

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION**Executive Summary****North American Higher Education Cooperation:
an Inventory of U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico
Academic Linkages**

In September 1992, a conference on North American Higher Education Cooperation was organized by governmental and educational authorities from Mexico, Canada, and the United States at Wingspread. Attendees agreed that basic information was needed on existing academic linkages to provide accurate, current and comprehensive baseline data to assist a newly formed trilateral Task Force in the development of a strategic action plan. USIA's Office of Academic Programs asked the Institute of International Education (IIE) to conduct an inventory of U.S. colleges and universities, with parallel surveys to be conducted in Canada by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and in Mexico by the Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior (ANUIES). A detailed questionnaire was sent by the IIE in early 1993 to the heads of 3,444 accredited colleges and universities in the United States for distribution to the appropriate departments in their institutions for reply. A total of 1,219 responses were received. Of these, 109 reported linkages with Canadian institutions and 182 listed Mexican linkages; 56 of these institutions reported linkages with both Canada and Mexico. An additional 43 U.S. colleges and universities that do not have linkages now expressed strong interest in developing contacts with Canadian and Mexican institutions.

The report of that inventory, summarized here, describes the variety of bilateral linkages which have been developed by U.S. institutions with Canadian and Mexican colleagues in a wide range of fields. Appendices to the report list the institutional partners and fields involved. A number of intriguing "model" programs are reported, along with a summary of major sources of funding for linkage programs in North America. The report describes the considerable enthusiasm expressed by respondents eager to expand such linkages, and the benefits accruing to individual participants and institutions involved. The report also notes the obstacles respondents identified in trying to establish or expand exchange links and their proposed solutions to such obstacles.

In reviewing the level of activity reflected in the inventories, it is important to take into account the uneven numbers of higher education institutions in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Canada has 89 universities and about 200 other institutions of higher education; Mexico has 148 universities and 644 other institutions of higher education; the U.S. has 3,600 accredited colleges and universities of which about 40% are two-year colleges. It is also important to view the