

CANADIAN EXPORT

Vol.12, No. 3

FEB 15 1994

February 15, 1994

A North American Perspective

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The Challenge of Global Competitiveness

As Canada assumes its position within a global, knowledge-based economy, it is in the country's interest that higher education institutions, government and the private sector forge stronger partnerships to support the international dimension of higher education, research and training.

To this end, trilateral initiatives began in September 1992 at the 'Wingspread' Conference Centre in Racine, Wisconsin, where 60 senior representatives of post-secondary institutions from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico gathered to discuss possibilities for North American cooperation in higher education, research and training.

Out of these discussions, the North American Task Force was formed: six representatives from each country from the private sector, foundations, universities, colleges and associations.

The task force developed an action plan and organized the International Symposium on Higher Education and Strategic Partnerships: The Challenge of Global Competitiveness from a North American Perspective (September 10-13, 1993, Vancouver).

The Vancouver symposium occurred at a time when the relationship among the three countries was undergoing profound change brought on by NAFTA, an electronics and information revo-

lution, and the development of knowledge-based economies on a global scale.

The Vancouver symposium was attended by 300 senior Canadian, Mexican and American representatives from business, higher education, foundations and governments. A strong consensus emerged, reflected in the Vancouver communiqué, identifying nine interrelated conclusions for quick implementation. Three conclusions of specific interest to the business community are:

- The establishment of a North American Distance Education and Research Network (NADERN); a consortium to facilitate access to information and support education, research and training among participating institutions.
- The formation of an enterprise/education trilateral mechanism to examine issues of mobility, portability and certification of skills and common interests and approaches in technical, applied and life-long career education.
- The establishment of a North American Corporate Higher Education Council comprised of senior

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Seminars Slated

Marketing to U.S. State Government

How to do business with U.S. state governments is the subject of an educational seminar being held March 7-8, 1994 in Huntington Beach, California.

Following last year's successful mission, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is coordinating another mission.

The event is sponsored by the U.S.A. National Association of State Purchasing Officials, in cooperation with *GOVERNING Magazine*.

The seminar will offer an in-depth perspective about the purchasing policies and proce-

dures of the 50 state governments, providing an insight into procurement opportunities for those interested in selling to these markets.

Provisions in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and developments in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) relating to government purchasing will also be addressed.

As well, one-on-one meetings with state representatives will be possible.

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