

WORLD BEAT

Two Australian scholars have started a journal devoted largely to the issue of plagiarism, in an effort to create a forum for discussion of a recurrent problem among their country's foreign students.

The *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, a freely accessible online publication that made its debut last month, will cover matters of academic rectitude, including grade inflation, fraud, and other forms of academic dishonesty, as well as plagiarism.

Billed as the first of its kind, the periodical is to be published twice a year. Most of the articles in the new issue examine plagiarism in Australia, particularly in relation to the country's historically high number of international students, including many Asians, for whom English is not a first language.

One of the journal's editors, Helen Marsden, a researcher at the University of South Australia, said a recent plagiarism scandal at the University of Newcastle had prompted fresh interest in issues of academic integrity.

The journal's other editor, Tracey Bretag, who also works as a researcher at South Australia, said the journal was borrowing a leaf, with all due credit, from the book of the Center for Academic Integrity, an international consortium whose founding president, Donald McCabe, is on the new journal's editorial board.

—DAVID COHEN

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice helped inaugurate a program last month that will bring about 100 young reporters from around the world to six American journalism schools in order to study journalistic practices in the United States.

As part of their visit, participants in the Edward R. Murrow Journalism Program will travel to one of the schools, where they will take part in intensive seminars and field activities with faculty members and students.

The six journalism schools are at the Universities of Kentucky, Minnesota-Twin Cities, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Oklahoma, Southern California, and Texas at Austin.

In addition to the campus visits, the foreign journalists will travel to state capitals to gain an understanding of how politics and government are handled by the news media. The Aspen Institute, a public-policy advocacy group, will also hold a symposium for the international journalists here.

The program will take place over three to four weeks in April. Participants will be selected by American officials overseas.

Ms. Rice, a former provost at Stanford University, said in announcing the program that "the bedrock pillar of a free society is a free press," which is "crucial for the foundation of any democracy."

Geoffrey Cowan, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at Southern Cal, said that the program would be important in helping the United States improve its image abroad.

—EUGENE MCCORMACK

INTERNATIONAL

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Crucible of Unity and Diversity

A small graduate institution trains the future leaders of the European Union

BY FRANCIS X. ROCCA

WHEN Greek students at the College of Europe here threw a party for their classmates recently, they did it on a nearby beach, with the North Sea filling in for the Aegean. Not to be outdone, Italians flew in four chefs from their country to cook a five-course meal for the whole student body. Austrians and Hungarians kept up a college tradition by jointly holding a formal ball that recalled the days of the Hapsburg empire. And the British and the Irish collaborated with their American and Canadian cousins to play host to a "trans-Atlantic" affair, with costumes and decorations based on James Bond movies.

But no one would call the College of Europe a party school. At this small, elite graduate institution, the world's oldest and best known in the field of European studies, the students, all 274 of whom are fluent in at least two languages and typically know four or five, must take two full semesters of courses and write a master's thesis in little more than 10 months. A high proportion go on to pass the demanding qualifying examinations for jobs at the European Union institutions that make law and policy for the entire 25-nation bloc. These ambitious young men and women work hard for most of the week. But when they play, they do so in a spectacular fashion.

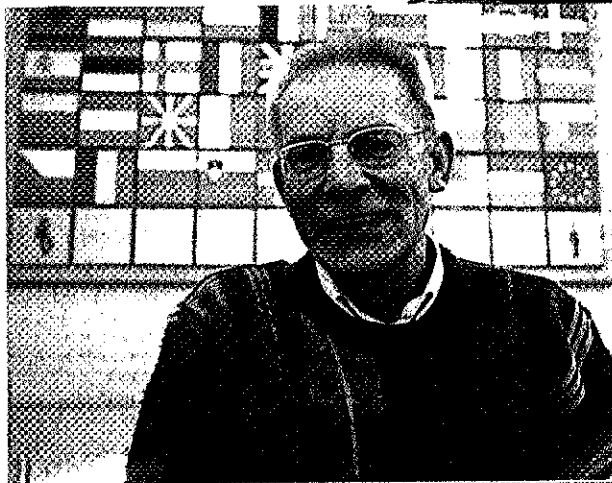
In their lavishness, often subsidized by corporations in the students' home countries, those festivities hint at the privileges that graduates of this private institution will enjoy as part of the EU's managerial elite. At the same time, the parties' emphasis on cultural stereotypes (usually ironic) suggests the surprisingly important role of national identity at this multinational institution, which must respond to the union's growing diversity even as it teaches the practice of European integration.

"The social experience of living together and of working together—this is really a great benefit," says Jenny Behrendt, a Ger-

man who studied economics and law at Bruges last year and is now pursuing a doctorate in marketing at the Free University of Berlin. "Just understanding the other nationalities, the other ways of thinking."

A MEDIEVAL MODEL

The college was founded in 1949 by Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish writer and diplomat, who envisioned a cosmo-



Jacques Pelkmans, chairman of the economics department at the College of Europe, says the college emphasizes practice because theory is not important at the European Union's headquarters in Brussels.

politan institution on the model of the great medieval universities. For most of its history, it has been known as the premier training ground for officials of the European Commission, which is the executive body of the EU, and of related supranational bodies, most of them located an hour away, in Brussels. The commission provides about a quarter of the college's \$18-million annual budget, the remainder of which comes from tuition, a subsidy from the Belgian government, and—the largest source of all—training courses and consulting services for clients in the public and private sectors. Today college alumni (called *anciens*) are prominently represented at EU institutions and in the governments of member states. With the growth of Brussels's



Although students and faculty members at the College of Europe generally favor European unity, says Paul Demaret, the college's rector, the level of integration is a subject of constant debate.

regulatory power, law or lobbying firms in the union's capital have also increased the demand for graduates in European affairs.

Students at Bruges, who normally pay one third of the \$19,000 it costs to attend (with most national governments giving scholarships to cover the rest), enroll in one of three departments: economics, law, or politics and administration. Courses emphasize the practical aspects of their subjects, the way things actually work in the EU, rather than purely academic questions. "Theory is not the big strength of Bruges," says Jacques Pelkmans, the Dutch chairman of the economics department. "What can you do in Brussels with that?"

The presence of former European Union officials on the faculty, and the proximity of current decision makers in Brussels, help keep lessons grounded in experience. Politics students take part every year in an elaborate "simulation game," in which they play the roles of member-state delegations in the

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Council of Ministers, the union's highest legislative and policy-making body. As preparation, they often interview the actual diplomats they will impersonate to learn their governments' positions.

Because of this real-world focus, the curriculum changes continually to reflect policy developments. The interdisciplinary program in law and economics, begun in 2004, Mr. Pelkmans explains, is a response to the increasingly "pro-market, pro-competition approach" of regulators in Brussels and across Europe. Next academic year, the college will inaugurate another interdisciplinary program on the EU's international relations, a topic made relevant by recent moves to develop a common European foreign policy.

Such flexibility is possible, says the rector, Paul Demaret, a Belgian legal scholar, because of the college's distinctive hiring policy: All professors are visitors, under contracts granted for one year at a time, and most fly in from universities across the Continent to lead four-hour seminars each week. (Teaching assistants, who handle administrative as well as academic tasks for the professors, are hired on a four-year basis and live near campus.)

EVERYBODY IS A MINORITY

The topics in the curriculum have naturally shifted as the European Union has grown from a founding group of six countries in 1951 to 25 today. The college opened a Polish campus in 1992 in anticipation of the union's eastward expansion, which finally occurred with the admission of 10 mostly former Communist countries last year.

The Natolin campus, located in a suburb of Warsaw, offers a special concentration in Central and Eastern European studies and plays host to many conferences and activities related to the region. A student activist group there has organized exchange visits with counterparts in Poland's neighbor Belarus, the last full-fledged dictatorship in Europe.

The EU's growth has inevitably diversified the college's student body, which now includes 47 nationalities, but is mostly composed of citizens of member states. Instructors and students alike acknowledge that this diversity is the institution's most distinctive trait. "Normally if students go to study abroad, they are a minority at a national university," notes Robert Picht, a German sociologist and the college's vice rector in charge of the Natolin campus. "Not at the College of Europe. Everybody is a minority."

Students, who typically arrive with previous experience of study abroad, often through the union's Erasmus exchange program, find themselves surrounded by multiple national viewpoints here. "Listening to a French professor explain the reason for de Gaulle's policies on Europe opens a new perspective," says David M. Robinson, a British student at Bruges, who says he now understands the late French president's opposition to British membership in the EU in the light of national interest, rather than "anti-Anglo-Saxon feelings."

Teaching styles, too, can vary with national origin. "Some faculty use the Anglo-Saxon system, which is a much more interactive teaching style. Others come from the French or southern European system, which is more a lecture-based system with less discussion," says Mirko Widenhorn, a German citizen who recently earned a politics degree at Bruges and now works as assistant to the rector here.

Students advertise their national cultures to each other in organized events, of which parties are only the most entertaining. The week preceding each "national party" typically features films and lectures sponsored by students from the same nation or regional group. Current events also provide occasions for such presentations, as when Polish students set up a display on the life of John Paul II following the Pope's death last April.

Until about 25 years ago, the prevailing cultural ideal both at the college and in Brussels was that of the "melting pot," says Alfonso Mattered Ricigliano, an Italian who has taught law at Bruges since 1980. "Today everyone says that what we want is for each state to conserve its identity, which is for us a richness."

One ironic effect of the EU's growth, on both the college and the union's institutions, has been to confirm the dominance of a single language, English. Though the college still requires French for admission, and all departments make students take a certain number of courses in that language, students report that English is now the undisputed lingua franca of social life.

The students' most intense exposure to other cultures naturally happens in their informal contact with each other. Small numbers of students (274 in Bruges and 107 in Natolin) and common living arrangements in college-owned buildings promote intimacy, as does the relative lack of distractions. Bruges, an exquisitely preserved jewel of Flemish architecture, picturesque canals, and cobblestone streets, offers little night life. The Natolin campus forms part of a 300-acre nature reserve 45 minutes from downtown Warsaw.

Mr. Widenhorn, the rector's assistant, who lived in the United States between the ages of 9 and 25, came to appreciate the varieties of European national character while helping to run the student bar with other students who came from 10 different countries. "You find all kinds of different cultural perspectives and even different ways to run a meeting, and I learned so much from that," he says, noting that the southern European students were far less formal than the northern Europeans in the way they approached business matters.

For Kristin Mørkestøl, a Norwegian who studied politics in Bruges and is now an intern at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, the Council simulation game was particularly revealing: "You see France's grandeur, and you see the Italians who know who to speak to all the time."

According to the economist Mr.



Kristin Mørkestøl, a College of Europe graduate from Norway, says that even though she is skeptical of European integration, she couldn't help but "take on concepts" while studying at the college.

Pelkmans, exposure to the college's "very intense multicultural society" produces the *esprit de Bruges*, a term that students and faculty commonly invoke, and which appears to mean a sort of camaraderie based on a shared commitment to European unity. "The main objective of this college is to train Europeans," says Péter Horváth, a Hungarian who studied politics at Bruges and is now a teaching assistant in political science at Corvinus University of Budapest. "It's a kind of socialization process."

COMMON VALUES

For Mr. Mattered Ricigliano, the interaction of students from so many different cultures reveals the fundamental values that unite them: "When an Albanian and an Italian are together, or a Finn and a Greek, they become aware that we are all Europeans," by virtue of a shared belief in democracy, solidarity, and tolerance, among other principles, he says. "To be Europeans means to be conscious of holding a set of common values."

Yet the college's diversity extends to views about the nature and value of European integration itself. Although students and instructors tend to share a generally favorable idea of European unity (hardly surprising, given the institution's purpose), the rector insists that there is

no orthodoxy. Partisans of a more centralized federal system study and debate with those who favor a looser organization more akin to a free trade area. "We should not try to impress on the minds of the students only one kind of European integration. No one is in charge of what Europe should be," Mr. Demaret says.

SUBTLE CONFORMITY?

Ms. Mørkestøl, a citizen of a country that has until now chosen not to join the EU, and who says she is skeptical of many aspects of integration, acknowledges that Euro-skepticism is not taboo at the college, and that her views found a respectful though sometimes bemused hearing in and out of the classroom. But she detects a more subtle type of conformity. "Even if you don't want to, you take on concepts, you take on ways of talking. My language now is very different here than it is when I go back home to see my friends," she says, referring to the notoriously hermetic Brussels policy jargon.

Nor does she think that the college, for all the multicultural pagantry, adequately represents Europe's social diversity. "People here are already part of a very small group in their countries," she notes. "Most of them have been abroad for many years. It's different to talk to a guy

who works in a supermarket in Warsaw."

The idea that European elites are out of touch with their populations is one that many commentators have used to explain this year's French and Dutch referendum votes against the proposed EU constitution, a measure that opponents argued would have given more power to Brussels.

When asked about the votes, which have effectively killed the constitution, faculty and students at the college tend to say that they represent a failure by the EU's leaders to communicate the meaning and benefits of integration to citizens at large. "People who have not had the chance to study it well have not perceived what Europe really is," says Carla Acocella, an Italian studying law at Bruges. "The message that comes through is that more information is needed. It's important to make people conscious."

No one's confidence in the prospects of the overall EU project—or of their own careers within it—seems to have been shaken by recent events. The consensus view is Rector Demaret's, that "European integration stands to lose a few years," but that the process will continue. "Eighty percent of European interdependency is a reality," says Vice Rector Picht. "You can't go back."

Australian Educators Criticize Training of Teachers

A COMMITTEE of prominent Australian educators has sharply criticized how the country's higher-education system trains reading teachers.

The scholars' conclusions are based on, among other things, a study of teacher-preparation courses at Australian universities, and are part of a 129-page report, "Teaching Reading," that was released last month by the country's education minister, Brendan Nelson.

The yearlong inquiry that led to the report was commissioned by Australia's conservative government amid reports that as many as 30 percent of high-school graduates could be functionally illiterate.

"The quality of higher education is dropping, not least in respect of

teacher education," said Ken Rowe, the report's lead author and a director at the Australian Council for Educational Research. Indeed, the investigation found that the academic preparation of new teachers was "uneven" at best across most of the country's 39 universities.

Mr. Rowe, a former associate professor of education at the University of Melbourne, suggested that at least part of the problem lay with the country's scramble to attract tuition-paying foreign students for whom English is not a first language. "That's not a racist statement," he said, "just a statement of fact."

To help reverse the trend, the report calls for universities to make teacher preparation in reading a key focus through a greater empha-

sis on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, knowledge, and text comprehension.

Australia's federal government has indicated that it could tie financial support for individual states to their willingness to adopt the report's recommendations.

Dr. Nelson, the education minister, criticized the literacy standards among those pursuing teacher training at the Universities of Tasmania and of New South Wales. Fewer than one in 10 such students attending either university possess the minimum standards of grammar, he said.

The minister said the government would look at introducing new accreditation standards for university education departments.

—DAVID COHEN