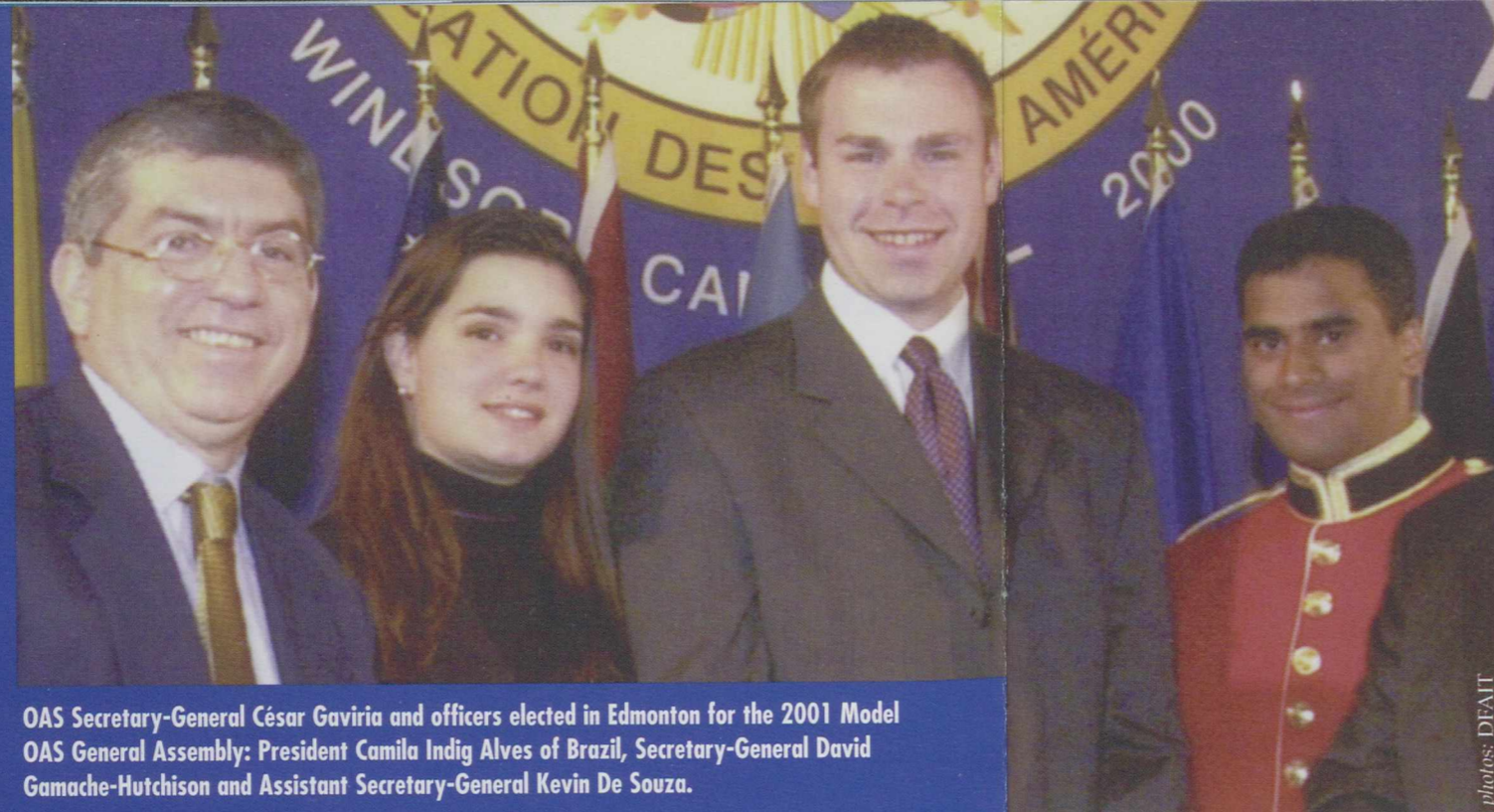


More than ever today, young Canadians are outward-looking. They travel the world, do internships abroad, study in foreign institutions, enrol in exchange programs, and participate in mock parliaments and international assemblies.



OAS Secretary-General César Gaviria and officers elected in Edmonton for the 2001 Model OAS General Assembly: President Camila Indig Alves of Brazil, Secretary-General David Gamache-Hutchison and Assistant Secretary-General Kevin De Souza.

photos: DFAIT

Youth in the Americas

Canadians make their mark

Model assemblies

Canadians currently have a high profile at the Model Organization of American States General Assembly (MOAS). For this mock parliament, students from 34 democracies in the Hemisphere form delegations, representing a country other than their own. They follow the rules and procedures of the OAS, tabling resolutions and debating issues.

The Model Assembly was set up two decades ago, and its annual sessions were held at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C. Last year, however, marked a fresh departure: member countries now take turns hosting the Assembly, and in 2000 the first turn was Canada's. The city of Edmonton welcomed the participants from all over

the Americas, and two young Canadians were elected to key positions.

David Gamache-Hutchison is a 24-year-old postgraduate student at the University of Alberta, working toward a master's degree in political science with a focus on Canadian foreign policy.

He headed the University of Alberta's delegation representing Mexico in the 2000 MOAS, and he was elected Secretary-General for the 2001 Assembly in Argentina.

David says it was a unique learning experience to promote and defend the international policies of another country, and "to see the world, and your own country, through the eyes of another nation." The process worked not only at the podium but in the hall. Seated in the Assembly beside the Canadians representing Mexico were Brazilians representing Canada. "It was interesting to hear a Brazilian interpretation of Canadian politics and foreign policy," says David, "and they were able to tap us for pointers on Canada's relationship with Mexico."

Encountering students from all over the Hemisphere was equally rewarding: "People from disparate backgrounds met and many friendships were made. I gained a great respect and admiration for the people of the Caribbean and Latin America."

David is proud to be the first Canadian to serve as MOAS Secretary-General, and proud as well to be on the team going from Canada and the University of Alberta to the 2001 MOAS in Argentina. He says, "I have been entrusted with a tremendous opportunity to help build communication, connectivity and co-operation among the young leaders of the Americas."

A 21-year-old naval cadet at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, **Kevin De Souza** was a member of the delegation representing Argentina in Edmonton. He'll get to see the real thing this year when he goes to Argentina to serve as Assistant Secretary-General for the 2001 MOAS. And with him he'll bring a fund of useful knowledge about the host country and the Hemisphere.

After the Edmonton Assembly, Kevin visited Central America to sharpen his Spanish. He lived with a Mayan family in Guatemala, and spent two weeks backpacking there and in El Salvador and Honduras. After his annual navy training, he worked as an intern at the Canadian Embassy in Buenos Aires.

The advantage of MOAS role-playing, he says "is that you get to view problems

and issues from a completely different perspective than what you had been used to. Until you walk a mile in someone's shoes you can never fully understand the challenges they face in their everyday lives."

Will the MOAS experience influence Kevin's career choices? "This has exposed me to a whole new world of international relations, particularly the relationship between North and South America. It has piqued my interest; we'll see where it leads."

DFAIT supports two other international mock parliaments:

- UN Model Assemblies annually bring together 3000 students from throughout the world. Last year, 225 Canadian students participated in the event at United Nations headquarters. They were welcomed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and met with then Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy and officials of the Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN.
- Québec-Europe is a simulation of the Parliament of the European Union, conducted in French and English. Launched in 1998, it alternates annually between Canada and Europe. Participating this year are students from 5 Quebec universities, the University of Ottawa and 15 European universities. DFAIT is the principal partner and funder, with other support coming from the Quebec National Assembly and the European Parliament.

Internships: path to success

At the start of 2001, a total of 76 young Canadians were on assignment on Americas-related issues in Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States under the Youth International Internship Program, or YIIP.

The experience is challenging and rewarding. Says YIIP manager Jennifer Barbarie, interns have the satisfaction of making a useful contribution—and more: "They have the opportunity to enhance their future employability, and improve their language skills and understanding of Latin culture."

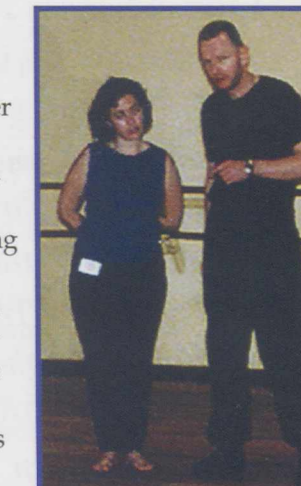
The interns are assigned to NGOs, governments, international organizations and companies across the spectrum of foreign affairs and international co-operation. Their tasks include work in education, legal support for human rights, drug control, tourism development and marine park management.

International internships are delivered by DFAIT, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the federal departments of Environment, Human Resources Development, Industry and Canadian Heritage.

For **Carolina Irigoyen**, a YIIP assignment has led straight to the career she had hoped for. As recently as 1999, she spent her days in a bank, processing reports on stolen credit cards. It paid the bills but hardly drew on Carolina's university training in fine arts and arts administration.

Carolina now manages three arts programs for ArtStarts, a non-profit organization that supports education in the visual and performing arts in British Columbia. This is a job she loves.

What gave her the breakthrough was an internship in arts administration in Mexico, with the Vancouver-based Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences. Carolina learned about the position from a newspaper ad, applied and was accepted. About the time she returned to Vancouver, ArtStarts asked the Institute to recommend someone with experience. The rest is history. ●



Carolina Irigoyen observes Guy Holland of Quicksilver Theatre, U.K., leading an actors' training workshop.

To see the world, and your own country, through the eyes of another nation—a unique learning experience

For more information on the Youth International Internship Program, visit: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/interns>