

Welcome to all of you on behalf of the University of Rhode Island. We are proud of this annual Colloquium which truly has succeeded in crossing the disciplines, bringing together international educators, engineering faculty, language faculty and leaders from both the private and public sectors.

Most certainly the issue of preparing young professionals to work internationally has become a matter of national urgency. I would like to congratulate you all on your work and thank you for joining with my colleagues at the University of Rhode Island in moving this agenda forward nationally.

The theme of partnerships in academia and partnership building for the future has been dear to my heart for my entire presidency at URI and it excites me to see so many forms of partnership represented here at this meeting today. Partnerships from department to department, from college to college, from academia to the private sector and to the public sector as well. Today I am proud to be able to celebrate our university's partnership with our friends at the Technical University of Braunschweig, a partnership which has been thriving since 1995, and can point to many landmark achievements:

- we have exchanged over 430 students between our two institutions who have spent full semester or full year experiences at their host school
- we have sent well over 200 additional students to Braunschweig for short-term visits
- we have developed groundbreaking dual degree programs at both the masters and doctoral levels
- we have created research partnerships among faculty and graduate students in engineering, the biological sciences, and pharmacy
- we have begun an active exchange of ideas about higher education among university administrators as well

We take pride in the fact that we have not only sent students back and forth; we have changed students' lives.

Andrew Marchesseault, for example, who studies micro fuel cell technology, went to Braunschweig to do his masters thesis, after having done his undergrad experience in Germany. He stayed on to complete the Braunschweig degree as well, and now has remained with a full assistantship to complete the Braunschweig Doctor of Engineering degree.

John Ellwood studies control systems and mechatronics. He has just completed the dual masters degree after doing the undergraduate IEP. He too has been offered an assistantship to remain in Germany for his doctorate.

But there are those who have made even longer term commitments. Pete Alberg met his future wife in a language course in Braunschweig. They now live in Bavaria, have two children and Pete is doing well as an engineer with the Hilti Corporation.

Rick D'Ambrosca also fell in love in Braunschweig, married in Prague, and now manufactures furniture and kitchen cabinetry for the U.S. market in the Czech Republic and China.

Students like John, Andy, Pete, and Rick did not know a word of German when they arrived at URI as freshmen. They had never been out of the country. Today they are equally at home in Germany and the U.S. and elsewhere. They have become global engineers and global citizens.

URI has been running an experiment lately, wondering how the 220 German students who came to URI from Braunschweig feel today about their American home-away-from-home. We began a small outreach campaign to see how many of these students we could contact and whether they might be interested in a URI reunion back in Braunschweig. As a result we have over 200 e-mail addresses for these students, and over 90 of the group have joined XING, a professional networking Web site, sort of a German version of LinkedIn, which gives each member information about all the others and helps create a collective group identity. The response to the idea of a RI reunion in Braunschweig has turned out to be phenomenal. In short, we are now planning URI's first international alumni event, to take place in Braunschweig in the spring of 2009, which will, of course, include our 25 (or so) American IEP grads who currently work in Germany as well as the 28 students now studying or interning in Germany.

What have we learned as an institution through the 20 years of our IEP and our partnership with Braunschweig? What advice can we impart?

- choose a partner institution that makes sense for you in the long-run (In our case, Braunschweig is about the same size and has a powerful engineering and science base to match with our IEP)
- make sure that you have a passionate advocate to pull the weight on your own side, i.e., don't enter agreements that you are not prepared to honor.
- make sure you are aligned with partners you feel comfortable with and can work with. (Grandin and Nuebold have become close friends, know each other well and trust each other without limit. The personal friendships began with them, but have expanded to many others.)
- If you have a good partner in a given country, don't run around signing agreements with other schools. That is counter-productive.
- Don't limit yourself to a one-idea relationship. Get to know each other, get a lot of people involved. Try to build a relationship at all levels, for undergrads, for graduate students, for faculty, even for administrators. It was really the depth and extent of our relationship that enabled us, for example, to compete for the NSF PIRE grant that you will see represented at the Grand Information Fair this afternoon.
- Work hard to convince your deans, provosts, and presidents to bend the rules now and then for the sake of international programming. It just will not work without an open mind and flexibility. For example, we don't have a problem with exchanging undergrads for grads, and we extend our regional Tuition status to partner school students wanting to do grad work here.

- Get your administrators involved. Let them travel to your partners. Let them see what your students are learning and experiencing.