then we will schedule a one-on-one Zoom interview which will be audio recorded. You must agree to be recorded to participate in the study.

Additionally, the researcher will check in with you during and after the interviews to ensure the researcher's interpretation of your responses are accurate.

Your time commitment will be about 60-90 minutes for the online interview. Additional time will be required for you to review the transcript of your interview to ensure accuracy of content captured by the researcher.

We will also collect information from your institution's strategic plan and/or mission statement as published on the website.

What are the benefits of this study?

You will not benefit directly from being in this study. However, others might benefit from a better understanding of the challenges faced by SIOs that relate to their institutional context.

What risks might I experience?

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. There is an unlikely risk of breach of confidentiality which we will mitigate as detailed below. Your name and any other identifying information will not be shared with others. Both you and your institution will be assigned pseudonyms for the purposes of the study. Only the principal investigator will have access to the interview transcripts, with all transcripts securely stored on a password-protected cloud-based network.

How will my information be protected?

All your responses will be kept confidential. In addition to the use of pseudonyms for individuals and institutions, the Zoom audio recording of your interview will be deleted after it has been transcribed by the researcher and interview transcripts will be stored securely on a password-protected cloud-based network to which only the researcher has access. These transcripts will not be shared with others and will be accessible only to the principal investigator.

How will my information be used after the study is over?

After this study is complete, study data will not be used for future research or other purposes. The data/information collected will not be used or distributed for future research studies even if identifiers are removed.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you withdraw, your data will be deleted.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?

For questions about this research, you may contact Elenora Haag at ehaag1@uncc.edu or 336-758-4238 or Dr. Mark D'Amico at mmdamico@uncc.edu or 704-687-8539.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact the Office of Research Protections and Integrity at uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Name (PRINT)

_____

Signature Date

_____

Name and Signature of person obtaining consent Date

Pre-Participant Survey

(1) What is your job title?

(2) How long have you served in this position?

(3) How long has this SIO or equivalent position existed (if known)?

(4) What is the job title of the person you report directly to?

(5) What is the name of the unit or department which you lead?

(6) What is your institution's Regional Accrediting Organization?

(7) How would you define your institution's type? (public/private, research/liberal arts, land-grant, regional, minority-serving, or other characteristic)

(8) What is your institution's total student enrollment?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Purpose & Questions

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to better understand the perspectives of senior international officers (SIOs) on how organizational context and culture shape their roles as implementers of comprehensive internationalization. The following research questions will guide this study:

1. How do SIOs perceive their roles in the implementation of comprehensive internationalization initiatives?
2. How do SIOs engage with organizational context in their implementation of strategic internationalization goals?

Interview Questions

Introduction/ Warm-up

1. Please tell me about your path to becoming SIO at this institution.

Institutional Context

2. Can you describe the mission of your institution? What makes this institution unique?
3. How well does internationalization align with your institution's mission?
4. Can you describe the history of the SIO role within your institution?
5. How important is the SIO position within the university's structure?

The Senior International Officer Role

6. What are your key responsibilities?
7. How does your position interact with senior leadership and governance of the institution
8. Can you describe your role in setting out a strategic internationalization plan?
9. Can you describe your role in communicating the value of internationalization?

10. Can you describe the biggest challenges you've faced in this role?
11. What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment in this role?

Strategic Internationalization

12. What are your overall perspectives on the role of internationalization at your institution?
13. How does your institution regard internationalization initiatives? Administration perspectives? Faculty perspectives? Student perspectives?
14. Can you identify any roadblocks to internationalization at your institution?
15. How do world events and the wider current geopolitical context affect your internationalization plans?
16. How have your plans for comprehensive internationalization changed over time?

Organizational Culture

17. How does your institution celebrate and support internationalization?
18. How would you describe your office or unit's culture/ your institution's organizational culture?
19. How would you assess the impact of institutional culture on the success or otherwise of internationalization?
20. How much impact can an individual SIO have on the success or otherwise of internationalization, given institutional constraints?

Conclusion/ Wrap-up

21. Is there anything else we haven't discussed that you would like to add?

APPENDIX C: PROTOCOL FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Descriptive/identifying questions:

1. What is the intended purpose of this document?
2. Who is the intended audience for this document?
3. When and where was this document published?

The SIO role:

4. How are the SIO role and administrative structures which support internationalization described?

Context and culture for internationalization:

5. What value is placed on internationalization of the university?
6. How is internationalization conceived of within the broader institutional mission?
7. What is the outlook for the future development of internationalization?