

*The Political Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

- The *Workforce for the Future* study recommends that the FS streams be merged to create a “consolidated FS group that draws on the best of the culture and skillsets we have developed”. In the study, George Haynal argues that, “In the new global environment, the basic tasks for both political and trade officers are close enough that the same kinds of people should deliver them (and) we should ... let the internal ‘market’ sort out which particular jobs line officers do at different stages of their careers.” Streams also limit careers and mobility, and “compartmentalize our talent pool dysfunctionally”.

PROPOSAL: In future, the core of the department should be “globalist” foreign service officers, with a basic grounding in the several dimensions of global affairs (politics, culture, technology, finance, national security and ecology), superior policy development capabilities, and the ability to function effectively almost anywhere in the world.

PROPOSAL: In support of the “globalist” concept, the department should eliminate barriers to mobility and acquisition of experience by:

- *combining all officers (political/economic, trade, consular and administrative) in a single rotational “stream”,*
- *letting “the internal ‘market’ sort out which particular jobs line officers do at different stages of their careers”, and*
- *restricting non-rotational and/or contract employees to specializations in emerging or technically complex issues and to headquarters-specific tasks.*

PROPOSAL: The department should reorient its hiring practices towards recruiting individuals with the potential to become “globalists”, accentuating intelligence and flexibility rather than specific knowledge or experience.

PROPOSAL: The department should accelerate the development of “second generation” training programs at CFSI to enhance “globalist” skills such as the management of complex issues.

Personnel Management

The department is implementing a human resources strategy to address issues which have long been a source of concern: leadership, career management, learning, human resources services, locally-engaged staff, and workplace issues. It is also tackling the problem of the shortage of foreign service officers and the proliferation of contract employees doing FS work, in addition to preparing for the introduction of the government-wide Universal Classification System. These are difficult issues made more difficult still by the impact which globalization is having on the work of the department and its personnel.