

Saving Lives, Saving Knowledge

An Interview with Dr. Allan E. Goodman,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Institute of International Education

EDITORS' NOTE Dr. Allan Goodman is the sixth President of the Institute of International Education. Previously, he was Executive Dean of the School of Foreign Service and Professor at Georgetown University. Dr. Goodman served as Presidential Briefing Coordinator for the Director of Central Intelligence in the Carter Administration. Subsequently, he was the first American professor to lecture at the Foreign Affairs College of Beijing, helped create the first U.S. academic exchange program with the Moscow Diplomatic Academy for the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs, and developed the diplomatic training program of the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam. He is a founding member of the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) and Co-President of the Partner University Fund (PUF) Grant Review Committee. Dr. Goodman has a Ph.D. in Government from Harvard, an M.P.A. from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a B.S. from Northwestern University. He also holds honorary degrees from Chatham and Toyota Universities, Dickinson, Middlebury, Mount Ida, and Ramapo colleges, and The State University of New York. He has received awards from Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, South Florida, and Tufts universities, and the Légion d'honneur from France. He was awarded the inaugural Gilbert Medal for Internationalization by Universitas 21 in May of 2012.



Allan E. Goodman

have saved academics from nearly every world crisis since then. Ten years ago, we created the Scholar Rescue Fund to formalize these efforts.

Today, we have big academic emergencies in Syria, Iran, and Iraq, and philanthropy is helping us to assist students and scholars so they can go back and help rebuild their countries.

You never know if the life you save might be a life that saves multiple lives. From the Nazis, we rescued the man who invented the process that created the MRI; in Iraq, we rescued an Iraqi medical scientist who was able to devise a cure for a rare form of blood cancer; in one of the former Soviet Union countries, we rescued a scholar who developed a way to diagnose and treat cancer without any side effects using lasers and microparticles of gold – he says if he hadn't been working on that, he would have been developing his lasers to shoot down airplanes.

When you exchange people through international education, you're also giving everybody a chance to better appreciate other cultures. Virtually everyone who goes through the experience says it's life-changing – they're doing things today they would not have done because they had the chance to study or teach in another country.

Is the size and scale of what you do well understood?

We have the privilege of administering the Fulbright Program on behalf of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State; most of the world knows Fulbright. Survivors of the Holocaust know us because of our work in scholar rescue and historians know us because the first Assistant Director of IIE was Edward R. Murrow, who began his career in international outreach by broadcasting through us. Many corporate and foundation leaders know us because we manage top-quality custom scholarship and fellowship programs for companies such as GE, Western Union, Alcoa, and Exxon-Mobil, to name a few. While we are well known in the international higher education community, we are not a household name because we often work behind the scenes to ensure the success of these programs.

What matters to us most is getting results – exchanging people, saving lives, and saving knowledge and this is made possible only by the generous support of our sponsors and donors.



Dr. Allan Goodman with rescued Iraqi scholars who have now returned to the country.

Why has IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund® (SRF) been so effective?

Our program's effectiveness is based on our careful process of choosing the most senior and most threatened scholars in the world today, making grants to get them immediately out of harm's way, and helping them find a safe haven via a host university. We have rescued nearly 500 scholars from 50 countries over the past 10 years. It's important to be single-minded in our focus on the fact that our job is to rescue scholars and save their lives and knowledge.

On the scholarship management side, our focus is to do all we can to increase opportunity, widen access, and to make international awareness a part of everybody's education.

What was the impetus behind launching the Iraq Scholar Rescue Project in 2007?

We were asked by the Minister of Higher Education in Iraq to save his scholars – by then, about 300 had been assassinated and it was clear that the sectarian militia were targeting each other's academics because they were the most respected scientists. He determined that 300 could grow to 500, as people were facing threats daily.

The most important thing we could do was to respond quickly, but do so in a way that didn't promote brain drain. That is why of the 265 Iraqi scholars we have rescued, more than 42 percent have now returned to Iraq. We also placed a large number in Jordan, so they would be closer to their homes and relatives. We're dealing with very accomplished scholars; to withdraw all of them and bring them to places from which they might never want to return would hurt the countries as they end wars and begin post-war reconstruction.

The other important concept here is one of leverage. Universities match the SRF funds and donors can fund or endow specific chairs. Every dollar we raise is leveraged by other sources, making it go a lot further than a program that is solely funded by one source.

In terms of promoting international development, how critical is implementing metrics to track impact?

The single question we ask everybody is, not only how did this change your life, but what impact have you been able to have throughout your career? There are 68 Nobel prizes that have been awarded to alumni of IIE-administered programs and trustees. Every one of our grantees and sponsors today has the potential of finding someone who will do something that will win a Nobel Prize. ●

How broad is the range of programs at IIE and what kind of impact have they had?

One impact is saving individual lives. We started our scholar rescue work by rescuing scholars caught in the crossfire of the Bolshevik Revolution – and we