

OUR VISION FOR THE INSTITUTE

FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND THE PRESIDENT

Peace and prosperity now depend on increasing the capacity of people to think and work on a global and intercultural basis. By the time the Institute marks its one hundredth year in 2019, more people around the world will be seeking a college education than in all of human history. Most of the capacity to respond to this level of demand has yet to be built. But the architecture will reflect the values and dynamics of many of the programs that this Institute is now developing and administering.

IIE will thus be one of the driving forces of the 21st century.

That role is firmly anchored in our history. We are the world leader in the exchange of people and ideas and were the first to focus on the internationalization of higher education. The Fulbright Educational Exchange Program is part of our heritage. We have administered it since its inception, and were in business for thirty years prior to its creation. We have created leading-edge training and professional development experiences for business managers and government officials in some of the world's most important transitional economies.

As we look to the future, we see that the environments in which we operate, our customers, the needs of students and scholars, and the sources of revenue on which we depend are all changing.

While governments have long been the prime sponsors of international educational exchange, national budgets everywhere are hard-pressed to sustain the annual outlays for educational exchange. This is as true when it comes to making the annual appropriation for the Marshall Scholarships at Westminster as it is for the Fulbright Program on Capitol Hill. Public funding for both, as a consequence, has declined.

Our customers are changing, too. The graduate student willing to spend a year abroad learning about another culture is increasingly rare. Most students seeking international exchange opportunities want shorter, focussed, and more professionally oriented programs. Top corporate and government leaders are telling us that their "high performers" are going to need international training opportunities throughout a career rather than just as preparation for starting one. And all of us need the opportunity to learn (as well as think) out of the box. It is the only way to test our assumptions about globalization and our ability to work in what is rapidly becoming a borderless world. Consequently, international educational exchange programs in the future will need to be tailored, frequent, applied, prestigious, involve intercultural learning, and sustained through partnerships between the public and private sectors.



*Henry Kaufman and
Allan E. Goodman.*

Then number of foreign students studying in the US has risen dramatically in the past decade. IIE has created numerous programs and manages many more that serve the needs of this diverse population.



Number of foreign students (in thousands) studying in the US over the last 40 years.

The Institute will be the 21st century's leading source of these types of opportunities. Such opportunities change the way people think about the world and how they contribute to society as professionals and participate as citizens. We will continue to set the standard for our industry. We need to track and continue to serve our alumni throughout their careers since we have a direct stake in helping them achieve as leaders. And we will continue to find ways to internationalize the institutions with which we partner in the public and private sector.

All of this will happen — and our role will be enhanced — because of what we have built over the course of our first 80 years. At the time our headquarters building at 809 United Nations Plaza was dedicated, the US Permanent Representative to the UN was Adlai Stevenson. He was, throughout his career, a visionary voice for the value of education. His words at the dedication ceremony explain much about what we have done and also where we are now heading:

“...education is... the process of acquiring knowledge and then communicating it, so that, generation by generation, a great deposit of shared understanding is accumulated, a universal city of the mind arises, insight by insight, discovery by discovery. And of that city we are all enfranchised citizens.” It is a city and a citizenship the Institute has done much to enable and enhance. The programs we have created and have the honor to administer as the 21st century begins are the power lines and thoroughfares of the city of the mind.

As we begin a new millennium, opinion polls consistently indicate that politicians and the public, here and abroad, have only limited interest in international affairs. What most people do care about is improving education. The best way to raise people's consciousness about the importance of international relationships is through expanding the educational links among nations in ways that will give the next generation first-hand experience in other cultures. Educational and professional exchange programs transform nations into people. The century just ending would have been a better one, had more minds been open to the world in just this way.


HENRY KAUFMAN
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