

Job experience, travel attracts students to York club.

by Nicole Lalsingh

Monica Hvidsten decided that Canada would be a good place to experience a different lifestyle. Through the work of AIESEC, it was made possible.

AIESEC, the French acronym for the International Association of Students in Economics and Commerce, gives students worldwide the opportunity to work temporarily in another country.

Presently, Hvidsten is working at Weston Bakeries on Dupont St. where she is doing clerical work such as keying in customers' orders and monitoring inventory. It's not directly related to the field that she studied but she's gaining valuable experience as a member of the work force.

"The job is not very interesting," she admitted, "but I didn't



come here only for the job." She is enjoying the other aspects of living abroad; a different environment and living among Canadians, whom she finds friendly and helpful.

Originally from Oslo, Norway, she spent the last four years in Bergen, where she attended a business school. She graduated

in general economics and business administration. Hvidsten is not a member of AIESEC. In some countries, including Norway (and not including Canada), a student does not have to be a member in order to benefit from what AIESEC has to offer.

At her school, there was a student association consisting of

many organizations and clubs which every student had to join. Hvidsten belonged to an organization that encourages companies to employ students after they graduate. When she returns home, she will start a job in the consulting department at Arthur Anderson, an American accounting and consulting firm.

Hvidsten's traineeship will last four months; she arrived in August and returns to Norway in mid-December. Traineeship can last anywhere from 8 weeks and 18 months.

AIESEC was founded in Sweden in 1948 by a small group of European students. The number of members has risen to over 45,000 students worldwide, making AIESEC the world's largest non-political, non-profit student organization. It has members in 69 countries, including Canada, which is represented by students from 38 universities, including York.

The organization has many objectives: to provide students with business experience, to promote international understanding and co-operation and to help develop management skills among students. This is accomplished through the International Job Exchange Programme. This programme uses a highly sophisticated computer network which links the countries and universities so they can communicate in the best possible way. There are always other universities wanting to become involved, the most recent being in Mexico, Singapore and Japan. The system connects a student to the country most suited to the information that he or she has submitted on the application form. The form includes the following topics: job experience, hobbies, proficiency in a second language, academic success and countries the student likes and dislikes.

Also, the AIESEC Development Assistance Programme for Trainees (ADAPT) is now in existence. It's a joint agreement between AIESEC and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) which subsidizes the travelling expenses for those students going to the developing countries. Its main purpose is to develop international relations between Canada and the developing countries in the world. Many students prefer to go to a big city where there's a lot to do, but it is just as rewarding to live in a different environment.

Much of AIESEC's success is due to the sponsorship from business companies and corporations who provide funds for the organization and jobs for the students. Bell Canada, Alcan Aluminum, Northern Telecom and John Labatt Ltd. are just some of them.

Every year the association's annual meeting, known as the International Congress, takes place in a different country. Next year, it will be in Strasbourg, France.

Barry Coutts, president of AIESEC-York, said that most of the Canadian students who have travelled abroad find it a very worthwhile experience and that many times it's different from what they expected. Communication is usually not a problem because student often come across fellow employees who speak English very well. He added that the experience can help develop a person's character, and if you are still an undergraduate, it helps you plan your university direction.

"Two problems that AIESEC-York face are underfunding and low membership," said Barry. "Due to low membership, the fund-raising projects aren't very large, which means less resources but I hope in time that the number of members will grow substantially."

York University Exchange Programmes

Information Sessions

University of Copenhagen, Denmark:

November 15, 1989, 2 p.m.

212 Stong College

Konstanz University, West Germany:

November 15, 1989, 3 p.m.

212 Stong College

Umea University, Sweden:

November 15, 1989, 4 p.m.

S136A Ross

University of York, England:

November 15, 1989, 5 p.m.

S136A Ross

University of Calabria, Italy:

November 13, 1989, 1 p.m.

Career and Placement Centre N108 Ross

These sessions are hosted by the Office of Student Affairs,
Foreign Student Counsellor, 124 Central Square, 736-5144.

