

IARU SENIOR OFFICERS' MEETING SUMMARY
19-21 September 2022, hosted by the University of Oxford

The Senior Officers exchanged updates and news from their institutions, with a more detailed follow-up discussion picking up on the emerging themes and common ground. In particular, the ongoing challenges around in-person, hybrid and online teaching were a concern shared by many IARU members. Strategic investment in the supporting technology and looking to transform (rather than just transfer) online pedagogy were felt to be important elements in the provision of hybrid teaching.

To open the session on how universities respond to international crises, Renata Schaeffer provided an overview of Cambridge's response to the war in Ukraine. Senior Officers compared the crisis response structures within their institutions, noting the importance of agility and adapting at speed. Some Senior Officers commented that there was now an expectation for universities to respond more broadly to international crises, following the work they did during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, it was noted there were difficult questions about why universities had not responded to past crises in the same way. Senior Officers agreed that management of communication was key to an effective response and that important lessons had been learnt for the future.

The Senior Officers were then joined by Dr Edward Brooks, Director of the Oxford Character Project, who presented a session on leadership development. The Oxford Character Project looks at the role of character and the key personal qualities that are part of effective and wise leadership. Dr Brooks raised a number of subjects including how do we develop and educate our students as leaders, and how do universities provide this sort of training and then measure the results. Senior Officers considered how these concepts could also be relevant for staff, as well as students and shared details of the leadership training models at their universities.

A report on the IARU Courses noted that although application numbers were recovering somewhat as travel restrictions continued to ease, the loss of the Santander funding was still noticeable. The Global Internships Program (GIP) had likewise been affected by travel restrictions, with no viable applications this year. It was agreed to increase the value of the internships in an effort to reinvigorate the scheme, although some Senior Officers had reservations about the overall impact of the program. It was decided that the proposed Education Committee could look at ways of increasing participation in the GIP.

The Senior Officers welcomed plans for the new Education Committee as it would provide some institutional memory of the various education initiatives, assist with coordinating current education activities and look for new opportunities.

Reports and funding requests were received by the research-related initiative (Aging, Longevity and Health) and the joint institutional working groups. Senior Officers commented on the enthusiasm and renewed energy of the groups to re-establish in person meetings and collaborative activities, after the disruption of the pandemic.

Following the Presidents' Meeting earlier in the year, Senior Officers had been tasked to investigate the possibility of a Latin American university joining IARU. The working group presented its initial research, and, after much discussion, Senior Officers felt that although there were some impressive candidates, none currently have strong enough links with IARU members or seem like a good fit to

the network. As a result, the initial recommendation will be to not proceed with the search at the moment and revisit the question in the future.

Finally, the Secretariat provided updates on the Early Career Collaboration Grants and the proposed IARU Group Handbook, in addition to asking Senior Officers to review financial planning over the next year, as in-person activities increase again.

Senior Officers decided that there were benefits in scheduling their meetings alongside the Presidents' Meeting on alternate years (for environmental reasons and increasing interaction between the two groups), with more regular online meetings in between. The next Senior Officers' Meeting will be hosted by Australian National University in late September 2023.