

PUBLISHER AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEFKristine Chin
(212) 591-7662
krisc@aiche.org**MANAGING EDITOR**Cynthia F. Mascone
(212) 591-7343
cynthm@aiche.org**SENIOR EDITOR**Rita L. D Aquino
(212) 591-7317
ritad@aiche.org**REGULATORY:**William A. Shirley
(888) 674-2529
envtllaw@charter.net**PATENT LAW:**Henry Heines
mh@townsend.com
Frank C. Eymard
frank_eynard@albermarle.com**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**Karen Simpson
(212) 591-7337
kares@aiche.org**ART & DESIGN**Jesse Gunzel
(212) 591-8678
jessg@aiche.org**ILLUSTRATOR**Paula Angarita
design@aiche.org**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING AND REPRINTS**Denise DeLuca
Mallon
(212) 591-7170
denid@aiche.org**AIChE****GENERAL INQUIRIES**
1-800-AIChemE
(1-800-242-4363)**MEETINGS/EXPOSITIONS**
(212) 591-7324**MEMBER ACTIVITIES & SERVICES**
(212) 591-7329**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**John A. Sofranko
johns@aiche.org**GROUP PUBLISHER**Stephen R. Smith
steps@aiche.org**EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD**William W. Doerr
FM GlobalStevin H. Gehrke
University of KansasDennis C. Hendershot
CCPS ConsultantRobert F. Hoch
ConsultantLaura A. Hofman
H&R Technical AssociatesStephen P. Lombardo
The Scotts
Miracle-Gro Co.Bruce Vaughn
DuPont TeijinFilms

Letter from the Executive Director

**Getting Your Global Career in Gear**

The capabilities and competencies needed to become a successful manager in the chemical industry keep evolving as businesses globalize. For many years, successful “fast track” managers honed their leadership, management and communication skills. They learned the value of “breadth of knowledge,” not just in a technical sense, but also in blending technological and business concepts into viable strategic plans.

Today’s chemical engineers though, face a plethora of new challenges and opportunities as they develop their careers. For example, the increasing globalization of the chemical enterprise has translated into many more engineers taking off-shore assignments. Luckily, the skills needed to succeed abroad are, for the most part, the same ones that make a manager successful onshore. However, in this era of globalization, you also need open-mindedness and flexibility, cultural and social insights, and sophistication that allow for successful negotiations with business partners from a wide variety of backgrounds (p. 26s). Additionally, today’s global businesses also demand self-starters — people who feels comfortable making decisions without all the traditional corporate support and guidance. (If you’re the leader of an organization 12 time zones from headquarters, you quickly realize the value of building up this confidence.)

Fortunately, chemical engineers almost have it “in the bag,” thanks to the rigorous training that many endure. What can be missing is a multicultural or global perspective. The U.S. has one of the developed world’s lowest levels of career assignments abroad — an average of 3% of U.S.-based chemical engineers venture outside the country for employment vs. 23% of our French counterparts, according to the World Chemical Engineering Council (2005). While assignments abroad can be the best way to broaden and sharpen certain skills, engineers based in the U.S. can still learn a great deal about their colleagues in the rest of the world. Why? Because the U.S. remains the number one destination for students from other countries seeking an international educational engineering experience (p. 36s) — and 63% of foreign students who study in the U.S. stay after completing their studies.

However, this vanguard position in providing higher education to foreign-born talent, including chemists and engineers, is weakening, experts say. More professionals are returning to their homelands, as those countries develop and become more attractive places to work. These are big changes and they drastically affect where and how companies hire employees. It’s important to take a serious look at how the U.S. prepares itself and its students to become members of the global community, because that is where a good number of tomorrow’s chemical engineers will be working in the latter half of this century.

One way to foster a global perspective is to encourage collaborative research between students and researchers in different nations. A National Science Foundation program sends U.S. students overseas to conduct laboratory work in exchange for internships offered by these U.S. schools to the respective foreign students. Attendance at international technical meetings can also be key to cultivating one’s global awareness. The interaction can deepen understanding of international product/process R&D and commercialization, and how diverse work fits into the overall value-creation process. And it doesn’t hurt to learn a foreign language or develop one’s management skills — In fact, these tools might prove to be the most crucial in the chemical engineers’ climb to “successful global manager” status.

John Sofranko
Executive Director, AIChE