Putting Down Roots in Foreign Soil

RANCH CAMPUSES—defined here as offshore campuses of higher education institutions—are becoming a significant trend in education across the globe. U.S.-based institutions are taking the lead in this, but are by no means the only players on the field. There are a number of models for these campuses. Line Verbik, deputy director of the Observatory on Borderless Education, recently noted in an article in International Higher Education (Number 46, Winter 2007) that three specific models are being seen currently with a fairly even distribution among them: (a) fully funded by the university; (b) external funding (either from the host country or region or from private sources); (c) facilities provided (this most recent model is being seen in places like Qatar's Education City).

The reasons for higher education institutions becoming involved in these ventures range from the desire to add a new source of income, to creating a pipeline for recruiting top international students, to offering a new option for U.S. students and faculty to study or work abroad respectively. Alan Dessoff's cover story in this issue, "Branching Out," explores these aspects of the branch campus phenomenon with key leaders at colleges and universities involved in branch campus ventures and others in the higher education community who are sounding a note of caution about how institutions should look at these international endeavors.

Also in This Issue

Dana Wilkie's article "Developing Opportunity in the Middle East" is the first in a series in which IE will be exploring the trends in higher education in key developing regions.

Nicole Branan's piece "Total Immersion," which deals with international education as it relates to marine biology, is also the first

in a new article series. This series will be examining various fields of science and engineering to see how education abroad and international students and scholars play a role in these fields.

Finally, our Voices interview by IE's Managing Editor Elaina Loveland is a fascinating and very timely conversation with Professor John L. Esposito, director of Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Esposito notes that the center "has built bridges of understanding between the Muslim world and the West, addressing stereotypes of Islam and Muslims and issues and questions such as the clash of civilizations, and the compatibility of Islam and modern life-from democratization and pluralism to the status of women, minorities and human rights—and American foreign policy in the Muslim world."

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