

**A QUARTERLY DIGEST
of NEWS of SPECIAL
INTEREST to the
COMMUNITY**

VOLUME 2, NO. 4

WINTER, 1985

In this issue ...

THE BUSINESS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION — A look at why Vancouver Community College is marketing its expertise overseas, what the college can gain from this effort and how it affects our regular programs. Page 1.

THE PACIFIC RIM PROGRAM — the college's bid to help business, industry and the larger community come to terms with the ways of commerce and life in this increasingly more important sphere. Page 2.

SINGAPORE: Home to the yuppies of Southeast Asia, this tiny country is a cosmopolitan centre of high tech manufacturing, international banking and insurance. How has it built booming, sophisticated economy in a region where so many of its neighbors have failed? Page 2.

VCC HOME TO JAPANESE STUDENTS — for six years Langara Campus each fall has welcomed a group of young men and women of Tokyo's Takushoku University, who, for eight months make it home while perfecting their English language skills. Page 3.

TEACHING THE TEACHERS: THE ZIMBABWE PROJECT: Out of a two year project, where Vancouver Community College provided a training ground for vocational and technical instructors from this African nation, grew a proven, practical, training package for instructors that the college is now marketing abroad. Page 4.

**Central Administration
Vancouver Community College
1155 E. Broadway
Box 24700 Station 'C'
Vancouver, B.C.
V5T 4N4 875-1131**



**THE BUSINESS OF
INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION**

Vancouver Community College's first initiatives in the international education arena came five or six years ago. Most were instigated from overseas, through organizations such as the World University Service of Canada, an education broker between institutions in this country and foreign nations needing their expertise, or through instructors here who developed a particular interest overseas. It was a rather ad hoc approach.

In the intervening years this casual handling has given way to a concerted, systematic business strategy, that really got off the ground when Norm Henderson, a senior bureaucrat with Canada Employment and Immigration, was seconded through the Interchange Canada program and came to the college as director of international education.

It is through his efforts and those of the international education committee, that the college has just taken a significant step forward with the board's approval January 23 of a proposal to bring between 50 and 70 students from Hong Kong to the college to complete their high school studies. This project, slated to get off the ground in September of this year, will not only recover costs but will generate some revenue for the college.

"It is important that people realize we are not displacing Canadian students," Henderson explains. "We have an expertise and we can market that expertise to the benefit of our own students here in Canada.

"Obviously, we want to earn money. This money enables the college to ensure it can continue to enhance existing programs and develop new ones. But activity in the international arena is not all related to finances.

continued on back page

THE BUSINESS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION — Cont. from front page

"This is a wonderful opportunity for faculty to expand their experience. It adds to the breadth and maturity of the college. Keep in mind, too, that we're providing a chance for students from overseas to have an education they badly want."

The international education committee is comprised of representatives from all campuses and from Continuing Education. Max Fleming is the committee's chairman, with Lawrence Fast, dean of instruction, representing Langara, Gerry Sylvester, dean of administrative and student services, representing KEC, Marvin Lamoureux, dean of instruction, representing VVI, and Tom Toulson, associate director, representing Continuing Education.

The committee is a brainstorming forum for ideas and policy and priorities development. As well, members provide a college-wide perspective on the merits and implications of different initiatives.

"We recently determined our focus for activities would be the Pacific Rim," Henderson reports. "Canada as a whole is turning this direction and, of course, we in Vancouver have the advantage of proximity."

"In this region, too, many countries have indicated an interest in the kinds of training and opportunities we can offer and they have the money to fund such projects."

"While we would certainly react to a query from any country in the world, we are taking a proactive stance in the Pacific Rim."

Henderson goes on to add that Hong Kong is a natural market. There are limited post-secondary facilities and many students are seeking entrance into Canadian universities. A Canadian high school diploma is, then, an advantage.

A high school program for the Hong Kong students will be offered through King Edward Campus's College Foundations Division. "We have both the facilities and the expertise to do this," he says.

"I think there is a particular plus we can offer. The problem many students from Hong Kong encounter is that even after obtaining a university degree in Canada or the U.S. their spoken English may not be particularly strong. The college's English language programs have an excellent reputation and spoken English is of prime concern. You could say it is what the reputation is built upon."

"Often students who come from Hong Kong into Canadian universities take math or sciences. They aren't necessarily called upon to answer in class. They take the tests

and do the lab work. Usually they work like Trojans. They graduate with excellent marks, but still without fluent spoken English. The education VCC could offer would certainly counter that."

Efforts aren't confined to Hong Kong. The committee was instrumental in the college's recent signing of agreements with the Beijing Institute of Technology in the People's Republic of China and with the University of East Asia in Macau. Both accords provide for future exchanges of faculty and students.

Henderson spends a good deal of time away from his office at central administration, either out in the business community exploring the needs for training overseas or travelling abroad meeting with government, education and business officials.

"We often start out talking with our own consulates and government departments, such as trade and industry," he explains. "They know what the needs are in these countries and they can often provide an important introduction."

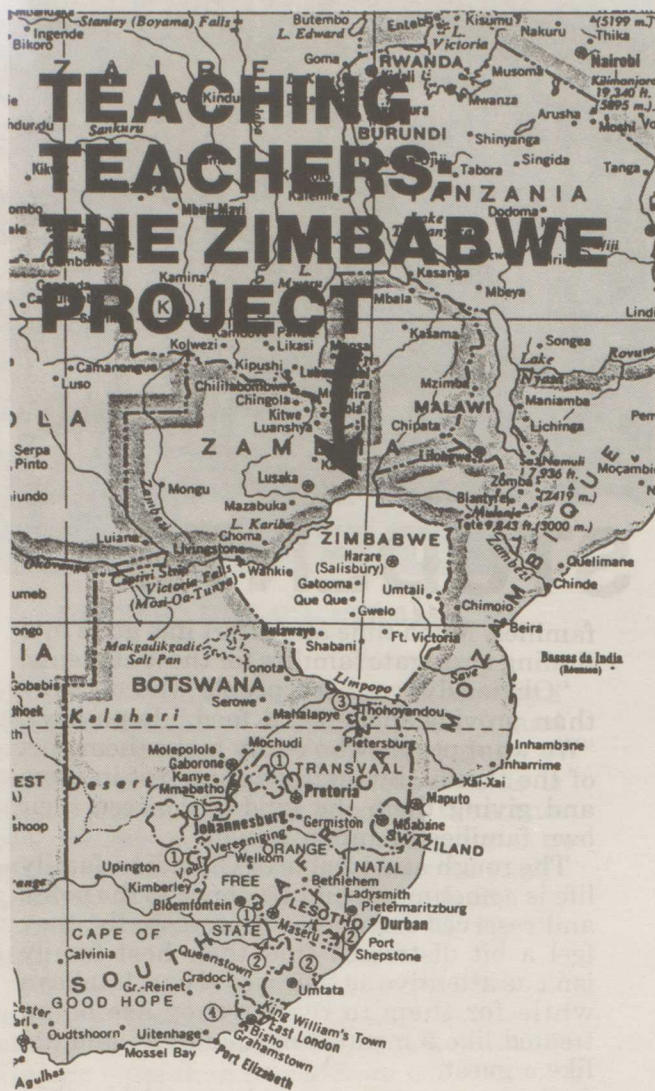
"We work with business too. I've just come back from Hong Kong where I got an enormous amount of help from Ron Poon, who is a CP Air representative over there. He's been there about 20 years and he has a wealth of knowledge about the situation and what the educational needs are. He was able to open a lot of doors for me."

International education initiatives aren't confined to projects that would see foreign students come to study in Canada. In some instances, Henderson says, instructors would go overseas to offer programs or provide technical assistance in establishing educational programs and institutions.

"I've also had discussions with a number of Canadian business firms who do major projects overseas, building mills or factories, for instance. Now they can construct and manage these projects, but they aren't in the training business. They need assistance in teaching local people how to handle the equipment. Here is where we come in. I'm spending a good amount of time getting out and letting these people know we are here and what we can do."

The college, Henderson maintains, is in the process of building programs in international education and there is still a good deal of groundwork to be done.

"I think we are doing what an educational institution should ideally do. That is, we are reflecting the new realities that are at hand. Communications and commerce are no longer contained within national boundaries. Our world is shrinking every day. By moving into the international arena I think we are at the forefront of a trend."



The Zimbabwe project, that saw vocational instructors-in-training from that country come to Vancouver Vocational Institute to hone their teaching skills, was the college's first major venture in the arena of international education.

In 1982 and then again in 1983, two groups of 20 came from Zimbabwe for an eight month session, where they divided their time between Vancouver Vocational Institute and the University of British Columbia.

Out of the experience, the college has developed its own streamlined training package for instructors, David Tickner, from the program development department, reports. This is now being marketed overseas through Norm Henderson, the college's co-ordinator for international education, and the international education committee.

The college's first tie to the Zimbabwe project came through World University Service of Canada, an agency funded through the Canadian International Development Agency, that acts as a link between foreign countries and educational resources in this country. Zimbabwe, having no means to handle this sort of training at home, was looking to put vocational instructors into a variety of educational institutions across the country to give them the necessary teaching skills to supplement their vocational qualifications. But during their investigations found they could match all their needs through VVI.

"Most of the people who arrived here knew their trade, but had no teaching experience," Tickner says. "Even their knowledge of their different trades varied quite a bit."

Each instructor-in-training was assigned to an advisor in VVI. The advisor was responsible for overseeing the individual's classroom experience in teaching.

This on-the-job training was supplemented by classes in the instructor's diploma program at the University of British Columbia.

"At UBC they took four courses over four or five weeks," explains Tickner. "Then they came to us to put the theory into practice. They would prepare and deliver lessons to classes here, guided by their advisors."

One snag in the first program, Tickner says, is that many of the Zimbabweans were here with an eye to upgrading their own vocational skills rather than acquiring teaching skills.

"You have to realize that in Zimbabwe they are greatly limited by resources, equipment and supplies. For instance, those who were trained in auto body repair had an education that was largely theory. Very few of them had had the chance to work on a car to any extent. They were astounded at what was available to them here."

One of the most important lessons that came out of the first session was the need for a structured relationship between the advisor and the instructor-in-training.

"When students come into VVI they are largely self-directed," Tickner says, "They're here because they want to be and they are learning a skill they've chosen. A lot of our advisors related to the Zimbabweans in the same way they did to their students. The atti-

tude was: 'You're responsible for telling me what you need, what you want to know.'

"In fact, we found they didn't know what they needed. They would take the initiative in acquiring new trades skills. They'd get in the shop and learn about the equipment and methods. But they weren't so aware of what their needs were as teachers."

Because the theory and practice were two separate elements, handled by two separate institutions, there was a certain amount of conflict. What people saw in the classrooms at VVI did not always jibe with the theory they had learned at UBC. As a result, those involved with this first project developed their own training package.

"Our approach is somewhat different," Tickner explains. "Rather than keeping the theory and practice as two separate elements we integrate them. In our train the trainer program people go into the classroom as observers first. They see how the instructor handles the class. Then, we have a week long instructional skills session, where we break people into small groups, each with a leader. The lessons are videotaped so the individual can assess strengths and weaknesses, and the group provides feedback as well."

This is a more practical, less theoretical approach, he says. With the classroom experience coming first, students have some resources to draw on in assessing theory they learn in the week long session.

"Each individual has to develop his own teaching method," Tickner says. "There is no one 'right' way. I think our approach makes that easier for the individual."

Tickner thinks the college is now in a good position to offer this training to Third World countries. The plan has sufficient flexibility that students could be brought to Canada or instructors could be sent from here to teach overseas.

"I think it is important to recognize that these initiatives not only enhance our reputation, but provide us with funds that help cover the costs of our regular instructional programs," he says. "In these days of restraint that is a particularly important consideration."

"CANADA'S NEIGHBOURS IN ASIA"



Chairman of Mitsubishi Canada Ltd. Arthur S. Hara (right) presents a cheque for \$1,000 to Ralph Kerr, Langara Campus's dean of instruction for career programs. The money went toward building a library collection on Japan for the new Pacific Rim Program.

This thought provoking series continues this year with talks by representatives of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Fiji, concluding with a presentation by Vancouver's Mayor Michael Harcourt.

These evening lectures are free of charge and open to the public. They take place in lecture theatre 130 at Langara Campus, 100 West 49th Ave. Ample parking is available on the campus. Talks get underway at 7:30 p.m.

This series is sponsored by the college's Pacific Rim Program and supported by the Canadian International Development Agency. It is designed to increase awareness in our community of culture, economics and politics in Pacific Rim countries.

The Philippines Today: Problems, Challenges and Opportunities. Ramon Cardenas, Deputy Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority. **February 13.**

Canadian-Malaysian Relations. Dr. Paul Chan, University of Malaysia. **March 13**
Fantastic Fiji. R. G. Pillai, Fiji Consul for B.C. and Alberta. **March 27.**

Vancouver. Mayor Michael Harcourt. **April 10.**



PACIFIC RIM PROGRAM

British Columbia continues to be beset by a sluggish economy. Fishing, forestry and trade — continue to be recession ridden. But, as is often the case, bad times shook up the status quo. We are now actively looking for new initiatives in business, industry and trade. And one of the important directions British Columbians are turning is west to the Pacific Rim.

This movement began building in the mid-seventies. From 1975 to 1980 Canada's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations more than tripled from \$350 million to over \$1 billion.

It wasn't long before members of Vancouver Community College recognized that there was a role for educators to play in this economic transition.

"At the community college we not only have to meet the needs of the community, sometimes we have to lead the way," explains Gordon Jones, a charter member in the self-proclaimed "gang of four" Langara instructors who, two years ago, moved to create the college's Pacific Rim Program.

Jones and cohorts — John Howard-Gibbon from the English department, Brian Pendleton, from physical education and recreation, and Glen Witter, from business administration — recognized that Canadians would have to learn how to do business in the Pacific Rim and that the college could play an important role in this education.

"In the past most of our dealings have been

with the U.S. or Europe. Here we share a common heritage. Our way of life is similar. Not so with the Asian countries."

The gang knew, merely drawing on the experiences of friends and colleagues, that Canadian businessmen were missing opportunities in Asian countries because they lacked the understanding, the cultural framework, for doing business in that part of the world.

After brainstorming among themselves and consulting with business people and academics, the group came up with a program that would meet a variety of needs:

- a two year diploma in Pacific Rim Studies, that would prepare students for entry level jobs in organizations active in that sphere;

- a transfer option, whereby students could go on to complete a degree in Asian studies from UBC or the University of Victoria;

- Continuing Education courses for people already working with Pacific Rim business;
- public information and lectures on the economies, politics, and cultures in Pacific Rim countries, to raise community awareness of this increasingly more important part of the world.

The diploma program's first group of nine students is nearly finished their studies, taking an option in either business operations or marketing and sales. The program, Jones believes, prepares students for a wide range of entry level jobs.

"I could see one of our graduates going into a junior accounting position in the Bank of Hong Kong's Vancouver office. Or, this could prove great preparation for someone who wanted to teach in our school system, where nearly 50 percent of the students have English as their second language."

Approximately a third of the program explores the way of life in Pacific Rim countries, looking at history, art, religion, and geography. As well, students must take a language credit.

This fall a new course called the Dynamics of Contemporary Asia debuted. It focuses on modern life in the region, examining political development, lifestyles and sociology. Offered in the evening, it draws in a number of people from business and industry.

While text book theory is fine, most educators would agree it is no substitute for personal insight or experience. That is why Vancouver Community College's Pacific Rim Program, early in the game, went after a scheme that would bring leaders in business,

government and education from Far East countries here to share their views, opinions and ideas with people in Vancouver.

Soon after the program got off the ground, in the fall of 1983, co-ordinator Gordon Jones and the three Langara instructors instrumental in the program went to work, first to get funding — which came through from the Canadian International Development Agency last spring — then to find "visiting experts" who would fit the bill.

"We wanted top flight people," Jones explains. "They had to be well educated, articulate and able to readily discuss any number of different aspects of their national life. These could range from trade and politics, to art and religion. We put in an ambitious order."

Working through Canada's embassies and consulates abroad, the program sought out candidates who could meet these rigorous demands. Last fall the visits, usually of three to four weeks each, began and through December the college hosted experts from the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore.

In February and March this year the college welcomes visitors from Malaysia and the Philippines.

So far each visitor has contended with a demanding schedule of commitments, running from classroom sessions at colleges and universities, to meetings with Board of Trade members, to radio hotline interviews.

The Pacific Rim Program was created at a time when there was no funding for new initiatives, so in a spirit of innovation its creators set about fashioning it from already existing programs. This spirit of initiative and flexibility has stayed with the program.

"We've purposely kept it ad hoc," Jones explains, "This way we can alter what we do as needs change and new issues arise. The key is to be responsive."

To this end the program works with a committee of advisors, drawn from business, industry and education, who have extensive dealings with Pacific Rim countries. Chairing this committee is Bill McQuaid, president of McQuaid, Fahy & Associates, a financial consulting firm.

In assessing the rationale behind the program, Jones explains:

"The world is shrinking day by day. If we don't appreciate other cultures, other ways of life, we're going to have problems as we grow more interdependent."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADA

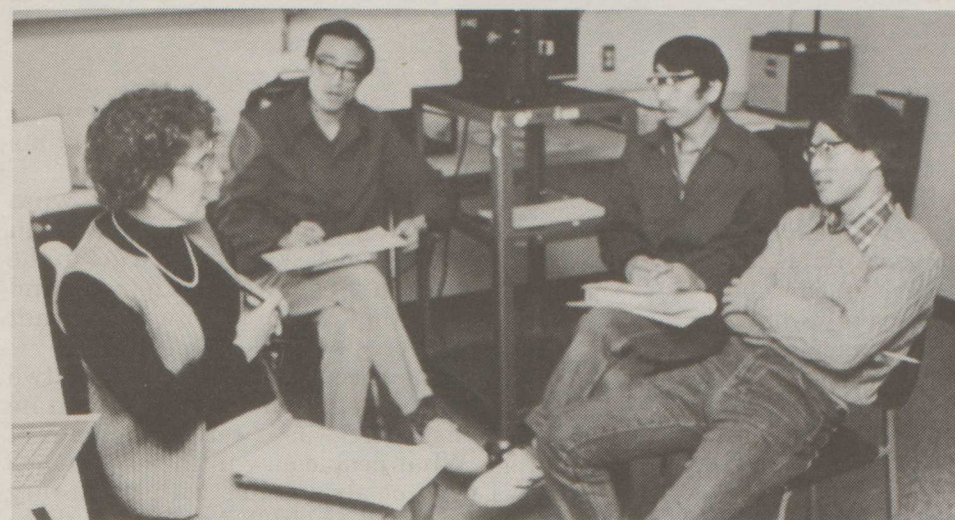
"In the last two years Canadian investment in Singapore went from approximately \$40 million to about \$80 million, even though our country doesn't have a very high profile here. The reason for this is that we have a cheap, highly skilled labour force and we haven't any strikes or labour disputes. Our economy is very stable. We provide a perfect base for manufacturing and selling to the region. There are about 240 million people in ASEAN. The market potential is tremendous. And Singapore is a good stepping stone into China."

Ong goes on to say that Canadians are readily accepted in Singapore. "You aren't tainted by an imperialist history. In that sense it is easier for you than for the Americans."

Singapore is looking, in particular, for investment and expertise in high tech industries. "We're interested in both hardware and software," Ong explains. "The educational component is important too because we need the technology transfer."

Doing business in Singapore is much the same as doing business in North America, he says. The people in Singapore are the yuppies of Southeast Asia. The atmosphere is cosmopolitan and educational and income levels are significantly higher than in other ASEAN countries.

How has Singapore managed to create a booming and sophisticated economy in the years since independence in 1959, when such success has eluded so many of the country's neighbours?



VCC HOME TO JAPANESE STUDENTS

For the past six years Vancouver Community College has served as an outpost of Tokyo's Takushoku University. In this time nearly 200 Japanese students have spent from six to eight months at Langara Campus, learning English and, as importantly, finding out about our North American attitudes and way of life.

"Takushoku University has a long overseas tradition," explains Jindra Repa, Continuing Education's co-ordinator for the program. "It has long been a training ground for young people who are interested in becoming language teachers or who are interested in joining firms that do international business."

"The university has other schools in Spain, Mexico, Peking and Taipei. As with the other schools, when students come to our Canadian school, they want not only to learn our language, but how we think. This is fairly fundamental to communication. You need to know more than just the words. You have to have some understanding of the people."

Competition to get into the program is stiff. Repa notes that about 70 students apply for the 30 spaces the program has open each fall. To qualify, the Japanese students must make scores of 350 to 450 on Princeton's Test of English as a Foreign Language.

"To put that in perspective, a person who scored 600 would qualify for admission in any North American university," he explains.

While here these young Japanese men and women, who range from 19 to 21, attend a specially structured program of language

training that includes oral communication, reading and composition, business English, public speaking, pronunciation, and North American perspectives.

"Though these students studied English in high school, their language competence is not yet sufficient that we can integrate them into our mainstream Langara classes," Repa says.

The students are highly motivated to learn English, so there isn't much of a problem with them staying in small cliques and lapsing into Japanese.

"We have them sign a pledge to use only English and they are very good about keeping it," he says. "They all spend at least half the day here on campus, so the environment is conducive to speaking English. And they are encouraged to take part in social and club activities at Langara."

In addition to Repa, whose office is open to students who may be encountering any difficulties, Takushoku University has its own resident counsellor, Tadashi Miyazaki, to assist students with problems, ranging from lost passports to academic difficulties. He lives permanently in Vancouver and provides a helpful link to Takudai students.

"The school provides a wonderful learning opportunity to these students," Repa explains. "But adjusting to life in another culture is never entirely painless. We try to build elements into that program that will ease the transition, without seeming to babysit them."

The Japanese students live with Canadian



families. Much time and effort has gone into finding surrogate families for these students.

"Obviously, we need people who do more than provide shelter and food," Repa says. "We want people who really make them part of the family, by taking an interest in them and giving them the kind of concern their own families in Japan would."

The rough and tumble of Canadian family life is sometimes a bit of a shock to the polite and reserved Japanese. "Occasionally, they feel a bit distressed that their host family isn't as attentive as they would like. It takes a while for them to realize they are being treated like a member of the family and not like a guest."

"It is amazing to me how quickly they actually adapt. By the end of the school session many want to stay on in Canada. I think this is one of the great benefits of the program. Wherever these students go — whether into foreign service or international business or teaching — they remain friends of Canada. They have a special interest in our country."

This year for the first time students are travelling in the other direction. In April a group of 11 students from Vancouver Community College go to Takushoku University for a year of study in Japan. They not only get intensive language study, acquiring university credits applicable in Canada or Japan, they experience first hand the Japanese culture and way of life. Like their counterparts at the Canadian School of Takudai, they live with host families during their stay in the country.



SINGAPORE . . . the sophisticates of the PACIFIC RIM

As Gordon Jones, the co-ordinator, explains, one of the Pacific Rim Program's primary objectives is to introduce people in the Lower Mainland to the ways of life and business in the Far East.

"Traditionally, we in North America have had our strongest ties with Europe," he notes. "But that is turning around now and we are increasingly looking to the Pacific Rim as our new frontier, particularly in terms of trade. To do business in this part of the world we have to have an understanding of the systems and values in these countries — ones that are quite different from our own."

Dr. Ong Jin Hui, head of the department of sociology at the National University of Singapore, came as his country's "visiting expert" late this fall.

"I was intrigued when I first heard about the program," he explains in easy-flowing English, that bespeaks an M.A. and Ph.D. from Indiana University. "I thought it looked like fun. But when I realized that I would have to talk about all different aspects of Singapore I was a little intimidated. No one is an expert with that sort of range. A friend told me I must have been crazy or punch drunk when I agreed to come."

"But seriously, I think it is important to be here. Canadians know very little about Singapore. In fact, we have an influence that goes quite far beyond what a country with 2.4 million would normally have. This contact is coming at just the right time. There are opportunities in Singapore that could be of real benefit to Canadians and I'm finding many business people aren't aware of them."

PLANNING IS KEY

A number of factors contribute. First, is Singapore's relatively small size — about 640 square kilometers. It doesn't face enormous problems with communications and transportation. On the other hand, it doesn't have the range of natural resources a larger country could offer.

"Singapore is a country of 2.4 million and we have nothing by way of natural resources. Our only natural asset is a good port. Initially we were dependent on trade. If you look at a map we're a nice, central location for Southeast Asian trade. But trading can be precarious. So we decided we'd better get into manufacturing. When you depend so heavily on your manpower resource education becomes very important. It's all that you have to offer. We've worked hard to ensure we have a highly skilled workforce. At first we were very labour intensive, but we can't compete with other ASEAN countries in this regard. So we became highly skilled."

A carefully controlled economy and strong infrastructures supported this progress.

"When the British left in 1959 we had to start from scratch. There were then only English schools and they only had enough places to supply manpower needs for the civil service. There were hardly any vocational or technical schools. We built up a whole educational infrastructure."

"Next we tackled housing. When the British left there were about 20,000 government built units. In the next three years the housing authority built 23,000 units. Last year we built 42,000 units. Only now, more than 20 years later are we starting to scale down."

THE GREAT DEBATE

One of the government's most controversial initiatives, at least in the West, is its active bid to encourage the development of a

strong educational elite. Under this scheme there is incentive for people with a low level of education to be sterilized. The incentive, Ong explains, comes in the form of a payment of about \$5,000.

"It is important to understand," Ong says, "that we aren't forcing anyone. It is an incentive. People can take it or leave it."

"What we are trying to avoid is the situation where those who can provide for them the least well, are having the majority of the children. That's not to say some brilliant people won't come from the lower socioeconomic strata. Certainly they will. That's the human spirit. But the educated people, those most able to provide their children with education, welfare and proper nutrition just aren't having children in the same numbers as those less well off."

As most aspects of national life are carefully planned, so is Singapore's future.

"We'll continue with trade and high tech manufacturing and I see the country moving more heavily into the service sector, particularly in international banking. We see Singapore as a financial centre for the region. Certainly banking and insurance are necessary to back up development projects in the region."

"Above all we're not going to be putting all our eggs in one basket. And certainly we won't be going into labour intensive projects again. Our rates simply can't compete with those in, for instance, Malaysia. We are really the middle class of the region, I suppose. I can see Singapore moving into biotechnology, for instance, producing vaccines."



PACIFIC RIM PROGRAM

British Columbia continues to be beset by a sluggish economy. Fishing, forestry and mining — for years our stock and trade — continue to be recession ridden. But, as is often the case, bad times shook up the status quo. We are now actively looking for new initiatives in business, industry and trade. And one of the important directions British Columbians are turning is west to the Pacific Rim.

This movement began building in the mid-seventies. From 1975 to 1980 Canada's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations more than tripled from \$350 million to over \$1 billion.

It wasn't long before members of Vancouver Community College recognized that there was a role for educators to play in this economic transition.

"At the community college we not only have to meet the needs of the community, sometimes we have to lead the way," explains Gordon Jones, a charter member in the self-proclaimed "gang of four" Langara instructors who, two years ago, moved to create the college's Pacific Rim Program.

Jones and cohorts — John Howard-Gibbon from the English department, Brian Pendleton, from physical education and recreation, and Glen Witter, from business administration — recognized that Canadians would have to learn how to do business in the Pacific Rim and that the college could play an important role in this education.

"In the past most of our dealings have been

with the U.S. or Europe. Here we share a common heritage. Our way of life is similar. Not so with the Asian countries."

The gang knew, merely drawing on the experiences of friends and colleagues, that Canadian businessmen were missing opportunities in Asian countries because they lacked the understanding, the cultural framework, for doing business in that part of the world.

After brainstorming among themselves and consulting with business people and academics, the group came up with a program that would meet a variety of needs:

- a two year diploma in Pacific Rim Studies, that would prepare students for entry level jobs in organizations active in that sphere;
- a transfer option, whereby students could go on to complete a degree in Asian studies from UBC or the University of Victoria;
- Continuing Education courses for people already working with Pacific Rim business;
- public information and lectures on the economies, politics, and cultures in Pacific Rim countries, to raise community awareness of this increasingly more important part of the world.

The diploma program's first group of nine students is nearly finished their studies, taking an option in either business operations or marketing and sales. The program, Jones believes, prepares students for a wide range of entry level jobs.

"I could see one of our graduates going into a junior accounting position in the Bank of Hong Kong's Vancouver office. Or, this could prove great preparation for someone who wanted to teach in our school system, where nearly 50 percent of the students have English as their second language."

Approximately a third of the program explores the way of life in Pacific Rim countries, looking at history, art, religion, and geography. As well, students must take a language credit.

This fall a new course called the Dynamics of Contemporary Asia debuted. It focuses on modern life in the region, examining political development, lifestyles and sociology. Offered in the evening, it draws in a number of people from business and industry.

While text book theory is fine, most educators would agree it is no substitute for personal insight or experience. That is why Vancouver Community College's Pacific Rim Program, early in the game, went after a scheme that would bring leaders in business,

government and education from Far East countries here to share their views, opinions and ideas with people in Vancouver.

Soon after the program got off the ground, in the fall of 1983, co-ordinator Gordon Jones and the three Langara instructors instrumental in the program went to work, first to get funding — which came through from the Canadian International Development Agency last spring — then to find "visiting experts" who would fit the bill.

"We wanted top flight people," Jones explains. "They had to be well educated, articulate and able to readily discuss any number of different aspects of their national life. These could range from trade and politics, to art and religion. We put in an ambitious order."

Working through Canada's embassies and consulates abroad, the program sought out candidates who could meet these rigorous demands. Last fall the visits, usually of three to four weeks each, began and through December the college hosted experts from the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore.

In February and March this year the college welcomes visitors from Malaysia and the Philippines.

So far each visitor has contended with a demanding schedule of commitments, running from classroom sessions at colleges and universities, to meetings with Board of Trade members, to radio hotline interviews.

The Pacific Rim Program was created at a time when there was no funding for new initiatives, so in a spirit of innovation its creators set about fashioning it from already existing programs. This spirit of initiative and flexibility has stayed with the program.

"We've purposely kept it ad hoc," Jones explains, "This way we can alter what we do as needs change and new issues arise. The key is to be responsive."

To this end the program works with a committee of advisors, drawn from business, industry and education, who have extensive dealings with Pacific Rim countries. Chairing this committee is Bill McQuaid, president of McQuaid, Fahy & Associates, a financial consulting firm.

In assessing the rationale behind the program, Jones explains:

"The world is shrinking day by day. If we don't appreciate other cultures, other ways of life, we're going to have problems as we grow more interdependent."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADA

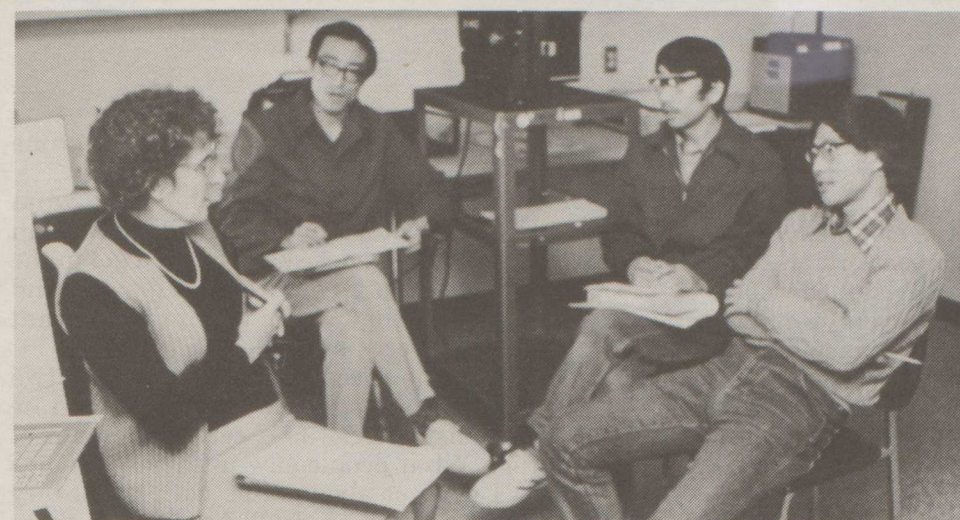
"In the last two years Canadian investment in Singapore went from approximately \$40 million to about \$80 million, even though our country doesn't have a very high profile here. The reason for this is that we have a cheap, highly skilled labour force and we haven't any strikes or labour disputes. Our economy is very stable. We provide a perfect base for manufacturing and selling to the region. There are about 240 million people in ASEAN. The market potential is tremendous. And Singapore is a good stepping stone into China."

Ong goes on to say that Canadians are readily accepted in Singapore. "You aren't tainted by an imperialist history. In that sense it is easier for you than for the Americans."

Singapore is looking, in particular, for investment and expertise in high tech industries. "We're interested in both hardware and software," Ong explains. "The educational component is important too because we need the technology transfer."

Doing business in Singapore is much the same as doing business in North America, he says. The people in Singapore are the yuppies of Southeast Asia. The atmosphere is cosmopolitan and educational and income levels are significantly higher than in other ASEAN countries.

How has Singapore managed to create a booming and sophisticated economy in the years since independence in 1959, when such success has eluded so many of the country's neighbours?



VCC HOME TO JAPANESE STUDENTS

For the past six years Vancouver Community College has served as an outpost of Tokyo's Takushoku University. In this time nearly 200 Japanese students have spent from six to eight months at Langara Campus, learning English and, as importantly, finding out about our North American attitudes and way of life.

"Takushoku University has a long overseas tradition," explains Jindra Repa, Continuing Education's co-ordinator for the program. "It has long been a training ground for young people who are interested in becoming language teachers or who are interested in joining firms that do international business."

"The university has other schools in Spain, Mexico, Peking and Taipei. As with the other schools, when students come to our Canadian school, they want not only to learn our language, but how we think. This is fairly fundamental to communication. You need to know more than just the words. You have to have some understanding of the people."

Competition to get into the program is stiff. Repa notes that about 70 students apply for the 30 spaces the program has open each fall. To qualify, the Japanese students must make scores of 350 to 450 on Princeton's Test of English as a Foreign Language.

"To put that in perspective, a person who scored 600 would qualify for admission in any North American university," he explains.

While here these young Japanese men and women, who range from 19 to 21, attend a specially structured program of language

training that includes oral communication, reading and composition, business English, public speaking, pronunciation, and North American perspectives.

"Though these students studied English in high school, their language competence is not yet sufficient that we can integrate them into our mainstream Langara classes," Repa says.

The students are highly motivated to learn English, so there isn't much of a problem with them staying in small cliques and lapsing into Japanese.

"We have them sign a pledge to use only English and they are very good about keeping it," he says. "They all spend at least half the day here on campus, so the environment is conducive to speaking English. And they are encouraged to take part in social and club activities at Langara."

In addition to Repa, whose office is open to students who may be encountering any difficulties, Takushoku University has its own resident counsellor, Tadashi Miyazaki, to assist students with problems, ranging from lost passports to academic difficulties. He lives permanently in Vancouver and provides a helpful link to Takudai students.

"The school provides a wonderful learning opportunity to these students," Repa explains. "But adjusting to life in another culture is never entirely painless. We try to build elements into that program that will ease the transition, without seeming to babysit them."

The Japanese students live with Canadian



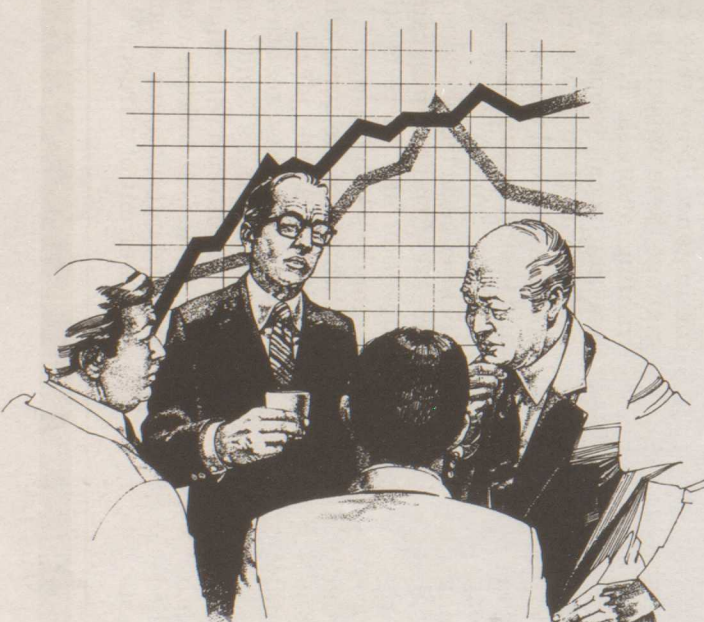
families. Much time and effort has gone into finding surrogate families for these students.

"Obviously, we need people who do more than provide shelter and food," Repa says. "We want people who really make them part of the family, by taking an interest in them and giving them the kind of concern their own families in Japan would."

The rough and tumble of Canadian family life is sometimes a bit of a shock to the polite and reserved Japanese. "Occasionally, they feel a bit distressed that their host family isn't as attentive as they would like. It takes a while for them to realize they are being treated like a member of the family and not like a guest."

"It is amazing to me how quickly they actually adapt. By the end of the school session many want to stay on in Canada. I think this is one of the great benefits of the program. Wherever these students go — whether into foreign service or international business or teaching — they remain friends of Canada. They have a special interest in our country."

This year for the first time students are travelling in the other direction. In April a group of 11 students from Vancouver Community College go to Takushoku University for a year of study in Japan. They not only get intensive language study, acquiring university credits applicable in Canada or Japan, they experience first hand the Japanese culture and way of life. Like their counterparts at the Canadian School of Takudai, they live with host families during their stay in the country.



SINGAPORE . . . the sophisticates of the PACIFIC RIM

As Gordon Jones, the co-ordinator, explains, one of the Pacific Rim Program's primary objectives is to introduce people in the Lower Mainland to the ways of life and business in the Far East.

"Traditionally, we in North America have had our strongest ties with Europe," he notes. "But that is turning around now and we are increasingly looking to the Pacific Rim as our new frontier, particularly in terms of trade. To do business in this part of the world we have to have an understanding of the systems and values in these countries — ones that are quite different from our own."

Dr. Ong Jin Hui, head of the department of sociology at the National University of Singapore, came as his country's "visiting expert" late this fall.

"I was intrigued when I first heard about the program," he explains in easy-flowing English, that bespeaks an M.A. and Ph.D. from Indiana University. "I thought it looked like fun. But when I realized that I would have to talk about all different aspects of Singapore I was a little intimidated. No one is an expert with that sort of range. A friend told me I must have been crazy or punch drunk when I agreed to come."

"But seriously, I think it is important to be here. Canadians know very little about Singapore. In fact, we have an influence that goes quite far beyond what a country with 2.4 million would normally have. This contact is coming at just the right time. There are opportunities in Singapore that could be of real benefit to Canadians and I'm finding many business people aren't aware of them."

PLANNING IS KEY

A number of factors contribute. First, is Singapore's relatively small size — about 640 square kilometers. It doesn't face enormous problems with communications and transportation. On the other hand, it doesn't have the range of natural resources a larger country could offer.

"Singapore is a country of 2.4 million and we have nothing by way of natural resources. Our only natural asset is a good port. Initially we were dependent on trade. If you look at a map we're a nice, central location for Southeast Asian trade. But trading can be precarious. So we decided we'd better get into manufacturing. When you depend so heavily on your manpower resource education becomes very important. It's all that you have to offer. We've worked hard to ensure we have a highly skilled workforce. At first we were very labour intensive, but we can't compete with other ASEAN countries in this regard. So we became highly skilled."

A carefully controlled economy and strong infrastructures supported this progress.

"When the British left in 1959 we had to start from scratch. There were then only English schools and they only had enough places to supply manpower needs for the civil service. There were hardly any vocational or technical schools. We built up a whole educational infrastructure."

"Next we tackled housing. When the British left there were about 20,000 government built units. In the next three years the housing authority built 23,000 units. Last year we built 42,000 units. Only now, more than 20 years later are we starting to scale down."

THE GREAT DEBATE

One of the government's most controversial initiatives, at least in the West, is its active bid to encourage the development of a

strong educational elite. Under this scheme there is incentive for people with a low level of education to be sterilized. The incentive, Ong explains, comes in the form of a payment of about \$5,000.

"It is important to understand," Ong says, "that we aren't forcing anyone. It is an incentive. People can take it or leave it."

"What we are trying to avoid is the situation where those who can provide for them the least well, are having the majority of the children. That's not to say some brilliant people won't come from the lower socioeconomic strata. Certainly they will. That's the human spirit. But the educated people, those most able to provide their children with education, welfare and proper nutrition just aren't having children in the same numbers as those less well off."

As most aspects of national life are carefully planned, so is Singapore's future.

"We'll continue with trade and high tech manufacturing and I see the country moving more heavily into the service sector, particularly in international banking. We see Singapore as a financial centre for the region. Certainly banking and insurance are necessary to back up development projects in the region."

"Above all we're not going to be putting all our eggs in one basket. And certainly we won't be going into labour intensive projects again. Our rates simply can't compete with those in, for instance, Malaysia. We are really the middle class of the region, I suppose. I can see Singapore moving into biotechnology, for instance, producing vaccines."