



# Annual State Conference

## *International Heat: Igniting Global Vision in the Magic City*

**FEBRUARY 5-6, 2026**

Florida International University,  
Biscayne Bay Campus  
Miami, FL

# FAIE Mission

The mission of FAIE is to promote the advancement of international education and serve as a resource to educators, organizations, and students in the state of Florida through advocacy, professional development, and connection-building.

In keeping with standards and principles established by the NAFSA Code of Ethics, FAIE provides professional education and training to the membership throughout Florida. This training is designed to strengthen and develop programs and services in international education throughout the state. FAIE provides a forum for discussion of issues and a network for sharing pertinent information. FAIE holds that international educational exchange advances learning and scholarship, enhances respect and cooperation among the peoples of the world, and encourages constructive leadership in a global community.

## Thursday, February 5th

### *Schedule at a Glance*



7:30-8:00 am	Pre-Conference Workshop Check-in & Breakfast Wolfe University Center, Room 155
8:00-5:00	Pre-Conference Workshop <b>F-1 Advising: Intermediate</b> Wolfe University Center, Room 155 <i>(Lunch included 12:00-1:00)</i>
3:30-5:15 pm	<b>FIU Points of Pride</b> Meet in front of Chaplin School (adjacent to tennis courts) <i>Tour the Chaplin School of Hospitality and the Marine Science Center</i>
5:30-7:30 pm	<b>Welcome Reception</b> Kovens Conference Center <i>Sponsored by Insurance for Students</i>



**Friday, February 6th**  
*Schedule at a Glance*



8:00-9:00 am

Breakfast and Conference Opening  
Sponsored by Terra Dotta



TERRADOTTA

9:00-10:00 am

Keynote Speaker Leland Lazarus  
WUC Ballroom

Session Block 1

WUC 155

WUC 157

WUC 221

WUC 223

10:10-11:10 am

**Unique Program Models:  
Maximizing Student ROI  
and Building Capacity  
through Innovative  
Program Design**

*Oliver McSurley & Randolph  
Scott*

**English Language  
Programs, Florida's  
Economy, and Recent  
Political Policy**

*Lexa Thompson*

**Student Exchange Visitor  
Program (SEVP) and J-1  
Exchange Visitor Program  
(EV) Updates**

*Regina Carvalho & Jennifer  
Donnelly*

**Belong Beyond Borders:  
Creating Connections and  
Community for International  
Students**

*Natalia Bocsi & Lynnette  
Rivers*

11:10-11:30 am

**Coffee Break and Exhibitor Hall**  
WUC Ballroom  
Sponsored by ISI



INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT  
INSURANCE

Session Block 2

WUC 155

WUC 157

WUC 221

WUC 223

11:30-12:30 pm

**Innovative Engagement:  
Learning in a Connected  
World**

*Laura Lamour*

**"You Belong": Lessons  
From A People-Centered  
Partnership**

*Rola Zahr, Grant Cutler, &  
Danny Fernandez*

**Hot Topics in Immigration**

*Anielka Nortelus & Kelly  
Poppen*

**Best Practices for Crafting  
an Effective Pre-Departure  
Orientation for Study  
Abroad**

*Ian Keil*

12:30-2:00 pm

**Lunch and Business Meeting**  
WUC Ballroom  
Sponsored by CIEE



Session Block 3

WUC 155

WUC 157

WUC 221

WUC 223

2:00-3:00 pm

**Igniting Learning and  
Adventure: Ensuring  
Academic Outcomes in  
Short-Term, Immersive  
Study abroad Programs**

*Julia Lynes*

**Stuck in Limbo: How  
Universities Can Navigate  
Visa Delays & Denials for  
International Students &  
Employees**

*Andrea Huerta-Rodriguez*

**FCIE and Florida's  
Flirtation with Global  
Education**

*David Moore*

**Mental Health & Well-Being  
for College/University  
Advisors & International  
Education Professionals**

*Anaberly "Ana" Chaviano &  
Kelly Poppen*

3:00-3:20 pm

**Coffee Break and Exhibitor Hall**  
WUC Ballroom  
Sponsored by Lewermark



Session Block 4

WUC 155

WUC 157

WUC 221

WUC 223

3:20-4:20 pm

**Unlocking New Flightpaths  
(UNF): Leveraging  
Technology to Expand  
Study Abroad Accessibility  
and Capacity**

*Luisa Martinez Joyce*

**Designing Responsible  
Study Abroad Programs for  
A Changing World**

*Michael Kung*

**International Ed Table  
Talks**

*Facilitated by FAIE Board  
Members*

**Helping International  
Students Succeed in US  
Higher Education**

*Lergia Olivo*

4:30-6:00 pm

**Closing Ceremony & "Final Cheers"**  
Chaplin School Bistro  
Sponsored by Fragomen



# Session Information

**8:00am Breakfast starts**

**8:45-10:00am: Welcome and Keynote**

## **Keynote Speaker, Leland Lazarus**

**President and Board Chair, Fulbright Association**

**Location:** WUC Ballroom



Currently President and Board Chair of the Fulbright Association, Lazarus brings a distinguished career spanning diplomacy, national security, global education, and international affairs. His experience includes senior roles at Florida International University, the U.S.

Department of State, and U.S. Southern Command, where he advised on China–Latin America relations and strategic policy issues. A former Fulbright scholar, award-winning public servant, and widely published commentator. Fluent in Mandarin and Spanish, he holds degrees from Brown University and The Fletcher School at Tufts, and offers a uniquely global perspective that will inspire and inform the FAIE community.

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**10:10-11:10am: Breakout Session 1**

## **Unique Program Models: Maximizing Student ROI and Building Capacity through Innovative Program Design**

**Presenters:** Oliver McSurley (University of Central Florida) & Randolph Scott (University of West Florida)

**Interest Area:** Ed Abroad

**Location:** WUC 155

Faculty-led study abroad programs continue to play a crucial role in student mobility at institutions across the United States. Explore how two public universities adapted their faculty-led programming models to maximize student ROI and increase student involvement in study abroad.

## **English Language Programs, Florida's Economy, and Recent Political Policy**

**Presenters:** Lexa Thompson (University of Florida)

**Interest Area:** English Language Programs

**Location:** WUC 157

This presentation will look at English language program (ELP) students' impact on local economies, with a focus on international students in the state of Florida. The purpose of this presentation is to provide attendees with a better argument for the economic benefits of

English Language Programs at public universities, outside of the immediate benefits of their tuition. We will look at current federal and state policies that affect ELPs, student demographics for the recent academic years, students' direct contributions to Florida's economy, and the benefits of state universities partnering with ELPs.

## **Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) and J-1 Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) Updates**

**Presenters:** *Regina Carvalho (SEVP Field Rep) & Jennifer Donnelly (EVP Division Chief)*

**Interest Area:** *Government Panel*

**Location:** *WUC 221*

Hear about government updates for the F-1 and J-1 visa programs, followed by an opportunity for audience Q&A.

## **Belong Beyond Borders: Creating Connections and Community for International Students**

**Presenters:** *Natalia Bocsi & Lynnette Rivers (Florida International University)*

**Interest Area:** *ISSS*

**Location:** *WUC 223*

International students thrive when they feel they belong. This session highlights programming at Florida International University's Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) that fosters connection, belonging, and support. Drawing on my personal experience as a former international student and current ISSS administrator, I will showcase signature events, visual examples, and data that demonstrate a positive impact on students' connection with others at the university and their sense of belonging. Participants will explore adaptable strategies to design inclusive spaces, build community, and support international students navigating today's changing landscape while igniting global vision on their campuses.

### **11:30am-12:30pm: Breakout Session 2**

## **Innovative Engagement: Learning in a Connected World**

**Presenters:** *Laura Lamour (Florida International University ELI)*

**Interest Area:** *English Language Programs*

**Location:** *WUC 155*

This session will explore how task- and project-based learning can spark meaningful engagement in today's connected world. It will provide strategies and digital tools that foster collaboration, global perspectives, and real-world problem-solving in digital and cross-cultural contexts.

## "You Belong": Lessons From A People-Centered Partnership

**Presenters:** Rola Zahr, Grant Cutler, & Danny Fernandez (Florida International University)

**Interest Area:** Shared Interest/ISSS

**Location:** WUC 157

This session covers the scalable programming and procedures which Shorelight and FIU implemented to enhance international student retention, satisfaction, and success. Through this people-centered partnership, the FIU Global First Year team has been able to accomplish a support structure which enhanced student sense of belonging.

## Hot Topics in Immigration

**Presenters:** Anielka Nortelus (Fragomen) & Kelly Poppen (Florida International University)

**Interest Area:** ISSS/Shared Interest

**Location:** WUC 221

In this annual FAIE session, experienced P/DSOs and immigration attorneys come together to share updates and hot topics in immigration. The session covers an overview of regulatory and policy changes or updates spanning the past year, encourages DSO/attorney collaboration and distinguishes legal responsibilities of the two, provides updated SEVIS guidance, and shares important reminders for anyone who works with, or supports, our international population in the U.S.

## Best Practices for Crafting an Effective Pre-Departure Orientation for Study Abroad

**Presenters:** Ian Keil (Broward College)

**Interest Area:** Ed Abroad

**Location:** WUC 223

A well-crafted pre-departure orientation is more than just a checklist of travel logistics—it is the first step in shaping a student's mindset for a successful and transformative international experience. This session shares practical strategies for designing orientations that engage students through interactive narratives, cultural readiness exercises, and creative use of technology. Participants will explore ways to build community and inspire curiosity while preparing students for academic and personal growth abroad. Attendees will leave with tools and a clear framework for crafting orientations that both inform and inspire, ensuring students embark with confidence, cultural awareness, and excitement for their journey.

## 12:30-2:00pm: Lunch & Business Meeting

**Location:** WUC Ballroom

FAIE requests that all members and conference attendees join us during lunch for the annual business meeting. We will give updates on the state of the organization, present our awards, and share our accomplishments from the past year.

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## 2:00-3:00pm: Breakout Session 3

### Igniting Learning and Adventure: Ensuring Academic Outcomes in Short-Term, Immersive Study Abroad Programs

**Presenter:** Julia Lynes

**Interest Area:** Ed Abroad

**Location:** WUC 155

Short-term study abroad programs, often 10-14 days, risk prioritizing sightseeing and excursions over meaningful academic engagement. This session explores strategies to guarantee academic outcomes while delivering immersive cultural experiences and fun activities. Participants will examine design principles for structuring tight itineraries that integrate reflection, experiential learning, and rigorous assessments alongside excursions. Attendees will leave with practical tools to create short-term programs where students engage deeply, connect cultural experiences to course objectives, and enjoy immersive, memorable experiences without compromising academic integrity.

### Stuck in Limbo: How Universities Can Navigate Visa Delays & Denials for International Students & Employees

**Presenters:** Andrea Huerta-Rodriguez (Fragomen)

**Interest Area:** ISSS/Shared Interest

**Location:** WUC 157

Strategies for handling 221(g) delays, administrative processing, and consular denials. What schools can (and can't) do, and how to set expectations with departments and international students/employees. Visa delays and denials can derail international students' studies, disrupt faculty hiring, and create significant uncertainty for departments and HR offices. With consular backlogs, 221(g) administrative processing, and visa refusals on the rise, universities must be prepared to manage expectations and provide clear, compliant guidance.

### FCIE and Florida's Flirtation with Global Education

**Presenter:** Dr. David Moore

**Interest Area:** Shared Interest

**Location:** WUC 221

This session will provide context for the creation of the Florida Consortium for International Education, which is now merging with FAIE to form one stronger statewide organization. In the late 1970's and early 1980's there was a great deal of focus in secondary and higher education on the need for Florida's citizens to be globally literate and improve foreign language instruction. The Florida Collegiate Consortium for International/Intercultural Education (later FCIE) was formed in 1977. A state commission was formed in 1981 to create a path forward to promote Global Education which was adopted by the Florida Dept of Education in 1982. In 1986 the Florida legislature passed the International Education Bill which established the Office of International Education and led to the creation of the Florida Linkage Institutes and the Latin American Caribbean Basin Scholarship Program. These

initiatives were supported in a bi-partisan way and were widely popular. Forty years later, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. Can Global Education ever make a comeback in Florida?

## **Mental Health & Well-Being for College/University Advisors & International Education Professionals**

**Presenter:** Anaberly "Ana" Chaviano & Kelly Poppen (Florida International University)

**Interest Area:** Shared Interest

**Location:** WUC 223

International educators juggle compliance, student advocacy, cultural sensitivity, and crisis response—all while meeting institutional expectations. While rewarding, this work often leads to compassion fatigue, burnout, and blurred personal boundaries. This session explored the impact of emotional labor on advisors and reframed self-care as essential for long-term success. Participants reflected on burnout, learned practical strategies for resilience, and discussed ways to foster supportive workplace cultures. The session emphasized that by prioritizing our own well-being—and drawing strength from FAIE and this conference community—we sustain ourselves and strengthen our ability to serve students with compassion, balance, and purpose. The session will end with a guided meditation and relaxation exercise.

### **3:20-4:20 pm: Breakout Session 4**

## **Unlocking New Flightpaths (UNF): Leveraging Technology to Expand Study Abroad Accessibility and Capacity**

**Presenters:** Luisa Martinez Joyce (University of North Florida)

**Interest Area:** Ed Abroad

**Location:** WUC 155

This session explores how innovative technology can remove barriers, streamline processes, and scale participation in study abroad. Participants will learn practical strategies for using digital tools to improve access, increase capacity, and ensure more equitable opportunities for students to engage globally."

## **Designing Responsible Study Abroad Programs for A Changing World**

**Presenters:** Michael Kung (University of Florida)

**Interest Area:** Ed Abroad

**Location:** WUC 157

This session explores how to design study abroad programs that integrate environmental responsibility into every stage of planning. Using examples from European field programs, we'll discuss reducing carbon footprints through intentional choices we'll discuss reducing impacts through intentional choices in transportation, accommodations, logistics, and student activities. The presentation will also highlight provider initiatives, practical strategies, and ways to encourage student accountability (such as carbon-offset programs). Attendees

will leave with examples to rethink their own programs while balancing cultural immersion, academic quality, and global responsibility.

## International Ed Table Talks

**Presenters:** FAIE Board members

**Interest Area:** Shared Interest

**Location:** WUC 221

Want to gain new insights into your practice? Have some great ideas to share? Join FAIE board members for informal small group roundtables on a variety of topics across international education. Specific topics of discussion will be announced prior to the session.

## Helping International Students Succeed in US Higher Education

**Presenter:** Lergia Olivo (Florida International University ELI)

**Interest Area:** Shared Interest

**Location:** WUC 223

While international students in US universities arguably have an equitable opportunity to enroll in academic programs and succeed, their life experiences place them at a significant disadvantage compared to their American peers, regardless of academic field. Also, their expectations and understanding of professional pursuits rarely transfer seamlessly, creating a sense of unbelonging. This session will facilitate meaningful conversations about how educators can help international students overcome obstacles and gain confidence as they pursue their academic goals.

## 4:30-6:00pm: Conference Closing and “Final Cheers”

**Location:** Chaplin School Bistro

Join us after the final session block to officially close the 2026 conference! Don't miss the FAIE Chair "Passing of the Gavel", the announcement of our raffle winners, and some final goodbyes for the year. On top of that, we will have our "Final Cheers", with networking, a ticketed/cash bar, and small bites.

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[HTTPS://FIAE.ORG/2025-FILC/](https://fiae.org/2025-filc/)





FAIE gives a special **Thank You** to Florida International University, FIU Global, International Student & Scholar Services, and all conference volunteers!

**Thank you for attending the  
FAIE 2026 Conference!**

Want to tell us how it went? Please complete our conference evaluation at  
<https://forms.gle/a4gniVdH25ZmFFLv5>.