

World Maritime University

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WMU in the News

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Education and Training : The World Maritime University

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The World Maritime University

The end of March witnessed the inauguration of the 1990 class of students at the World Maritime University in a ceremony held at Malmö Town Hall. This inauguration marked the beginning of two years of hard study and practical work for the 102 students from over 50 countries enrolled on this course.

Safety at Sea was amongst the invited guests, professors, visiting professors and students from the 1989 class at this ceremony which included addresses by the University's Chancellor, Mr C P Srivastava – Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization – and the Rector, Mr Erik Nordström.

In his speech, Mr Srivastava said that in six years since the University opened in July 1983, it had nearly 600 admissions from 104 countries. The first class numbered 72 students and this had risen to the 102 students of the 1990 class which is about the maximum number that can be accommodated. He spoke of the heavy responsibility of IMO in its purpose of achieving global standards and said that a global industry such as shipping must have these global standards. However, it was no good IMO asking developing countries to implement the standards set in IMO conventions without doing something to help those countries to achieve this. He said that on his travels around the world he had found, in various developing countries, training institutions with good facilities but lacking in qualified instructors. The World Maritime University would help overcome this situation by providing courses for training such instructors as well as surveyors, managers etc.

He said that in November 1981, the IMO Assembly agreed to establish an institution for advanced education for qualified personnel from developing countries. He said that the Government of Sweden made a generous offer and within days Sweden had agreed with IMO to provide one third of the budget and the City of Malmö offered the use of a building – a former maritime training school – for the University. Furthermore, within a matter of days it had also made available at a nominal charge an apartment building in which students at the University could be accommodated.

Mr Srivastava continued by saying that the University was like a family; all has been done for the one single



Mr C P Srivastava, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization and Chancellor of the World Maritime University, giving the address to mark the start of a new WMU academic year. To the left of the photograph is the WMU Rector, Mr Erik Nordström.

purpose of helping developing nations to become self-reliant in maritime matters. The visiting professors, all prominent people from within the industry, give their services free of charge in order to do something for the maritime world. "What you have to do," he said, addressing the students, "is to get the best that you can from your time at the University and return to your countries with knowledge, determination and devotion, and must think of total global standardisation. It is one world, you symbolise that and the World Maritime University symbolises it."

At the conclusion of the official ceremony, we were pleased to note the manner in which the students greeted each other, posing for each other's cameras and generally talking amongst themselves. This was particularly so with those embarking on their second year at the University, this epitomising the family atmosphere of the institution.

We later met Mr Srivastava and he told us that the students return to their

countries feeling that it is their duty to implement IMO conventions. Because shipping is a global industry it must have global standards and it is the responsibility of IMO to set these standards; therefore IMO is in the interest of everyone, not just the developing countries. The students gain a detailed knowledge of what IMO is doing and they are the people who, together, will implement IMO, therefore the World Maritime University is the instrument of implementation. He continued by saying that the developed world has provided money and capacity, with the host country providing facilities and support – a major contribution – while not only has the City of Malmö provided the building totally free but also furnishes and maintains it at its own expense. Furthermore, the students have been welcomed by Malmö's inhabitants and the Town Hall is made available for WMU functions. He drew attention to the fact that the developing world is also making a contribution as the countries



A general view of the World Maritime University building, which was donated by the City of Malmö.

have to pay the students whilst they are attending the University and also to find replacements to carry out their normal work during their absence. When one bears in mind that the students attending the University are already qualified personnel, this is a considerable contribution to make.

He continued by saying that shipowners and seafarers, the general maritime community and other organisations such as the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) have all provided something, all have joined hands worldwide. As the University cannot afford to employ too many people, it welcomes the contribution made by the visiting professors, the best brains in the maritime section.

Continuing, he said that students attending the University receive not only classroom education but also practical hands-on training which enables them to actually do the job. All countries have accepted batches of students for the practical part of their course; everyone is anxious to give something and the students return with great gratitude to their host countries. Mr Srivastava also paid tribute to the contribution made by the United Nations Development Programme.

He told *Safety at Sea* that the University had also accepted students from the developed world which made it a truly global operation and that hardly any country with a maritime interest had not been represented in some way. The World Maritime University was something created by IMO which is serving the world in a good way. The quality of student attending had not only been maintained but enhanced and he feels that this is very important. "Protection of the marine environment is possible only if all rules are properly implemented," he said. "Safe shipping means clean oceans."

We were also given the opportunity

of meeting the Rector, professors and other staff, meeting informally with the students, and even sitting in on a lecture by one of the visiting professors.

The Rector, Mr Erik Nordström told us that the University encouraged students to co-operate as much as possible, this began with a four day common introduction period followed by a one day specialist introduction before each began the appropriate specialist course. A lot of importance is attached to team training and on-the-job training, and various factors are taken into account to suit the students to the on-the-job training each receives. With regard to the thesis that each student has to produce, Mr Nordström said that they were encouraged to relate this to their own countries. As an example he pointed out that, say, if a country did not have a safety administration, in the thesis the student could draw up a working document as to how such an administration could be established and operated.

We were told that all the professors and lecturers are all very well qualified people both academically and in terms of practical experience. It would be invidious to mention any of them by name as each one is without doubt the top person in his individual field, having held senior positions in shipping companies and maritime administrations and similar organisations. Each professor is responsible for one of the courses and is ably supported by qualified and experienced lecturers who differ from the professors mainly in professional experience but have, in general, obtained similar academic qualifications.

The University offers the following courses, all of which are of two years duration leading to an MSc degree.

- General Maritime Administration
- Ports and Shipping Administration
- Maritime Safety Administration

- (Marine Engineering)
- Maritime Safety Administration (Nautical)
- Marine Education and Training (Marine Engineering)
- Marine Education and Training (Nautical)
- Technical Management of Shipping Companies.

The course language for all the above is English and because the students come from many different countries, the University offers intensive English language courses for those students from countries where English is not the language, or one of the official languages. There are two of these courses, one of 18 weeks and the other of 10 weeks and both finish when the two year courses begin. Those students who require such teaching attend whichever of the two best suits their need. The WMU has three resident English language lecturers and these are supported by up to four supernumeraries during the intensive programme. We can certainly vouch for the effectiveness of the courses as one evening we joined a Tunisian student at dinner. He told us in excellent English that prior to attending the course he spoke no English, only French and Arabic. His command of English was quite remarkable in all respects and we enjoyed a most stimulating conversation with him.

Space does not permit full details of all the courses to be given here, but two of obvious interest to readers of this journal are the Marine Safety Administration courses. We first spoke with Professor Hansen Tangen about the engineering course and he told us that there are four aspects to this course, these being administration, certification of ships, certification of personnel, and investigation of accidents. He pointed out that the students were all certificated engineers with seagoing experience and the administration part of the course would enable them to take a senior position in a safety administration, these positions ranging from surveyor to the highest level. In addition to covering specifics, this part of the course looks at how an administration is operated, its responsibilities and other aspects.

Turning to the certification of ships he said that the course explains what is happening when a certificate is issued to a vessel, or part of it, and details each convention concerned. The students do a lot of field training relating to certification, most of this being undertaken in Nordic countries, although other practical work is done in non-Nordic countries. For example, in addition to a visit to IMO headquarters, students go to Poland to see engines being built and certificated, witness class surveys in



Students using word processors on which their theses are produced. Some of these units were donated by the Hong Kong Shipowners Association.

ports such as Rotterdam, etc. Mr Hansen Tangen continued by saying that he endeavours to expose the students to a variety of requirement bodies so that the students can make up their own minds on requirements and regulations. The thesis each has to produce must be related to safety administration, the student's own country and his position within that country. Both Marine Safety Administration courses work closely together and therefore a part of each course is common to both. There is also co-operation with other related courses such as the Marine Education and Training (Engineering).

With regard to the certification of personnel, we were told that this deals with the IMO STCW (Standards of Training and Certification of Watchkeepers) and how it is implemented; to this end, each student on the course gives a lecture as to how it is carried out in his/her country.

The fourth aspect of the course – casualty investigation – is self-explanatory.

The foregoing is literally only a very brief outline of what the course involves, there being some 36 modules included.

The professor in charge of the Maritime Safety Administration (Nautical) course, Professor P S Vranichiswar, told us that this course comprises 42 modules covering

maritime operations and related matters, maritime law, registration of ships, maritime safety, marine environment protection and related matters, marine personnel, maritime accident inquiries/investigations and related matters and supporting subjects. The modules comprising the maritime safety, marine environment protection and related matters comprise almost half of the course and cover such diverse subjects as life saving equipment, load lines, fire prevention, navigation equipment, search and rescue, port state control and various other subjects. Here again, Professor Vranichiswar emphasised the importance of the practical aspect of the course, with the students being sent to many countries for their case studies.

We were fortunate in being able to attend a lecture on choosing a ship and its dimensions by use of a design spiral. This was given by Mr C R Cushing, the renowned naval architect and designer of some of the world's outstanding ships. This alone demonstrated the high level of qualifications of the visiting professors, of which Mr Cushing is just one. It was most interesting to witness the exchanges between him and the students over certain points; attendance at the WMU is clearly a wonderful opportunity for students to clarify their queries with experts of the

highest possible level.

Following the lecture Mr Cushing told us that he had never previously encountered students who were so intensive, soaking up every piece of information like a dry sponge. He welcomed the good interaction with the students.

None of the above would be possible without the tremendous support given by the permanent staff from the administrative and other departments such as the library, language laboratory and the various services. There is a great atmosphere prevailing throughout the University, this being reflected in the Henrik Smith residence centre where professors and visiting professors also reside. They are therefore always on hand to discuss any course matters with their students, a facility which, we understand, is taken advantage of by many.

The success of any educational establishment is best judged by the standards of student it turns out. In this respect the WMU must surely rank as one of the highest, not only in terms of the very high percentage of students who obtain their degrees – and these are not awarded lightly, they really do have to be earned by sheer hard work and dedication – but also by the posts held by graduates from earlier years. Examples of these are:

- Academic Dean of a training institution
 - Vice-Principal of an institute of technology
 - Heads of departments in maritime training institutions
 - Director General of shipping
 - Adviser to a minister of transport
 - Executive director of a port authority
 - Harbourmaster (the first national replacing an expatriate)
 - Director General of maritime transport,
- and numerous other senior positions across a broad spectrum of the maritime industry.

An Appeal

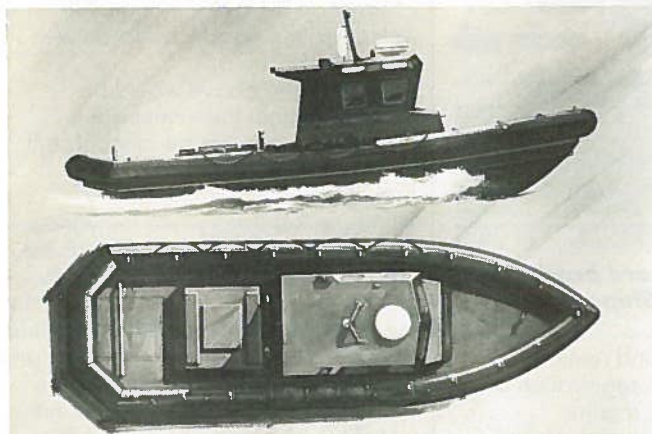
It would be so easy for the maritime world to sit back and think that now the WMU is well established it will continue. However, as we reported earlier on, its establishment has been made possible by generous donations by many organisations. It does cost money to run and with inflation these costs are increasing, and yet there is no guaranteed long-term income. In view of this, the University needs continued financial and other support from the industry it serves. Let us reiterate what Mr Srivastava has said, "It is not only the developing nations who benefit from the University but the whole maritime world, a global industry such as shipping requires global standards – the World Maritime University will help ensure their implementation."



In the University are boards displaying the names of organisations who have contributed to the WMU. There is an ongoing need for such contributions.

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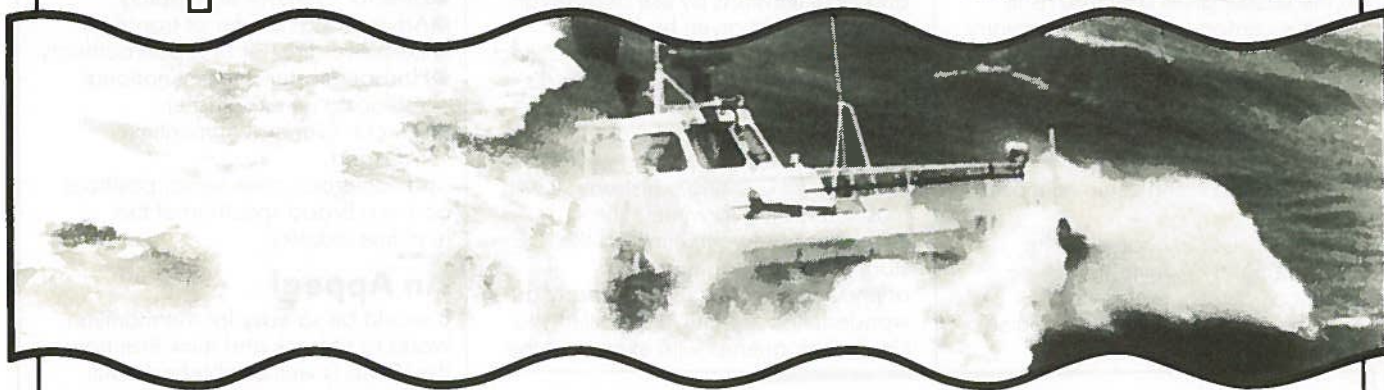
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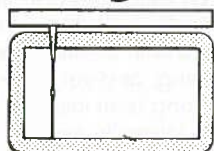
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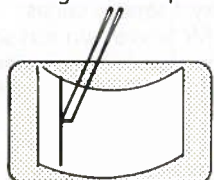
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