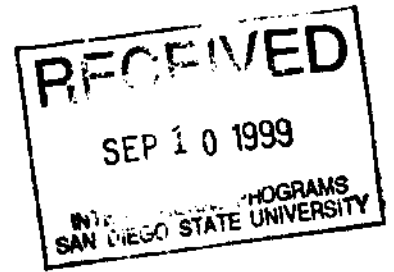


September 3, 1999

To: International Programs Office

From: Donna Castañeda  
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x65586

Re: Visit to Memorial University  
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada



My visit to Memorial University took place on July 29, 1999, where I had a meeting with Dr. Anthony Dickinson, Director of Operations at the International Centre. Previous to my visit, I had contacted Dr. Dickinson and determined that he was the most pertinent person at Memorial University to meet with regarding development of student exchange programs. In our meeting I explained that in order to stimulate development of new student exchange possibilities, the Office of International Programs at SDSU had provided travel funds to faculty engaging in international travel this summer. Since I was attending a conference sponsored by Memorial University this summer, I had applied and received funding to come and meet with representatives there.

I gave Dr. Dickinson a copy of the SDSU graduate and undergraduate bulletins, a sample copy of a student exchange MOU between universities, and since I am from SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus, I gave him an international business graduate program brochure from that campus. I have also sent a copy of SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus' bulletin for this year, as it was just recently available.

I had an very enjoyable and lengthy meeting with Dr. Dickinson and he was informative about Memorial University, the work of the International Centre, Newfoundland, and St. John's as a community. He was quite interested in developing student exchange programs with SDSU and in addition, he is interested in developing programs that include Mexican universities, SDSU, and Memorial University. Since my return from St. John's, Dr. Dickinson has emailed me to ask about the next steps to be taken to in development of student exchange programs and I would definitely like to see an agreement between SDSU and/or SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus and Memorial University developed. If I can be of help in facilitating such an agreement, I would be happy to do so.

Below, I describe the information obtained about Memorial University and the International Centre from my meeting with Dr. Dickinson, my impressions of St. John's, and ideas we discussed regarding student exchange programs.

## The International Centre

I met with Dr. Dickinson at the International Centre, located on the Memorial University campus. As its literature states, the International Centre is the hub of international activities at Memorial University. It coordinates international exchanges and development projects and promotes the internationalization of the university's teaching and research mandate by providing a formal institutional link with Memorial's faculties and research units. The booklet describing international programs at Memorial University lists an impressive range of student exchange and development projects around the world. The international exchange agreements include ones where students from around the world study at Memorial University, as well as ones where Memorial University students study abroad. Dr. Dickinson commented that few of the international projects or student exchanges are with Mexico and none are with the U.S. That stands in contrast to the institutional linkages list contained in the International Centre booklet, which lists agreements from such varied countries around the world as Vietnam, Jordan, and Brazil.

In addition to the International Centre, Memorial University has a well developed infrastructure to meet the needs of international students. Pages 30-31 of the International Centre booklet lists the administrative and support resources available to facilitate the student exchange experience and these resources include, for example, an International Student Center and International Student Advisor.

## Memorial University

Memorial University is the only four-year university in Newfoundland and it is the largest in the Atlantic provinces. According to Dr. Dickinson, it has an enrollment of about 15,000 students and it has a branch campus in Corner Brook and a Fisheries and Marine Institute in St. John's. It also has two satellite campuses, one in Harlow, England and the other in St-Pierre, France. St-Pierre is an island off the coast of Newfoundland that belongs to France where students studying French can live in a French-speaking environment.

The university has a wide spectrum of excellent academic and professional degree programs; that can be seen by just glancing at the literature I have included here. One immediately realizes that Memorial University stands out in its fisheries and marine sciences programs, but my impression was that it also had a strong emphasis on folklore/anthropology studies and the theater and visual arts. In conversations with people, they would often talk about Newfoundlander's rich legacy of stories, jokes, and sayings, and there appears to be a thriving arts community.

## The Region and City of St. John's

Dr. Dickinson asked me if, when I told people I was visiting St. John's, Newfoundland this summer, people responded by asking me where it was located. That is exactly what many people asked. Newfoundland certainly does not have the name recognition of other provinces in Canada, but it is a beautiful place with a unique history and cultural heritage. Most of the people

in Newfoundland have Irish ancestry and the language and traditions are very "Irishy." For example, I noticed in bookstores many books listing the last names of Newfoundlanders and connecting them to their origins in Ireland.

I was struck by how often people described Newfoundland in terms of superlatives—St. John's is the oldest city in the new world, Cape Spear is the closest point to Europe in North America, the St. John's regatta is the oldest one in North America, etc.

St. John's is a beautiful city of about 160,000 people sitting above a large bay. The downtown, where I spent most of my time, has lots of art galleries, restaurants, pubs, and shops. The city is very clean, with amazingly low crime levels (the local police were allowed just last year to carry guns), and low housing costs. The people I met were open, friendly, and they seemed particularly proud and ready to talk of their history and culture. Downtown St. John's has many historical and picturesque buildings that give it a European ambiance.

Not all is perfect in Newfoundland. Dr. Dickinson let me know that Newfoundland is the poorest province in Canada and since the moratorium on cod fishing, the largest fishing industry in Newfoundland, rates of poverty have increased. Although I saw little evidence of poverty, I know that social problems attendant to poverty must be present.

### Student Exchange Opportunities

I did not go to Memorial University to present plans for student exchanges in specific academic program areas, rather Dr. Dickinson and I discussed a number of possibilities that might be appropriate for both Memorial University and SDSU/SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus students. Students studying international business, the social sciences, education, Spanish, French, history, and theater and visual arts were areas that were mentioned. As I was in St. John's to attend an international health psychology conference, we also discussed the strengths of the psychology program there which seems to emphasize health psychology.

Dr. Dickinson was interested in development of three-way student exchanges between Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. in any academic program area, but particularly in the areas of fisheries and marine sciences. We talked about the possibility of developing such linkages with the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California in Ensenada and Tijuana because Baja California has a large fishing industry and thus the Ensenada and Tijuana campuses may have an emphasis in marine studies. I am more familiar with the Mexicali campus of UABC, so when I returned I provided Dr. Dickinson with the contact information for the person in charge of academic exchanges in Mexicali, who may then be able to direct him to pertinent persons at the Ensenada and Tijuana campus.

Both SDSU and Memorial University offer a wide range of academic programs and students in many majors could pursue a semester abroad. SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus offers a much smaller range of academic programs, but because of its proximity to the Mexico border that is easily crossed each day and the bilingualism of much of the population in Imperial County, it can offer Memorial University students a unique international experience.

In addition to a semester experience, Dr. Dickinson and I talked about development of short-term or intercession programs, where for example, students from SDSU/SDSU-Imperial Valley campus visit Memorial University in summer and Memorial University students visit SDSU/SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus during winter. Dr. Dickinson indicated that Memorial University does not typically offer many classes during the summer, but particular programs may be organized for exchange students. These shorter, more targeted programs may be more attractive to undergraduates than a full semester abroad.

I would like to end by saying the exchanges with Canada seem to be underutilized by SDSU students, but Memorial University and St. John's present SDSU and SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus students a wonderful opportunity for an international experience. My visit to Newfoundland was brief, but even so I returned with a greater appreciation of the cultural and linguistic variability that exists in the English speaking world. I think students will experience this as well.