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Dear Dr. Lesser:

Thank you for sending to me a copy of your speech to CACS in Winnipeg in November. I reviewed it with interest.

I would support some initiative to form exactly the type of linkage you propose in the speech, although that linkage would have to be looked at carefully. Perhaps some institution in Africa would be appropriate. Perhaps we could discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Howard C. Clark
President

HCC/pam

cc: Dr. D.W. Stairs
Mr. A.D. Tillett

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INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
THE ROLE OF CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

by
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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

An Address Presented To The Annual General Meeting Of The
Canadian Association Of Graduate Schools, Winnipeg,
November 3, 1989

The theme of this workshop is international graduate education in Canada and abroad. This evening I would like to discuss with you one facet of this subject - that which applies to or deals with developing countries. There are important issues which relate to other countries and to students from those countries studying in Canada as well as Canadian students studying abroad. In choosing to concentrate on developing countries, I do not wish to imply that these other aspects of international graduate education do not matter. Rather it is that I believe that it is developing countries which demand greater attention and where the issues posed are of greater complexity and, consequently, more difficult to deal with. Let me begin by commenting briefly on the situation of education in developing countries and then address the question of the role which Canadian graduate schools might play in this picture.

Developing countries as a group have not fared well in the 1980's. Real growth has fallen appreciably, external debt has risen dramatically, there are serious balance of payments problems, infrastructure has deteriorated, political stability has lessened in many cases, growth of foreign aid has fallen and

for many countries, the sum of aid and capital inflows minus debt service payments has turned negative.

There are many reasons which have been advanced for this, ranging from the oil price shocks of the 1970's, the recession of the developed world in the early 1980's, deteriorating terms of international trade, wrong or inappropriate domestic policies in developing countries, too much government, inefficiency, and so on. It is not the purpose of this talk to try to determine the merits of these various arguments. Rather the point is simply to note that for the majority of developing countries, they are no better off today and in some cases they are worse off than they were 10 or 15 years ago.

What this means for the education sector, including especially universities, is that the government funding on which they have relied in the past is in jeopardy. In many cases, funding has already fallen in real terms in the face of stringent government budgetary pressures, a situation which Canadian universities can identify with but cannot begin to appreciate in terms of relative severity. In this respect, universities in developing countries are no different than all other sectors of these economies—everyone is feeling the pinch of government restraint.

In addition, however, universities are feeling two additional pressures not common to other sectors.

First, universities in developing countries are under considerable pressure from their governments to contribute more to their country's development efforts. There is a perception that they have not been doing so. Right or wrong, the perception is real and is resulting in further cutbacks in funding and/or more direct government involvement in university affairs.

Second, there is a school of thought which argues that there is a need for a reallocation of government resource commitments to education away from tertiary education towards primary education. The reasoning behind this is based on research on the relative benefits of different levels of education in developing countries, where the benefits are measured by computing rates of return where the benefits are measured by the increase in earnings realized by persons who have completed the respective levels of education. The return to primary education measured in this way is much higher than the return to university education. Hence, the recommendation is made that fewer resources be invested in the university system and more in the primary education system. This argument has a number of problems, not the least of which is its assumption that the benefits of education are both captured entirely by the individual and reflected fully by the wage-price system. Nonetheless, the view that resources are misallocated between the different levels of education has gained considerable currency and poses a considerable threat to the vitality of universities in developing countries, independent of their other problems.

To put some of these arguments in context, consider the following statistics:

- in 1984, the number of students enrolled in higher education as a percentage of the relevant population age group was 4% for low income countries, 12% for lower middle income countries, and 15% for upper middle income countries.

- in 1986, the numbers were 3%, 17%, and 20% respectively.

- In 1986, the same figure for Canada was 55% and for the United States, 59%. For all OECD countries taken together the figure was 39%.

- in many African countries, the cost ratio per pupil between higher and primary education ranges as high as 283 to 1. One 1985 study reveals that higher education in Africa was receiving 35% of the total education expenditures while serving only 2% of the total student population at all levels.

The gap between the richest and the poorest is obvious. So too is the relative decline of the poorest countries, who had a smaller percentage of the relevant population age group enrolled in higher education in 1986 than in 1984. And finally, the cost figures for Africa are somewhat higher than in some other countries in say Asia, and in absolute terms are not that far out

of line with North American standards, but the concern over the gap relative to primary education is easy to appreciate in societies already struggling under tremendous resource constraints and where only 55% of primary school age children in Africa are actually enrolled in school.

In the general climate of overall restraint coupled with the specific problems of the university sector, Third World universities are witnessing a deterioration of their physical plant, reductions in faculty relative to enrolment, and generally, a sharp reduction in the quality of teaching and research. There is one reported case of an instructor in an African university teaching an individual class of 3000 students. Canadian faculty like to complain of falling standards and loss of time for research if their class enrollments go much above 100 students. Compare that with 3000 and ask yourself what quality of education that is likely to produce and what kind of research you can expect from faculty in that position.

While I don't have any firm numbers for you on graduate enrolment per se, when we consider the total enrolment figures for education at all levels and the fact that in many cases (Africa, for example) primary enrolment is as high as 80% of the total, and secondary enrolment another 15-18%, and then subtract for the undergraduate population and the non-university component of the higher education figures, what is left as the share of graduate

education is very small indeed. And in a period such as we are now in, a period of restraint and pressures to realign the allocation of resources within the education sector, graduate education is being made to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of these cutbacks.

I am of course talking in generalities. There are countries where universities are relatively healthy and there are graduate programs within universities which are equally healthy. But the overall picture is not particularly encouraging. There is a long process of revitalization and institutional strengthening and expansion which must occur. Nor will more funding by itself entirely solve the problems which Third World universities face. There is a sense in which ultimately universities rest on the foundation of their faculties and money alone does not guarantee the quality of faculty and the attitude to their work which is necessary if the problems are to be solved in a meaningful way.

I would like to suggest to you for your consideration that Canadian graduate schools should accept/assume the role of helping to build the quality of graduate education in developing countries. By this I mean helping to develop the capacity of these universities to deliver their own graduate education programs; I do not mean trying to directly take on the wholesale delivery of their graduate education for them. There is a sense in which the latter is what we have been doing. The difference

is that, instead of an ad hoc, passive role in accepting foreign graduate students, Canadian graduate schools would accept as a primary goal in their efforts to educate developing country students, the training of persons who can be expected to assume positions in universities in their own countries and that they coordinate such efforts with the developing country universities in question or consortiums of such universities. To do this requires obvious changes in the kind of education which we deliver to developing country students, a question to which I will return in a few moments. More fundamentally, however, it calls for an institutional commitment on the part of Canadian universities and their graduate schools to the cause of international development, and the belief that education is a vital element in development and graduate education an important element, in turn, in the education sector. Such a commitment has not been present in this form up to the present time.

I would suggest to you that, in general, the policy of Canadian graduate schools respecting developing country students has been ad hoc at best and opportunistic at worst over the last twenty years or so. I don't believe that profit is necessarily a dirty word for universities to talk about. And insofar as profit can be complementary to development goals, there is nothing wrong with it. Indeed, the point may have to be made much more forcefully than it has been in the past with CIDA and other agencies that profit may be a necessary price for them to pay if

their own development objectives are to be met. But this argument is not the same as one which makes the profit motive paramount. The latter is what many Canadian universities have been doing and what the government would have us do more of through more aggressive marketing of Canadian universities to those in developing countries who can afford to pay the going price for a Canadian university education. Such an approach, however, will potentially give us the wrong set of students from a development perspective both in terms of the countries they represent and their motives in obtaining a graduate education.

At present, most of us take a wholly passive role to the recruitment of developing country students - if they apply then we consider them; and if they don't, well, they don't. Whereas we make very deliberate efforts to recruit nationally and in some cases internationally in the U.S. and Europe, in general we do not do this with developing countries. But the marketing I would suggest needs to be done is not a general approach based on who can pay but a developmental approach based on a close working relationship with particular developing country institutions or groups of such institutions.

Secondly, insofar as Canada as a country does make a special effort to recruit developing country students, through for example the Commonwealth Scholarship program or major bilateral education programs such as for example the CIDA-sponsored Kenya

General Training Fund Program, the university response is again a relatively passive one - we look at the applications which are sent to us by the sponsoring bodies and accept or reject. The priorities are being driven not by the universities but by the external agencies which are providing the funding.

Thirdly, increasingly, Canadian universities are getting students through international development projects hosted by departments or members of their faculties. Insofar as these projects often involve a partnership agreement with a developing country institution, they represent some acceptance of the proposition I advanced earlier regarding the training of university personnel for developing countries. But typically, such projects are the province of only a few individuals - an institutional commitment is still lacking. And they are still ad hoc insofar as the projects which they serve are ad hoc and they are to a large degree still externally driven by the funding agencies in terms of priorities. Many of the rest of the faculty regard these students as an imposition or look on them with a kind of benign tolerance, a tolerance borne of the belief that projects generate revenues which can be used for other purposes.

An institutional commitment to the cause of development would mean entering into collaborative arrangements with developing country universities in such matters as joint selection of students, possibly joint degree arrangements, student exchanges,

faculty exchanges, joint research, etc. It may also imply other changes. For example, it may suggest that we do not necessarily apply the same admissions standards to developing country students as we do to domestic students, with the corollary implication that we then assume the responsibility for providing the necessary remedial training which this calls for. It may mean that we have to think more carefully about what we teach, i.e., about what is the most appropriate curriculum for these students. It is not clear, for example, that bringing developing country students to Canada to take off-the-shelf programs is necessarily helping the development efforts of their countries or helping those students to function in the best possible way in their own environment. Indeed, degree programs may not be the answer at all in some cases. A developing country student, for example, who is trained in the sciences using the latest state of the art equipment, which he or she will probably never see at home until at least it has become obsolete in Canada, will end up at best frustrated and at worst will leave his or her country. Or, to take another example, training Chinese students in a Canadian MBA program is not obviously the best way of teaching those students the knowledge and skills about private enterprise which will be of greatest assistance to China given the relatively embryonic stage of development of the market system in China today. The problem here, we must realize, is not simply that students end up frustrated. Rather, it is that they end up not returning to their countries or leaving at a

subsequent time even if they do initially return. There is a serious "brain drain" problem in many developing countries which is in part explained by the understandable desire for a better standard of living but is also explained in part by the fact that we train people to work as professionals or educators in ways that they can never make full use of in their own countries.

Again, if we consider figures for Africa, a 1987 study showed that in 1979-80, 14% of all African students enrolled in higher education were registered in universities abroad, principally in Europe and North America. Most of these were students enrolled in post-graduate programs. Many of these students never returned home or, if they did, they often subsequently left. The research they carried out as part of their graduate training was often research relevant to the agenda of their host institution versus their own country. Those who returned home and stayed, working in universities or research institutions, often regard publication in Western journals as being of greater significance to their professional development than work they might do relevant to their own country's national development. Should we not, then, when we educate these students in the first place, be insisting on, or at least encouraging, research which is related to their own countries and/or which recognizes the environment within which they will subsequently be working? We need to deliver programs appropriate to the students' needs when they return home.

G. R. Taylor, a British historian, writes of "a story of a primitive tribesman who was asked by an anthropologist to sort into groups various fruits and vegetables mixed with plates, knives and household items. The tribesman placed the knife with the orange because, he said, it would be needed to peel it. He placed the vegetables with the plates because, he said, they would be used to serve them. And so on. No, said the anthropologist, that is not what he had in mind. But that is what a wise man would do, said the tribesman. Then how would a fool sort them? said the anthropologist, becoming irritated. The tribesman replied, Oh, he would put all the fruit together and all the vegetables together and all the implements together.

We must begin to realize that there is more than one way to look at the world. If we are to genuinely seek to help developing countries in their quest for development, then the numbers of students from such countries that we educate and how we educate them must be done with their values and needs more in mind, and less with ours in mind. This we can accomplish only by working collaboratively with third world universities. But in doing so, we must become more pro-active as institutions than we have been in the past in seeking to further the cause of international graduate education. This means making an institutional commitment. It means helping to set our own agendas rather than allowing those agendas to be solely externally driven by aid agencies or governments. It means recruitment to meet specific

objectives rather than passive consideration of ad hoc applications. It does not necessarily mean that we need to do more versus doing what we do, better and having a greater say in the setting of our priorities. As Jim Hine of the University of ~~Alberta~~ ^{Calgary} has put it, "We must lead or be led."

None of this will be easy. There are obvious problems, most notably financial. And the status quo can be maintained, probably indefinitely, as an alternative. But it is not clear that such an option will serve either our interests or the interests of developing countries particularly well.

It has become almost a cliché to note that we are living in an increasingly interdependent world, one in which strong forces, particularly technological forces, are promoting an economic globalization of markets and with this, a harmonization of public policies and, to a point, social and cultural homogeneity. It is important as universities that we understand these forces. It is equally important that we educate our students about them. But of even more importance is that we recognize that we too are affected by these forces and that we accept that it is part of the role of the university as a social institution and of a graduate school as part of the frontier of knowledge, to share these attributes with those less privileged in such a way that their capacity to help themselves is made stronger.

Let me conclude with two quotations. The first is by Julius Nyrere of Tanzania.

In one world, as in one state, when I am rich because you are poor, and I am poor because you are rich, the transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor is a matter of right, it is not an appropriate matter for charity... If the rich nations go on getting richer at the expense of the poor, the poor of the world must demand a change, in the same way the proletariat demanded change in the past. And we do demand change. As far as we are concerned, the only question at issue is whether the change comes from dialogue or confrontation.

The second quotation is by Maurice Strong of Canada.

For the first time since human life appeared in this planet, the human species is in command of its own evolution. We are the principal determiners of our own future. We cannot escape the responsibility that this imposes on us. We are, therefore, compelled to manage the processes which will determine that future so as to provide the security, the opportunity and the well-being for the entire human family which, for the first time in our history, is now an achievable goal. It is also indispensable.