

The internationalization of the campus

There are signs of it all over the world.

Japan has set a goal of 100 000 foreign students by the year 2000. Australia has called for a conference on the future of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region. In the United States, under the National Security Act, \$160 million has been appropriated to help fund international education.

But what exactly is the "internationalization of the campus" and what are its potential benefits for and threats to Canada?

Eva Egron-Polak is the director of the International Division of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

"There is no simple, unique or all-encompassing definition of the phrase internationalization of the campus," says Ms. Egron-Polak. "It is a multitude of activities that have as a goal the provision of both an educational experience and educational environment for students that bring in the global perspective, issues and opportunities."

She says that ideally it would involve changing everything from curriculum to reading lists to fields of research.

"For example, do we read only North American books or do we read books from Latin America, China and Europe in courses that are not specifically about Latin America, China or Europe. For example, in the pure sciences or political science do we look at the literature on the topic from all possible sources?"

Ms. Egron-Polak did her Master's thesis on the topic of the European Community's approach to higher education. She says the Europeans have an integration process in mind based on the belief that this is the only way to promote competitiveness and appropriate skills development.

"The European Community was first and foremost an economic common market. But very quickly the

Europeans realized that in order to build a common European market you have to create or enhance a sense of Europeanism in the people. They went from economic to social and cultural goals, even though, at first, they felt these social and cultural goals were outside the parameters of the economic treaties that guided the whole system."

The desire for increased competitiveness lead to the creation of such educational programs as ERASMUS and COMET. This despite the fact that education was not part of the original domain of the Treaty of Rome which created the European Economic Community.

Ms. Egron-Polak sees a parallel with Canada in this regard.

"The parallel with Canada is there because our constitution leaves education at the provincial level just as the Treaty of Rome left education at the national level. But there can be conditions that promote a co-ordinated approach to education on the international level."

She sees Canada as occupying a unique space both geographically and conceptually.

"First, geographically we happen to sit at a place that allows us to talk as a Pacific Rim country, as a member of the Organization of American States, a Commonwealth country, a member of the Francophonie and we

also would like a privileged relationship with Europe."

This position carries with it a strong need for Canada to set its priorities in the area of the internationalization of the campus, says Ms. Egron-Polak.

"The challenge is to come to terms with the fact that we cannot disregard the pushes and pulls of internationalization. We cannot afford to disregard them and yet we have such a difficult time designing strategies that are consistent with both our resources and objectives. There is nothing worse than having a broad and far-reaching strategy and then having no resources to carry it out. It is much better to have a small and focused strategy that has the resources to back it up."

She also sees a strong negative incentive to formulate such a plan of action.

"The incentive to get our act together is the negative effects of failing to get it together. An important quote is, 'If you think co-operation in international higher education is expensive, just think of the cost of isolation.' Canada is not large enough to do it alone in many areas of research. We cannot afford it and we need the interaction so necessary to creative research. You don't get that by sitting in an isolated country. You get it by being a fully integrated partner in international networks."

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CULTURE

Founded last August in Venice, the World Arts Forum is the brain-child of Klaus Shwab, the same man responsible for the World Economic Forum and its annual world competitiveness report.

Harry Hillman Chartrand, an Ottawa-based economist specializing in cultural economics, recently travelled to Davos, Switzerland to present his proposals for an annual global report on the arts.

Mr. Chartrand is proposing that the annual report on the arts use hard economic statistics — some compiled especially for it, others derived from existing statistical series — in conjunction with essays from the world's leading artists, impresarios and policy makers.