

Provincial university systems

The federal government, under the auspices of the Department of External Affairs, has signed technical and cultural agreements with a number of countries which call for the bilateral exchange of students and academic personnel. Also, a number of countries such as Venezuela and the People's Republic of China have made arrangements either through the Department of External Affairs or directly with the universities for the placing of students, researchers and scholars within Canadian institutions of higher learning. In addition to the above, individual Canadian universities have themselves arranged for links with institutions and agencies in developing and industrialized countries.

Canadian universities also participate in the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan by receiving a number of scholars from other Commonwealth countries each year. In turn, this multilateral plan enables Canadian scholars to study abroad.

Many of these exchange programs are administered on behalf of the federal government, by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, and by the World University Service of Canada. Each province has its own university system. While the institutions are largely financed by the public purse, they are autonomous in the areas of academic matters and internal fiscal management. About 80 per cent of their operating income is derived from government grants, the remainder being accounted for by student fees, research monies, private donations, and miscellaneous income.

A university system is generally composed of four elements, although every element may not necessarily be found in each provincial system. The first element consists of the individual institutions. The second is the collectivity of universities, that is the voluntary association of universities to deal with common concerns. Thirdly, all provinces, except Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, have either individually or, in the case of the maritime provinces, collectively established a "buffer body" as an intermediary between government and the universities. Conceived as instruments to maintain a balance between public accountability on the government side and institutional autonomy on the university side, these bodies normally have government-appointed members representing