

World Maritime University

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B. Zagorin

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The World Maritime University

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B. Zagorin

Senior Adviser to the Secretary-General, IMO

SYNOPSIS

The author outlines the origins of the World Maritime University and defines its purposes and objectives. He then describes the structure and organization of the WMU, including: academic work; the faculty; the student body; equipment and library facilities, and provisions for accommodation and recreation. Finally, the author explains how the WMU is financed.

INTRODUCTION

The World Maritime University (WMU) is truly a remarkable achievement in international co-operation. Following the consideration of its establishment in various inter-governmental bodies in the United Nations system, it is functioning with an international resident faculty; it benefits from lectures by visiting professors from a large number of countries all over the world; it has a student body from developing countries from all the regions, and it is financed with funds provided by various donor governments and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with the participation of sponsoring developing countries themselves.

THE WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY

The WMU had its origins in the deliberations of the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in November 1981. At that session of the IMO Assembly, a mandate was given to the Secretary-General of IMO to take all necessary action to proceed with the establishment of the University. A major step taken by the Secretary-General was to bring the matter to the attention of the Governing Council of the UNDP in June 1982, which requested a progress report on the establishment of the University to be presented to the UNDP Governing Council the following year.

Following the meeting of the Governing Council, the Heads of the two UN bodies, namely the Secretary-General of IMO and the Administrator of UNDP, undertook to explore the possibilities for financing the launching of the WMU and, when a feasible scheme was presented by the Administrator to the Governing Council, it gave its blessing and the formation of the WMU could then proceed.

Of major importance in the formative stages was the offer of facilities by the City of Malmö, Sweden, to house the University itself at no cost and also to provide residential accommodation for the students at a modest rental. Also of key importance was the pledge of the Government of Sweden to provide US\$ 1 million a year to support the University.

Purposes and objectives

The WMU was established to provide advanced training for specialized maritime personnel, particularly from developing

countries, in various maritime subjects to enlarge their capacity to deal with the questions of improvement of maritime safety, protection of the marine environment and promotion of greater efficiency in international shipping.

It was widely recognized that the developing countries had a large role to play in international shipping, but it was also recognized that they have a great need to fill acute shortages of well trained administrators and maritime specialists. It is a major purpose of the University to reduce the dependence of the developing countries on expatriate experts and to enable developing countries to participate more effectively in international shipping activities.

The international community felt that the WMU, by providing opportunities for advanced training, would result in widespread benefit to developed and developing countries alike from the resulting improved safety of shipping, better control of pollution and more effective implementation of IMO international conventions on shipping.

Organization and structure

The Charter of the World Maritime University was promulgated by the Secretary-General of IMO in May 1983 pursuant to the mandate given to him by the IMO Assembly. The top body controlling the policies and directing the operations of the University is a Board of Governors whose members, from a considerable number of countries serving in their individual capacities, are appointed for 2-year terms by the Secretary-General of IMO in accordance with criteria approved by the IMO Council. The Board of Governors meets once a year in Malmö and determines the policies controlling the operations of the University and approves its budget.

Under an agreement between the IMO Secretary-General and the Government of Sweden, approved by the Swedish Parliament in May 1983, the University was accorded the rights and privileges equivalent to those extended to a specialized agency of the United Nations. Other basic documents in the University's establishment are agreements between IMO and the City of Malmö setting forth the arrangements under which the buildings for the University and for the residential quarters of students are made available to WMU.

The WMU was inaugurated on 4 July 1983 and classes began immediately thereafter. Thus the University has had nearly one and a half years of successful operation since its inauguration.

Organization of academic work

The University provides four types of 2-year courses, as follows:

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

In addition the University gives 1-year courses on:

- Technical Staff of Shipping Companies;
- Technical Officials engaged in Maritime Safety Administration.

It has been the experience thus far that almost all of the students have elected to enrol in the 2-year courses, and in both the 1983 and 1984 classes a number of students shifted into 2-year courses after beginning their study in Malmö.

An important part of the University's curriculum is the practical training and exposure outside the University itself, gained in field trips and on-the-job training which has been organized with the co-operation of a number of countries and organizations who have hosted the visits of the WMU students. This has been a very rewarding part of the University's work.

The University found it necessary to provide intensive English language training courses for students whose mother tongue is not English. These are made available for 18 and 10-week periods prior to the beginning of the academic maritime courses in each academic year.

The University held a seminar in Malmö in September 1984 for Heads of Maritime Training Institutions in Developing Countries and will have a similar seminar in August 1985 for Heads of Maritime Administrations in Developing Countries.

The University is also preparing for various short courses which will probably be given in the various regions of the world under the University's sponsorship.

Faculty

The resident faculty in Malmö consists of a Rector, Vice-Rector and seven professors, who come from nine different countries. Lectures are also given by visiting professors, renowned specialists in various maritime subjects, who serve at the University for no fee and just receive expenses for travel and per diem. Visiting professors give lectures ordinarily for one or two weeks throughout the academic year and are chosen from a roster of over 150 prominent persons in the maritime field who have offered to provide public service to the University in this way.

Student body

Applications for study at the WMU are submitted with the approval of sponsoring governments. The students may come from governmental or private organizations such as shipping companies. Applications are reviewed by a selection committee of professors at the University and on the basis of the qualifications noted in the application forms a decision is taken on admission to a particular course.

The first class which joined the University in July 1983 consisted of 72 students from 40 countries. The second class which enrolled in February 1984 numbered 65 students and brought the total number of participating developing countries to 59. The initial class, which covered the period July 1983 to July 1985, was exceptional and thereafter the academic year began in February or March and runs to December, when the 2-year students get a 2-month winter break until mid-February. The Board of Governors at its meeting in June 1984 decided that, beginning in 1985, a limited number of students from developed countries could enrol at WMU (up to 10% of each incoming class).

All students are provided with travel to and from Malmö including home leave after their first year of study, free food

and lodging, a clothing allowance on arrival at the University, a stipend of \$150 a month, books and per diem costs for field trips and on-the-job training.

Residential and recreational facilities

The lodging consists of separate small apartments given to each student. The University helps to find accommodation in Malmö for students whose wives and children have joined them. The City authorities provide unlimited free bus transportation in Malmö and the students have free access to an excellent recreation and sports facility.

Equipment and library facilities

A number of countries from around the world have donated modern equipment to the University for instructional purposes. This has provided opportunities to the students for greater familiarity with up-to-date nautical, engineering and communications equipment. The University also is developing a library which has some budgetary allocation for this purpose as well as gifts from various donors. A modern language laboratory was contributed to the University for use by the intensive English language programme. The University also has a floating laboratory on a ship in which equipment has been installed for testing and training purposes.

Financing of the WMU

Approximately half of the \$4 million annual budget of the University is provided by the governments of Sweden and Norway and the UNDP. Almost all of the remainder of the University's income derives from fellowships which initially were set at \$10 000 per student per year and are to be raised to \$12 000 per year for new students entering in 1985. These fellowships are to be mobilized by sponsoring governments or organizations from their own resources or by fellowships financed by donors through the IMO or under bilateral aid programmes and the UNDP Country Programmes.

In the early life of the University it has benefited from various contributions in kind. These have consisted of equipment, teaching materials, books, consultant services and host government support to visiting students on field trips and on-the-job training.

The international community recognized the compelling need for ensuring sustained support for the University and in November 1983 the IMO Assembly established a Working Group for this purpose. The Working Group has encouraged the establishment of focal points in countries throughout the world to foster interest in WMU and to mobilize financial and other support for the University. An important development has been the establishment of the Friends of World Maritime University in the USA which has obtained special tax status so that contributions for the WMU can be given beneficial tax treatment.

There is clearly a need to widen the group providing support for the recurrent costs of the University beyond Sweden, Norway and UNDP. There is also a need to secure additional fellowship financing which will enable students from developing countries to enrol at the University whose sponsoring governments have difficulty in mobilizing the needed fellowship funds.

Following a decision by the Board of Governors in June 1984, the Secretary-General of IMO launched an appeal for a General Capital Fund for the World Maritime University with the target of \$25 million, which is intended to provide a steady flow of income for the University from the earnings of the capital held in this Fund. The Secretary-General wrote to many companies and organizations requesting contributions to this Capital Fund and it was featured as the main point of emphasis in his message transmitted throughout the world on World Maritime Day in September 1984.