

Universities tag along for Team Canada ride

BY MEG MURPHY

TORONTO (CUP)— As a whirlwind of networking and deal-making sweeps through Latin America, eager representatives of Canadian higher education are doing their best to secure a piece of the action.

Eighteen universities are participating in the two-week trade mission to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico currently underway, which has been dubbed 'Team Canada' by the Liberal government.

They are acting as third-string players beside Canadian business and the federal and provincial governments in a fierce competition to posit our innocuous nation as a leader in the emerging global economy.

The trade mission comes as a pre-cursor to a free trade agreement with the Americas (excluding Cuba), scheduled to be signed in April.

According to a spokesperson from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the jaunt enables the sectors to promote a common goal. All are vying for prosperous trade relations with Latin America, says Karen McBride.

"Canadian businesses have a real interest in expanding into Latin America," she said. "And it is Canadian universities mandate to prepare students to cooperate in an environment which is now global."

This mission is the fourth annual networking bonanza organized by the federal government. In past years the destination has always been somewhere in Asia first China, then South East Asia, and most recently the Philippines, Korea and Thailand.

McBride says post-secondary participation in this mission will enable Canada to throw a touch of warmth into the climate of budding busi-

ness liaisons, making Canadian ties to Latin America that much stronger.

"It is not just about economics, it is about building bonds by understanding each other's cultures," she said, adding collaborative projects and student exchanges will accomplish this goal.

Building partnerships with educational institutions in the mission's four pit stops is one main goal. It will both help trade relations and promote international diversity on Canadian campuses, says McBride.

An aspect of these blossoming relations will be student recruitment, which is highly profitable for Canadian universities since foreign students are often charged three times what domestic students pay.

Four Canadian Education Centres will be opened for this purpose. They will be located in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Venezuela. Prior to this mission, the only Canadian recruitment centre in Latin America was located in Mexico.

The other primary incentive for the education sector to participate in the mission is the thrill of developing more partnerships with Canadian businesses in the process, she says.

But as higher-education officials are swept into the free-trade frenzy, some argue they are joining a business-heavy team that has paid little heed to the societal threats of this game.

Ricardo Grinspun, director of the Centre for Research on Latin American and Caribbean Studies at York University, says serious oversights must be addressed.

He says universities should look at the types of collaborations they are carving, as well as the ethics of

those around them.

"One thing is very worrisome. A lot of these contacts are being started around business-university linkages. To what extent are these university links established around a business agenda and to what extent are they established around academic priorities?" he questioned.

On Jan. 13 in Mexico City, Canadian businesses and educational institutions signed 91 new business deals worth \$229.9-million. This marked the largest number of deals signed at one time on a team mission.

"There is a clear trade-business agenda here. Unfortunately, this arrangement has not been shaped up taking into account the societal implica-

tions of these connections in terms of how they will impact Canada and Latin America," Grinspun said.

But McBride says universities, for their part, will encourage Latin American countries to address some of these social issues through collaborative courses.

"From the universities perspective, academic cooperation allows you to work with these countries around areas of concern, like environmental and human rights issues," she said. "It is through sharing expertise that we can make improvements."

Several key universities decided not to take part in the Team Canada trade mission this year. These include York University, University of Vic-

toria, Concordia University, Dalhousie University, University of British Columbia and the University of New Brunswick.

Of those contacted, several suggested that scheduling problems prevented them from attending, particularly because the government did not provide adequate notice of the trip's timing.

A few also candidly admitted their interests in foreign student recruitment is centred in Asia, while others delivered a rather interesting version of the two.

"It was just a matter of timing," a public relations officer at UBC, said. "We have participated in past Team Asia. I mean Team Canada trips before."



Job Job Job Job Job

Fall 98 Job Available

What are we talking about?

Are you are looking for a job that best suits your schedule? One with no limit to potential earnings? If so then maybe you should consider applying for the Advertising Manager at the Cadre.

What does an Ad Manager Do?

An Ad Manager is responsible for all Advertisements in the student newspaper. He or she is to insure all soliciting of Ad's for the paper are being done properly and fairly. He or She is to produce the highest revenue possible for the newspaper. The hours of work are flexible and easy to make because *You set your own office hours.*

How do I get the Job?

Anyone can apply with little or no experience needed. All your experience and training will be provided this semester as you work as a volunteer with the current Ad Manager. For Further Information please contact the Cadre at **566-0629.**