

A NEW WORLD of KNOWLEDGE

Canadian Universities and Globalization



Edited by Sheryl L. Bond and Jean-Pierre Lemasson

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Sheryl Bond
and
Jean-Pierre Lemasson

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE
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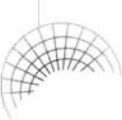
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Students as Agents of Change

Catherine Vertesi

In the first 30 years after World War II, the emphasis of student-related international activity was on discipline-oriented field studies for Canadians; overseas projects in which Canadians lived and worked in some developing economy, and the education of foreign students in Canadian universities, most receiving financial assistance from some aid agency. However, by the late 1980s, an economic rationale took over, and the rhetoric surrounding the need to produce graduates who could function in an increasingly globalized economy was followed by intense growth and investment in international-liaison offices, student-exchange coordinators, and institutional linkages. Many Canadian colleges and universities added new courses, degrees, or diplomas as the rationale for internationalization shifted to this economic need to increase the international literacy of young Canadians. At each stage, services and expertise were developed to meet the specific requirements of the project or program at hand. This process has been cumulative, giving the Canadian postsecondary community a wide-ranging set of skills to form a strong foundation to broaden international activity in all our institutions.



The vision of an internationalized campus has been present in many of our institutions for years, and the leaders in those institutions should be congratulated for their Herculean efforts to develop exchanges, field schools, and recruitment activities abroad. Yet, many remain disappointed by the cumulative change in what we do and how we do it. Indeed, it does not appear to be a lack of vision or international-program opportunities that has led many to see an underachievement in the internationalization in Canadian post-secondary education; rather, it seems to be inadequate investment in the internationalization process itself. Some institutions are still in the formative and visionary stage, but most are now charged with increasing the impact of the programs currently in place, moving from rhetoric to reality. For this reason, much of this chapter carries a strong focus on the process and the players in student-related international activity. The devil is definitely in the detail, but a better grasp of the detail should help shape the tactics used by determined internationalization planners to increase the benefits of international activity and spread them to all students on our campuses, not just to those who participate directly in international ventures.

Now, in the late 1990s, Canadian government and university administrators have looked to in-coming international students, not only to help internationalize our campuses, but also to provide an additional source of revenue from differential tuition and the overseas sale of Canadian education. The federal government has supported the development of the Canadian Education Centres (CECs) in Asia and South America to promote Canada as a destination for foreign students. The terminology of the marketplace now plays a significant role in the strategic plans to increase international activity on Canadian campuses.

Our current challenges are directly related to the decrease in funding for the postsecondary system, which is felt to a greater or lesser extent in all regions of the country. Can internationalization continue to be a top priority if it has to compete for resources with the more traditional research and teaching functions of our institutions? Do we have the time and money to develop a portfolio of high-quality internationalizing activities for students with differing academic and personal needs? Will we invest in internationalizing the students and faculty who do not travel, thus gaining a greater impact from the international activities currently taking place in our institutions? And can we resist exploiting full fee-paying international students as cash cows, rather than using their revenue to improve services and contribute to the internationalization of the whole campus?

Hence, this chapter will explore two major themes: the continued internationalization of Canadian students and the new initiatives to recruit international students to Canada. Finally, I look at the ways these streams merge to bring potential benefits to all students attending Canadian universities. Throughout the chapter, anecdotal examples are used to illustrate some of the issues under discussion. Some major differences appear in approaches to students and their international experiences in the francophone universities of Quebec and the anglophone universities in the rest of Canada. These differences will be described and explored throughout the text.



Internationalization of Canadian students

I learned so much about myself and about how the world works that
I wonder what I knew before.

Canadian exchange student at the
University of Ausburg, 1995/96.

The student-related factors driving the need to internationalize our universities and colleges are not new, but they have certainly increased in number in the past decade. Canadians have always felt an ethical obligation to contribute to the growth and well-being of developing nations, and the universities' early international work reflected this. French-speaking institutions were also motivated to support connections with francophone centres in other countries to maintain and strengthen their unique culture. But the increased globalization of business, the interdependency of economies, the changing face of the Canadian population, and the environmental, economic, and demographic problems that transcend borders demand an even greater response from our educational institutions. If universities are to continue to play a critical role in preparing leaders to respond effectively to the urgent needs of society, then we have an obligation to enable graduates to

- ♦ Function effectively in an international and highly competitive economic arena;
- ♦ Interact, within their communities, with a Canadian citizenry of increasing racial and religious diversity;
- ♦ Engage in intellectual and scholarly activity that finds synergy and fresh insight from using paradigms and models from cultures different from our own;

- ♦ Supervise, and be supervised by, individuals from diverse nations and cultures at home and overseas;
- ♦ Generate solutions to issues that transcend national boundaries, using sufficient intercultural skill to ensure widespread participation; and
- ♦ Contribute to world peace and stability.

The internationalization of Canadian students immediately brings to mind the major thrusts of special international degree and course development, student exchange and field-study programs, the presence of international students on campus, and work opportunities overseas. Discussion at meetings of the professionals involved in the delivery of international programs and services, such as the Canadian Bureau of International Education, reveals a high level of consciousness on our campuses that these programs and services are all necessary components of a well-rounded international strategy for student development. The number of mobility programs has grown enormously over the past 10 years, and most campuses in Canada now have some opportunity for Canadian students to go abroad on some university-sanctioned program. Without question, the students who choose to go abroad have gained immeasurably from their experiences. Virtually all returnees report that their exchange, field study, or overseas internship was the high point of their educational program, including those with negative experiences in their host country:

My year ... enabled me to improve my Japanese and gain a deeper understanding of the Japanese culture while studying engineering The first month of classes was pretty difficult because of all the technical Japanese I caught up by memorizing words until ... my technical Japanese was solid It was my most challenging and fulfilling year of university yet!

Canadian exchange student at
Ritsumeikan University, 1993/94

I can only promise you one thing. ... You will have some hard times and you will have some great, unforgettable times. You will learn a lot both from your studies and from the experience of living in another country and speaking another language I'm going back to work there. I guess that just about says it all.

Canadian exchange student at the
Université de Lyon, 1992/93

On a continuum, the Canadian students who have had the most “internationalizing” experience provided by their university are those who study and then perhaps work abroad for a year, immersed in another language and living with nationals from the host country. These programs are swelling in number and should continue to be encouraged. However, even the most ambitious program can only reach a modest percentage of current university and college students. In addition, only the most intrepid and well-prepared students come forward to apply for such opportunities. Although language skills, practical experience, and even expertise related to the host culture can doubtless be gained from these full-immersion periods, different and less comprehensive skills must also be developed to increase the international and intercultural capacity of students who face barriers in dealing with all-encompassing experiences (even when these experiences are self-imposed). We must develop and exploit the indirect effects of having more international students on campus (from exchanges as well as full-degree students), as well as Canadian students returning from international experiences, either studying or in a cooperative-education placement. Returning students have been well used by study-abroad professionals to recruit and orient the next exchange group; yet, resident students and faculty remain relatively unaffected, as exchange students’ observations and insights rarely appear in the classroom setting.

Exchanges are high-profile, labour-intensive initiatives (with candidate selection, course planning, credit transfer, reentry counseling, etc.) and therefore costly. In most institutions, the total number of

Box 1**Students’ mobility**

There are no data on the mobility of Canadian students abroad. There are many explanations for this: keeping education in the provincial jurisdiction contributes to the scattering of education-related information; governments exhibit little interest in these issues; and there are methodological difficulties in identifying this population. Evaluations of the number of these students vary according to source. We estimate that less than 1% of Canadian students go abroad for credited training activities. The percentage of post-graduate students is likely to be even lower. Among the reasons for this situation, it is important to mention the lack of academic incentives, the negative impact of the cost of living in Canada, the Canadian dollar’s rate of exchange, the almost total absence of a specific financial-support mechanism, the relative impoverishment of students in recent years, and burdens on a good number of students with family responsibilities. Major efforts are required from universities to offer a wide range of opportunities for mobility, but only a few students are able to benefit from the expected academic and cultural gains.

exchange students is still a small proportion of the student body, and for the most part the exchange students contribute in only minor ways to the overall internationalization of the institutions involved. Even institutions where 300–400 students go on exchange remain relatively monocultural in their values, service delivery, and curriculum.

Figure 1 ranks the effects of various international activities on students. Not all students are ready for the extensive enrichment that a full year abroad can bring, but they may still have an internationalizing experience through other less comprehensive, university-generated activities. Note that, for the purposes of the schematic, whether the student studies or works, the effects seem similar. It is the extent of the immersion (language, exposure to host culture, use of public transport, etc.) that has an impact. *Home language* refers to one's usual language of study, whereas *host language* indicates that the student must accommodate to study in another language. *Abroad* is used in the most general sense to indicate any institution away from where the student normally studies.

I will now explore further the efforts to broaden our internationalization initiatives on campuses and examine some key barriers to, and opportunities in, our current and future programs.

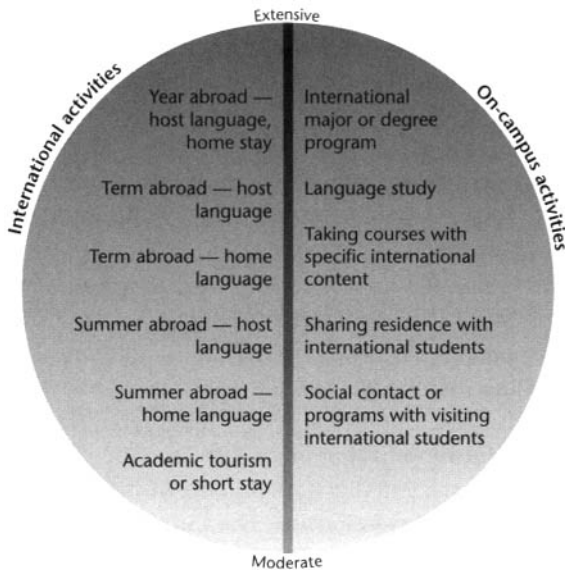


Figure 1. A schematic representation of international effects.

Mobility programs for Canadian students — learning from others

There is a significant difference between the Americans and Europeans when it comes to mobilizing students to travel to other countries for their education. The Americans tend to favour off-site campuses, where the students go abroad to take courses taught in the American style — semesters, midterms, papers, and course credits — and are taught, or at least supervised, by American faculty or staff. With the exception of language programs, they are taught in English. These “island” programs can be as short as 2 weeks or as long as a full year and may be part of the regular tuition structure of an institution or have extra fees attached.

The Europeans, in contrast, have embarked on large-scale mobilization through government-funded mobility programs and institutional partnerships, in which students from home institutions join courses mixed with the normal student population in the host country. The successful European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS), now somewhat revised and called SOCRATES, has supported the movement of more than 200 000 students (Teichler 1996b). Intuitively, the immersion experience of ERASMUS would seem to have a more profound internationalizing effect on student participants, but the American approach has the benefit of affecting large numbers of students and taking them to places where study would otherwise be inaccessible because of obstacles such as language, institutional quality, or educational structure.

Inasmuch as Canada shares attributes with both Europe and the United States, internationalization efforts in Canadian institutions are enhanced by providing both types of experience to students. Canadians, like Europeans, are not accustomed to paying high US-style tuition, so families do not save up enough to support an expensive study term abroad for their children. However, like the US students, Canadians tend to be held back from full immersion in non-English-speaking institutions because of the students' weak foreign-language skills. The opportunity for a bilingual French-English public-school education has certainly increased the percentage of linguistically mobile students in Canada beyond the US numbers but not to the same extent as in Europe. The variety of experiences made available to Canadian students through field schools and island programs is an enormous strength that opens up areas unattainable by direct exchange.



Credit-transfer mechanisms

After returning ... I found that I had to start from the very beginning again in regards to matching credits to the courses I took at Keele.

Canadian exchange student at
Keele University, 1995/96

There was so much uncertainty with regards to transfer credits being given for a senior level course. It was very frustrating. Financially, I cannot afford to be paying out money for courses for which I will not receive senior credit.

A non-Canadian visiting
Université Laval, 1996/97

The evaluation of overseas experiences and credit transfer is a thorny issue. The number of students across Canada who attend excellent academic institutions abroad with contractual partnerships with their home institution only to return and have their adviser deny transfer of some of their credits is shocking. Whole institutions or individual departments with long experience in international education tend to adopt the fundamental principle that students should not be disadvantaged by joining a university-approved study-abroad program. The acceptance of this principle compels more flexible and generous treatment when Canadians return from their exchange.

In Quebec, for example, international experiences for undergraduate students are seen as a way to provide students with a cultural experience, educational in the broadest sense. The Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities (CREPUQ, *Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec*) has an agreement system in which more than 250 universities worldwide can send students on a reciprocal basis and all credits are recognized at the home institution. It is assumed that if the institution is good enough to be a recognized partner it must be trusted to deliver satisfactory courses. There is only limited concern with the course being identical to something offered in Quebec; in fact, taking advantage of the differences in offerings is encouraged.

In the open approach of CREPUQ, students accept responsibility for their course choices and the coverage of prerequisite materials. This is most desirable, as it greatly diminishes the barriers to an overseas experience. However, in many institutions, faculty are not prepared to grant students such autonomy, and for them some new tools are needed. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the international course-equivalency guide, is an approach with many

advantages. Articulation across Canada and then to the ECTS would be an excellent start in streamlining credit transfer. Of course, for widespread acceptance of a standardized articulation process, the governing bodies of our institutions must have a systematic way to evaluate partners; accordingly, any articulation must involve local faculty on a discipline-by-discipline basis.



A portfolio approach to mobility offerings

International experiences for students can range from short-term academic tourism to a full year of interacting in another language, culture, and academic and work environment. Students, too, range from those who are sheltered and fearful to the courageous and curious, but all should be more international by the completion of their postsecondary experience. In a country where the majority of students attend university while living at home, we need to acknowledge that signing on for a full year in an unknown environment may represent a significant hurdle. A portfolio approach, with various types of mobility offerings at each institution, is needed to meet the requirements of various student groups. The more intrepid students will always come forward, even without help from the university, but we need to reach those larger numbers of students who require some extra encouragement.

To build trust and support for these types of programs, faculty, too, must gain experience with sending their students abroad. Departmental leadership is essential, but faculty buy-in comes with a series of positive experiences. For example, although a full year abroad provides a more intensive experience, faculty who are new to the exchange process may be more comfortable having students spend only one term abroad, because it poses less risk of undermining the integrity of the degree. As well, for some professional programs, students may jeopardize their ability to meet licencing requirements if they spend too much time away. As a result, international program planning should include increased liaison with appropriate licencing bodies. Canadian faculty should not assume that an overseas experience will prohibit a student's meeting licencing obligations in Canada. Academic program leaders in Canada have often successfully advocated the merits of such experiences with a professional organization, with the result that the organization relaxes requirements for students with parallel (not identical) international experiences.

However, internationalization is a gradual process. We are not responsible for completing the process in our students, merely for taking them as far as they can go. By developing profiles of the groups

of students on one's campus who share values and attributes, one can tailor initiatives to specific populations of students and can set goals that are appropriate to their needs.

An example of an international program targeting a particular student group is an undergraduate program with a student population dominated by the sons and daughters of new immigrants from Hong Kong. For these Asian parents, an open exchange program without supervision was out of the question. In response, a tailored 5-week island summer program in Europe was developed (Tretheway 1992). The director hosted an information session for parents and stressed that Canadian faculty would teach and live on site with the students. Under these conditions, many students were then permitted to travel and gain some direct experience with Western European culture and traditions. Some used it as a stepping stone to a full-term exchange program later in their degree:

My parents would not allow me to even apply for an exchange program, even though I would only be gone for one term, and I had already spent 2 years at UBC [University of British Columbia], away from them. They only said yes to summer school after they met the professors and knew we would be taken care of. Even though I was 21, they would never have let me travel on my own!

P.W., a Chinese-Canadian student at the University of British Columbia, summer program, 1992

Students want more opportunities to go abroad, better information about the opportunities, more assurance that their academic work will be recognized for transfer credit, and some hope of financial assistance for overseas study. Virtually all students report that their international experience, regardless of duration, was a highlight of their time at university:

Most of the people I spoke to before I went on exchange would say that their year abroad was the best experience of their life. I used to think that they were "keeners," the sort of people who say that every year. The thing is, I find myself saying the exact same thing; giving the same sort of answers that I usually reserve for my grandma just to make her happy — only I'm genuine.

Canadian exchange student at the University of Nottingham, 1994/95

Those who stay home

Internationalizing our students is an incremental process and, as such, is linked to activities beyond exchanges and travel. The introduction of programs, international courses, and increased foreign-language


study can contribute to internationalization, but experience shows that these have often occurred without significant disruption of the culture and practice of the institution. The way in which transnational student gatherings are encouraged and attended; the access to foreign books, case studies, and computer networks; the availability of foreign-language word-processing opportunities; and the manner in which visiting staff and students are assisted are all extracurricular ways of highlighting internationalization and should be included in planning and targeting the deployment of resources. Changes to the curriculum to make the acquisition of cross-cultural skills and cultural awareness explicit and desirable for all students require an additional fundamental change.



Educating the whole student

Professional programs at universities and colleges tend to look at program-wide issues in evaluating and developing their offerings. In schools like pharmacy, dentistry, management, and engineering, competencies beyond the main academic content, such as public speaking or medical history, are embedded either as special courses or as an integral part of the overall curriculum. International opportunities for students in these disciplines are easier to stimulate because of the already established commitment to "professional readiness" and some overarching sense of a complete education that goes beyond a mere collection of courses. In less career-focused programs, the education of the student beyond a list of course requirements is less often discussed, much less funded. In response to a question about the lack of science students on educational exchanges, a science dean replied that "labs are almost the same everywhere in the world so there is not much advantage for science students going abroad." Nonacademic goals are insignificant in this kind of thinking, and yet I am sure that the mission statement of his faculty, like those of other large and small institutions, expresses commitment to developing graduates prepared to function as leaders in the society of the future. Certainly, the Canadian future requires international, intercultural, and multicultural skills. And why should science students be denied the advantages and opportunities offered to others in the institution? But in the more general programs in science or the humanities, who takes the responsibility to make sure that this happens?

Many dedicated faculty have become involved in developing international work and study experiences for Canadian students, but many are also becoming frustrated at the lack of recognition for their



contributions. This is especially true at the large research-based institutions, where the research mission remains paramount. Most explicit reward structures support research excellence, and the implicit system identifies the strong researchers as being more valuable than the great teachers or service providers. Even when these skills coexist in talented faculty members, it is research capability that is the most lauded. There is very little time for developing supraprogrammatic or broader based educational experience, especially at the undergraduate level. The pleas for shifts in the reward system have been made for years, but the results are modest. More incentives need to be developed for faculty to support internationalization initiatives for students but also to increase the faculty members' own international skill set.

Work abroad

In addition to study experiences abroad, Canadian students are seeking work experiences as a part of their education. Cooperative education was established in Canada more than 40 years ago as a way for students to gain practical experience and understand the application of the knowledge they were acquiring in classrooms. It is estimated that more than 30 000 students from Ontario alone participate annually in these programs, but only a small percentage of these students leave Canada for their experience (Zarek 1999). There are some notable exceptions, and increasingly the attempt is made to find overseas placements so that cooperative education can help address the need to prepare graduates to work in a more global business environment. However, finding and supervising suitable employers is an expensive proposition, especially when targeting parts of the world less accustomed to interns and cooperative-education students. Demand for places usually exceeds the number of those available, and virtually all cooperative-education offices across Canada report higher numbers of applicants than they can place.

Our most successful programs should be a template for new initiatives. Capilano College in British Columbia continues to be recognized for excellence in its Asia Pacific Management Co-operative Program, as it still seems innovative 12 years after accepting its first 30 students. Experienced postbaccalaureates receive a year of intensive language, culture, and business training, before finding a year-long placement in Asia. The majority of graduates find permanent employment that builds on their international experience, and a recent report indicates that the economic impact of graduates on two-way trade and investment between Canada and Asia over 10 years is

in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Dr Scott McLeod, the director of the program, stated that the ratio of return on investment in this program to the Canadian economy is more than 200 to 1 (McLeod 1997).


Many MBA and bachelor of business programs have made international work projects or internships available, but very few make them a requirement. In Toronto, York University's International MBA includes language and culture training and requires an international internship in the country of specialization. In the early 1990s, the University of Victoria began to offer a BComm with a specialization in international business. In less than 2 years, it developed placements in Asia for all of its students — an astonishing feat. There are established and successful consortia like the Co-op Japan Program for engineering and science students. It was founded by the universities of Victoria, Waterloo, and Sherbrooke and now has 17 participating members and excellent experience in developing orientation, language training, and overseas support programs for their placements in Japan. Hundreds of Canadian students have benefited and returned with a specialized skill set to offer the Canadian economy.

The desire for international experience continues to grow, but students are limited by language capabilities and the high costs of finding and supervising such experiences:

Reflecting on my year abroad I must admit that it was a year of extremes. Some aspects of life in Hong Kong far exceeded my expectations while in other areas I remained frustrated until the day I left Many students found internships in their area of career interest. My internship changed my life.

Canadian exchange student at the
University of Hong Kong, 1993/94

Before the emergence of exchange and cooperative-education programs at our universities and colleges, students themselves organized opportunities to get international experience through organizations such as the Association for International Exchanges of Students in Economics and Commerce (AIESEC) and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). First established in Europe in 1948, AIESEC has 50 000 members in 87 countries. From a high of 237 students in 1986, the total number of students placed in Canada has dwindled to 74 in 1998. AIESEC can only offer positions overseas on a reciprocal basis: the total number of placements offered to incoming international students is equal to the total number of positions offered to Canadian students overseas. The Canadian executive reports increasing difficulty in locating Canadian businesses willing



to employ foreign students for the summer. Perhaps the numbers of cooperative-education programs linked to Canadian universities and colleges has increased to the point that firms traditionally supplying placements simply do not have additional room for foreign students. In any case, now that Canadian students have choices offered by their own institution and often for credit, AIESEC has become a less prominent player in finding international work placements for Canadians.

The volunteer agencies are another source of international experience for Canadian students. WUSC has also been active for five decades in sponsoring international students at Canadian universities and colleges, and, like Canadian Crossroads International and Canadian University Service Overseas, WUSC provides many opportunities for young Canadians to gain international experience. Unlike AIESEC, which places students in the private sector, WUSC's network of individuals and postsecondary institutions focuses on development-related projects and training organizations in less affluent parts of the world.

Government-sponsored internships

New federal initiatives providing internships for underemployed graduates are to be applauded. They are now in their second year of operation. Sponsoring agencies, such as the Canadian International Development Agency, seek out placements with salaries and preparation funding for new graduates. Although a full evaluation of the experience is not yet complete, certainly a significant number of young Canadians have received international exposure, as well as some opportunity to gain experience in their field. With further evaluation of the sponsoring organizations and intern experience, it may be possible to determine which kinds of placements will make the greatest contribution to the Canadian economy in future.

International student recruitment — a strategic assessment

Over the years, international students have attended Canadian universities in slowly increasing numbers, despite ad hoc recruitment efforts and meagre expenditures. There is some irony in the fact that in the early 1990s, when many institutions became more aware of the value of the foreign student as a force for a more internationalized education for Canadian students, the overall number of foreign

students entering our universities for full-time studies declined. Concurrently, both provincial and federal governments began to see incoming foreign students and their differential fees as a way to enhance the resources available for postsecondary education without further depleting government coffers.


The Canadian postsecondary-education sector is confident that Canada has much to offer the international community of students, but we now find ourselves in a highly competitive environment, one in which education is dealt with as a commodity. In many academic circles, with the shift to an environment in which financial potential is so prominently featured, there is a great deal of discomfort. A highly subsidized education and a sincere attempt to provide equality of access have been hallmarks of the Canadian postsecondary-education system. The majority of institutions have enjoyed strong enrollments from high-quality candidates, and demand has generally exceeded supply. Efforts have always been made to secure top candidates from everywhere in the world for particular institutions through scholarships, recruitment visits, and the like, but, on the whole, students have made their choices without heavy marketing campaigns, glossy brochures, or slick education fairs.

To some extent, the enriching effects of having international students on campus were taken for granted by Canadian institutions. Long before governments showed direct interest and "globalization" became a catchphrase, those committed to the goals of internationalization provided support and encouraged interaction between incoming foreign students and the local student population. Although these interactions were often confined to the social realm, they unquestionably contributed to a more sophisticated worldview in those Canadians who came to know the foreign students.

The francophone universities in Quebec have not suffered the same decline in enrollment as the rest of Canada. The majority of incoming students are from francophone countries, so Quebec may not be subject to the same competitive pressure. Special tuition arrangements between Quebec and the Government of France eliminate price differences, and the province has been generous in its support of foreign students, especially those from Africa, who make up almost 40% of the total francophone foreign-student population.

The recruitment challenge

As latecomers to active recruitment, Canadians have an opportunity to gain from the experiences of their competitors. Worldwide, the economic incentive has become primary, whereas academic and cultural



rationales remain at the institutional level only (de Wit and Knight 1997). Even without a revenue incentive, we are now forced to compete for students from other nations and cultures because others are actively recruiting and redirecting potential students away from Canada. The obvious contribution that overseas tuition revenue can make to the system — as is evident even in publicly funded systems like those of Australia and the United Kingdom — has changed funding expectations at the federal level and has the potential to alter those of provincial ministries as well. Increased tuition fees for overseas students in at least some jurisdictions now seem inevitable. That this should be cause for concern may be difficult for those outside Canada to comprehend; having access to education (and health care) without regard to one's income is a key component of the sense of "Canadianness" and the value system the Canadians themselves use to delineate their culture from that of their very large neighbour, the United States.

The approach in Quebec is distinctly different from that in the anglophone universities in the rest of Canada. Although de Wit and Knight (1997) reported that cultural and academic rationales were predominantly found at the institutional level outside Quebec, cultural and political values seem to motivate the Quebec government in its approach to international students. Indeed, because the government retains any differential tuition charges from international students, the incentive to recruit more students is much more embedded in a long-term strategy of good reputation.

The competitors

Because the highest profile education providers in the United States have been private institutions, overseas students have been part of their student bodies for decades. The best known places, like Stanford or any of the Ivy League schools, continue to select on merit and ability to pay (although some scholarships are offered) and have not compromised academic standards in the process. However, the Canadian education community is well aware of some smaller and less prestigious institutions that may have adopted less stringent admission criteria in exchange for much-needed tuition revenue from foreign students. An *Open Doors* press release, dated January 1998, stated that international students bring more than 7 billion United States dollars into the US economy on a yearly basis (IIE 1998).



Economic difficulties in the United Kingdom shifted the emphasis in international postsecondary education from aid to trade almost 20 years ago. Organizations like the British Council have successfully presented education in the United Kingdom in a coordinated, cohesive manner and systematically made it a billion-dollar industry for the United Kingdom.


A decade ago, Australia followed the British model, taking a countrywide approach to the systematic recruitment of full fee-paying international students. It chose to use the education system to help integrate the Australian economy with those of the Asia-Pacific region (Back et al. 1997). The government provided additional funding for a comprehensive internationalization plan for its own nationals that included curriculum-development initiatives, mobility programs for the Australian student population, and the research and mobility needs of scholars. Financial incentives encouraged universities to adopt internationalization goals, and government influence smoothed any immigration "red tape."

Some local stakeholders

On Canadian campuses, there is still debate about the desirability of actively recruiting more foreign students, setting high fees, and investing in programs and systems to ease foreign students' entry. International-education professionals, faculty members, credential evaluators, and the general public have somewhat different perspectives, but each must be understood if we are to develop strategies to move forward.

Among the general public, there is the perception that our universities are working at capacity; therefore, international students are seen as taking the place of some deserving Canadians in a taxpayer-supported institution. The real benefits of international classmates for Canadian students are still not widely understood, and so Canadians do not necessarily welcome their increased presence. Visitors to campuses in the larger centres of the country commonly mistake the multicultural reality of Canada for evidence that the university is already full of students on visas.

International-program professionals tend to see the positive social, cultural, and educational contribution that a diverse group of international students can make to a campus, and these professionals generally support the choice to open our campuses to more international participants. When international-service organizations first



emerged on our campuses, the professionals in these organizations worked closely with church and other service organizations, and very limited budgets, to provide reception and ongoing support for students sponsored by the various aid organizations. The international-service organizations are needs responsive, not for profit, and service oriented. The recent focus on the revenue potential of international students raises anxiety in these organizations about issues of elitism, sufficient support, and appropriate placement that may emerge as the numbers of international students increase.

Faculty throughout the country are always interested in attracting the best scholars to their programs, regardless of their nationality. Many have been leaders in internationalization efforts to date and have enthusiastically endorsed the option of having more international students on our campuses. But many are uncomfortable with setting high tuition fees, selling education like a commodity, and basing admission to the university on the student's ability to pay. Also, concern is expressed about the decrease in the quality of education in the classroom when there are too many students with linguistic difficulties. This is compounded in those universities with very high populations of landed immigrants with weak English-language skills, such as the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia (UBC). There is also the concern that if institutions rely too much on foreign tuition revenue, they may be tempted to compromise entry standards to meet budgetary requirements.

Admissions officers are asked to screen students based on a set of criteria imposed by the academic governing body. In the past, in anglophone universities, screening for English-language ability has been common, and, in many institutions, the brilliant student with weak language skills was not even considered. The unscrupulous behaviours of some applicants, coupled with the high demand for places in many Canadian institutions, has forced many admissions officers into the difficult role of gatekeeper. Somehow, they must achieve a balance between enforcing standards and projecting a welcoming and encouraging attitude to applicants of many cultural backgrounds.

In Quebec, a French-language competency test is generally not a condition of admission. The attitude is that students know that they are studying in French and will be expected to perform well enough in that language or risk failing their courses. If they have an admissible grade-point average, they are granted entry. It should be noted that francophone institutions have a variety of support courses in the French language, both in summer and year round, so students can

concurrently work on their language proficiency and discipline studies. This approach is common in European schools. Although this is not the place for an extensive discussion of the merits of having students pass a language-proficiency test as a criterion of admission, anecdotal evidence from Quebec suggests that leaving the responsibility for language development up to the student has been a successful strategy. Language is not a barrier; effort is rewarded; dropout and failure rates are minimal; and the numbers of international students continue to grow.




Resource allocation

A decision to join the Canada-wide initiatives to bring more international students to campuses should be made with a good understanding of the implications for the services currently in place. Without a careful audit, to merely add to what is currently in place would be unwise. The current staff of admissions, awards, student reception, and counseling can be used to meet the anticipated needs of incoming students. They can also inform the strategic planning process by defining the current barriers in an institution and identifying issues specific to a particular ethnic group or geographic region. Commitment must come from top administrators and often the board of governors, and they must develop policies on tuition fees, the number of foreign students, admission standards (such as language skills), and the ways these are related to the Canadian applicants.

In Australia, the national government set regulations to allow international students no more than 25% of spaces on any campus, and the institutions then worked on plans appropriate to their circumstances (Goldring 1984). Because of the division of legislative powers in Canada, we cannot borrow directly from this experience, but governmental dialogue still needs to occur. Alberta, British Columbia, and New Brunswick have provincially funded organizations dedicated to international education, and recently Prince Edward Island embarked on some joint institution-government marketing initiatives in Asia. In British Columbia, UBC negotiated with the provincial ministry for a 15% increase in total enrollment of full fee-paying international students. As previous full-time enrollment calculations included all students, establishing additional full-time enrollment as a separate quota not only provides new revenue but also frees up spaces for Canadians in the funded student allotment previously occupied by visa students.

If an institution wishes to increase its international enrollment, then new funds must be dedicated to this undertaking. A financial



plan that includes enrollment projections, promotional materials, recruitment travel expenditures, and new service costs can clearly demonstrate the potential long-run benefits of opening the institutions to greater numbers of foreign students. Some proportion of foreign-student tuition revenue should be dedicated to the provision of scholarships to attract outstanding applicants and support able students who would otherwise be unable to attend the institution.

An increase in the number of international students requires additional investment in services. Students who have been actively recruited and are paying high fees have expectations of good support services (Patterson 1996). By providing reception, orientation, counseling, and ongoing support to international students, one can diminish the difficulties in adjusting to what is for many of them a very different educational system. This investment is needed not only to improve the students' chances of academic success but also to reduce strain on all university services, including those in the classroom. International-student support units in Canada are accustomed to "doing more with less," so staff fears of exorbitant demands on campus should be central in planning the necessary services.

Some system of revenue sharing to allow faculties and departments to gain some financial benefit from having additional international students would be essential. Students from diverse educational traditions have diverse expectations of the workload, deadlines, class participation, and student-faculty relations and create an additional burden on the faculty (Vertesi 1992). Further, a lack of common cultural experience limits the examples and metaphors instructors can use to enliven the material they teach. Successful internationalization of the classroom depends on a positive response from faculty, who must believe that the benefits outweigh the costs. Idealistic arguments alone are simply not strong enough to induce what is sometimes significant change in both pedagogic style and workload in the professorate.

Establishing recruitment targets

Student recruitment should not be an ad hoc process but should match institutional strengths and attributes to the applicant's requirements. All Canadian institutions offer credible educational experiences. Relative to the rest of the world, Canada is a land of beautiful natural settings and is safe, clean, and tolerant of diversity. These strengths can be promoted by all institutions and should form the basis of the general marketing of a Canadian education to foreign students. Beyond these, each institution needs to understand its unique

qualities and recognize the wide variety of students seeking an educational experience abroad in an English- or French-speaking environment. What seems a drawback to one student segment may be an attraction for others.

For example, some Asian students look for cities with significant Asian populations, like Vancouver or Toronto, where they can be close to relatives or easily find familiar food or surroundings. Others arrive at the University of Toronto or UBC and are very disappointed that they are not surrounded by Caucasians only. Intrepid foreign students may be much more satisfied in less racially diverse communities. No matter how “natural” some connections seem to be, there are some general guidelines to include in planning for targets. Students are more likely to come to Canada when they

- ♦ Know Canada through immigration patterns, large alumni populations, or world institutions or events, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Olympics, music, and movies;
- ♦ Have established travel links to Canada, such as nonstop flights, or flights that do not require transit through the United States;
- ♦ Are part of a growing middle and upper-middle class, who can afford a postsecondary education abroad;
- ♦ Have Canadian embassy or CEC support for international-education initiatives; and
- ♦ Can easily obtain exit visas and take currency out of their home country.

A recently published study (Lawrence 1997) on how students from 10 Asian countries made their selections to study abroad reveals in all cases that the first criterion was the country. This emphasizes the need to promote Canada as a desirable destination for foreign students in general, before marketing efforts focus on individual institutions. Students who have chosen North America indicate that the reputation of the institution and the specific program influenced their choice, whereas students going to Australia and the United Kingdom stated that they were looking for a broadening experience. Much more research on student decision-making is needed to make a wise use of the resources in attracting students to Canada.



Box 2

Recruiting foreign students: questions from universities

Canada, like many other countries, is engaged in recruiting foreign students. It does this through its network of Canadian Education Centres (CECs). Although the idea of enlisting more foreign students enjoys broad support from Canadian universities, our way of going about it often raises questions. Why is it, for example, that the CECs, which are often housed in Canadian embassies, should have to charge universities a membership fee, when our embassy cultural programs used to distribute information free to the universities? Isn't there a risk that CEC activities, such as education fairs, are simply duplicating the efforts of provincial agencies or other university groups and organizations? Are the CECs to some extent competing with our own universities when the CECs set up shop in countries where these universities have been active for some time? How can we measure the extent to which this network is really helping to enrol more foreign students in Canadian universities, given it is impossible to determine what influenced the students' decisions? In short, if the costs to the universities are so high and the results are so difficult to assess, we may question whether the efforts of the CECs are really good for the universities and whether it might not be better for the universities, and for Canada, to take a different approach.

Eliminating barriers

When the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) embraced international-student recruitment, it brought much needed attention to the immigration issues facing recruiters and international students. More active consultative committees are bringing government and university officials together to try to streamline the prompt handling of visa requests. Obviously, the establishment of the CECs is meant to alleviate pressure on the embassy staff, and in some locations these are very effective partnerships. However, some of the procedures that interfere with the timely issuance of student visas have little to do with the CEC.

The processing procedures for health certificates, visa changes and renewals, and foreign-student work opportunities and the requirement that foreign students have all funds available for the complete degree program need to be reevaluated. Ridiculous regulations, such as that the visa application provide all information about future place of residence, should be adjusted to reflect the reality of the university setting, where even places in residence may not be assigned until only a few days before term.

Admissions procedures

Professionals in international admissions have made enormous progress in cataloguing and assessing educational structures and institutions worldwide, so fundamental credential evaluation should


be much less of an issue. The future of international admissions includes more on-line registration with faster approvals and turn-around times, although the current systems will be maintained for those students without access to technology. Once again, detailed investigation of the applicant's home-country conditions should help to identify those procedures that require tailoring, if recruitment is to be successful. For universities in Canada without a semester system, the September starting date may limit successful recruitment from areas of the world where the yearly timetable differs from Canada's, such as in the southern hemisphere. The University of Calgary recently opted to allow foreign students to begin their studies in January or April because a high incidence of unexpected delays in visa processing was holding students back an entire year.



Language training and bridging programs

Language evaluation remains troublesome. Against the explicit advice of the Educational Testing Service, which developed the official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (ETS 1994–95), scores on TOEFL (or some other test of English) have been used extensively as a screening device at Canadian universities. Although admission procedures require transcripts and other documentation, the language-proficiency scores are frequently used as the first hurdle before further evaluation of a file is carried out. Study after study has shown that TOEFL is not a successful predictor of academic success (Hughey and Hinson 1993), but admissions criteria in many institutions have not changed. There are still stories of faculties raising the TOEFL requirement even higher, after receiving students with good TOEFL scores (550–600) who nevertheless could not communicate orally. In many institutions, it is not widely understood that the most commonly used English-proficiency examinations measure only passive proficiency and neglect the more active skills of speaking and listening, which are also essential to student success.

There are two approaches to take when confronting a student with a language deficiency. The first, to block their admission, is becoming less frequent. The other, to evaluate on academic merit beyond language skills and provide or suggest remediation, is an essential part of any successful recruitment of international learners to our campuses. Increasingly, schemes are being developed involving “conditional admission,” together with bridging or transition programs in English language (for example, at the universities of Carleton, Alberta, York, and Western Ontario, to name a few). Several universities offer credit for language-development courses for



non-native speakers (for example, at the universities of Carleton, Saskatchewan, and Québec à Montréal) and allow students to begin their academic program while continuing to up-grade their English or French.

The Europeans have been much more flexible about language requirements for their highly mobile students (Teichler 1996b). In many institutions the student may take courses in their native language even when it is not the language of their host country. Sometimes classes are taught in the host language, but students can elect to be evaluated in their mother tongue. In Canada, the University of Ottawa has provided bilingual courses and evaluation in both of Canada's official languages. In any case, universities that have not already done so should establish clear policies and entry tracks for their increasing nonnative-speaking international (and domestic English-as-a-second-language) populations.

Linked to (but not the same as) language preparation are programs that stress the performance expectations and culture of Canadian universities. Sometimes offered as part of an extended orientation, these programs should cover learning and instructional styles, faculty-student relations (for example, Canadian faculty members expect to be questioned), workload, level of self-discipline, student responsibilities, commonly used terminology, assignment-deadline expectations, group-work responsibilities, mid-term- and final-examination formats and deportment, and introduction to Canadian culture, history, social structure, and politics. Whether given for a fee (like UBC's University Readiness Program), for credit (for example, the Capilano College Study Skills course), or as part of the entry program for international students, these programs reduce the incidence of misunderstanding between faculty and foreign students and lead to more successful integration and student success.

Positive implications of internationalization for all students

Having more international students on campus has practical implications for what we teach and how we teach it, even in the short run. However, instructors in Canadian universities are not being asked to change their teaching style only to cater to foreigners — national background is the most obvious dimension of learning differences in any group of Canadian students as well.

Pedagogical dimension

Across Canada, many institutions are increasing the number of non-Canadians in their classes; yet, generally, classes are still taught in traditional Anglo-American lecture-and-discussion format. Perhaps the pressure of teaching to rows of individuals unresponsive to old jokes, silent during class discussions, and bewildered by group projects will be enough to motivate faculty to consider new approaches. Students raised in North America enjoy being taught with humour, expressing their own ideas, and seeing their professor as a guide and facilitator (Flowerdew and Miller 1995). Behaviours appropriate to this model may be highly offensive to students from other cultures. Canada has very little tradition of instructional training for faculty in universities and colleges, but without question, success in a multicultural classroom depends on some adjustment in the teaching styles otherwise successful in Canadian culture.

Professors need to develop new pedagogical techniques to encourage the participation of students from cultures where asking for help is unacceptable. Students from cultures where they are rewarded for regurgitating facts cannot instantly become critical thinkers, nor can those from a tradition of students' remaining silent in the classroom suddenly "role play" or speak up in class discussions. They must be nurtured to display more interactive behaviours, especially as it is through their increased participation that their Canadian classmates will benefit from internationalization:

When I was first in Canada and a professor talked to me in class, I was so embarrassed. Now I am back here in Japan — our professors say that we noisy students are suffering from the UBC effect!

Japanese exchange student in the Ritsumeikan-UBC
Academic Exchange Program, 1996/97

We need to shift our focus to the development of the best pedagogical techniques to fit the audience or, better still, to provide alternative approaches to the same material, allowing the student to choose. Of course, many excellent teachers across the country do this already, but it must happen more systematically. Innovations and adjustments in instruction initiated because the student body is more diverse can also benefit the other students, as they, too, may find in this innovation a delivery suited to their learning style. Many of the changes are small, a matter of nuance, but they are cumulative and can have a very positive affect on learning outcomes for students, regardless of background.

Instilling an international perspective throughout the curriculum

More attention must be brought to the issue of instilling cross-cultural perspectives in all the material that we teach. The international students in the class should therefore be regarded as a resource in that they compel the professor to provide multiple reference points for viewing the subject matter under review. Obvious examples of this can be found in lectures and discussions of international case studies or literary pieces, but professors will also have less obvious opportunities. Should foresters, for example, always learn good forestry practice relative to Canadian environmental conditions or should they be exposed to some comparative forestry techniques as part their core requirements? This small change in one course might signal that everything else that is being taught is local and pertinent in some geographies only and that graduates will have much to learn when going to new environments.

The international students in all courses are an untapped force for internationalization. One of the most trivial techniques for increasing their potential impact is to make the professor and tutorial leaders aware of who they are in their classes. By calling on these students, the faculty member brings new information to the class and signals to other class members the value of these different perspectives. Given the multicultural nature of Canadian society, many Canadian students can contribute in this way as well. Certainly, in many classes, the topics may not be suitable for this technique. Nevertheless, some variation of it can be developed for every type of teaching format, if the faculty member is motivated:

I couldn't believe it. There we were in a strategic management class, doing a case on the EU [European Union]. The prof knew I had been in Belgium but never even let me speak during the discussion. I knew more than he did. Maybe that's why he didn't ask.

Exchange student from
Louvain-La-Neuve, 1993/94

Faculty should also call on Canadian students who have had a university-sponsored international experience, whenever possible. They have an enhanced impact because they are likely to return to more senior classes, which are usually smaller and more conducive to discussion, and to be familiar with a participatory classroom culture (in fact, some schools use frequent class participation as a selection criterion). They feel an intense desire to share what they learn, and they choose to comment on issues salient to their home culture — in this case, Canada.




To further the benefits to the Canadian students who do not study or work abroad, it is best to increase the impact that a highly diverse student population may have. A direct effect can be produced in the formal-education setting of the classroom, but the effect can be greatly enhanced by increasing the opportunities for social interaction between the Canadian and the non-Canadian students. It is a mistake to assume there will be widespread spontaneous socializing between Canadians and foreign students. Here, too, some incentives are needed to encourage Canadians to get over their shyness. Some examples of the means to accomplish this are the following:

- ✦ Student-society or senatorial positions representing foreign-student needs and responsible for activities that bring students together;
- ✦ Requirements for “buddy” or other international volunteer activity from Canadians as a condition of acceptance to overseas exchange or cooperative-education programs; and
- ✦ A recognition system for Canadians serving as buddies, such as a social event hosted by the president or dean.

Conclusion

International students, whether they come for a term or a complete degree, require similar services but should be seen as different planks in the university’s internationalization platform. Exchanges provide opportunities for study in institutions and in parts of the world to which Canadian students might not otherwise have access. High fees, stringent language entry requirements, or political regulation can be overcome through institutional partnerships. For example, instead of the 13 260 GBP a year tuition fee at the London Business School, exchange students from McGill University pay only their home rate to their university before studying at the London Business School (in 1999, 0.612 pounds sterling [GBP] = 1 United States dollar [USD]). Students on exchange are permitted to go to Italy, Mexico, or many other places, bypassing the usual language testing. It is their responsibility to comprehend enough to successfully complete their term.

Exchanges can be a source of foreign students who would not otherwise come to Canada. German students do not pay tuition in their system and have a countrywide international-mobility financial-support system. Most are simply not motivated to pay high tuition fees overseas while degrees at home are subsidized, and yet, they are



excellent additions to the Canadian classroom when on exchange programs. Strategic partnerships can add ethnic balance to the international student group and raise the profile of Canada as a destination for other foreign students.

The past decade has seen a profound increase in international activities for students. Where universities have been slow, students themselves have organized programs, such as study tours to China and Latin America, internships, and group projects overseas. Individuals seek out organizations that send them abroad to work so that they will gain the experience they need for their future; the proportion of students doing so is still small, however. There have always been intrepid individuals on campus who need little encouragement to seek out new experiences and expand their horizons. However, most young Canadians are not so bold. A March 1998 survey of undergraduates in a large business faculty in which educational exchanges had been operating successfully for more than 10 years found that 75% of students thought that study-abroad programs were "a desirable part of an undergraduate program" but that fewer than 33% had any intention of applying to these programs (Stanbury 1998). The mere opportunity is obviously not enough. We must convince the other 67% that they, too, must develop international skills, and we must offer more ways for them to acquire these skills.

Returning students are an extremely potent force for the internationalization of campuses. Having spent time in another culture, they recognize differences that are salient to the education of other Canadian students who chose not to travel yet still need to increase their intercultural knowledge. What is required is an approach institutionally coordinated both within and between levels to increase the impact on our programs. Only in those institutions that invest in social as well as academic activities that bring domestic and foreign students together over and over and provide a forum where their students can speak out about their international experiences will the presence of foreign students have any effect on the majority of Canadian students who never go abroad.

Support from the federal and provincial governments is essential to increasing the external profile of Canadian education, but we also need a concerted public-relations effort to remind Canadians of how we benefit from having international students on our campuses. Just as our university decision-makers need more information from national sources on emerging international-recruitment opportunities, the government also needs more dialogue with the education providers so that our rhetoric does not outstrip what we can be

reasonably offer. At the macrolevel, we must take the following measures:

- ♦ Develop a coordinated plan to raise Canada's profile as a destination for international students;
- ♦ Establish measurable targets for numbers of incoming foreign students;
- ♦ Improve our investment decisions by assessing the impact of various marketing initiatives, such as fairs, written materials, and web links;
- ♦ Coordinate our coverage of major educational events to share costs across various players;
- ♦ Assist in the development of further international work opportunities for Canadians overseas and for foreigners in Canada;
- ♦ Solidify mechanisms for communication between practitioners and legislators to address regulative barriers to entry of full-time and exchange students;
- ♦ Enforce national standards for ethical practice and for provision of foreign-student services; and
- ♦ Develop a national-international credit-transfer scheme to decrease the administrative burden of exchange programs and to secure transfer credit for Canadians.

But in the end, no matter what the DFAIT initiatives are, no matter how competently the CECs promote Canada, and no matter how well organized provincial jurisdictions become, our success will depend on the actual experiences of the students on the campuses.

At present, the Canadian dollar allows us to offer real price incentives for international students to choose Canada. This is a tolerable short-run strategy because it creates an incentive for students to "experiment with our brand," rather than choosing something more familiar, like the United Kingdom or United States. But in the long run, surely we do not want to base our international reputation on being the lowest priced provider of a university education. To really increase the quality of what we have to offer international students implies a level of intercultural sophistication and generosity that will take training, resource reallocation, and commitment from everyone on campus from food-service providers, to professors, to information clerks, to senior administrators, to housing staff, to student organizers. Word-of-mouth reputation is an enormous motivator in international



students' choice of a country for their education (Lawrence 1997). The most potent marketing tools we have are satisfied alumni.

Universities and colleges where administration and faculty understand the true significance of internationalization are the ones that actively invite students from other cultures and treat diversity in their classrooms with respect. They ensure that revenues are reinvested in the further development of programs and services. And they build reward systems that encourage faculty to include intercultural perspectives in their teaching. Anyone can write internationalization into their mission statement and sign a few agreements. But the leading institutions in this field manage to actually change the habits of faculty beyond the superficial, train their staff to be generous toward diversity in their student body, and convince their students of the importance of intercultural skills in their careers and personal growth.