



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

The AIEA 2026 Timothy J. Rutenber Award

The Timothy J. Rutenber Award is an award established to honor AIEA members who have rendered long-term and outstanding service to the Association. This occasional award is named for the late Timothy J. Rutenber, who served as Director of the Secretariat and Treasurer of AIEA

The 2026 Rutenber awardee is Dr. Judith Pennywell, Director of the International Center and Adjunct Lecturer in the Marsal Family School of Education at the University of Michigan.

Judith is an incredible leader, mentor, and colleague whose career reflects more than three decades of commitment and advocacy within the field of international education. She has held leadership roles within AIEA including serving on the Board of Directors and as an AIEA Presidential Fellow. In addition to her longstanding contributions to AIEA, she has also held national and regional leadership roles with AIEA's peer association, NAFSA.

In her nomination, colleagues referred to her leadership style as “not positional; rather she leads without being in the spotlight through her ability to influence and shape change and relevant trends in the field. Judith is the type of mentor and colleague who is comfortable engaging in forward-facing, public positions but who will also (when no one is watching) engage with a newcomer sitting alone at the AIEA annual conference to make sure they feel welcome.” She has served as a mentor and inspirational leader to countless professionals. Her selection as a Fulbright scholar, AIEA Presidential Fellow, Chair of the 2019 NAFSA national conference, along with her local and regional leadership demonstrate service excellence.

At Michigan, Judith oversees immigration services for the university's more than 12,000 international students, scholars and employees as well as global engagement and education abroad programming, including Peace Corps recruitment.

In Judith's decade of leadership at the University of Michigan, she has provided steady guidance and helped shape institutional responses amid national and global uncertainty while building internal infrastructure to strengthen support for U-M's international community. She chaired the Council on Global Engagement, guiding university-wide discussions on international travel, global learning, and policy and was a 2022 recipient of the U-M President's Award for Distinguished Service in International Education.

Judith's work supporting U-M's international community - which includes the sixth-largest international student and the largest H-1B population at a U.S. public research university - transcends academics. Since joining Michigan, Judith has integrated intercultural engagement



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with holistic student well-being, recognizing the unique challenges facing this population. She has secured funding and developed partnerships to support emergency and retention scholarships, pre-departure orientations, and career focused initiatives, while advancing institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Judith earned a doctorate in Higher Education Leadership and Policy from Vanderbilt University with research focused on campus internationalization.

AIEA congratulates Judith Pennywell on receiving this year's Timothy J. Rutenber Award.