## CSIET Strategic Plan
**July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023**

### Our Purpose
To cultivate excellence, to facilitate a spirit of cooperation and support, and to help ensure safety and value for international exchange students, secondary schools, host families and natural parents.

### Our Mission
The mission of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is to evaluate and certify long-term international student exchange programs at the secondary level. CSIET accredits only those programs that demonstrate:
- Commitment to CSIET’s Standards of Excellence;
- Engagement in the development and sharing of Community Preferred Practices; and
- Advancement of the educational value of international student exchange.

### Who We Serve
CSIET is the only standard setting organization in the U.S. for international student exchange programming at the secondary level. Our seal of approval serves 213 member organizations representing a variety of constituent groups within the educational and international student exchange communities. CSIET’s reach through these organizations extends to 196 countries.

### Our Programs and Services
CSIET accomplishes its mission and purpose in five ways:
- Standards development;
- Evaluation and certification of international student exchange programs;
- Advancement of preferred practices;
- Professional growth;
- Resource expansion.

### Our Priorities
1. **STEWARDSHIP:** Improve Value of International Student Exchange for CSIET Constituent Groups, Including International Students, Natural/Host Families and US Secondary Schools;
2. **TRANSPARENCY:** Align Expectations across the International Student Recruiting and Placement Continuum;
3. **ENGAGEMENT:** Improve CSIET Training/Volunteer Opportunities and Increase Member Involvement;
4. **PARTNERSHIP:** Grow CSIET’s Capacity and Expand its Reach, through the Development of Existing and Emerging Partnerships.
INTRODUCTION

These are exciting times at CSIET! As we celebrate 34 years of setting standards for international student exchange programs at the secondary level, CSIET (The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel) and its members continue a history of excellence. We share a strong commitment to the educational value of international educational travel and exchange. In its last strategic plan, the CSIET Board of Directors sought “to provide increased oversight of programs and improved access to preferred practices for international exchange programs at the secondary school level.” Having achieved this goal, CSIET turns its attention to the over 140 programs applying for listing in 2018 and beyond. With an equal representation of J-1 and F-1 programs among CSIET’s membership, and an increasing number of international members, it is clear that the CSIET seal of approval is gaining recognition and that the international student exchange community values CSIET’s unique role as its standard-bearer. While we are proud of our accomplishments thus far, we are eager to begin the next phase of CSIET’s development. We are resolute in our commitment to the responsible stewardship of international student exchange programming at the secondary level.

Background

According to CSIET’s Statistics Report, 23,047 exchange students partook in the J-1 high school exchange experience in 2017-2018. This number represents a 13.7% decrease compared to 2012-2013. Sixty-two CSIET Listed J-1 programs represent over 98% of these students. However, regulatory and market influences continue to apply downward pressure on overall J-1 high school numbers. As a result, traditional J-1 organizations are feeling increasingly constrained and obliged to adapt to changing circumstances.

According to statistics provided by the 1Department of Homeland Security and IIE (Institute of International Education), in the fall of 2016 there were 59,026 international F-1 students enrolled in US secondary schools and pursuing a full high-school diploma. While the number of CSIET F-1 organizations has increased to 69 in 2017-2018 (a 63% increase compared to 2012-2013), 84.7% of F-1 international exchange activity

remains without significant regulation/oversight; CSIET member organizations represent only 15.3% of F-1 high school students. Moreover, with a rapidly increasing number of I-20 certified secondary schools and a levelling of F-1 applicants, the F-1 high school market is more competitive than ever.

**International Student Recruitment Challenges**

Recent recruiting issues have caused increased scrutiny of international student recruitment agencies. An indication of the continued F-1 visa issues faced by secondary schools is echoed in the results of a recent CSIET survey of 684 schools:

- 90% of schools agree “There needs to be more oversight of non-U.S. based international agents/agencies at the secondary school level”;
- 76% cite “testing for English language capability” as one of the main reasons for additional oversight. 61% cite “verification of application materials”. 55% cite “mental health”;
- 98% of surveyed schools report hosting F-1 students;
- 84% report recruiting students from China, 65% from South Korea, 45% from Vietnam, 25% from Germany, 20% from Brazil, 20% from Spain, 18% from Mexico.

**Regulatory Context**

J-1 Visa: CSIET enjoys a cooperative and long-standing relationship with the US Department of State. Over our 34-year history, CSIET Standards and J-1 high school federal regulation have combined to create a high quality secondary school cultural exchange program. Though we no longer require management audits for our J-1 members, CSIET monitors program status with the US Department of State and we respond to complaints regarding program aspects not subject to 22 CFR \ PART 62--EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM \ § Sec. 62.25 Secondary school students, specifically, those issues related to athletic participation and program promotion.

The Department of State is currently reviewing the J-1 high school category to determine:

- “Overall contribution to achievement of [the Department’s] Mission, Strategic Goals and Objectives”
- “How the [secondary school] category fits into the program portfolio”
- “[The] overall health of the category”
- “Parts of 22 CFR 62 that require clarification or modification.”

Through CSIET’s Preferred Practices Committee, CSIET and its J-1 members collaborate with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to conceive and design a body of preferred practices. As a matter of policy, the CSIET Board of Directors must review and accept such practices before distribution to our members.
F-1 Visa: CSIET maintains a strong relationship with ICE and SEVP, and our Standards for F-1 activity have increased student safety and welfare for over 60 F-1 programs. There appears to be limited movement at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security toward additional regulation of F-1 high school programs at this time. Until there is further development of additional regulation, leading independent school associations have adopted a “best management approach” rather than strict adherence to a set of standards.

Without additional F-1 secondary school regulation in sight, CSIET will continue to occupy and expand its F-1 oversight domain in the same tradition it has for its other listed programs, setting the stage for expanded activity and additional evaluation of programs. Should the Department of Homeland Security desire expansion of its own oversight, CSIET and its members are well positioned to adapt to potential development of new regulation.

CSIET MISSION STATEMENT

As CSIET charts its course for 2018 to 2023, we have adjusted our Mission Statement to meet the needs of our many constituent groups.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is to evaluate and certify long-term international student exchange programs at the secondary level. CSIET accredits only those programs that demonstrate:

- **Commitment** to CSIET’s Standards of Excellence;
- **Engagement** in the development and sharing of Community Preferred Practices; and
- **Advancement** of the educational value of international student exchange.

CSIET’s purpose is to cultivate **excellence**, to facilitate a spirit of **cooperation** and **support**, and to help **ensure safety and value** for international exchange students, secondary schools, host families and natural parents.

KEY PRIORITIES

CSIET believes that the next five years will be critical for establishing and growing an infrastructure that will help deliver safety and value to as many international exchange students, secondary schools and families as possible. To that end, CSIET’s new strategic positioning seeks to expand our reach, both domestically and internationally to
include not only the evaluation and certification of US based organizations, but also international student recruitment agencies. In 2017-2018, informed by the current educational and political landscape and spurred by comprehensive surveys of schools and CSIET membership, the CSIET Board of Directors has approved a strategic vision and plan that aims to strengthen international student exchange programming throughout the recruiting and placement continuum.

As CSIET pursues its strategic direction for the next 5 years, the Board of Directors has set forth priorities based on CSIET’s four core values:

**CORE VALUE: STEWARDSHIP**


**Objective 1: Value Added Standards Setting**

A. Review CSIET Standards for outdated/obsolete criteria. Update and make additions as necessary; and  
B. Drawing on input from relevant stakeholders, design and implement new Standards for international student recruitment agencies.

**Objective 2: Effective Evaluation of Programs**

A. Refine processes for the measurement of adherence to CSIET Standards;  
B. Simplify and automate evaluative tools to accommodate scaled activity;  
C. Align CSIET audit templates/grids with revised Standards, create a separate audit template for international student recruitment agencies; and  
D. Within declared budget and fundraising constraints, research, develop and implement a financially sustainable and operationally scalable model for the evaluation of international student recruitment agencies.

**Objective 3: Fair Complaints Adjudication**

A. Review and re-articulate the role of the CSIET Complaints Process as it relates to determination of program Listing Status;  
B. Revise the CSIET Complaints Process to meet the needs of constituent groups (Natural Parents, International Student Recruitment Agencies, International Exchange Students, Schools, Athletics Associations, Host Families, etc.); and  
C. Design and implement a modernized methodology for the collection, presentation and adjudication of complaints materials.
CORE VALUE: TRANSPARENCY

Priority 2: Align Informational Expectations across the International Student Recruiting and Placement Spectrum

Objective 1: Relevant Research (Surveys, Polls, Market Studies, Statistical Reports)

A. Partner with complementary entities to conduct comprehensive research on CSIET stakeholders and to define shared expectations;
B. Conduct a thorough review of existing statistical reports to determine relevance and value; and
C. Pilot new methods and formats for the collection, sharing and interpretation of data.

Objective 2: Professional, Ethical and Accurate Representation of Programs

A. Review existing CSIET publications for consistency and accuracy;
B. Design and implement a publications strategy/portfolio that ensures professional, ethical and accurate representation of Programs;
C. Create a formal process for periodic review of CSIET’s print and digital publications;
D. Research and implement existing and emerging technologies for efficient delivery of CSIET publications and materials; and
E. Develop a defined set of preferred practices relative to the promotion of international student exchange programs (both US and internationally based).

CORE VALUE: ENGAGEMENT

Priority 3: Improve CSIET training/volunteer opportunities and increase member involvement.

Objective 1: Relevant and Timely Training, Workshops and Conferences

A. Develop and implement a formal training strategy that generates pertinent and responsive CSIET professional growth opportunities;
B. Establish a minimum participation rate among programs to increase involvement at the CSIET Annual Conference; and
C. Develop online training and/or information workshops to respond to new programming realities.

Objective 2: Effective Technology Use

A. Within the limits of resources and budget, introduce a blended member communication strategy that implements the use of technology resources for synchronous/asynchronous participation;
B. Establish/streamline processes for timely collection and maintenance of member contact information; and
C. Create a standing Technology Committee to review CSIET technological capacity, conceive a new technology plan, and advise CSIET Staff on preferred practices.

**Core Value: Partnership**

Priority 4: Grow CSIET’s capacity and expand its reach, through the development of existing and emerging partnerships.

**Objective 1: Strategic Partnerships**

A. Research, identify and acquire new corporate partners, as well as state and national associations, for engagement with CSIET and its members;
B. Seek additional endorsements from state, national and international education associations;
C. Enlist international student recruitment agencies for membership and evaluation; and
D. Within the limits of resources and budget, research, develop and implement an effective fundraising strategy to supplement and sustain activities that support increased evaluation of programs.

**Objective 2: Constructive Outreach**

A. Federal Engagement and Partnership
   ● Develop, document and maintain a formal strategy for engagement with the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security;
B. Outreach
   ● Provide opportunities for member contribution to the CSIET State Policy Database;
   ● Create a standing State Policy Monitoring Committee to establish a clear process for the collection, appraisal and sharing of state policies relative to international student exchange; and
   ● Within the limits of resources and budget, equip members with relevant tools and content so they might campaign on behalf of safe and transparent international student exchange.

*Approved by the CSIET Board of Directors, May 3, 2018*