SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN A WORLD OF DIVERSITY
Principal Daniel Woolf visits with international students
Focus on the University’s internationalization and the role of the International Centre

As a support service for the Queen’s community, QUIC is an integral part of the University’s commitment to a comprehensive vision of internationalization both on campus through “internationalization at home,” and through global outreach. QUIC is an important contributor to fulfilling the University’s priorities which include promotion of diversity, inclusivity, equity, and cross-cultural awareness within the university community, and developing opportunities for domestic and international students, faculty and researchers to engage successfully as members of the global community.

QUIC is leading the Queen’s community (and setting a standard for other institutions in Canada and internationally) toward the future by defining needs and developing programmatic infrastructure on campus such as the “risk and responsibility” approach to pre-departure preparation for students embarking on study/work abroad experiences in order to support international activities abroad, and to deliver training programs at home that enhance intercultural awareness and communication.

Queen’s is proud of the 50-year history and evolution of the International Centre. From its humble but forward-thinking beginning as a place where international students could connect through their common experiences, it has become a centre of innovation in redefining the scope of what it means for Queen’s to be an international and cross-cultural community.

I congratulate QUIC on reaching this major 50-year milestone, and express thanks to QUIC’s dedicated staff on behalf of the entire Queen’s community for their significant contributions to our campus.

Daniel R. Woolf
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Focus on the student experience, and the benefits of the International Centre

When the Queen’s University International Centre was established in 1962, there were approximately 150 international students at Queen’s; in 2012 as QUIC celebrates its 50th anniversary, Queen’s hosts over 2000 international students from more than 90 countries, and over 2000 Queen’s students annually embark on a wide variety of international experiences. Throughout this period, international and domestic students have found the QUIC to be a supportive community that offers a comfortable and inclusive environment where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to interact and participate in a wide range of enriching international and cross-cultural activities.

QUIC provides international and domestic students with work, internship and volunteer opportunities. QUIC also provides a wide range of support services and resources to incoming, outgoing and returning students to enrich the individual and collective student experience. In turn, incoming and returning students bring expanded global perspectives that they share with one another, as well as with members of the Queen’s and Kingston communities.

Students who use QUIC services play an integral role in its success. QUIC is a venue for community members to meet and share a cup of coffee, or a bowl of soup and conversation at a QUIC International Community lunch. In many cases students instigate development of new programs and services.

To the readers of this booklet who have engaged with, benefitted from and contributed to QUIC over the past 50 years, thank you; to those who are new to QUIC, I invite you to visit QUIC and discover opportunities to share in the next 50 years of QUIC’s history.

John Dixon
Vice-Provost (International)
An international vision brought to fulfillment

Hidden somewhere in the archives of Queen's University is the name of the first out-of-country student to register in the years following its founding by Royal Charter in pre-Confederation Canada. More than a century later – in the tumultuous decade of the 1960s when the “winds of change” swept through social institutions around the world – a trickle of international students turned into a steady flow.

One among the growing number was a young man from Jamaica, Karl Bennett, who viewed the prospect of a Canadian winter with almost as much apprehension as dealing with an unfamiliar culture while mastering his studies in economics and political science. Karl had the support of the oldest international club on campus, the West Indies Students’ Association. “I saw a lot of students having difficulty settling into the campus,” recalls Karl, now a retired professor of economics from a Canadian university.

It was Karl’s appreciation of the need for a facility to serve all international students that led to creation of the Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC), which in 2012 marks its 50th anniversary. Obtaining a grant from the Kingston Rotary Club, Karl investigated what other North American universities were doing to accommodate foreign students. His 1961 report recommended establishment of an International House that would serve as a gathering place at Queen’s for students from other countries.

The positive response to Karl Bennett’s recommendations led to the provision of a home to serve as a temporary International House, followed a few years later by the establishment of the present International Centre in the John Deutsch University Centre.

International House had its official opening on October 14, 1962 in ceremonies presided over by Queen’s University Principal Dr. J.A. Corry. He characterized it as “a place where visitors will find friendship, where warmth of hospitality and of companionship will cause a glow of memory in the future.”

FOUNDED IN AN AGE OF CRISIS

At the time of the founding of the International Centre, the world was fraught with crisis. Aerial reconnaissance photos revealed the construction of Soviet missile sites in Cuba, setting off a crisis that swept the world to the brink of a nuclear inferno. In China, following the years of the Great Leap Forward, the stage was being set for the Cultural Revolution. To the south, the civil rights movement was nearing its height and the Vietnam War was beginning to escalate. In Africa, countries such as Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda were declaring their independence.

The Canada of that time was a relatively inward looking country, and Kingston was a city only half the size of its 21st century embodiment. The University’s Scottish heritage remained firmly implanted and the skirl of bagpipes – like ‘the Gaels,’ the name of its varsity teams – was an ever-present reminder of its Celtic roots.

The postwar years, by now having run their course, had left a legacy of new spirit, characterized notably by the abolition of colonial empires and the emergence of developing nations each anxious to secure its own unique place in the world. The result was a flow of scholarship student “ambassadors” to Canada’s shores.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Over the past 50 years of hosting students, the Centre has accommodated a broad range of activities that create a receptive and respectful environment for students and their families. Consider these events:

- Mid-afternoon tea and conversation
- A noon hour reception giving the Principal an opportunity to meet with international students
- A performance of the Precision Ice Skating Team (consisting of those who could stop and turn but not skate backwards)
- An orientation program for the first class of first year students departing for the International Study Centre at Herstmonceux in England
- A game of chess, Japanese Go or table tennis played amid a host of onlookers
- Children playing with books and toys housed in a large hamper
- A line-up of students and visitors at the kitchen window anticipating their bowl of lentil soup
The original motivation for the International Centre was to provide a supportive and welcoming environment for international students. Such an atmosphere, it was reasoned, would contribute to students’ success and their ability to contribute to the social and economic development of their homelands. It was not long, however, before it was recognized that domestic students also stood to gain immeasurably from campus experiences that could open them to opportunities for study and work abroad. The creation of a genuinely international ambiance for all students and staff of Queen’s thus became a compelling mandate of the International Centre.

At this time, community groups such as the Islamic Association of Kingston, the Baha’i Association, the Canada-Pakistan Association and the World University Services Canada (WUSC) made their home in the Centre. The integration of domestic and out-of-country students in International Centre programs brought multiple benefits: international students enjoy a more fulfilling and effective educational experience before embarking on lifetime careers in their home countries or around the world; domestic students and faculty become fully attuned to the diversity of cultures making up modern Canada and the world at large; and domestic students who wish to do so begin to acquire the knowledge and understanding essential to the pursuit of successful careers abroad in international settings. By 1969, CUSO (formerly the Canadian University Services Overseas) opened an office in the Centre to offer recent graduates of Queen’s opportunities to volunteer in developing countries.

AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IMPERATIVE

In the 1970s, nearly half of the international student body at Queen’s was enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies, with undergraduates concentrated in Arts & Science and English studies. Asia accounted for 49 per cent of students, with 16 per cent from Europe and 12.5 per cent from the Americas and 7 per cent from Africa. The top seven countries in 1971 were United States, Hong Kong, United Kingdom, India, Australia, Malaysia, and Bermuda.

The International Centre contributed to raising the profile of Queen’s University in the community when Executive Secretary Kaspar Pold developed the Public Education Program in 1972 to have international students speak to schools and community groups. Building on this initiative, through the 1980s and early 1990s, the International Centre played an important role in the Global Development Program of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The program was inaugurated in 1976. Students from Queen’s served as speakers at program workshops and during more than a decade the Centre implemented hundreds of workshops and special events. Between 1976 and 1991 over $2 million were brought into the Centre from CIDA, Boards of Education, and local groups such as the Rotary Clubs of Kingston.

Staff of the Centre also developed a resource library on development issues and published Development Perspectives, a curriculum kit for use in secondary schools. Other global related activities of the International Centre included the Kingston International Film Festival and publication of the EarthLinks newsletter reporting on international student and staff activity at Queen's.

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When Marilyn Freeman moved to Kingston after retiring from teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in Toronto, she checked the Queen’s University web site to find out what was happening in her subject area.

Her search quickly turned up the International Centre. She sent an email requesting more information, while stressing she was not looking for a job.

“I got a response within a couple of hours,” she remembers. This started Marilyn on one of the most rewarding phases of her life – volunteering with students from around the world to help them become more comfortable and acculturated to an English language environment. Marilyn benefited from the long commitment of Pat and Peter Gordon, volunteers who coordinated the program for more than 13 years.

Her first surprise – among many – was that most of the students attending the QUIC English Conversation Group have a pretty good grasp of English.

“There are no rank beginners,” she said. “Many are graduate students with a good level of English. They are lonely – they want to meet people faced with similar challenges in a new environment where they haven’t yet found their place.”

The students attending the English Conversation Group Marilyn Freeman coordinates as one of a four-member team meet every Thursday evening from September to June. Working alongside her team are other volunteers from the community and the Queen’s student body.

One of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering with international students, she says, is watching them absorb the values of Canadian and other cultures within their group.

Discussion subjects at the Conversation Group are always topical and designed to enrich understanding of Canadian culture and attitudes. A pre-Valentine’s Day session featured hand-outs on the history of the tradition and quizzes on romantic relationships and family values.

As always, Marilyn observes, those who teach learn from those being taught. “You always learn something new from these exercises,” Marilyn comments. “But most of all, we see in practice how these students come together with so many different viewpoints, and leave with an enriched understanding of Canada and of each other.”

DIRECTORS OF THE CENTRE

The Centre has been ably served by a series of dedicated directors and acting directors.

1965 David Dewar appointed first Executive Secretary; Dr. John Coleman becomes Director of International House

1967 Mary Brunette is appointed Acting Executive Secretary

1969 Fred Hartland is appointed Executive Secretary

1970 Kaspar Pold becomes Executive Secretary

1978 Wayne Myles appointed Acting Executive Secretary while Kaspar Pold is on leave

1982 Wayne Myles becomes Director of the International Centre

1988 Jack Sinnott becomes Acting Director while Wayne Myles is on leave in Indonesia

2004 Susan Anderson is appointed Acting Director while Wayne Myles is on leave in Asia.
MULTICULTURALISM AND THE CHARTER

The 1980s brought further significant change to Canada. As a consequence of changes in immigration law, the country began to take on a more multicultural character. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, entrenched in the new Canadian constitution of 1982, became the core expression of Canadian values. The building of an international and multicultural community began in earnest at Queen’s and other Canadian institutions. It was at this time that the International Centre established its first mission statement that aimed at building “an internationally minded and cross-culturally sensitive” community at Queen’s.

This was a decade in which the Canadian government was increasing its aid to the developing world. Universities played a significant role in delivering these human resource development and education programs. Under the direction of Wayne Myles who was appointed Director of the International Centre in 1982, the Office of International Programs was researched and developed through a grant from Principal R.L. Watts. The Office focused mainly on communicating to Queen’s departments and faculty members, opportunities for applying for international development grants from CIDA. In 1985 the office moved to the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

The decade also saw a growing interest in work and study abroad, raising a need for more information about such opportunities. The Centre undertook to fill the gap by collecting and publishing a Work/Study/Travel Abroad Database listing hundreds of opportunities abroad. Its success led to the Database being purchased in 1986 by the Canadian Bureau for International Education, which marketed it under the name Sojourns.

The International Centre’s many in-house activities grew rapidly during that decade. A well-attended Cooking School acquainted students with the fare of other cultures that resulted in the publication of a cookbook International Dishes from the Far East, South-East Asia and the West Indies. The Centre cooperated with Kingston's Cabelnet 13 to host the Earthlinks series based on topics related to international development. Such diverse organizations as the Southeast Asian Group, Canadian Crossroads International, WUSC local committee (which headed up the campaign to establish the WUSC Student Refugee Award in 1985), Amnesty International, the Campus Action Network for International Development (CANID) and the Human Rights Conference began to make use of the Centre’s facilities.

Over the years, student associations representing many communities have booked Centre facilities for their activities. These include Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Taiwanese, Tamil, Vietnamese, Egyptian, Bangladeshi and Iranian student groups, as well as the Muslim and African-Caribbean student associations.

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By the 1990s, the International Centre had firmly embraced a vision of assisting the University in developing the international learning environment throughout the campus. In examining its Mandate for the Future in 1991, the International Centre recognized that while the Centre had found success as a “home away from home” for international students, it would face a leap of herculean proportions in order to take a lead in “internationalizing the campus.” To this end, it expanded its Mission to include providing services and programs for education abroad, and to assist in the internationalization of the campus in cooperation with academic departments and campus groups.

Building on the trend set in the 1980s, a growing number of Queen’s students began to expand their competencies by participating in international work and study programs. The International Centre established the Education Abroad Program in 1992 and subsequently appointed an Education Abroad Advisor. This has enabled the Centre to play an important role in providing information, guidance and support to those interested in these career-enhancing opportunities, including supporting faculties and departments that run exchanges and study abroad programs.

With internationalization now identified as a fundamental principle of the University’s life and its future, the Centre began to work cooperatively with faculties and departments at Queen’s to fulfill their international goals, as well as with the broader network of international educators across Canada. The 1990s saw the Centre engaged in a variety of initiatives, including formation with other Ontario Universities of the Work, Study Abroad Network (WSANet) to enhance their resources in supporting education abroad, and the development of the Ontario Association for International Education (OAIE).

As the number of students studying abroad grew and the risk of their encountering an emergency abroad increased, the Centre created an Emergency Support Program for students studying and working abroad, facilitated through its Risk and Responsibility Office. Whether the emergency is a mishap involving a student, civil unrest in a country where a Queen’s field trip is taking place, or a natural disaster in a region where an exchange partner institution exists, the Centre not only provides support as required but also utilizes the incident to deepen the department’s and participant’s understanding of the responsibilities of studying and working in an international context.

Other initiatives by the Centre involved video productions and the development of the Centre’s first web site. The 1990s saw the production of a widely acclaimed, award-winning television series, Soft Landings (1992) which focused on international students as they settled into life at Queen’s and in Kingston. The bestselling video, World Within Reach (1995), a production of seven Ontario universities, was headed up and distributed by the Centre.

As the work of the International Centre expanded, so did the important role played by volunteers from the student body and the community. Hundreds have participated, often in critical leadership roles, in the full range of QUIC programs. Whether in mentoring – especially beneficial to students experiencing difficulties in adjusting to new surroundings – or in language support or dozens of other roles, the gift of volunteers is a priceless ingredient of the International Centre’s student offerings.
EMBARKING ON A JOURNEY OF INNOVATION

In the 21st century, growing diversity is clearly evident in the social and cultural makeup of Queen's University campus. With an increasing number of students in transition across cultures, members of the campus community encounter social and cultural differences on a daily basis. This mix of Canadians of varied backgrounds with large numbers of international students has created a dynamic environment for the mutual sharing of Canadian values and values from across the globe. The challenge is to maintain a welcoming atmosphere for the entire student body.

In response, the International Centre has developed its capacity to offer international education and intercultural training sessions to faculty and staff. One program that draws on the insights of volunteers from the international student body is staged in conjunction with Human Resources. This program has gradually expanded to include seven sessions that impart some theory, knowledge and practice underlying international education, cultural diversity, and intercultural communication. The result has been a heightened awareness, understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity across the campus. A Certificate in International Perspectives is offered on completion of the sessions.

The rapid pace of change brought many innovations to QUIC in the past decade. One of the most successful has been the International Education Internship Program that has prepared Queen's graduates for a career in international education since 2000. The successful applicant in the national competition trains at the Centre in the various aspects of the services and programs for international students and study abroad.

In 2001, an International Housing Office was established to provide a short-term housing service for new international students, scholars and postdoctoral fellows.

In 2003, supported by a grant from the Anna and Edward C. Churchill Foundation, the Centre unveiled the International Educators Training Program (IETP). The program is delivered through a Summer Institute that provides in-service training to international education professionals from across Canada and around the world including a Certificate for International Education Professionals offered in cooperation with the Faculty of Education.

An important repositioning of the Centre came about in 2004 when the International Centre was rebranded as The Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC). The change, together with QUIC’s new logo, created a shaper focus and a stronger image that has strengthened our profile both on and off campus.

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A FULFILLMENT OF HOPE

Today, the sentiments that drove the founders of the International Centre have been largely realized. One in ten Queen’s students come from outside Canada. While once the international focus was on students from developing countries, the complement of today’s ranges from around the globe. The students come from 96 countries, with the top seven in 2011 being China, United States, India, Iran, United Kingdom, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia.

Visitors continue to be impressed with the traditional warmth and friendliness to be found at the International Centre. The Ed Churchill Hall of Friendship symbolizes this interaction – a large recreation room used for such activities as table tennis, also provides space for meetings of up to 100 people. The central location of the kitchen represents the significance that food and its preparation has for the QUIC community. It is here that the monthly community soup lunches are prepared. In addition an International Resource Library, the offices of the International Student and Education Abroad Advisors, the Director’s office, and a comfortable lounge occupy adjacent space and accommodate the hub of essential services and programs offered to students and their families.

The central location of the Reception and Office of the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) is critical, as Queen’s University requires that all international students entitled to coverage be enrolled in the plan. To this end QUIC produced a booklet, entitled Guide to Health Coverage and Services – The Ontario Medical System and UHIP, which was translated into six languages: Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. It was given to the families of international students and workers.

More than 2,000 international students study at Queen’s every year in degree, Exchange and English language programs, and another 2,000 Queen’s students go abroad for study/work/travel experiences. With internationalization a fundamental precept of today’s Queen’s University, the services of the International Centre have become critical to its contribution toward the global knowledge society in which Canada must play a major part if it is to flourish in the twenty-first century.

“Students change faster than any institution,” QUIC Director Wayne Myles observes. “We don’t ask people where they’re from. Our students are as likely to spring from Canada’s multicultural mix as from another country. But all bring to the International Centre a global outlook.”

University administrators throughout Canada, as well as officials in government, recognize that our country’s success in the emerging global knowledge society will depend in large part on our ability to utilize the talent and skills of international students and prepare our own students for study and work abroad. The academic, cultural, and economic dimensions of this new society – anchored in a world of instant communication – pose enormous challenges to Canada’s aspirations for leadership and influence. The International Centre looks forward to playing an important role in making a dynamic learning environment that, on the one hand, will continue the tradition of providing a warm and receptive “home away from home” for all newcomers to our campus, and, on the other, will enable members of the Queen’s University community to face with confidence the international and intercultural challenges of the 21st century.
The need for an International Centre

Karl Bennett (Arts’62 & MA’64) found a ready welcome from other Caribbean students when he arrived from Jamaica to attend Queen’s University in 1959. An active West Indian Students’ Association (as it was then called) greeted him on his first day, helped him find accommodation, and smoothed his entry onto the campus.

“It was the first international student club at Queen’s and its presence was a great support to me as a young man in a strange land,” he remembers.

But what about students from other countries, of which Karl noticed there were an increasing number as he worked toward his undergraduate degree? An International Club had been organized, partly through the leadership of another Jamaican student, Keith Chan. It was time to take the idea further, Karl decided. Obtaining a grant from a local Rotary Club, he undertook a survey of other North American universities to see how they were dealing with the growing influx of international students.

Work done at three leading schools – the University of Toronto, University of Chicago, and Columbia University – convinced Karl that it was time for Queen’s to formalize its approach.

In his 1961 report to Queen’s, Karl affirmed the need for an International House that could draw together students from other countries with faculty and domestic students, and serve as a locale for discussion groups, coffee parties and other special functions.

The dream was soon realized – first with a temporary location and later with a permanent facility on University property.

After graduation, Karl spent a year teaching in Saskatchewan and then returned to Queen’s for an MA, later earning a Ph.D in economics at McGill University. It was then that he decided Canada was the country in which he wanted to spend the rest of his life. Karl accepted a teaching position at the University of Waterloo, from which he retired recently as Associate Professor of Economics.

“In today’s global economy, it is urgent that as many students as possible have an international experience,” he says.

“The International Centre has proven invaluable to students from all over the world over the past half century. It will play an even bigger role in the future, serving domestic as well as international students. I am proud to have been able to play a small role in starting the great project that has become such an integral part of Queen’s University.”

Our mission – our activities

The governance model of the Centre is a key to its success. The International Centre Council is responsible for advising the Director on policy matters, encouraging constructive communication among Canadian and international students and the community, and coordinating activities “of all those interested in the well-being” of the international student body.

On matters of operation and administration, the Director reports to the Office of the Vice-Provost (International).

As an educational support service for students, faculty and staff, QUIC has the mission of engendering an internationally informed and cross-culturally sensitive university community. Its activities support:

• The academic and personal development of international students, other international members of the Queen’s community, and their families;

• The academic and personal development of Queen’s students, staff and faculty interested in Education Abroad; and

• The internationalization of the campus by working with other university departments, offices, groups and individuals to enhance and diversify the international learning environment at Queen’s through educational and training activities.

QUIC program coordinators play a role, with other internationally focused Queen’s units, in the Queen’s University International Program Committee that plans, designs and implements new internationalization initiatives.

News about the Centre’s programs and services is carried through links with social media including the Centre’s webpage, Facebook and Twitter. Some of the programming is delivered online including the Centre’s Pre-Departure Orientation Program that presents travel information and cultural modules for students preparing to study, work or travel abroad.
International learning takes many forms

*I'm sittin' on the dock of the bay
  Watchin' the tide roll away…*  

Or, standing on a rock below a waterfall, in the midnight rain, might be a better description of Jonathon Farrell's (BA’12) first exposure to international business. He found himself eel fishing on the New Brunswick coast, using a net on the end of a long pole to catch baby eels swept up by the high tide. The tiny (two-inch) larvae are shipped to a Hong Kong fish farm, where they grow up to satisfy the palates of Asian diners.

Jonathon’s bent for adventure was honed during his days at Queen’s University. Having grown up in Kincardine, Ont., he enrolled at Queen’s because of the focus on international learning he saw during a familiarization tour.

“Queen’s was so well connected with the world, with opportunities for everything from going on archeological digs to studying classics abroad, that I knew this was where I wanted to be.”

Jonathon was impressed with the International Centre, which he visited during that tour. “Everyone was so helpful, and I especially found the library a great source of information on subjects and places I wanted to study abroad.”

Through the International Centre, he learned of scholarship opportunities overseas. He obtained a full scholarship for a year at St. Andrews University in Scotland. His time there went a long way to fulfilling his goal of international growth.

“I learned I was capable of coping with a new environment. That experience taught me that it pays to set off into the wind and see where it takes you,” he says.

“I realized the world was much more than just Canada. My major is in history (minor in French), and I knew that doing a year in Europe would help me tie all my studies together.”

Jonathon’s biggest surprise at St. Andrews was the internationality of the campus, just as he’d seen at Queen’s. “I found enormous numbers of students from all over the world at this little bubble on the Fife Coast.”

He took part in “some strange and old university traditions.” In one, students must produce “raisin recipes” on Raisin Monday, as proof they have given their hosts or parents either a bottle of wine or one pound of raisins.

While in Scotland, Jonathon took a week off to visit Norway. He spent the last three weeks of his UK year on a whirlwind tour, staying with friends in Edinburgh, Manchester, Wales, and Sussex, to “see the world through their perspective.”

Back in Canada, Jonathon is pursuing a teacher’s degree at Nipissing University, North Bay. He hopes to teach abroad and fulfill his personal global vision that he found while at Queen’s: “Hold nothing back; take part in every aspect of what the world has to offer.”

* With apologies to Otis Redding
1961 Keith Chan forms The International Club at Queen’s University.
Karl Bennett conducts survey on International Houses of North American universities.


1963 Queen’s chooses a new site in the Students’ Memorial Union (now JDUC) for the International Centre.

1964 Council of The International Centre and the Management Committee are formed.

1965 Kingston and area Rotary clubs raise $45,000 from members to help with construction costs.

1965 Dave Dewar is appointed first Executive Secretary of The International Centre/House. Dr. John Coleman becomes Director of The International House.
A temporary International House is located at 187 Stuart Street.

1966 International House moves to its permanent home in the Students’ Memorial Union building (now JDUC) and becomes the International Centre. The International Centre booklet (1st Ed.) containing original photographs and an early history of the International Centre is published.

1967 Mary Brunette is appointed Acting Executive Secretary.

1969 Fred Harland is appointed Executive Secretary of the International Centre. Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) joins the Centre.

1970 Kaspar Pold is appointed Executive Secretary of the International Centre.
The International Student Handbook, Living in Canada for Overseas Students, is published (1st ed.).

1972 The Public Education Program is initiated. The Prison for Women Culture Night is initiated.

1975 The Development Perspectives Project begins.

1976 Newly renovated, The International Centre opens with its current configuration of space. The International Cooking School begins.

1978 Wayne Myles is appointed Acting Executive Secretary while Kaspar Pold is on leave. The International Student Handbook, Living in Canada, is published (1st ed.).

1979 Global Development Education Program is established.

The Development Perspectives Kits and Users Guide (4 volumes): World Development, Resource Development: Canada and Brazil, Science and Survival, and Through the People’s Eyes (literature) are published (500 sets are sold). The International Cook Book International Dishes from the Far East, South-East Asia and the West Indies (1st Edition) is published.
The annual Principal’s Dinner, sponsored by the International Club, is initiated.
The title of Executive Secretary of The International Centre is changed to Director.

1980 EarthLinks cable television series is produced on topics of development.

1982 Wayne Myles is appointed Director of The International Centre.
Queen’s University Senate formally approves Constitution of The International Centre.
The international student handbook, Living in Canada (2nd ed.) is revised.

1983 The Office of International Programs opens in the International Centre.

1985 The International Centre’s first Mission Statement is developed Earthlinks newsletter is launched.

1986 Sojourns Study Abroad database is developed.
That was then …

“Telegrams are a reasonably inexpensive means of transmitting a short message quickly over a long distance.”
“Ladies’ hair cutting and styling is done at places called beauty parlours…”
“Depending on your background, you may find Canadians and Canadian society relatively cold and reserved. Ours is not a society where curiosity about another is welcomed …”
“Some female attire may seem openly suggestive; this appearance may not be the reality; however, an increasing trend is developing in Canada and North America to greater freedoms in dress and manners. It cannot be assumed that an individual is promiscuous because of mode of dress, or behaviour with a partner of the opposite sex.”
“‘Dating’ or ‘going out’ are terms used to mean an arrangement with a member of the opposite sex to spend time together …”

— Living in Canada for Overseas Students, 1970

1988 Jack Sinnott is appointed Acting Director while Wayne Myles is on leave.
The International Student Advisor position is created.
The International Centre’s interlocking Qs logo is first used.
1991 The Constitution of The International Centre is revised.
1992 The International Centre ceases to deliver the Development Education Program.
The International Centre celebrates three decades with a 30th Anniversary Symposium.
The Education Abroad Program (EAP) is planned and implemented.
’Soflandings’, a five-part video series is produced to assist in the settlement of international students and new Canadians. The series wins an Ontario cable television award and is broadcast periodically for years.
1994 The International Centre in cooperation with AIESEC and Career Services jointly hosts Crossing Borders: a Work/Study Abroad Fair.
The International Centre begins administering the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) as a service for international students and staff.
1995 Queen’s University International Centre, in concert with six other universities, produces a video for Pre-departure Orientation sessions for outbound study abroad and exchange students entitled World Within Reach.

The video sells 500 copies worldwide.
The initial website of The International Centre is launched.
1997 The position of Education Abroad Advisor is created.
The position of Joint-Appointment Counsellor is created as a cross-appointment with Health, Counselling and Disability Services.
Queen’s University Procedure for Out-of-Country Emergencies involving work/study abroad students is developed and put in place (Ratified 1998).
1998 The Risk and Responsibility Office is established.
1999 The Emergency Support Program (ESP) is established for Queen’s students studying/working/travelling abroad.
2000 The International Centre implements its first International Education Internship.
2001 The International Housing Office is established.
2003 The first Summer Institute for the International Education Training Program (IETP) is held.
The International Centre mandate is revised to add a training function.
2004 Susan Anderson is appointed the Acting Director while Wayne Myles is on study leave.
The International Centre is rebranded as The Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC).
2005 The Centre works with five student services offices to offer Diversity Training, a series of volunteer information/training sessions geared toward international and Canadian students.
2007 The Exchange Student Handbook is developed in conjunction with the Office of the University Registrar and the Faculty International Offices.
2008 QUIC partners with Queen’s Human Resources to offer the first sessions in a 7-part Certificate in International Perspectives.
2009 The QUIC English Conversation Group receives the 2009 Queen’s University Human Rights Office Initiatives Award.
QUIC Photo contest is initiated.
2010 QUIC Diversity Training series is re-focused from diversity training to intercultural training through the Intercultural Competence Certificate Program.
2011 The Socio-Cultural Competency (SCT) Training is launched by QUIC, providing an experiential learning opportunity for domestic and international students.
QUIC assumes administration of PFF Community Leadership Program.
2012 The QUIC Staff Intercultural Training Project is launched for a three-year period providing QUIC staff with the knowledge and skills to facilitate intercultural training programs for the Queen’s community.
QUIC holds 50th Anniversary Gala, October 11.
Queen’s a prelude for South Africa success

Growing up in Botswana, Pat Dambe (BAHons’84) set her sights on gaining an education that would enable her to fill a role in the South Africa she was sure was coming – free of apartheid and open to new challenges. She credits Queen’s University with preparing her to “pursue groundbreaking experiences” that have led to a brilliant business career.

Today, Pat Dambe-Hansen reflects on the inspiration she drew from being part of activities organized by the International Centre during her time at Queen’s. She looks back on QUIC as a place “where we could connect, converse, debate and ultimately celebrate our diversity. We could be ourselves, which helped us overcome homesickness, especially during the cold months!”

Pat’s Queen’s connection goes back to her homeland, where she met Prof. Jim Whitley of Queen’s, then living with his family in Botswana. His encouragement led her to apply for and win a De Beers scholarship for a BA Hons. program at Queen’s.

“Queen’s and the International Centre nurtured my need to be immersed in a diversity where I could explore, understand, and appreciate different cultures and ways of life. These were the things that were influential to the person I have become.”

Following graduation, Pat became one of the first black female management trainees to work in a De Beers mine. She later became the most senior female manager with the consultancy division of the Price Waterhouse accounting practice in Botswana.

In 1994, with apartheid gone, Pat was appointed the initial female Executive Director of Thebe Investment Corp., the first black-owned investment company in South Africa. That led to her setting up the country’s first black private radio station, Kaya FM.

In 2003, Pat helped establish Forge Strategic Marketing, a unit of the global advertising agency DraftFCB. She interrupted her career there to serve as Director of Public Affairs for Coca-Cola South Africa during the 2010 World Cup. She has since returned to Forge as Executive Director.

“Where better to study these impacts than in one of the fastest-growing economies of the world?”

Her stint in China led Erika to apply for a Pathy Family Foundation (PFF) Fellowship that has enabled her to plan and implement a health education workshop series addressing the needs of female migrant workers in an area outside Shanghai.

The 11-month project involved partnering with a local non-governmental organization and focused on reproductive and maternal health topics. “I was really
eager to work with a grassroots NGO, to learn more about community organization, and to glean some insights about the generation of civil society in a complicated political context.”

Erika’s workshops, conducted in tandem with a local Chinese health leader, included immunizations, oral health, nutrition, sexual health, and relationships between partners. Despite China’s One Child policy, she found one of the community’s greatest needs was for better contraception information. Erika got to know participants on a personal level by interviewing them for their stories, on the understanding they would be shared anonymously in an online publication.

“The PFF Program allowed me to stay in my community long enough to build meaningful relationships and immerse myself in local culture. The decision to move to China, alone, and with only basic language skills, was intimidating to say the least.”

“The support that I received from QUIC gave me the confidence to pursue my own ideas, and the framework within which to execute them,” Erika adds.

She chose to attend Queen’s because of the “opportunities it provides undergraduate students to complement their in-class learning with hands-on, practical experiences.”

Erika plans to study in Ottawa in fall 2012 for her master’s degree in Public and International Affairs.

“My time in China has given me a passionate interest in the role civil society can play in social change. I plan to continue to explore this in my master’s studies.”

Erika urges students with similar interests in the international sphere to follow her example.

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**Connecting with new communities**

When Nilani Loganathan (BAHons’02) travelled from Canada to South Africa on an education and human rights internship, she carried with her the memory of having watched, on TV in her family’s Toronto home, the release of Nelson Mandela from imprisonment. She had been 11 years old.

“Later that same summer, I heard Mandela speak when he came to Toronto. I cannot recall what he said but I remember an overwhelming sense of hope.”

Nilani’s internship in South Africa, at a time when South Africa was celebrating ten years of freedom from apartheid, involved her in programs to train young people to become human rights ambassadors.

Nilani received her first glimpse into the world of international education in 1997, when she attended a pre-departure orientation at the Queen’s University International Centre for students who were going to attend their first year of Queen’s University at the Bader International Study Centre (BISC) in the United Kingdom.

When she returned the next year to take up her Queen’s studies, Nilani took part in activities of students’ international clubs, and departmental symposiums. She studied in Cuba and in 2001 obtained a summer student position at QUIC’s International Resource Library and in 2002 became the International Education Intern.

“I fondly remember that time,” she recalls. “I worked with a local School Board on issues of conflict and power relations in the classroom.”

In 2009 – 2010, Nilani worked as the Education Abroad Advisor at QUIC. She is now living in Halifax where she works for an organization dedicated to the support of immigrants. “I find myself speaking with colleagues about intercultural learning and dominant culture and power relations, echoes of conversations I had at QUIC.”

Nilani has no doubt that her association with the International Centre has greatly influenced the direction of her life.

“I have a great appreciation for how QUIC not only created space for students and families to build community, but also for staff to do the same. Having spent much of my life moving from one place to another, my experiences at the International Centre highlight for me the importance of the connections I make with people when our paths overlap.”

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[Image of Nilani Loganathan]
An international student on familiar ground

When Anke Sonnenschmidt (BSc’84) first arrived on the Queen’s University campus after having emigrated from Peru via the United States, she felt she had found familiar surroundings.

Anke had spent a year in Toronto to complete Grade 13 and was pleased with the offer of an entrance scholarship at Queen’s. Like many young people, she jumped at the opportunity to be away from home.

Mixing with international students from many countries, Anke soon realized that although she had traveled widely, she was about to learn much more of cultures and traditions.

“The International Centre was in many ways my home away from home,” Anke says.

“I made friends there because there was always someone interesting to talk to. The Centre opened my eyes to a world of opportunity in travel, exchange, and volunteer work, yet it also made me realize what makes Canada a great country.”

Born in Peru of German descent, Anke spent a year in Germany after graduation. “My heritage is German, the country is rich in history, culture, and beauty, but Canada had won my heart.”

Now Anke Berner and a resident of Sherwood Park, Alberta, she recalls how “my international friends worked very hard toward their degrees. Not all were wealthy and many had debts to pay after graduation. They bore tremendous pressure from their own countries and families, so they had to work hard and achieve academic success.”

Observing the commitment of her peers, Anke realized how “it put everything into perspective for me, because without such examples it could have been tempting to spend too many nights at the local pubs.”

Anke served three years as president of the International Club, and held membership in the Southeast Asian, Chinese, African and West Indian clubs.

“All this would not have been possible without the leadership and vision of Wayne Myles and the support of other staff members. Like any student needing assistance, I benefited from their advice and friendship.”

A dedicated English Major, Anke wrote the copy for an anniversary brochure on the International Centre published in 1983.

Anke Berner has been an ESL volunteer in her Edmonton area community for the past year. She recently spent time at a northern Saskatchewan First Nations community, distributing skates and hockey equipment.
Fred Addo-Abedi (Ph.D, Eng. ’81) grew up in Ghana with visions of becoming a builder of roads that would knit together the isolated communities and regions of his West African country.

He arrived at Queen’s University in 1976 as a graduate student and Canadian Commonwealth Scholar, facing life in a new culture that had seen few students of African origin.

For Fred, the International Centre was the focal point of life at Queen’s outside the classroom. “The Centre offered support to students who had come from very far and did not have the support of friends and family in an era when communications in the developing world were not as developed as they are now.

“My desire to come to Canada was motivated by the pursuit of knowledge to be better able to help my country in the transportation sector and ultimately to be able to teach in the university.”

“The International Centre became a surrogate where students could go and chat, debate international issues, and for general social interaction. Some also benefited from peer to peer counseling when the going got tough.”

Fred became involved in the Centre’s management committee and remembers it “taught me a lot of things which were very useful in my subsequent professional development.”

He credits the International Centre with offering students “the opportunity to learn about and accept other peoples’ cultures and their views,” while generating interest in international issues beyond a student’s own field of studies.

Dr. Fred Addo-Abedi returned to Ghana in 1981. He worked as Deputy Chief Executive at the Ghana Highway Authority, and for the Tanzania National Roads Agency and the Rwanda Transport Development Agency. He is currently a consultant to several African countries.

Dr. Addo-Abedi pays tribute to “the principles of hard work, discipline, respect for other people’s opinions and tolerance which were reinforced through the International Centre.”
Independence at Queen’s leads to a global success

Playing hockey when you’re blind may seem an impossible task, but it did not deter Amar Latif, a 19-year-old student from Scotland when he arrived at Queen’s University for the 1995-96 school year.

“I couldn’t actually see the puck, but I could at least ice skate which gave me an advantage over some of our fellow ice hockey virgins,” Amar recalls. “We had an effective direction-finding system, with my teammates shouting out the location of the puck: ‘It’s at 12 o’clock, it’s coming to you at 2 o’clock, now, fire!’

Blind as a result of the onset of retinitis pigmentosa at the age of four, Amar had made it through the University of Strathclyde in his hometown of Glasgow when the opportunity arose to become an international exchange student at Queen’s. He had never previously traveled anywhere by himself.

While Amar Latif may be one of the most exceptional students to have attended Queen’s, his response to the support provided by QUIC during his year here is very little different to that of other international students.

He describes the staff of the International Centre as a “team of guardian angels helping in all sorts of ways – from liaising with academic departments to giving logistical help in preparing course materials (math and finance) and offering assistance with practical matters such as accommodation and health insurance.

“The International Centre extended a far-reaching positive experience which went well beyond the confines of the University itself,” Amar says.

“I was excited about the challenge and opportunity. Queen’s gave me independence, the greatest single gift that anyone can give to someone who is blind.”

Carrying forward that Queen’s-instilled sense of independence, Amar Latif has become a global entrepreneur, inspirational speaker, and world traveler.

Because there was no one catering to blind travelers, Amar set up his own company, Traveleyes International, based in Leeds, England and catering to sighted as well as blind travelers.

In 2007, Amar won the £50,000 Stelios Disabled Entrepreneur award, and has been named an Outstanding Young Business Entrepreneur by the Chamber of Commerce International.

He has addressed such groups as the United Nations, directed documentary films for the BBC, and appeared in a TV series, Beyond Boundaries, which saw him join a grueling 350-kilometre trek through the jungles of Nicaragua.

“Though every year my eyesight has become more restricted,” Amar says, “every year the sky becomes higher and the horizon becomes wider and more tantalizing. I’m the blind guy who wants to show you the world.”
IN MEMORIAM – EDWARD AND ANNA CHURCHILL

The International Centre Newsletter of December, 1997, reported the death of Edward C. Churchill:

On Monday Sept. 15 1997, Edward Churchill, the patron and longtime supporter of the Queen’s International Centre, passed away. For most students on campus, Ed Churchill would not be a familiar figure. However, over the years, international students and Canadian students alike have benefitted from his vision of international understanding and goodwill. In the early 60s, well before “internationalization” was in common usage, Ed believed that international students should be warmly welcomed in our Kingston and Queen’s communities as cultural ambassadors. He worked together with the International Club, the local Rotary Clubs and Queen’s University to establish a meeting place for international and Canadian students. To this end, he purchased a house at 181 University Avenue and turned it over to the University rent-free to be used as an International House.

Over the past 36 years, Ed and Anna, his partner for 66 years have faithfully supported the Centre through personal gifts, contributions of the Ed and Anna Churchill Trust Fund, and through grants from the Churchill Foundation in support of projects at the Centre. Ed’s pragmatic advice as a member of the Centre’s Management Committee and Council was always timely and well received. In recent years, the Foundation’s gifts have accounted for significant developments at the Centre including the development of the Education Abroad Program and the Centre’s Resource Library.

Perhaps Ed’s greatest legacy is in the spirit that he has infused into the life of the International Centre which aims at a wholehearted and mutual cooperation between international and Canadian students. At this time, our thoughts are with Anna and other members of the family.

(Anna Churchill passed away two months after Ed’s death, on October 14, 1997, the 35th anniversary of the opening of International House.)

QUIC gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Anna and Edward C. Churchill Foundation for publication of this 50th anniversary report.
Founding of the International Centre

An early report on International House described it as a place providing “a friendly atmosphere to assist students from other countries in adjusting to their new surroundings.”

The report added that while the educational experience gained by out-of-country students represented “an important contribution to the development of their homeland,” there remained a “great need” to offer more.

“The impressions of Canada which overseas students take back to their homeland may have a great impact on international relations in the years to come. These students fulfill a valuable task in widening the outlook and deepening the understanding and sympathy of Canadians for developing countries, their problems, and their points of view.”

The original International House was located in one of Kingston’s older homes, at 181 University Avenue. It was made available rent-free to Queen’s through a generous donation by Edward C. Churchill.

An active Rotarian, Mr. Churchill secured the support of Kingston’s two Rotary Clubs toward furnishing and operating the House. It opened with four resident students and a resident faculty member. Soon, regular open house nights were drawing students, faculty and Kingston residents to discussion groups, coffee parties and other events.

It was understood from the start that the University Avenue location would be only temporary, to be succeeded by a larger and better-equipped facility that would be built for the purpose. A planning committee, with preliminary sketches furnished by Kingston architect Logan Gallagher, set a budget of $180,000 plus land costs.

When Queen’s University announced plans to enlarge the Students’ Memorial Union, now the John Deutsch University Centre, Rotary and other supporters who by now had raised $45,000 for a permanent site, interceded with the University to make room for an International Centre. The University agreed to enlarge the building further by making use of vacant land between it and the Physical Education Centre. With the support of funds raised through Rotary, the new International Centre opened in the enlarged Students’ Memorial Union on January 22, 1966.

The Centre’s opening was a highlight of International Week, which also included an international festival that brought a colorful mix of cultures and moods to the University. A creative touch was added to the opening ceremonies when two students, Doris Heffron representing Canada and Raquel Aconche from Colombia, tied two ribbons in a bow on a large Rotary wheel to symbolize the bringing together of students in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and support.

‘An important catalyst’ for the future

Dr. Bruce Berman, a professor emeritus of political studies at Queen’s University, knows first-hand the challenges of international studies. His experience has led him to become a strong supporter of the International Centre as “an important catalyst” in the evolution of Queen’s.

Once held for a week by state security in Nigeria, his release led to what he calls “an incident” but not one that deterred his interest in promoting international education.

Having taught at Queen’s since 1971 – he continues as a research director – Dr. Berman regards the International Centre as “a catalyst moving in parallel with the development of future academic programs.”

A leading authority on international development focusing on Africa, Dr. Berman cites the value of the International Centre as a resource for course materials and as a gathering place for international students.

He began sending students in African studies to the Centre shortly after his arrival at Queen’s. There, they were able to access books and films on African development issues and gain personal exposure to African traditions and culture through contact with international students.

“We required our domestic students to contribute a dish and cook something African for dinners that broadened their perspective and proved of real value in their education.”

Being an authority in the development of modern African ethnicities and on ethnicity and globalization, Dr. Berman is encouraged by the growing interest and involvement of Queen’s students in development issues.

He predicts “the International Centre will serve as an important resource for those who have that interest.”
Pioneer advisor remembers culture nights

Dr. David McLay, professor emeritus of the department of physics, has vivid memories of the “quite stunning” dancing and singing of the first African students to attend Queen’s University in the early 1960s. “Overseas students were few and at first we (the rest of the student body) had nothing to do with them. Their culture nights helped change all that.”

Dr. McLay found himself in a pioneering role in the internationalization of Queen’s when Principal J.A. Corry asked him to serve as a student advisor. A main task of he and David Dewar, who worked in the registrar’s office, was to meet trains and planes to take newcomers to their residences “and sort of advise them through the year.”

As an undergraduate, Dr. McLay had been a member of the International Student Service, later to become the World University Service.

After joining the faculty of Queen’s and watching the International Centre move into offices at the Students’ Union, he became chair of the Centre’s Management Committee through the 1980s. “We met three or four times a year. Financing the Centre was one of the problems we had to deal with. An important role was welcoming foreign students and providing a base for them and their clubs.”

While Queen’s has always striven to offer a welcoming environment, this did not always work out in practice, he points out.

For example, there was prejudice by local landlords who rejected black and Asian students despite having vacant rooms. “The International Centre worked with students, led by Keith Chan, a Jamaican, to identify and make known the names of landlords who discriminated.” Chan later went on to become the first international student at the Queen’s School of Medicine, having earned a Queen’s B.Sc.

Dr. McLay recalls that two important agencies in the international development of Queen’s were the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) and the World University Service.

“Students would volunteer to spend their summer in some development project and we had an interviewing committee to select the best candidates.”

The Centre has attracted strong leadership over the years, Dr. McLay recalls. A notable example was Kaspar Pold, Director from 1979 to 1982. He was succeeded by Wayne Myles.

“Pold was an ex-football player from the University of Toronto. He had a lot of international connections, was a big, husky, tough guy and he didn’t take any nonsense.”

Dr. McLay views the current rapid rise in international education as something that is driven by economics as much as by cultural awareness. “There is a strong demand for people who can go abroad and serve as executives of local corporations.”

Dr. McLay sees his own field, physics, as an international discipline and perhaps this is why he has been such a strong exponent of the internationalization of Queen’s. Today, he sees the International Centre as having grown “into a very substantial element of Queen’s. It has played an important role, it’s diversified, and it’s been a positive agent of the university.”
Learning to enjoy a new culture

Makia Gibson (Artsci'02) spent his first few weeks at Queen's in 1997 hiding in his room, desperate to avoid being noticed. The frivolities of Frosh Week left him with no desire to take part in activities from which he felt ostracized and excluded.

“Holding hands, chatting and singing, partying at night, I could not think of anything more foreign to me.”

Makia had come to Queen's from the Bahamas, with a stop-over in Toronto where he completed Grade 13. He’d read the university rankings in Maclean’s magazine, and had talked to guidance counselors and other students about Queen's. Applying for admission to the Faculty of Arts, he was thrilled when he was accepted.

Makia says he might have spent all his time at Queen’s isolated from the student mainstream, but for the International Centre. “These were people who made me feel at home,” he recalls. “For the first time, I felt that people were aware that different cultures approach activities through different lenses. The International Centre created a wonderful atmosphere where students from all over the world could come together and create respectful rules of interpersonal interaction.”

Makia soon found himself involved as a peer tutor, helping international students practice English skills, and connect with students with more experience in settling in to a new country. He also became involved in the African Caribbean Students’ Association and worked as an intern in the Human Rights Office.

“I found my voice at Queen’s University,” Makia asserts. “I had a lot of good mentors who I continue to be inspired by today. I learned it was okay to have my own opinion, and I made lifelong friends. At Queen’s, I learned to believe that I could make a difference.”

And a difference Makia has made. The experience he gained as a member of several volunteer boards in Kingston inspired him to form, on his return to the Bahamas after graduation in 2002, The Yes to Education Foundation.

The Foundation – www.yestoeducation.com – is committed to advocating and providing access to quality education for all citizens of the Bahamas. Among its activities, Yes to Education organizes professional development programs that enhance teaching practices, and connects students to global enrichment opportunities.

Makia followed up his Queen's BA with an MA from the University of East Anglia in England. He began his teaching career in Japan and later worked in New Zealand and the United States. He then served as Deputy Director of Education for Anglican schools in The Bahamas. He is now working toward his Ed.D.
A shift in world view

Haifang Wang (MEd’06, MPA’09) thought of her visit to her husband, a student at Queen’s University in 2004, as simply an opportunity for them to be together for the first time since he had left China for study abroad. The visit, which saw Haifang leave a television studio in Beijing where she was a rising personality, brought a shift in world view as well as in culture. Impressed by what she’d seen, she applied for admission to the Queen’s Faculty of Education and graduated two years later with her Masters’ degree and a focus on international education.

Haifang had studied English since the age of 12 but once in Canada she found out “what I was hearing was different from the book English I had studied.”

One of her first contacts at Queen’s was with the International Centre, where she got help in applying for a student visa to stay in Canada. “They gave me enormous support and encouraged me not to be afraid. While I found things confusing at first, they helped me to communicate and function well, which I could never have learned on my own.”

Haifang recalls her early difficulties in participating in class discussion, and her fear of asking a “stupid question.”

“I found out there are no stupid questions, thanks to the open-minded attitudes of the professors and my fellow students.”

Having served as a student volunteer, Haifang entered the competition for the International Education internship and being selected, found herself in a year-long involvement in activities of the International Centre. She also spent a year with the Centre as an Education Abroad Advisor.

Haifang has gone on to found her own business, Educonnex, following a two-year stint teaching English in Toronto schools. Her company assists Chinese students seeking a North American education, either through full-time enrolment or participation in summer camps.

“There is a new trend in that many Chinese parents are sending their children to high school or even elementary school in Canada,” she notes. “There is a growing demand for a North American education and I hope to build an organization that can help to meet the need in this area.”

One of the things that impressed Haifang at Queen’s was the strong interest of Canadian students in international education.

“The International Centre encouraged this by being a place for everyone interested in an international experience. For me, it built on my academic knowledge by preparing me to survive and thrive in the Canadian community. It helped me move from a student to a professional, and empowered me along the way.”
‘We have great diversity’

Farzana Haq thought she was accustomed to a Western way of life among her English-speaking family and friends while growing up in Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh. It was only when she arrived on a scholarship at Queen’s University in 2008 that she realized what a great cultural difference faced her.

“I expected things to be much the same as I’d seen at home,” she says. “But I found a huge cultural difference.”

There was greater diversity than she had expected but from the beginning, she found people living and working together in harmony. Her way was smoothed, she says, by the support she received from the International Centre.

“The people there were wonderful the day we lined up for our health cards,” she remembers. “They were all smiles and they took time to talk to me, even though there was a huge line-up to look after.”

Farzana, due to receive a B.Sc. in biochemistry this year, wanted to attend a Canadian university because there is little opportunity for research in Bangladesh. She has worked on student staff with QUIC for two and one-half years. She plans to pursue a Masters’ degree in public health and then hopes to work with a United Nations agency in different parts of the world. She will ultimately return to her home country.

“Farzana has a bit of advice for Queen’s when it comes to admitting international students.

“When a student telephones from half way around the world, it is because they need to talk to someone. It would be nice if they could reach someone for the answers they need.”

She also has advice for future international students: “Don’t be afraid to ask your professor or the International Centre if you have a problem. They’ll help you with a solution.”

Smiles of recognition

Learning to recognize people by their smiles became a special pleasure to Bonnie Lawrie, senior secretary at the International Centre for 25 years before her retirement in 2009.

Bonnie particularly remembers the welcoming environment given students from countries with oppressive governments.

“One soon realized that everyone shares the same aspirations: respect, decent shelter, food, comfort, and joy. That’s when I learned to recognize people by their smiles.”

Hired by Director Wayne Myles, Bonnie saw immense growth in enrollment of international students, but is even more impressed by how Canadian students have often forged global careers as a result of their contacts at Queen’s.

“I saw many domestic students come alive to opportunities for work and study abroad through people they met at the International Centre,” she says.

“It is not just the international students who benefit from the Centre. It opens a new world to Canadian students by giving them access to personalities, ideas and opportunities that can change the course of their lives.”

“Two other things Farzana had to come to grips with were meal times and food.

“Of course, the food is completely different here, but also meal times were strange for me. I found having supper at six o’clock unusual when I’d been used to eating at nine o’clock and going to bed at midnight.”
Message from the Director

The Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC) has reached a significant point in our history as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary Year. The period 1962-2012 is rich with personal stories, full of community memories and alive with examples of project and program initiatives that have acted as a national standard for other international centres across the country. Whether involved with individual students arriving from across the globe, or facilitating the growth of study abroad and internationalization, or advancing the skill and training of professionals in the field of international education – QUIC has played a key role which has put Queen’s University in the forefront of the Canadian university international scene.

As we look to the future with a growing number of students who bring to the Queen’s learning environment a wide range of diverse cultural and national perspectives that enrich our daily experience both inside and outside of the classroom, QUIC will be called upon to deepen our role in building community and enhancing the mutual exchange of different ways of knowing and seeing the world. The QUIC staff team is currently positioning itself to engage our campus of the 21st century through on-going intercultural training and the development of innovative programming.

At Queen’s University, we have in our midst the makings of a dynamic learning experience that will enable students to become skilled and competent global citizens prepared to meet the intercultural and international challenges of the world into which they graduate. This will require innovative and creative staff and programs. During our past 50 years, QUIC has demonstrated our creative capacity to help Queen’s achieve its international goals. In the coming years, QUIC will continue its commitment to working with the departments and faculties on campus to create an internationally informed and cross-culturally sensitive university community.

Wayne Myles
Director