

June, 2003

**Petition for the recognition of the
Foreign Born International Educator SIG (FBIE-SIG)**
www.wmich.edu/oiss/fbie

Dear President of NAFSA: Association of International Educators:

On behalf of **237** undersigned members of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, I respectfully submit this petition on January 8, 2003 to the NAFSA President, requesting recognition of Foreign Born International Educators Special Interest Group (FBIE-SIG) by the NAFSA Board of Directors.

I. FBIE-SIG Mission Statement

The FBIE-SIG strives to provide a forum for NAFSA members to advocate for policy and regulation changes to remove obstacles for current and future foreign-born international education professionals, to serve and support foreign born international educators' professional entry and development, and to promote foreign-born standpoints and perspectives to enrich NAFSA programs and services.

II. FBIE-SIG overview and reasons for establishment

FBIE-SIG intends to facilitate professional development of foreign born international educators (FBIEs) in U.S. higher education. Foreign nationals working or entering into the U.S.-based international education profession bring valuable and diverse perspectives – *outsider-within perspectives* -- into the profession. However, barriers limiting access to and within the field of International Education for FBIEs must be addressed in order to ensure ongoing integration of FBIEs into our profession. If FBIEs need to talk to someone who would understand them entirely – professionally, culturally, and personally – where would they turn? It is important for FBIEs to have the option of learning from someone who has personal experience coupled with professional knowledge to make sense of and to validate what they are facing. NAFSA, by forming a Special Interest Group, could provide an ideal and unique forum to address these issues and provide support for current and future FBIEs.

III. FBIE-SIG's goals and objectives

Goals:

1. Raise awareness on issues related to foreign born international educators among NAFSAns.
2. Support U.S.-based international students' entry into the field of international education.
3. Utilize FBIEs' experiences and expertise to provide outsider-within perspectives on issues and challenges surrounding the U.S.-based international education.

Objectives:

1. Inform NAFSA governance on the issues of access to and within the field of international education from the perspectives of FBIEs.
2. Provide mentoring opportunities among new and current FBIEs.
3. From outsider-within perspective, model best practices on how international educators can respond to the academic, social, career, and personal needs of international students in U.S. colleges and universities.

IV. How FBIE-SIG helps NAFSA meet objectives of the Strategic Plan

In relation to NAFSA's Strategic Plan: 2003-2005 (published March 2002), the proposed SIG will help NAFSA meet the following goals.

NAFSA Strategic Plan-Goal 1: Be a strong public advocate for policy, laws, and regulations that promote and enhance international education opportunities

As one of the SIG's activities, it will seek to identify unique barriers and opportunities in the professional development of FBIEs. While FBIE-SIG members are advocates of international education in the U.S., they experience the direct impacts of recent changes in policies regulating international education in the U.S. FBIE-SIG will conduct needs & opportunities assessment, which could then be used to ensure ongoing integration of FBIEs in our profession (as stated in FBIE-SIG Goal #1).

NAFSA Strategic Plan-Goal 2. Manage growth of the membership

The SIG'S overarching goal is to maintain and enhance the presence of FBIEs within the field. FBIE-SIG will strive to create inclusive atmosphere for new FBIEs, encouraging them to join NAFSA, and expand their active mentoring roles within NAFSA (as stated in FBIE-SIG Goal #2).

NAFSA Strategic Plan-3. Set and uphold standards for professional practice for individuals and institutions, and advance recognition of the profession

Because of their outsider-within status, FBIEs have unique vantage points. Their collective professional and personal experiences may help us view the professional practices of U.S.-based international educators from non U.S.-centric perspectives. (as stated in FBIE-SIG Goal #3).

NAFSA Strategic Plan-4. Develop quality products, programs, and services that serve the international higher educational community

As a recognized SIG, FBIE-SIG will offer sessions and communications in alignment with its goals. (as stated in FBIE-SIG Goals #1, #2, and #3).

V. How FBIE-SIG promotes the Values of NAFSA

The Values, as stated in the Strategic Plan, reads "NAFSA members share a belief that international education advances learning and scholarship, builds respect among different peoples, and encourages constructive leadership in a global community." By extending this belief to its membership, the presence of FBIEs also advances learning, scholarship, respect, and global leadership within the organization. Specifically, FBIE-SIG members become cultural informants on higher education issues with *outsider-within* perspectives, bring more diversity to the membership, advocate for international students' career advancement in this field, and advocate for U.S. higher education by interfacing with their countries of origin.

VI. Anticipated membership and NAFSA activities

The FBIE-SIG is open to all interested NAFSAs from all sections and countries. It is also open to students who attend NAFSA conferences (but are not necessarily NAFSA members yet). The majority of the membership is anticipated to be foreign-born international educators in U.S. higher education and international students entering the field. The SIG's anticipated activities for the 2003-2004 academic year are as follows:

1. Conduct needs and opportunities assessment of FBIEs to provide the best possible services.
2. Submit session proposals at both national and regional levels on issues and challenges surrounding international education from the perspectives of FBIEs.
3. Actively participate in mentoring opportunities at NAFSA conferences to support the professional development of current and future FBIEs.
4. Develop and maintain a website and an e-mail listserv for FBIEs to share and promote ideas.

VII. Ensuring effective governance, communication, and coordination

This SIG's mandatory leadership positions are Chair and Chair-Elect. It may also include positions such as Membership Coordinator, IT Manager, Newsletter Editor, Mentor Coordinator, Program Coordinator, and any other positions deemed necessary by the members determined at the national conference's Open Meeting. Elections for all available leadership positions will be held at the conference's Open Meeting. The term of each position is one year, starting on **July 1** and ending on **June 30** of the following year. However, during the first year in which the SIG is to be recognized by NAFSA, the chair and chair elect shall be elected after the NAFSA approval and will fulfill the term until June 30 of the following year. All the governance activities will be shared among members via the aforementioned website and mailing list.

It is our commitment to make this SIG a valuable and effective networking vehicle for NAFSA and its members. We thank you very much for your consideration.



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