

A black and white photograph of a globe. The top half of the globe shows a map of the United States with state names like 'KANSAS' and 'NEBRASKA' visible. The bottom half shows a map of the Caribbean region with country names like 'COSTA RICA' and 'NICARAGUA' visible. A dark horizontal band is superimposed over the middle of the globe, containing text.

The Universal in University

American colleges are attracting students from other countries in growing numbers. The two following articles examine the phenomenon.

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
GLOBE

OU'S FOUR HUNDRED

The world bordered by Boyd, Jenkins, Lindsey and Elm is larger than you may think: students from fifty countries offer American students a broad cultural perspective

By GENE RUSSELL

HAVE you ever heard of a university where the student body was given the opportunity to travel without cost to 50 countries of the world? This is the fortunate position of the student body at the University of Oklahoma, and the opportunity is made possible without even leaving the campus. The answer to the riddle lies in the fact that there are currently 400 international students enrolled at the University from 50 countries of the world. These students are eager to know America and are also eager for Americans to know their countries. This makes it possible for a student from Oklahoma City to walk down the main street of Bangkok or Beirut or to talk with an Egyptian about President Nasser or a Japanese student about Hiroshima. The resulting cross-cultural exchange of ideas is what puts the "universal" in university. Whether chatting over a cup of coffee or visiting during an International Club meeting, American students are privileged to share ideas with people of other lands. Of course this can sometimes be quite painful, as when a Panamanian student argues for the right of Panama to joint operation of the canal. This causes students to consider more than just one alternative and often results in a careful study of many aspects of important problems which might otherwise be ignored.

There are many reasons why international students are attracted to the United States. Traditionally students have traveled to foreign lands seeking the adventure in learning. These motives still predominate, but in addition many institutions, companies and governments sponsor international students in the United States. For example, fully one-half of the international students at OU are studying engineering. However, it is encouraging to note that large numbers of international students study in the humanities and social and political sciences.

It is commonly believed that inter-

national students invariably come from rich, upper-class families. This is becoming less and less true, partly because of rapidly expanding U.S. and home country scholarships and in part because work opportunities for international students in the United States. The federal government alone sponsors 15 percent of all international students in this country, and home governments sponsor another five percent. This leaves the bulk of our international students on their own. Interested persons in the U.S. and home countries provide some assistance, as do foundations, business concerns and other groups. However, the bulk of support must come from parents and part-time work during the school year and full-time work during the summer. It is a rare international student indeed who receives his entire support from home, even if he comes from an upper-class family, since the cost of living in the United States is higher than in most countries, and the home country currency suffers when it is exchanged for dollars. There is a little noted advantage to the United States regarding financing of international students. During the 1962-63 school year international students spent over \$125 million here of which \$75 million was forwarded to the United States from foreign countries. Federal government sponsorship of international students totaled \$20 million during this period. International students in Oklahoma alone contribute over \$2 million a year to the economy of the state. One can readily see that the exchange student program is not by any means to be considered strictly as foreign aid. In fact, only about one-half of one percent of the foreign aid program is directed toward the exchange student movement.

One would like to think that the primary advantage of having international students on a campus is the opportunity for these students to attain

their personal goals and indirectly to give the U.S. students a chance to broaden their knowledge of the world through first-hand interaction with international students. The home countries also receive many advantages. The training provided international students is perhaps of more long-term assistance than any other form of aid since it helps form the necessary base for developing countries to become self-sustaining. There are also potential long-term benefits since many of the students will be leaders of their countries in the future.

At OU we are fortunate to have an International Students Hospitality Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. George L. Cross. This committee is composed of about 70 Norman families who are assigned an international student for a full school year. The student is included in regular family activities on an average of once a month. In addition, the committee sponsors an activity once each semester for all the international students on campus. This informal approach which stresses the cultivation of friendships in depth has been found to be much more effective than occasional mass meetings such as teas and coffees. Since international students are in a strange environment, it naturally takes them awhile to warm up, and continued association with the same family with no effort at fanfare makes for a more lasting and fruitful relationship.

Along this same line, it is very flattering to international students when Americans participate in activities organized by the international students themselves. At OU there are eight international area student clubs: Pakistani Students Association, Arab Club, Indian Students Association, Iranian Students Association, Chinese Students Association, Spanish Club, Korean Students Association and Union of African Students. Their

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Moti Khemlani, Lucknow, India



Lisa Kim, Andong, South Korea



Luigi Lisi, Perugia, Italy



Sumitra Suwannabha, Bangkok, Thailand



Godfrey Ekweme, Oke, Nigeria



Farideh Fozoonmayeh, Tehran, Iran



Michel Dallal, Saudi Arabia



Henry Chao, Taipei, Formosa



Dora Rincon, Choconta, Colombia

Although these nine of OU's Four Hundred represent a diversity of countries and cultures, they, like most foreign students, have several things in common: They are bright, serious students with high academic achievements. They speak fluent English. They have

adjusted, not without difficulty in some instances, to American ways and, in particular, to our exotic, hamburgerish food habits. Well informed about American and world affairs, they are eager for and responsive to contact with Americans and with one another.

PHOTOS BY JOHN CRELLEY

PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

What are the goals and purposes of the educational interchange in our universities?

By FORREST MOORE

FOREIGN ALUMNI are now being generated by American colleges and universities at the rate of about 15,000 annually. Those who finish their studies this June will represent approximately one fourth of all the foreign students registered. The present enrollment of foreign students, some 64,000, is five times the pre-World War II figure; and the national trend points to 125,000 or more in our institutions of higher education by 1970. This development, along with the migration of our students abroad, is one of the important new dimensions in American higher education.

Despite this sizable number of foreign students in the United States, their proportion to our total student enrollment remains small—in 1963, only 1.6 percent. In Western Europe, the percentage of foreign students in universities is already 20 percent and is still climbing. True, some of our universities are moving toward this figure; in 1963, 17 percent of Howard University's students, 13 percent of M.I.T.'s, and 9 percent of Harvard's were foreign. It should be noted, in passing, that the traffic in students moves not only one way. Last year, American students—some 16,000 in all—were scattered through 411 institutions in 60 countries.

What are the goals and purposes of the educational interchange? This depends on whether one takes the viewpoint of the government, of the educational institution, or of the individual. The U.S. government, in its promotion of interchange programs, stresses the importance of strengthening bonds of international understanding. The foreign country is looking for means to educate, since it needs an almost unlimited number of trained men and has limited or inadequate educational facilities. The educational institution is looking for high-quality

students, whether they come from Minnesota or Mozambique, and expects its training of scholars will serve the general welfare of people both at home and in other countries. The student's goals may be national; normally he is committed to building up or improving his own country. But they may also be personal—to make a living, to escape from a difficult situation in his own country, or simply to learn more than he already knows. These goals are, of course, not mutually exclusive; the individual and the institution may share some of them and often do. But, shared or not, they must all be taken into account in deciding who should be educated and for what purpose.

There is always a question of whether or not this flow of ideas between either countries or individuals increases understanding between them, and whether or not this, in turn results in liking for one another. But it is also relevant to ask whether mutuality of emotional feeling matters. A foreigner's understanding of us should lead him to a proper assessment of our goals, our motives, and our likely behavior; this in turn should lead him to deal realistically with us. At this point in history, perhaps we should be less concerned about whether we are liked and more concerned that people of other countries understand what we mean, so that we minimize the risk that they will incorrectly estimate our intentions. While we would like to be understood, even to be loved, we should perhaps be satisfied to be realistically appraised.

For the individual, there may be real questions about the results of the cross-cultural experience. It may make him dissatisfied with being a citizen of one country, and disposed to becoming a citizen of the world. A world-citizen has been described as be-

ing: (1) a professional whose ideas encompass more than a single system of education or a single professional field; (2) a bilingual person whose native language depends on where he is located and to whom he speaks; (3) a citizen of the world affected only by decisions that have to do with internationality; and (4) a person whose human relationships are limited only by the extent of the family of man. When students from differing cultures come to a new land, obviously there are problems involved for both the individual who comes and the family he often leaves behind; for both the personnel that staff the university he joins and the community in which it is located.

We now have rather good evidence that what happens is sometimes shocking, that while the path to a successful educational experience in the United States looks and sounds deceptively easy, for many foreign students it is surprisingly difficult. Some would have us believe that the entire interchange effort should be abandoned, that as high as 50 percent of our foreign students return home disliking America and its inhabitants. Yet the failure rate of foreign students as gauged by academic criteria is low, 10 to 15 percent at most, and on the really important questions—Are you satisfied with your training here? Do you feel your training will lead to a better job? Were you accorded fair treatment in the college you attended and in the community where you lived?—all measurements we have yet devised show a high level of satisfaction among 70 to 80 percent of those queried.

When we consider that undergraduate degrees require four or five years and graduate degrees at least as long, the miracle is that so many foreign students carry through with their

plans, and that, once having arrived here, they have the fortitude to complete the degree. Often they are lonely, no matter how friendly the surroundings. Often they are discouraged, as is every student who faces hardworking and brilliant competitors. And often they are anxious and ill at ease, no matter how long or intense their U.S. experience. Add the difficulties that a strange language brings and the idiosyncrasies of a new educational system, and you marvel at these modern-day explorers. It is one thing to read and speak a second language for everyday usage; it is quite another task to compete for marks with native-born Americans schooled in use of the language since infancy, untroubled by the need to translate and then retranslate the unfamiliar word or phrase—and all this at a pace that leads one to believe that the instructor must think each new day is his last.

Then there is the shock of facing the really puzzling realities of another culture, a culture where it appears to the foreign student that measuring time is more important than understanding them, and where taking action seems more important than deciding whether the action is appropriate. Anthropologists refer to this as culture shock. The cues to behavior, those elements of the environment which surround us with so comfortable a sense of well-being because we know what we are doing, are suddenly replaced by nagging doubts that no one can fully understand unless he has himself experienced them.

Just as the foreign student is about to conquer and control these symptoms of his mind's reaction to the new and unfamiliar, he faces them all over again in new form as he prepares to return home. Now he finds that he is overtrained, that in his own country there is neither the equipment to do the job nor the need to have the job done with such careful precision at such heavy expense. He learns that the problems of the host country were not really the same as those of his own and that he must make major concessions in adapting his plans for revolutionizing an industry or changing a teaching method.

For the educational institution the acceptance of the foreign student poses other problems. Shall the overseas student be given special atten-

tion? How do we balance our allocation of resources as we attempt to serve students from our own country and our own area and at the same time respond to the importunity of individuals and agencies who want our aid in educating the world? Do we accept students from other countries on the basis of an agreed-upon plan—for example, from a single area of the world in order to increase our proficiency? Do we give attention to training foreign students in selected fields only? In the United States, the autonomy of educational institutions requires that cooperation in this kind of management be attained only by voluntary agreements. Thus, at the moment, our educational institutions are often competing with one another in the same fields and for nationals of the same countries.

Government and private agencies alike seek to use the educational institutions to accomplish their own aims. When these aims are consistent with university aims, no problem arises. State educational institutions in particular may find it difficult to convince their constituents that new concepts of the limits of service and responsibility need to be accepted, that universities may best serve their local interests by performing national and international service. Is it possible that our conception of service and of the importance of the welfare of all mankind can become broad enough to lead us to accept all those who are qualified to receive training in our institutions without concern for whether they finally perform their work in the United States, in their home countries, or in any country of the community of free nations?

If, as is frequently the case, the more spectacular products of the interchange of persons are quietly overlooked, then it is easy to understand why the many small but significant changes in outlook and methods escape attention. There also are improvements in the effectiveness of educational interchanges to be found on a number of campuses and in a number of communities across our country. For example, American students are making serious efforts to overcome their inability to communicate at an effective level with their more politicized foreign student counterparts. This is being done through formal and

informal seminars in which selected American students, beginning as freshmen, study more intensively their own culture, then the process and problems of cross-cultural education, and finally an area of the world, familiarizing themselves with the problems of student life and the leadership provided by the students there.

As a resource for teaching, the foreign student is being used in an ever-increasing circle of planned programs. These programs involve high-ability high school students interested in the social sciences and provide realism for their classroom and extra-curricular experience. When an African student from Northern Rhodesia or Uganda talks about the political future of his country, it is likely to have more impact than when an American does it.

At the level of human relationships and social action, some persons have found it possible—often for the first time—to accept as inconsequential the differences between individuals as accentuated by foreignness, and eventually to move toward an affirmation of the importance of our likenesses irrespective of race, color, or creed. There seems little doubt that a substantial share of our concern for racial injustices, and of the urgency which goads us to solve the problem, stems from the reaction of our foreign students to our practices of discrimination—practices that are sometimes imposed on these guests from overseas.

Looking ahead into the 1970's one can be sure that the interchange of students will bring its share of innovations and surprises. The report of the Committee on the University and World Affairs, issued in 1960, saw these changes taking place in four broad general areas:

1. Curricula will change so that American students will be educated more and more in courses based on knowledge from worldwide traditions of history and culture.
2. Numbers of foreign students in higher education in the United States will so increase that few American students will be likely to miss the personal experience of working and living with them.
3. Faculty members of U.S. uni-

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Problems and Potential

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versities will spend a sizable portion of their teaching careers in service overseas or in training those who will see service in other lands—Americans going abroad or foreign students studying in the United States.

4. Business executives, the military, professional men, and the community at large—through travel, through local contracts, and in the performance of their normal duties—will spend a larger proportion of their time dealing with problems that call for knowledge and skill in world affairs.

Graduates of universities are already involved in changing their viewpoint from a local and regional one to one that is national and international in scope. In the realm of curriculum changes, for example, the University of California is now operating four overseas centers where its students may, under the guidance of selected faculty members from California and the cooperating university, receive instruction that will make them bilingual, bicultural, and probably multinational. (*Multi-national*, since it appears that the cross-cultural experience, when successfully undertaken, stresses elements of commonality to the extent that the knowledge gained has transfer value when the recipient moves to a new and different culture.)

Thus, it may not be too preposterous to envisage the day when the presence of the foreign student on every campus is commonplace; when every student spends at least one year of his four-to-six-year college career in an international institution; when the student will receive not a degree from Harvard, the University of Paris, or Bombay, but a certificate of professional accomplishment issued by a certifying body acceptable to all member universities in whatever country.

Assuming these ideas have validity, what can and should be done to implement them, and how do those of us interested in higher education direct this transformation instead of being overwhelmed by it? Some possible patterns of cooperative action are already emerging. Groups of universi-

ties in the United States have banded together to provide mutually agreed-upon concentrations of strength in each of the several institutions which can be used for the benefit of students in all the institutions of the group. Consortia of colleges and universities are being established to meet the demands and requirements of the educational development of an entire nation or continent.

The several problems we face as we move into this exciting period of development include the need to counter the little red schoolhouse mentality, lay to rest the myth that bigness necessarily means lack of personal attention or lack of quality, and convince the public that the product will be worth what it costs in tax dollars.

Just as the little red schoolhouse became a sacred cow to be preserved at all costs when educational leaders sought to consolidate school districts in order to upgrade the level of education, so may well-meaning but uninformed faculty, students, and alumni rally to guard institutional autonomy and excellence against those who would suggest that University "X" should specialize in work with foreign students from nation "Y" in fields A, B, and C. Yet it is clear that if we are to avoid widespread mediocrity in the interchange effort exactly these kinds of choices will need to be made. And deciding to allocate and share responsibility commits us to the concentration of power and to the numbers of students that we instinctively reject.

The costs of internationalizing education are high; yet we cannot afford not to meet those costs. At every level of the educational ladder we must train students who know their own educational system and cultural heritage and its strengths and weaknesses; students whose educational background includes the study of anthropology and of comparative education, and who cultivate the skill to make relevant comparisons among systems and have the courage to take the actions needed in the light of the comparisons made. Whether the money comes from private, local, state, or federal sources is really of little consequence. Federal initiative certainly seems proper, since whether curriculum will be internationalized is not a decision that local or state authorities should make for their city or area.

(How the task is to be done is their decision.) And, since our educational relationships, as visualized here, extend beyond the borders of the United States and the national interest is at stake, the Federal government must expect to underwrite the basic cost of the job.

One would hope that the far-flung alumni of American educational institutions would take a major role in seeing that these goals are accepted and implemented, for among their numbers in every country are legislators, heads of governments, college presidents, and executives of corporations. Their business associates, their friends, and their families are international and intercultural in character and the international dimension is ever-present in their lives. Let us hope they are now ready to assume leadership in pressing for an international dimension in education everywhere.

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OU's Four Hundred

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programs are interesting and informative. American students and townspeople are always welcome at the meetings. IS feel that anyone interested enough to attend one of their meetings is someone really special. IS typically respond warmly to sincere interests but see very quickly through efforts to exploit them. They are particularly shy about being put on display, by being asked to perform or to appear in their "native costume." They also resent interest which is motivated by a desire to "help those poor people." Those who are accepted most readily by IS are persons who befriend them just for the joy and satisfaction of associating with others. Interest does not have to be motivated by humanitarianism, interest in international understanding or other lofty purposes. In short, if you like stimulating conversation, crisp discussion—even argument—and wish to get a well-balanced view of the people of our world and what they believe in, then we'll see you at International Club meeting Friday night.

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