

Josef Mestenhauer, professor emeritus of educational policy and administration at the University of Minnesota and a noted expert on campus internationalization, was invited to campus during MSU International Education Week 2005 to speak on "Internationalization at Home." While on campus, he also met with individuals and groups involved in restructuring MSU's Internationalizing Student Life initiative.



## Rethinking Campus Internationalization

What does it mean to internationalize a campus? How does one go about it? These and other related questions occupy the time and minds of many on campus committed to providing Michigan State University students with educational opportunities designed to facilitate their international and intercultural learning.

While there is broad agreement that comprehensive internationalization of higher education is no longer a choice but has become an urgent necessity<sup>1</sup>, the meaning of "internationalization" and its related concept, "international education," is unclear. According to Dr. Josef Mestenhauer, there currently is "no general agreement about what [international education] is, why we should have it, and what the end-product should look like."<sup>2</sup> In the context of this larger discussion, and energized by the momentum generated by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools self-study on internationalization, MSU is engaged in a dynamic process of rethinking how campus internationalization should be conceptualized and implemented.

An invited speaker for MSU's International Education Week 2005 program, Mestenhauer introduced his audiences to the strategy of "Internationalization at Home" (IaH), a concept developed and implemented at Malmö University by Swedish scholar Bengt Nilsson.<sup>3</sup> IaH is unique in that it addresses the complexities of international education through a system-oriented and conceptually integrated strategic approach. Writes Nilsson, "internationalisation is the process of integrating an international dimension into the research, teaching, and service function of higher education."<sup>4</sup>

IaH is characterized by taking international edu-

cation beyond the formal curriculum and integrating the full range of international resources available on and off campus. It is a holistic approach aimed at helping learners build bridges between academic content and extra- and co-curricular experiences. According to Mestenhauer, it can "bridge the gap between campus and off-campus, between theory and practice, and between rhetoric and action." To a degree, the approach also challenges some traditional academic assumptions and practices. For example, IaH complements the formal curriculum with an experience-based nonformal curriculum; it sometimes requires both students and teachers to be learners; it emphasizes the explicit teaching of higher-order intellectual skills such as critical, creative, and comparative thinking; and it places disciplinary knowledge content into interdisciplinary contexts.

The IaH approach has guided MSU faculty and administrators charged with the "re-visioning" of MSU's Internationalizing Student Life (ISL) program. Established in 1990 in response to the Council for the Review of Undergraduate Education (CRUE) report (1988), ISL was charged with providing out-of-classroom opportunities for U.S. students to learn about other cultures and to develop the skills needed for successful intercultural interactions.

Recently funded through MSU's Fund for the Enhancement of Academic Quality, the redesign of ISL derives its expanded mission from MSU's primary goal of preparing students to assume their roles as citizens of an increasingly complex world. The redesign is a campus-wide project under the joint leadership of the university's Division of Student Affairs and Services, International Stud-

ies and Programs, and the Office of the Provost (assistant provost for undergraduate education). Its end goal is a revised ISL program that would strive to deliver high-quality international education to those already convinced of its value, as well as to new and traditionally underrepresented audiences, including such off-campus audiences as K-12 students and teachers as well as local international and domestic community members.

Even when MSU reaches its goal of sending 40 percent of undergraduates on study abroad by the time they graduate, not all students participating in study abroad will return to campus "internationalized," and 60 percent of MSU students will still graduate without an educational international experience abroad. MSU must, therefore, develop mechanisms that help returning students integrate their study abroad experiences and provide alternative international experiences at home for those who choose not to study abroad. Such mechanisms and alternatives must be designed to help prepare all students to live and work in an increasingly international workplace and society.

MSU is uniquely positioned to take on the challenge of ensuring that no student will leave MSU without exposure to some level of international experience. However, to both achieve this goal and ensure that internationalization does not become an "add-on," MSU's large array of international resources must be purposefully and intentionally coordinated to achieve optimal synergies among units and programs that have tended to function in isolation. Ultimately, student learning must be relational and the rhetoric of international learning must be brought into practice by coordinating and connecting international opportunities in ways that allow students to make meaning of the sum of their experiences.

The redesigned ISL will capitalize on MSU's vast international resources to increase students' cross-cultural contacts, deepen their international understanding and competence, and more fully connect the international/global learning from students' academic course work to their personal and professional lives. Proposed initiatives include: a pilot program of international cocurricular activities in partnership with faculty from selected integrative studies and other internationally

focused courses; an advisory group comprising, but not limited to, individuals from units or programs currently engaged in cross-cultural work; and a series of structured learning experiences on topics such as multidimensional leadership and "hot" international issues.

The long-term goal is to involve all academic and nonacademic units in a comprehensive program of developmentally appropriate activities and events that will combine to bolster students' internationalization at home. Student learning outcomes will range from acquisition of global knowledge and a global perspective to the development of capacities that will allow them to work and act as global citizens, including the ability to apply the new learning in analysis and problem solving.

It takes a concerted effort to internationalize a campus. With the help of an integrated strategy like IaH, MSU is well on its way to making comprehensive internationalization a reality.

—Inge Steglitz and Peter Briggs

## International Student Reception

Sue Carnell, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm's education adviser, addresses the audience at MSU's second annual international student reception on September 28, 2005 to celebrate the presence in the community of the 3,293 international students enrolled at MSU for the 2005-06 school year. Approximately 450 international students, members of the hosting organizations, dignitaries from the community, and MSU administrators attended the reception and were treated to hors d'oeuvres and music during the unstructured part of the event. In addition to the brief remarks from Carnell, participants heard from Don Horner and Doug Kahl of the Kiwanis Club, Sam Singh (mayor pro tem of East Lansing at the time), MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon, and Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) Director Peter Briggs. The event, which took place in the MSU Union ballroom, was sponsored by the East Lansing Kiwanis Club, Community Volunteers for International Programs, and OISS.



<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Henry Kaufman and Thomas S. Johnson (2005). Send future US business leaders abroad. *The Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 8, 2005. Also see: Stephanie Bell-Rose and Vishakha Desai (2005). *Educating Leaders for a Global Society*. Report released by The Goldman Sachs Foundation and Asia Society.

<sup>2</sup> Mestenhauer, J.A. (2005). *International at Home: A Holistic Approach to International Education at the University*. Lecture delivered on November 14, 2005, at Michigan State University.

<sup>3</sup> Mestenhauer, J.A. (2003). Building Bridges. *International Educator*, XII, 3, (Summer 2003), 6-11.

<sup>4</sup> Nilsson, B. (2003). Internationalisation at Home From a Swedish Perspective: The Case of Malmö. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7, 1, 27-40, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Mestenhauer, J.A. (2003). Building Bridges. *International Educator*, XII, 3, (Summer 2003), 6-11, 11