

28 September 2010 – Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington
“Challenges and Rewards of a Multidisciplinary Program: Canadian Studies at the University of Washington,” by Nadine Fabbi, UW Canadian Studies Center

Notes for Presentation and Meetings:

National Resource Center

- The U.W. Canadian Studies Center forms the Pacific Northwest National Resource Center on Canada with Western Washington University
- It is one of two National Resource Centers on Canada in the U.S. (the other is a consortium including University of Maine and SUNY Plattsburgh)
- The Center was just awarded its 9th consecutive NRC and FLAS grant from the U.S. Department of Education, International Programs Service
- This \$1.7 million-dollar grant is divided between the NRC, the FLAS program and our Consortium partners
- A National Resource Center has the mandate to train specialists on Canada including curricular content, research, K-12 professional development training, and public programming at the institutional, regional and national levels
- A Foreign Language and Area Studies grant is to train language specialists in Québec culture and language and other Canadian languages

History

- International Programs Services (Title VI grants) grew out of a response by the U.S. federal government to the 1957 launching of Sputnik 1 by the Soviet Union
- The event so shocked the U.S. government that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was created the following year and funding for scientific research and international education was dramatically increased creating the funding base that supports National Resource Centers today.
- Most recently, the attacks of September 11th only increased the demand for international knowledge with Congress and the President providing the largest, single increase to International Education Service funding in recent history.
- In 2010 127 NRC were funded in the U.S.

Canadian Studies Center

- Founded by a Canadian Geographer in the mid-1980s, Douglas Jackson
- Staffing includes a chair/director (about 15%), associate director (100%), outreach coordinator (25%), secretary (25%) – also supported by staffing from the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
- Within JSIS where there are 7 other Title VI programs and a total of 14 international programs
- In the College of Arts and Sciences under Social Sciences
- Also have a campus-wide office – Global Affairs – that oversees all things global and that we interact with

Canadian Studies Associations and the Embassy/Consulates

- Association for Canadian Studies in the U.S.

- Based in DC
- American Council for Québec Studies
- International Council for Canadian Studies
 - Based in Ottawa, represented in 38 countries
- Canadian Embassy, Washington, D.C.
 - 501 Pennsylvania Avenue – the only embassy located between the U.S. Capitol and the White House
 - Canada’s first diplomatic post abroad opened in 1927
 - 1991 the Embassy became home to one of Canada’s most stunning aboriginal sculptures – *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* by Bill Reid. Bill Reid (1920-1988) is renowned for his work as a Haida artist. *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* is of a Haida canoe (cast in bronze) and carrying 13 figures including Grizzly Bear, Beaver, Raven and the Killer Whale. The creatures represent the difficulty of different cultures all being in “one boat” together.
- Canadian Consulate General, Seattle (Denis Stevens, Wendy Baldwin, Kevin Cook)
 - 21 Consulates General, Consulates, or Trade Offices in the U.S.
- Québec in the United States (Yanick Gobout, LA)
 - 6 Offices of Québec in the U.S.

Why Study Canada?

In an increasingly interdependent world, it is vitally important that education transcends national borders. Students need to learn about life in other countries and how their people see the world. For American students, what better place to start than with a neighbor? In his 1961 speech to the Canadian Parliament, President John F. Kennedy said, "Geography has made us neighbours. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies." These words about the Canada-United States relationship are as true today as they were more than 40 years ago.

Canadian Embassy website

According to the rationale behind the creation of the U.S. Department of Education’s International Programs Service founded in the 1960s, international education is essential in maintaining peaceful relations globally and in resolving conflict in a peaceful and productive manner. Without the understanding of other nations and cultures, there is little hope that as a society we can effectively conduct trade, manage our global environment, or respect differences in order to maintain positive relations.

So, why study Canada? Canada is the most effective nation to use in comparative study with the U.S. First, Canada is much like the U.S. Both countries are geographically the largest in the world and peopled with aboriginals and immigrants from every nation on earth. Both were settled within a year of each other as European colonies. We look the same, the majority of our citizens are English-speaking, we watch the same television shows, read the same books, and buy more or less the same products. We are each other’s largest trading partner and millions of our citizens cross the border daily.

Given these similarities, when we introduce our students to the differences between the countries including our histories, governments, social welfare systems etc., those differences cannot just be

shrugged off as “foreign.” Instead, how it is that Canada is different from the U.S. can be used to challenge our students’ thinking and assumptions about themselves as Americans. At the very least, this enables students to know themselves better through comparison.

Consider the following differences:

- Canada implemented universal health care beginning in the 1940s (introduced in Saskatchewan in 1946) – a contentious discussion that is just occurring in the U.S. today – and over 85% of Canadian support it
- Canada and the U.S. often agree on foreign policy but in 2003 Canada opposed the War in Iraq – a sore point for the U.S. government
- Canada decriminalized marijuana in 2005
- Canada was the third country in the world to legalize gay marriage in 2005
- Canada opposed the National Missile Defense program in 2005

Second, much of Canadian history is linked to U.S. history and so in extending our curriculum across the 49th parallel, we broaden and enrich our students’ understanding of American history. African-American history is incomplete without the inclusion of the incredible exodus of runaway slaves to Canada during the Underground Railway Movement. Cajun history wouldn’t exist if the Acadian expulsion from Canada had not occurred. The first major influx of English settlers to Canada were American – Tories leaving the U.S. during the American Revolution. And the five million Franco-Americans in New England would not be if it weren’t for the French Canadian exodus at the turn of the 20th century. The more we as educators include Canada in the curriculum, the more we broaden and enlarge the context of U.S. history.

Finally, Canada and the U.S. are increasingly more integrated – we are one another’s largest trading partner, environmental management issues from fish stocks to air and water quality to wildlife do not stop at the border, and security concerns are forcing close collaboration. Students without a solid understanding of Canadian history, politics, social values, etc. will be less able to deal effectively with North American issues in future professions and leadership roles.

Canada is an easy and effective way to introduce international studies into the classroom and to broaden student understanding of the world and themselves. And, besides, Canada is curious, rather unusual and fun – it is an easy “sell” to students’ who often have a relative from Canada or an experience there.