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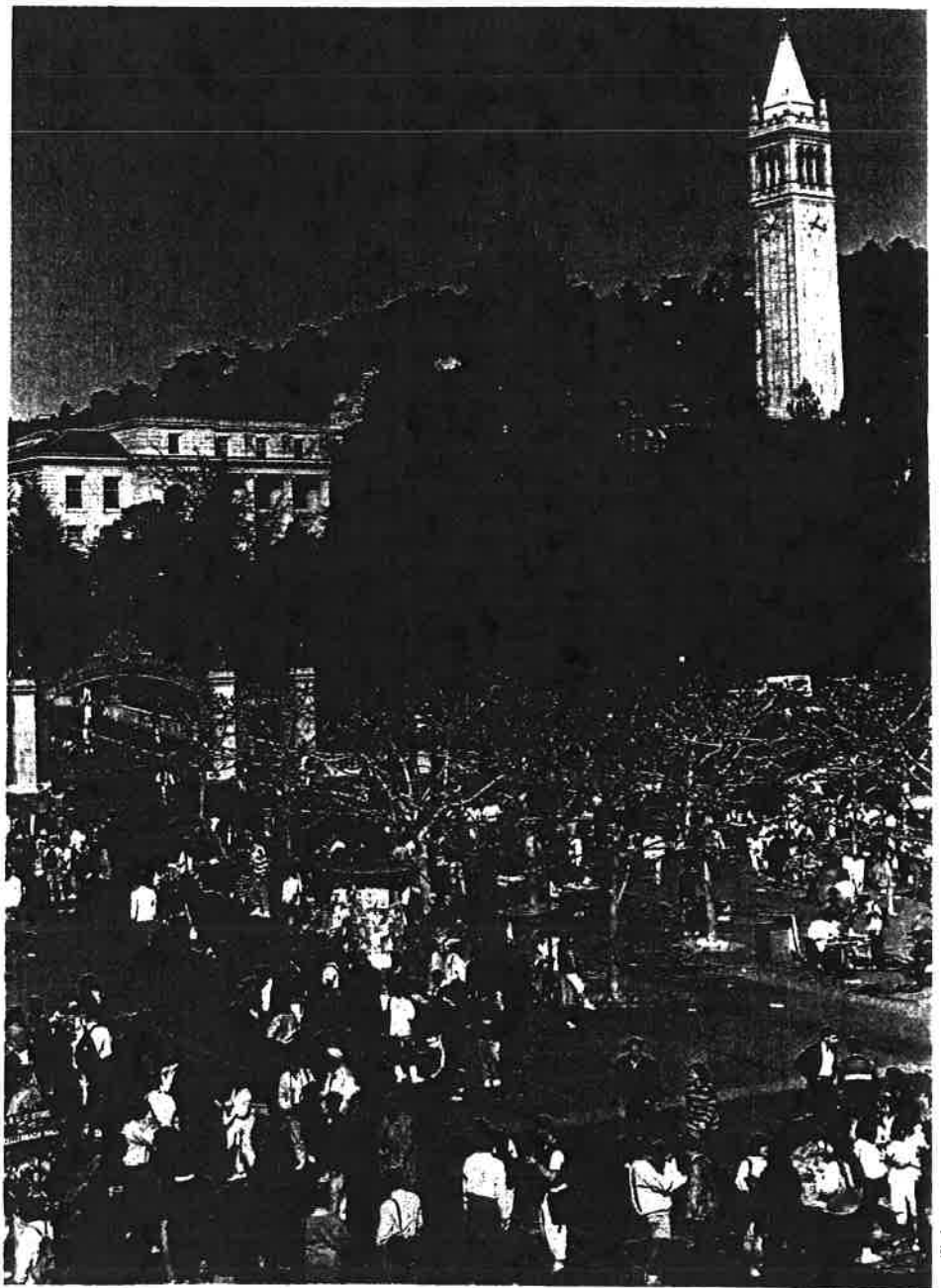
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Internationalization: The State of the Institution

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The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages may appear unlikely models for the modern university. The medieval university was, after all, innocent of fund-raising campaigns, legislative budget hearings, environmental impact reports, parking problems, and losing football teams—blessings that, today, we take for granted.

Yet these remarkable institutions had one characteristic of particular relevance to their modern-day counterparts—namely, the truly international character of the medieval university, which welcomed students of all nationalities from throughout the Western world. Students traveled freely across political boundaries under the protection of the Pope. The language of instruction and discourse was Latin, irrespective of the host university's locale. The masters were peripatetic, sometimes on their own initiative and sometimes at the urging of others. A common curriculum provided a standard core of learning for all students. In other words, in its basic attitudes and assumptions, the university of the Middle Ages was a profoundly international institution—fundamentally more so than our universities today.

Hastings Rashdall, a noted scholar of the period, points out how integral the international focus of these early universities was: "To appreciate the fact that the university was in its origin nothing more than a guild of foreign students is the key to the real origin and nature of the institution."¹

Ironically, despite the fact that technology has made the world a much smaller place, in many ways ours is a more parochial time than then. Today's universities have a vital role to play in rekindling that spirit of internationalism, and, happily, the chance of their succeeding is quite high. American higher education is quite decentralized, and change and innovation are possible precisely because of the absence of central control.

At the same time, however, the United States has a long history of isolationism and suspicion of foreign influences. For generations we were preoccupied with the internal problems of settling a vast continent and creating a nation; our self-sufficiency in natural resources and our enormous internal markets made us uncommonly independent of the rest of the world. Besides, our country was bordered on the east and on the west by two huge moats, which, for much of our history, were formidable barriers breachable only by long, dangerous, and tedious travel. We created and sustained this

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tradition of independence in the name of freedom from what our founding fathers called "entangling alliances."

But today, the world is not so easily kept at bay. Whether we like it or not, the United States is in the throes of a vast adjustment to a world in which our products no longer dominate world markets, but instead must compete vigorously with those of other nations. Economic decisions made in Tokyo, London, or Paris reverberate in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The National Commission on Excellence in Education pointed to the consequences of these new economic realities in its 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*: "The time is long past when America's destiny was assured simply by an abundance of natural resources and inexhaustible human enthusiasm, and by our relative isolation from the malignant problems of older civilizations. The world is indeed one global village. We live among determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors. We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops. . . .

[T]hese developments signify a redistribution of trained capability throughout the globe. Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilizers, and blue jeans did earlier."²

Alongside these dramatic shifts in our international relations, America is undergoing profound demographic changes—results of both differential birth rates among the nation's many ethnic and racial groups and the mass migration of peoples from Pacific Rim and Latin countries to the United States. We are experiencing a wave of immigration that rivals that of the turn of the century. The United States has always been a diverse society, but that trend is accelerating dramatically.

We therefore have even more reason for helping to prepare American leadership to function competitively and knowledgeably in what will be a global environment in far greater measure than ever before.

But compared with other advanced industrial nations, our country has been slow to recognize the implications of the growing interdependence of the world. This is certainly in stark contrast to the developing nations of South and East Asia, whose economies are rooted in an aggressive participation in world trade and whose students have been attending our colleges and universities in larger and larger numbers.

As part of its common market planning, the European Economic Community intends to provide opportunities for at least 10 percent of its

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students to study in another member country.³ And although the rise in the overall number of foreign students studying in the United States has leveled off somewhat, a significant imbalance still exists between the number of foreign students who study here and the number of American students who study abroad. [See box, next page.]

According to UNESCO figures, one-third of all foreign students worldwide come to study in the United States. A significant portion of the world is making an effort to learn about us; what effort are we making to learn about them? This is our *real* trade imbalance!

A decade ago, the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies lamented our "scandalous incompetence in foreign languages" and pointed out that only 8 percent of American colleges and universities required a foreign language for admission—a figure that probably has not changed dramatically in the past decade.⁴ A more recent study made the broader point that "America just does not prepare enough of its own citizens to be true cosmopolitans the way other countries do."⁵

We simply are not doing as much as we could and should to educate ourselves about the rest of the world. Our colleges and universities have an urgent role to play in preparing for these changing times—a point most of the recent studies of undergraduate education have made.

Some American colleges and universities *do* have excellent programs in international fields. The University of Minnesota, for example, has a long record of campus-to-campus relationships with Chinese universities; Oberlin and Yale also have long-standing, recently revitalized connections with Chinese institutions. Dartmouth students are encouraged to spend a term studying abroad, and almost three-fourths of its undergraduates do so. Stanford also encourages study abroad (roughly one-third of its undergraduate students participate) and sponsors language schools in Taiwan and Japan. The University of Southern California has outstanding overseas programs for its students, as well as the distinction of enrolling the largest number of non-immigrant foreign students of any university in the country.

Along with many other universities, the University of California (UC) has been planning its response to changing global circumstances. First, it is scrutinizing the education it offers its undergraduate students, including the international dimension of that education. Five years ago, a task force of faculty, students, and administrators examined UC's lower-division education and made recommendations about how to improve general education at the university. One of the overriding emphases of the

recommendations was the supreme importance placed on educating students for a world in which the process of internationalization is developing with breathtaking speed. Most political thinking and most of the relevant academic disciplines have rested on the assumption that the basic unit of social life is the discrete nation, society, or culture. The fact is, however, that the twin phenomena of internationalization and interdependency are rendering this fundamental premise questionable and demand novel ways of thinking, analyzing, and understanding.⁶

The report recommends providing more interdisciplinary courses with a multicultural or global dimension, offering more language instruction in underdeveloped areas, and, perhaps most important, dramatically expanding UC's Education Abroad Program.

Universities are the principal places where instruction in the less commonly taught languages (African and Asian languages, for instance) can be obtained. United States area and language studies programs provide an invaluable source of information and expertise to assist our government and our society in understanding an increasingly complex and interrelated world. Taken together, these scholarly resources comprise one of the great intellectual treasure houses of the world.

We need to do a better job of connecting these resources with those outside the academic community. Business people, for example, clearly can benefit from the specialized knowledge about a particular country's economy, mores, cultural practices, history, and language that area studies centers are so well equipped to provide. Policy makers in trade, commerce, immigration, and many other fields can also use this same expertise. Richard Lambert, a scholar who has examined our national strengths and deficiencies in international affairs, points out that campus language and area studies centers are a uniquely valuable source of information and expertise that should be better utilized by business people and others.⁷

The importance of study abroad opportunities

We need to give more students the unique experience that can be gained by living, studying, and working in a foreign culture. We need to expand the number of international faculty exchanges among colleges and universities worldwide, not only in the established and familiar countries of Europe, but also in the growing and less familiar countries of the developing world. We need to recognize that our colleges and universities are ill-equipped to teach fluency in a foreign language to students whose only exposure to the language may have

Who Studies Where And What do They Study?

In their efforts to internationalize their campuses, American college and university leaders are making great strides in the recruitment and admission of foreign students. At the same time, however, the number of American students participating in study abroad programs remains comparatively low, despite a 29 percent increase since the Institute of International Education's (IIE) first statistical survey of the topic in 1987.

Not only are few students studying abroad; of those who do, comparatively few do so in countries outside of Western Europe. In striking contrast, Europeans—East and West combined—account for only 12 percent of all foreign students studying in the United States. Compared to previous years, slightly larger percentages of American students study in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, but a significant imbalance remains: Asia is the origin of the largest percentage of foreign students in the United States, and accounted for more than half of all foreign students studying in the United States in 1988–89.

Another area of imbalance relates to the difference in fields of study pursued by Americans abroad and by foreign students in the United States. While nearly 50 percent of American students abroad pursue courses in the liberal arts, foreign languages, and social studies, an equal percentage of foreign students pursue coursework at American institutions in engineering, business and management, and math and computer science.

And when the level of study is taken into account, this imbalance becomes even more pronounced: Less than 6 percent of American students abroad study at the graduate level. In contrast, more than 45 percent of foreign students in the United States

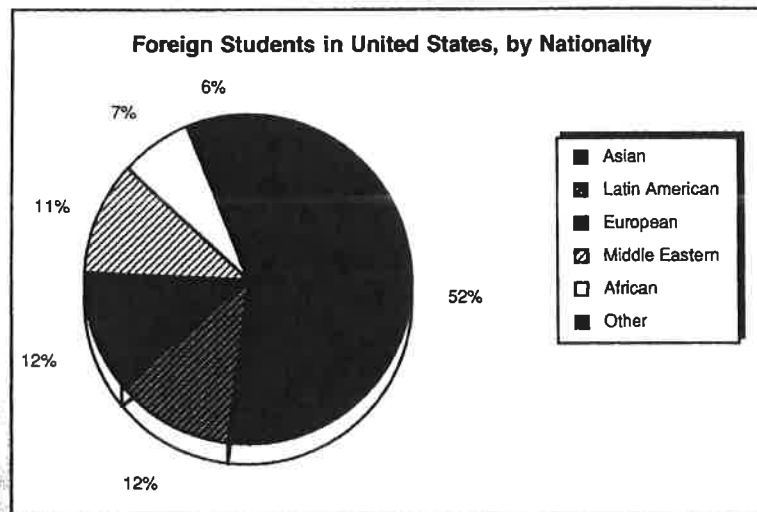
are engaged in graduate studies. In fact, of all doctorates granted in the United States in 1988, 23 percent were awarded to non-U.S. citizens.

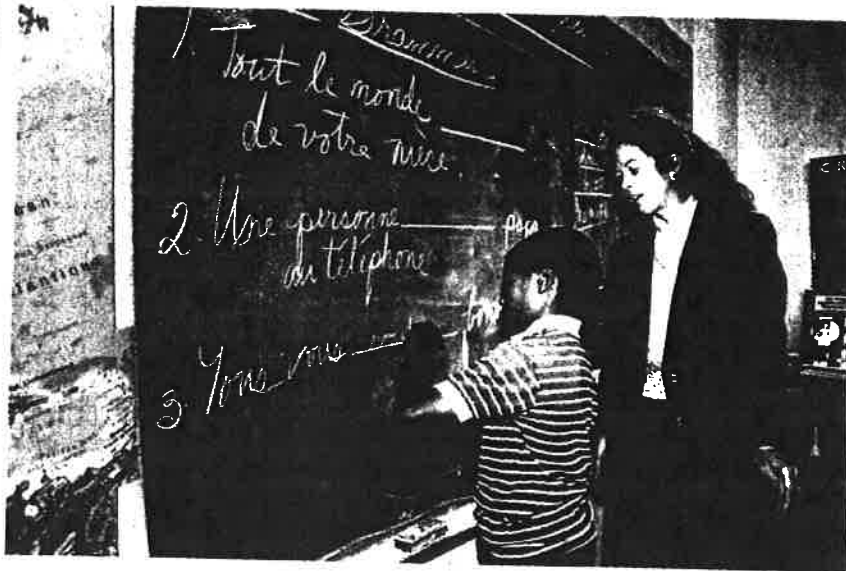
The imbalances between American and foreign student data for study abroad are significant, but it would be a mistake to ignore the progress that is being made. More American

students are studying abroad; more of them are choosing to study in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Finally, foreign students on American campuses are serving an important function: they are introducing American students who remain on their home campuses to cultures with which they would otherwise remain unfamiliar.

STUDENTS:	UNITED STATES	FOREIGN
How many study abroad?	62,342	366,354*
Where do they study?	United Kingdom 29%	California 13%
	France 12%	New York 10%
	Spain 8%	Texas 6%
	Italy 8%	Mass. 5%
	Mexico 5%	Florida 5%
Three most popular areas of study	Liberal Arts 20.9%	Engineering 20%
	Foreign Language 14.8%	Business 19%
	Social Studies 14.0%	Math/Comp. Sci. 10%
Level of study		
Undergraduate	94%	56%
Graduate	6%	44%

*All figures for foreign students pertain to those studying in the U.S. only.
Data Source: *Open Doors 1988–1989*, Institute of International Education.





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We need to give an international dimension to the education our young people receive, from kindergarten through graduate school.

been a few years of high school instruction. Virtually every advanced nation except our own begins foreign language instruction in grammar school; we should do the same.

We need to give an international dimension to the education our young people receive, from kindergarten through graduate school, to educate the next generation for the global opportunities and responsibilities that will be theirs to embrace. We need to plan ways to manage the steadily expanding flow of information between and among nations so as to make the best and most appropriate use of it. We need, in sum, to look at our responsibilities and our opportunities in light of the international spirit that, scholars tell us, has been an integral characteristic of higher education in the West since its beginnings at Salerno, Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Salamanca.

The tradition of insularity and isolationism has had a profound influence on our history. But we also have powerful counter-examples in the American experience.

For one thing, our universities themselves are the result of a creative combination of foreign influences—the English undergraduate college and the German research university. Even our tradition of lay governance can be traced directly to the universities of Scotland and Holland, and indeed stretches all the way back, in one form or another, to the medieval Italian institutions. American colleges and universities have always had international characteristics that set them apart from the isolationist stream in American history and that connect them to a long tradition of international influence and contact.

The nation's political history offers another example. In 1987 we celebrated the bicentennial of the Constitution, America's most enduring

document and its most creative and singularly brilliant expression of global leadership. The framers of the Constitution were counted among the political, social, intellectual, military, agricultural, and business leaders of what had been the colonies. But besides these conventional attributes, they brought to their task a disciplined, informed, and sophisticated appreciation of their culture and the civilization of which they were a part. They possessed not a parochial but a universal view of the world and their place in it. *The Federalist*, for example, reflects the authors' acquaintance with ancient and modern history; it also reflects Hamilton's love of literature, Madison's comprehension of political philosophy and theory, and Jay's grasp of the law and its civilizing role.

These Early Americans were prepared for their task because of the breadth, depth, and richness of their education and training. The tendency today is falsely to assume that commitment, desire, and raw intelligence will prove equal to the task of leadership. They will not. In the end it was what the authors of the Constitution wrote that counted, and what they wrote was drawn from a fund of knowledge, incisively engaged and brilliantly expressed, sweeping and strategic in its scope and significance, suited not just for their time but for ours as well.

Our nation is in urgent need of that kind of leadership today. We live in a world that neither the founders of the European university nor even the founders of our young nation could have imagined. Yet both created, out of the chaos and turmoil and challenges of their world, institutions that transcended the ephemeral and temporary to endure into our own times. In a crucial sense, both chose a global rather than a parochial perspective. In doing so they chose the road to the future; and so must we. **ER**

¹ Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985): 163.

² *A Nation at Risk*. Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 1983): 6-7.

³ Richard D. Lambert, "International Studies and the Undergraduate," Special Report (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1988).

⁴ *Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability*. Report to the President from the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1979): 7.

⁵ Richard D. Lambert, *Points of Leverage* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1986): 29.

⁶ "Lower Division Education in the University of California." University of California Task Force Report (University of California, 1986): 30.

⁷ *Points of Leverage*, Chapter 3, "International Expertise in Business."

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