

# Strategic Plan

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2018



## INTRODUCTION

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As CSIET celebrates 30 years of evolution in international student exchange, we look toward the next three years of our history and CSIET finds itself in a position of strength. In our last strategic plan the CSIET Board of Directors sought to build “on our strengths in terms of reputation with the educational community” and to “enhance and strengthen [our] role as the central voice and information resource for international [student] exchange programs”. With J-1 programs achieving a level of quality believed to be higher than at any time in our 30 year history and an increasing number of F-1 organizations seeking CSIET Listing, the international student exchange community values (now more than ever) CSIET’s role as developer of Standards and purveyor of the educational value of international student exchange. As a result, CSIET’s membership base has reached its highest level in 30-years.

According to the CSIET Statistics Report, 25,007 exchange students partook in the J-1 high school cultural exchange experience in 2013-2014. Though this number represents a slight decrease compared to the previous three years, J-1 secondary school numbers have remained relatively consistent over the past 10 years. With the J-1 high school management audit recently deferred to the United States Department of State, the overall J-1 visa allotment capped, and the October 6, 2014 release of Subpart A, the J-1 high school program has matured considerably, and the market is one not likely to experience significant growth in the near future.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, in October of 2013 there were 73,019 international secondary school students in the United States. 48,632 of these students were enrolled in US secondary schools and pursuing a full high-school diploma. The remaining 24,387 students took part in semester/year-long exchange programs, 17.2% of which were represented by a total of 25 CSIET listed programs. While the number of CSIET listed F-1 organizations has increased to over 40 in 2014-2015, 82.8% of F-1 semester/year-long exchange programs remain without significant regulation or oversight. Though well over 90% of J-1 high school students are

represented by CSIET Listed programs, much remains to be done to build upon the strengths of CSIET's current program and to broaden the oversight of F-1 programs.

To that end, CSIET's new strategic positioning aims to provide increased oversight of programs and improved access to preferred practices for international exchange programs at the secondary school level. In 2014-2015, informed by the current educational and political landscape, and spurred by a comprehensive survey of membership, the CSIET Board of Directors approved a strategic vision and plan that seeks to strengthen international student exchange programming for the entire high school community.

## CSIET MISSION STATEMENT

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As CSIET charts its course for 2015 to 2018 – our Mission Statement remains relevant and tailored to the needs of our many constituent groups.

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is to provide leadership and **support** for the exchange and educational communities to ensure that youth are provided with safe and valuable international and cultural exchange experiences.

CSIET's purpose is to **identify** those organizations that successfully demonstrate:

- Commitment to **CSIET Standards**;
- Dedication to the development and sharing of **Community Best Practices**; and
- Support for the **educational value** of international youth exchange

### KEY PRIORITIES

In the next three years, CSIET seeks to serve as the chief developer and aggregator of preferred practices for the educational travel and exchange communities at the secondary school level. With just over 100,000 students in 2013 and an absence of significant F-1 visa regulation in key areas, the need for improved standards and practices is apparent. The dramatic increase in international students calls for a new level of attention to the safety and welfare of students, and the practices of the organizations that recruit, place and care for them. CSIET recognizes in its members a history of excellence and a strong commitment to the educational value of international educational travel and exchange. This experience positions CSIET well for the development of high quality programs. Appropriately, the Board of Directors has identified three key priorities as it charts its strategic direction for the next 3 years.

## **PRIORITY 1: CULTIVATE A NEW “INFORMATION ECOLOGY” AMONG THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL AND EXCHANGE COMMUNITIES AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL**

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### **Objective 1: Review and Upgrade Existing Information Technology Functions**

#### *A. Membership Communications*

- Re-examine newsletters and email distribution lists for different market segments. Investigate existing and emerging methods for delivery (e-mail, social media outlets) to not only allow for reallocation of existing resources, but improve the efficiency of all communication; and
- Establish communication opportunities to and from public and private schools that are authorized to issue F-1 visas and provide informational services (through webinar/ online training) regarding visa law, consular issues and SEVIS.

#### *B. Annual Meetings and Workshops*

- Increase the level of membership involvement by modernizing communication methodology and by:
  - Improving pre and post-level communications through the use of online and mobile technology;
  - Creating new formats and schedules; and
  - Providing improved sponsorship opportunities through online and mobile technology
- Develop training and or information workshops to respond to new programming realities.

#### *C. Member Services*

- Streamline process by developing an online platform that integrates the following functions:
  - Membership renewal
  - Annual fund donations and records tracking
  - Annual Meeting registration
  - Job board, message board, resume posting
  - Email blasts and rapid delivery of messaging for both routine and crisis communication
  - General invoicing
  - Member management
  - Surveys, Polls and Inquiries
  - Publications/other sales
  - Membership reports
  - Website management

### **Objective 2: Knowledge Creation and Information Sharing**

*A. Preferred Practices:* Create a standing Preferred Practices Committee to establish a clear process for the collection and sharing of Preferred Practices and related materials.

#### B. *Data Collections, Statistics*

- *School/State Policy Database*: Create, maintain and make available to the membership, a broad-based clearinghouse of national, state and local policies, laws and regulations related to international youth exchange programs, including, but not limited to:
  - School and school district enrollment guidelines;
  - Athletic eligibility procedures;
  - State-level immunization requirements; and
  - Schools not open or receptive to hosting exchange students.
- *Annual Statistical Report* – Expand the exchange student statistics reports to include more comprehensive reporting on all inbound high school activity (J-1, F-1); Explore methods other than the CSIET listing process for the collection, interpretation and sharing of data related to outbound and short-term activity.

#### C. *Publications and Informational Materials*

- *Advisory List*: Seek additional endorsements of the *CSIET Advisory List*, on a State-by-State Basis, (State Departments of Education, Boards of Education, Other Education related managing organizations).
  - Increase electronic distribution of the *CSIET Advisory List* to parents and youth groups, educators, guidance counselors, and school administrators;
  - Expand the online version of the *Advisory List* to include descriptions of listed exchange programs; and
  - Provide additional in-depth information to member organizations and schools.
- *Newsletters*: Create specific newsletters and other forms of communication with content designed for specific categories of international student programming.
  - Increase electronic distribution of the *Student Diplomat* and other newsletters

**Key Outcome:** Improved, efficient member engagement, better information, and improved awareness regarding reputable international student exchange programs.

### **PRIORITY 2: IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

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#### **Objective 1: Standards Setting**

- A. Revise CSIET Standards to include program criteria that has intended educational outcomes (teaching and learning);
- B. Modify CSIET's long-term inbound Standards to align with existing program category structure (J-1, F-1); and
- C. Revise CSIET's long-term outbound Standards to align with changing program realities.

**Objective 2:** Refine processes for the measurement of adherence to CSIET Standards; Enhance the audit review and listing process by continuing to formalize the review structure and criteria.

- A. Refine CSIET audit templates/grids; examine the need to create a separate F-1 audit template for F-1 programs (perhaps utilizing a third party vendor) and F-1 private schools.
- B. Re-examine the need to set standards for short-term and outbound programming

**Key Outcome:** Improved program practices and increased student safety.

### **PRIORITY 3: STRENGTHEN AND DEVELOP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

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#### **Objective 1: Advocacy and Outreach**

- A. Federal Engagement and Partnerships
  - Strengthen relationships with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Congress;
  - Build effective working relationships with the U.S. Departments of Education and Homeland Security.
- B. State and Local Activities
  - Promote standard policy language for members regarding the use of ELTiS (English Language Test for International Students);
  - Promote and assist with state level policy development regarding athletic/activities participation of F-1 students;
  - Monitor other state level education initiatives and advocate for fair and reasonable policy implementation on behalf of the international student exchange community.
- C. Corporate partners and State Association membership.
  - Research, identify and acquire new corporate partners and state associations for engagement with CSIET and its members;
  - Research new services and content to improve the CSIET value proposition, potentially engaging third party resources for development.

**Key Outcome:** Improved value proposition for all categories of CSIET membership.

*Approved by the CSIET Board of Directors, June 4, 2015*