

Maureen O'Neil on May 18 at Ryerson for its Spring Conference.

**STOP THE WORLD! I WANT TO GET ON:
Reconnecting the Canadian university with the world**

Opening

I was impressed and then flattered to receive Dr Mendelsohn's invitation to speak to you this morning. I was impressed when I understood that the purpose of this annual meeting of faculty at Ryerson was an annual in-house symposium for faculty to take stock of what you are doing as a university community of researchers and teachers—building on your traditions of excellence in teaching—asking yourselves what can be done better and what needs to be done to respond to the ever changing world your students will inherit. I was flattered to think that you wanted to know more about the International Development Research Centre, the IDRC, as a part of your deliberations.

For ____ years I was a member of the Carleton University's Council, the Chair for ____years so I have a great regard and affection for the university institution—unabashedly considering it a corner stone in the Canadian social structure.

I am very aware that this is a working session where you are in a learning and planning mode. You want these meetings to provide you with reference points that connect with the needs of the university community, speak to your professional development and relate to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for your students. It is that feature of my remarks this morning that I wanted to convey in the title Stop the world! I want to get on.

I gather from Dr Mendelsohn that Ryerson proves the rule: that IDRC is better known outside of Canada than at home. I would be remiss as IDRC's President if I did not seize the opportunity to close this gap in your knowledge of 'great' Canadian institutions.

So I will tell you something about IDRC.

(About IDRC)

IDRC is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada. We report to Parliament through the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Centre is unique among Canadian public corporations because of the international composition of its 21-member Board of Governors. The IDRC Act requires that only the Board's Chairman, Vice-Chairman and nine other members be Canadians. The international complement of the current Board is made up of eight governors from developing countries and one from the United States. The leadership and perspective provided by governors from outside Canada help to keep the Centre's programs relevant to the developing world while setting them within a broader international context. Our Board is a direct

reflection of IDRC's philosophy which is to convene people from different backgrounds and different nationalities to work together and benefit from each other's experiences.

IDRC was created under the basic premise that a country can develop only when its citizens have acquired the capacity to address their own development problems. We help communities in the developing world find practical solutions to important development challenges. In doing so, we support the work of Southern researchers and scientists.

IDRC has been supporting research in developing countries for twenty-nine years now. This assistance has had multiple repercussions and considerable significance. The training provided to thousands of researchers in the South has helped create a pool of specialists who seek solutions to the problems of

development at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

IDRC's assistance to special research projects has facilitated the development of the innovative and effective technologies the South so urgently needed. Predictive research financed by IDRC influences the national policies of the governments of developing nations in areas such as the environment, science and technology, the economy, and urban planning.

IDRC has also been an innovator in the way research is carried on in the developing world. The Centre sets a premium on a participatory and multi-disciplinary approach which takes into account inequalities between men and women.

Drawing on its international reputation and its well-established networks, the Centre has initiated many partnerships with other donors. This approach allows IDRC to pursue a more ambitious

program of research than would otherwise be possible, therefore increasing our contribution to research in developing countries.

A number of the Centre's activities are carried out jointly with Canadian and developing country researchers. IDRC has enabled Canadians to collaborate with researchers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. This is done selectively, almost always at the direction of the developing country researchers when they indicate the need for collaboration. IDRC also creates links with the non-governmental, and private-sector communities in Canada and abroad, providing unique opportunities for joint ventures for the creation and exchange of knowledge. About 18 percent of the budget is used to support Canadian collaboration.

In our increasingly interdependent world, helping other countries also serves the best interests of Canadians. A wide range of

issues - disease, environmental degradation, and underdevelopment, for example - transcend borders. The transmission of diseases across borders is reduced when health issues are addressed in countries worldwide. Addressing development challenges contributes to sustainable development and increased stability, and, therefore, has peace and security implications at regional and global levels. (I shall have more to say on this point later.) Canada's continued support of Southern science research has won for our country a great deal of respect and goodwill in international arenas.

Following the agricultural revolution and the industrial revolution, we are now firmly embarked on the information and communication revolution. This means that mastery of knowledge will be the fundamental element in the process of development, and countries that are not prepared for it will be

even more marginalized. The world is evolving towards a dynamic where development will be dictated by the ability of States to generate new knowledge. But if you say knowledge, you are saying research and autonomy. Research is not a luxury reserved for the countries of the North; it is not to be opposed to the resolution of pressing needs. It is central to the development of long-term strategies and thus essential to any lasting crisis management process. It is illusory for the developing nations to think that the developed countries are going to “think” for them and place a priority on their interests. That is why IDRC involves disadvantaged groups in the work it supports.

IDRC continues its work as do other development organizations with declining resources. Unfortunately, the 0.7% GNP target for foreign aid recommended by Pearson has never been ¹ reached by Canada. Since 1989 the dramatic slide in the ODA budget has

left Canada with a contribution of less than 0.3% -- the lowest point since the creation of the aid program. IDRC has felt the cold wind of deficit reduction as its budget fell from \$114 to \$81 million between 1988 and today----\$81 million which is only \$60 million in 1988 dollars.

This reduction of resources of CIDA and IDRC compromises Canada's ability to meet its responsibilities of global citizenship and I take every opportunity to plead the case for an increased aid budget. But I want to share with you this morning a view that suggests that you, the university community, have been given at least some of the responsibility for deciding what part of its treasure Canada will devote to international development.

But first a view of the Canadian university from where I stand.

Because the Canadian university community is the natural partner

for IDRC we follow with interest the life and times of this community. Depending on your point of view these are either difficult times or momentous times for the university. It has been summed up as a time when our basic institutions—designed for another time and set of circumstances—are ‘showing their age’. Those of us working in these institutions are torn between defending and preserving what works and managing the process of reform to ensure a fit with our times and circumstances and to build in the ability to continue to respond to rapid change—a ‘permanent’ (if one can use that word here) feature of our age.²

Permit a ‘friend’ to share with you a view of the challenges facing your publically-funded institution, the Canadian university. I do this to prepare for my main message to you today—to signal that I am aware of the context in which you are planning for the future.

To be brief, I’ll simply offer a list, knowing that this audience can

supply the details. Also I should stress that my information comes primarily from the media, which I take as good a yard stick as any that you are under scrutiny and that the reasonably informed citizen is watching for your next move.

Funding—You are underfunded. I can relate to this as both CEO of an organization supported by taxes and as a citizen who believes that the universities must come high on the list of public goods.

Infrastructure³—not the most exciting consideration in scholarly circles I know but we are told that because the fabric of our universities is crumbling repercussions include for the most affected institutions the inability to conduct research, and to attract faculty and students.

Job ready or a liberal education—this is a perennial bone of contention. I was encouraged recently to read that the CEOs of several of Canada's leading high tech companies “had a pent-up feeling of anxiety” because the overinvestment in training for high tech at the expense of education in the liberal arts was failing to nurture “skills and talents increasingly valued by modern corporations.”⁴ The real concern here, of course, is getting the balance right between ‘device makers’ and ‘decision takers’—who do you want in leadership positions?

Competition—the ‘net’ has made it possible to replace the ‘campus’ with a ‘server’. Although it is still early days the ‘private university’ is taking on a new meaning. It is targeting your ‘market share’ in fields where it just may have the edge—in the rapidly changing fields of high tech, business and commerce for example.

The Kept university—it came to the public's attention as the 'Pepsi university'. And you will recognize that this item on the list borrows from the recent cover feature of the Atlantic Monthly⁵—suffice it so say that anyone concerned for the supply of public goods must be concerned at the trend towards the Market's 'acquisitions' and 'takeovers' ('colonization'?) of a key, publically funded asset.

Retirement—I'll conclude my list with this item. I mention it because we have been reminded by the AUCC⁶ of how dramatically the demographics of the university will change over the next five years. Most striking for me is the indication that Canada's universities cannot, meet the demand for graduates to replace the retiring faculty. Almost certainly we shall have to recruit internationally—dare I say globally. A challenge in the short run. A remarkable opportunity in the long run.

I'll refrain from other pet items—the changing nature of research—from the domain of elites to a vehicle for broader citizen participation, the fragile to non-existent links between university research and public policy,... but these are insider issues—they have not drawn media attention—yet.

On the one hand many problems. On the other hand, the universities are in a better position than they have been for decades to cultivate public support. Everyone can now quote speeches about the social benefits of investing in the knowledge-based economy. Within this emerging 'ecology of knowledge' the universities have a unique role. When the universities do speak out about the benefits of knowledge they bring to society, citizens take them at face value and do not see them as offering whining overtures to self-aggrandizement. The designation 'interest group' has emerged as the badge to distinguish adversaries struggling

with society's issues. The 'Battle in Seattle' and the demonstrations in Washington at the April World Bank and IMF meetings underscore a new direction in civil confrontation. What was interesting for me was to see both sides in Washington—Dr Geoffrey Sachs, for the Breton Woods institutions and Dr Vandana Shiva of the NGOs--say of each others positions---'they do not know what they are talking about'. What this says to me is that we have to move very quickly from 'interest-based decision making' to 'knowledge-based decision making'. The universities do not have a lock on knowledge but they must offer themselves as major players if confrontation and conflict over the core issues of society are to be better understood and, hopefully, resolved. You can help prevent an escalation into a new from of 'civil war'.

The recent AUCC Report, *Progress and Promise*⁷, authored by Ryerson's Dr. Jane Knight, shows that internationalization has

taken firm root in the Canadian university. It is encouraging to learn that 84 percent of Canadian universities report that internationalization is already part of their university-wide long-term strategy, and 73 percent ranked as of first importance the rationale to “prepare graduates who are internationally knowledgeable and inter-culturally competent”. On the other hand, only 23 percent of the institutions responding to the AUCC’s survey gave as a rationale for internationalization to “address through scholarship the increasingly interdependent nature of the world”. And in terms of curriculum change, Knight reports that, “overall there appears to be a low level of interest and activity by faculty members.”

Because the survey behind the report can be compared with one done in 1993 it is encouraging to learn that the “findings seem to suggest an evolution from awareness to commitment, to

implementation and, increasingly to institution-wide integration.”

Of course there is the ever present qualification----the universities need additional support to sustain internationalization, given competing demands for scarce institutional and financial and human resources.

It is essential that Canadian universities continue to increase their international activity. And you have been given new resources to do this. My message to you today is that the university atlas must include the developing regions of the world.

New Resources and a new opportunity

The announcement of the 21st Century Chairs for Research

Excellence [NOW RENAMED ‘THE CANADA RESEARCH

CHAIRS’] ⁸in the October 1999 Speech from the Throne and the

Prime Minister's response in Parliament marked a red letter day for scientific research in Canada. In February the Federal budget confirmed that \$900,000 will be available to create 2000 new Chairs over the next five years. I suggest that the new Chairs provide the universities with the opportunity and the resources to take a significant next step in their internationalisation: an opportunity to take both a broader and longer term view of the international dimension in research?

From an IDRC perspective, aspects of the Speech from the Throne and the Prime Minister's response beg questions about the scope/definition/clarity of Canada's 'international relations'. The main message was the opportunity offered by the new Chairs to benefit Canada through rebuilding and strengthening the national research and development capability. Understandably, the central issue is to improve Canada's international

competitiveness primarily by retaining and attracting 'research stars'. Those of us working in international development know that increasingly, 'research stars of tomorrow'--will come from the countries we currently label as 'developing countries'. Sooner rather than later, researchers from these countries/regions will become sought-after research collaborators/partners.

In the same Speech from the Throne (and the Prime Minister's response) we learn of an intention to commit Canada to increase its international development assistance 'to do our part to help those who are very poor'. But most enticing is the plan to 'concentrate the growth in our assistance to enable Canada to work in innovative ways to help the less fortunate countries improve the lives of their citizens.'

If we juxtapose the reduction in Canada's development

assistance with the marked increase in domestic support for our national research system, and, if we agree Canada is making every effort to be a knowledge-based economy to compete successfully in a globalized knowledge-driven world, then, from where I view the world in IDRC, I must ask if the Canada Research Chairs program offers an opportunity to respond to the call for Canada “to work in innovative ways to help the less fortunate countries improve the lives of their citizens.”

I recognize that the catch 22 in this pairing of domestic need with international conscience is to prevent Canada contributing to the developing countries’ brain drain. In this respect the full potential of research networks must be explored further.

Attracting individual research stars to Canadian universities is important but we are increasingly aware of the critical role of

networks to strengthen the intellectual core of research and to achieve the most favourable cost benefit performance. In a study commissioned by IDRC, NSI and the IISD, Howard Clark⁹ highlighted how important the innovative Canadian program for the Network Centres of Excellence had been for national research and made a case for their extension into international research—including the developing regions of the world. Another study by Professors Richard Stren and Janice Stein¹⁰ of the University of Toronto has underscored the increasingly important role of networks for international research while commenting on what works and what needs to be improved. Both of these studies support IDRC 's expereince with research networks in its own programs.¹¹

I find it compelling that both national and international observers are calling attention to the changing nature of international

development, underlining the interdependence and shared problems in a globalized world and demanding, I would suggest, that the universities engage more fully with the challenges of globalization.

Let me share with you examples of these perspectives on the changing nature of international development.

In Canada, a sub-committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers has observed: "Today, all issues are international--The traditional distinctions between 'international' and 'domestic' issues are increasingly fuzzy and for purposes of research and policy-making, almost irrelevant."¹²

Canada in the World--the government's current foreign policy statement, observes: "Thanks to technological innovations, the

adoption of outward-looking political and economic policies,...

Domestic policy is foreign policy...foreign policy is domestic policy."¹³

A report commissioned by IDRC, NSI and IISD and chaired by Maurice Strong concluded: "Development can no longer... be cast purely in terms of 'North' and 'South' or in terms of development assistance. The most important relations between countries and regions today and in the future will, in fact, have less to do with development assistance than ever before.... If Canada is to achieve maximum impact for investments in building a more sustainable world, direct access to relevant knowledge and local conditions in the developing world will be essential."¹⁴

These Canadian observations are echoed by international actors.

I recommend to you a book 'Global Public Goods: International

Cooperation in the 21st Century' (Edited by Inge Kaul for the UNDP). I quote-- "We have entered a new era of public policy, defined by a growing number of concerns that straddle national borders...it poses dual challenges...the need to transform international cooperation from its traditional place as 'external affairs' into policy-making applicable to most, if not all, domestic areas.....to develop the concepts and instruments needed to overcome problems of collective action. (p. xxv)..."

The book predicts what, I think, is a tectonic shift in the way 'international cooperation (for which read much of what we now think of as 'aid') will be configured. To quote from the same publication--- "International cooperation must form an integral part of national public policy making (p. xxvii).....international cooperation starts 'at home'.... A policy of internalizing externalities may also require that national government ministries

develop a clear mandate for international cooperation.... it would be useful for ministries to have a two track budget...one for domestic expenditures and one to finance international cooperation.”¹⁵

Something along these lines is underway in Canada. Sectoral departments, struggling to cope with the demands of globalization, are seeking changes in their mandates to encompass the international dimension of their national duties and seeking relief from ‘policy rigidities’ that hamper their ability to finance Canada’s work on major international issues with domestic consequences. What Inga Kaul, and her team of editors, predict for how sectoral ministries will structure and finance their international activities should be taken as an indicator of the world for which you are preparing your students. I suggest it is a direction finder for teaching and research in the Canadian

universities.

These fundamental questions about the nature of 'official development assistance' require Canada to rethink its own theory and practice. Debate has begun on the need to rethink the very nature of human security¹⁶. Canada looks to its universities for innovative Knowledge-based partnerships that respond to the challenges of globalization. Canada stands to gain a comparative advantage if it seizes opportunities to propose and test new arrangements for intellectual and research partnerships with Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. Let us also recognize that researchers in these regions need opportunities to assess the merits of closer and long-term relationships with their Canadian counterparts.

For its part over the last few years IDRC has responded to this

change in the context for international cooperation by experimenting with new collaborative arrangements with Canadian universities.

IDRC contributed to the endowments to establish two chairs, the Chair of South North Studies at UBC, and a Chair in the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences at the University of Laval (not yet named but specializing in research for agribusiness) and a fund that supports the annual David Hopper Lecture in International Development at the University of Guelph. IDRC 'opened' the Canadian Window award to support the doctoral field work of a Canadian graduate student doing research that bridged national and international preoccupations. IDRC has just completed the first round of a joint venture with the SSHRC, the *Canada in the World Research Grants*, building on the Standard Research Grants and the Post Doctoral Fellowships. After further

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discussion with the SSHRC this joint venture will be adjusted to align with SSHRC's two New Themes in the Strategic Grants Program: *Challenges and Opportunities of a Knowledge-based Economy*; and, *Exploring Social Cohesion in a Globalizing Era*.

IDRC is following with interest the development of the Canadian Institute for Health Research and has noted in particular Henry Friesen's suggestion that this initiative will 'modernize health sciences research in Canada'. I suggest that the Canada Research Chairs offer an opportunity to 'modernize' many domains of research in Canada when more attention is given to the impacts and challenges of globalization.

The Canada Research Chairs provides the opportunity and the funding for the Canadian university community to make a major, self-directed, reconnection with the world—a world that includes

the developing regions.

Based on 30 years of supporting knowledge creation in the developing regions of the world, IDRC has the contacts, the trust and the models for knowledge collaborations that others now see as required to achieve a new dimension in international cooperation. These are Canadian assets available to anyone of good will seeking to improve the lives of people at home and abroad. IDRC is well placed to work with universities who are ready to allocate some of the new resources that are now flowing their way to the problems that increasingly link Canada with the larger challenges and problems of global interdependence.

To form these collaborations IDRC will look for the following traits:

Programs of research and teaching that include the problems and

perspectives of the developing regions—especially when these tackle mutual problems;

An institutional commitment to allocate university controlled resources to global issues with special reference to the most disadvantaged countries;

The establishment of research networks that offer researchers in Africa, Asia and Latin America partnership in an enriched research environment that enables them to advance their careers while remaining, if they so choose, to stay close to the people they want to serve;

Evidence that young Canadian academics devoting careers to international collaboration have their work valued when it comes to tenure and other aspects of promotion and advancement; and,

Research that accepts participatory and multidisciplinary methods and which seeks to involve everyone with a connection to a problem in the search for a solution—the people most affected on a day to day basis and the public sector managers and political leaders whose understanding and support can block or initiate change.

CONCLUSION

An opportunity for Ryerson?

When I accepted to speak to you today I went looking for Ryerson's mission statement to see what it had to say about internationalization. I didn't find it: but I learned that with the move from *Ryerson International* to a new *Office of International Affairs*, Ryerson is actively engaged in rethinking the international

dimension of its work and that inclusiveness, networking, faculty and student exchanges have come to the fore as the preferred modus operandi. Those of us who have watched the evolution of Ryerson from a well respected polytechnic institute to a full status university have been aware of the challenges you faced to create a knowledge space which combines your applied professional technical orientation, for which you have a well deserved reputation, with the liberal arts that mark your transition to a university. Ryerson's approach to "Scholarly Research and Creative Activity" is not a compromise but a robust alternative for how teaching might be better done in a world too ready to polarise the technical and the humane studies.

To conclude I'm going to quote from a book that IDRC, CIDA and AUCC published last year---Ryerson's Jane Knight contributed one of the Chapters. I cannot pass up an opportunity to do a

commercial for 'A New World of Knowledge: Canadian universities and Globalization and I cannot find a better summary of what faces your institution today.

"Canadian universities are experiencing ...forces of change, at times involuntarily, and like all other institutions they are working hard to equip themselves to master their ongoing restructuring... Canadian universities still possess real assets: their variety, flexibility, and openness to the world (not just to certain regions); their sense of initiative and organization and their devotion to public service; and their concern for equality, particularly when it comes to access. For any one who views higher education as an essential instrument of the wealth and culture of a country, these assets are convincing arguments that the time has come for important and innovative change. With and only with such change can we hope to simultaneously sustain the outreach of our

universities, increase our capacity to create innovations in research and development that are relevant to those in need, actively promote a successful pedagogy, and show a way to a humane appropriation of information technologies. Achieving these goals will be necessary to ensuring strong intellectual leadership in Canada for the world of tomorrow, when knowledge will be the source of both wealth and global citizenship.”¹⁷

Ryerson occupies an important and rather ‘niche’ position in the Canadian university community given your polytechnic orientation and the unique blending of arts and science with craft and technology. And you are rethinking the international dimension of your mission at a time when an open and collaborative approach to making and sharing knowledge is more critical than ever both for Canadians and the developing regions of the world. Use the opportunity offered by the new Canada Research Chairs to match

your unique approach to Scholarly Research and Creative Activity to the challenges of international cooperation and provide the Canadian university community with a new model and standard for reconnecting the Canadian university with the world.

Thank you for listening.

ENDNOTES

1. Gordon Smith, Chair of IDRC Board of Governors, in an article in *Time*, November 17, 1997, p. 39.
2. One could also mention the books published over the last coil of year that have diagnosed the state of health of the Canadian university. *The University in Ruins*. B. Reading. Harvard University Press. 1999. and, *The Petrified Campus: the crisis in Canada's universities*. Bercuson, D., Bothwell R., and Granatstein, J. I.. Random House. 1997..
3. A point of No Return: The Urgent Need for Infrastructure Renewal at Canadian Universities. Canadian Association of University Business Officers. 2000
4. High-tech chiefs join fight to save liberal arts: new economy requires 'broadly educated' decision makers. *Ottawa Citizen*, April 8, 2000.
5. The Kept University. *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 2000
6. Revitalizing universities through faculty renewal. Leanne Elliott. AUCC's 'Research', March 2000.
7. Progress and Promise: The 2000 AUCC report on Internationalization at Canadian Universities. Jane Knight. Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. 2000
8. 'Minister Manley Appoints Chair of Canada Research Chairs Program Steering Committee'. Industry Canada News Release. April 27, 2000.
9. Howard Clark, *Formal Knowledge Networks: A Study of the Canadian Experience*. IISD, 1998.
10. Janice Gros Stein, Richard Stren, *Networks of Knowledge: Development Experiences in the University Setting*, 1999 (mimeo and being reviewed for publication).
11. Anne K. Bernard, *IDRC Networks: An Ethnographic Perspective*, IDRC, 1996.
12. Canada 2005: Global Challenges and Opportunities: Report of the ADM Sub-Committee, Draft Interim Report, February 25, 1997 (P2). <<http://policyresearch.schoolnet.ca/keydocs/global/index-e.htm>>
13. Canada in the World, Government Statement. 1995. p4 <<http://www.dfa-it-mae.ci.gc.ca/english/foreign/cnd-world/menu.html>>
14. Connecting With the World: Priorities for Canadian Internationalism in the 21st Century: A Report by the International Development Research and Policy Task Force, Maurice Strong, Chairman, November 1995. <<http://www.idrc.ca/strong/index.html>>
15. In, *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*, Inga Kaul et al (ed) UNDP and Oxford, 1999.

16. 'The concept [of human security] establishes a new standard for judging the success or failure of international security policies--namely, the ability to protect people, not just to safeguard states. It may even require protecting people from states. It considers both military and non-military threats to safety and well-being; and it points to human rights, democracy and human development as key building blocks to security. More profoundly, it recognizes that no country is immune from and none is able alone to meet the challenges of globalization' Paul Heinbecker, Human Security, remarks for an address given to a Canada-US conference in Ottawa on 'Global Reach: Influencing the World in Different Ways, organized by the Canadian Institute for International Affairs. October 17, 1998.

17. A new World of Knowledge: Canadian universities and Globalization. Sheryl S. Bond and Jean-Pierre Lemasson (eds). IDRC Books. 1999. pp 264.