

World Maritime University

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The World Maritime University

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1. Introduction

Since its establishment in 1958, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been concerned with the shortage of trained personnel to deal with maritime matters in many countries, especially those in the developing world. The shortage was a serious handicap for economic development; apart from this, it could also produce a disastrous impact upon maritime safety and marine pollution.

In order to overcome the problem, as an immediate step the IMO initiated a technical assistance programme to help countries wishing to improve their maritime activities. The programme was not however found to be a great success. On the one hand, the IMO was severely limited by the meagre resources at its disposal; the developing countries, on the other hand, struggling in the backwater of their marginal subsistence economies, could not make any substantial contribution from their own resources to cover the local costs and provide counterpart shares of expenses. They could not even hope to produce all the raw materials and equipment needed for their development: these have to be imported. These problems became all the more complex and were compounded by the recurring deficit of foreign exchange reserves.

By the mid-seventies, it became clear that the IMO had to pursue a new course of action, as an alternative to its technical assistance programme, if progress was to be made. Thus, after prolonged deliberations within and outside the Organization, the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization unanimously adopted a resolution in November 1981 at its twelfth session authorizing the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps for the establishment of the University.

Following this, the movement of events accelerated. Preparatory financial assistance was promised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Sweden. The Charter of the University was promulgated on 1 May 1983. Six weeks later, on 4 July 1983, the World Maritime University (WМУ) was officially inaugurated at Malmo in Sweden.

2. Institutional mechanism

The World Maritime University has an international status. Though it is established under the auspices of the IMO, it is a separate entity with its own institutional personality and functions as an independent body. It is responsible only to an international Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors consists of highly qualified and widely recognized persons with maritime interests. They serve as Governors in their individual capacities. Members of the Board are selected by the Secretary-General of IMO who is also the chairman of the Board. In the selection of members, the Secretary-General must consider the qualifications and professional specialization of the individuals and also

the need for a balance among a wide range of countries and shipping activities. The Board has representatives from both developed and developing maritime nations.

The Board of Governors is responsible for guiding and supervising the activities of the University. They normally meet once a year either at the site of the University or at the headquarters of IMO. If the number of Governors becomes unwieldy, they may appoint an Executive Board of a smaller size so as to give closer and more direct guidance to the University.

The Rector is the chief academic and administrative officer of the University. He has overall responsibility for the direction, organization, administration and programmes of the University. As such, he is a qualified professional with long experience in maritime training. He is assisted by eight full-time professors and an adequate number of short-term visiting professors and lecturers to cover the specialized subjects. The combination of full-time staff and visiting lecturers allows the University to provide a wide coverage of each subject as well as to give the students access to the leading experts in their respective fields. The faculty consists of four main departments: (1) Nautical Sciences; (2) Maritime Safety and Administration; (3) Maritime Technology; and (4) Marine Environment Protection.

In addition to the academic staff, the Rector is assisted by an administrative staff who organize the field trips and the practical aspects of the on-the-job training programmes, and aid the teaching staff as well as the students in the conduct of the University's course work.

Students are accepted after careful review by a Selection Board. Entrance requirements are maintained in order to ensure high standards so as to optimize the gain for the students and for the countries they serve from the advanced training at the University. In general, an applicant should have attained a University degree or equivalent professional qualifications in a technical field, combined with work experience as appropriate.

As an international centre for advanced training for specialized maritime personnel from developing countries, the University maintains close links and contacts with other maritime training institutions. It has also established continuing working relationships with several United Nations and other agencies including, in particular, the UNDP, the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks.

3. Financial aspects

The University is funded by voluntary contributions, in both cash and kind. This provides for viability, objectivity, and quality of its scientific and scholarly work. The voluntary contributions are received from various sources; e.g., governments, non-governmental agencies including shipping concerns, foundations and individuals, and from international organizations. Apart from cash contributions, leading shipbuilders have donated marine equipment to the University and the visiting professors have provided their services free of charge.

During the early stages of the establishment of the University, the United Nations Development Programme provided preparatory assistance of \$215 750. This was supplemented by a contribution from Sweden of \$100 000 thus totalling \$315 750. The city of Malmo gave enthusiastic backing by generously providing a building, equipment and other facilities free of cost.

The annual budget of the University, including all operational, administrative and staff expenses as well as expenditure, on travel, board and lodgings of students, is estimated to be \$4 million.

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More than half of the annual budget comes from recurring contributions from

Sweden	\$1000000
UNDP	\$800000
Norway	\$350000
Commonwealth Secretariat	\$120000

The balance of about \$1.7 million per annum needs to be secured on a recurring basis to enable the University to function efficiently. For the present, it is met by *ad hoc* donations and fellowship costs contributed by governments, shipping enterprises and private individuals. For instance, several IMO member States, including Denmark, FR Germany, France, Greece, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the UK and Saudi Arabia, have provided *ad hoc* donations or fellowships. The countries which send students to the University have also contributed towards the costs. A group called the Friends of the WMU in the United States has made several donations.

An institution cannot simply rely on *ad hoc* voluntary contributions. To make it strong and viable, finance is needed on a permanent basis. Thus, in order to establish a permanent and secure financial base so that recurring financial expenses are assured, the Board of Governors has resolved that the University should establish a Capital Fund with a target of \$25 million. The income from this Fund would provide sufficient earnings to plan the University's activities appropriately and to function efficiently.

4. Programme of activities

The University offers two-year and one-year courses. In addition, it also provides short courses of four to six weeks' duration dealing with particular subjects. The two-year courses run from February to December, with a December–February break.

Two-year courses leading to a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree are offered in the following four specialized areas (1) General Maritime Administration; (2) Maritime Safety Administration; (3) Maritime Education; and (4) Technical Management of Shipping Companies.

One-year courses (two semesters) leading to the granting of a Certificate are offered for (1) technical officials engaged in Maritime Safety Administration, and (2) technical Staff of shipping companies. The aims of these courses are similar to the corresponding two-year M.Sc. course mentioned in the preceding paragraph, but they have been specially designed for personnel who are not eligible to pursue the Master's programme.

The specialized short courses are given in five different subject areas. They have been specially designed to meet the requirements of modern shipboard technology. The five subjects are: (1) Oil Tankers including Crude Oil Washing; (2) Chemical Tankers; (3) Liquefied Gas Tankers; (4) Carriage of Packaged Dangerous Cargoes; and (5) Implementation of the COW requirements of MARPOL 1973/78.

The main courses of study include a number of compulsory units together with a certain number of subject options which can be selected by the student. This approach ensures that principal subjects are covered by all the students but at the same time it allows flexibility to cater for the particular needs of students from different countries and organizations.

The teaching method includes lectures, tutorials, laboratory work, demonstrations, case studies, projects and industrial experience. Though students will spend most of their time at the University premises, arrangements are made for them to extend their experience by field trips to other cities and institutions within Sweden and abroad to

visit ports, industries and other organizations involved in shipping. They will also have opportunities for 'on-the-job' training.

While the courses include a considerable amount of traditional classroom work such as examinations, preparation of project reports and theses, the practical content is much greater and more varied than in normal post-graduate studies.

As far as student population is concerned, 72 students from 40 different developing countries were enrolled in the initial class at the University in July 1983; 65 students from 41 developing countries were admitted in the second class in February 1984. The class of 1985 consisted of 80 students from 43 countries.

5. Conclusions

The establishment of the World Maritime University provides one of the most vivid illustrations of the creative acts of imagination on the part of International Maritime Organization and the Government of Sweden. The functioning of the University within such a short time of its conception also illustrates the impact of personalities on the outcome of negotiations, especially on the matter of financing. Although several people played an important role in the concept of the WMU, there is one whose role loomed especially large. He is C. P. Srivastava, Secretary-General of the IMO, whose administrative capability brought wide public attention to this unique institution of advanced training and attracted assistance from UNDP and a number of countries, including Sweden, the prime mover and chief donor in cash and in kind.

The World Maritime University is a new concept. Abstract academic exercise of the intellect without further search for results is not its function. On the contrary, the programme of studies is oriented towards achieving practical professional experience with a view to problem solving – a substantial part of time is devoted to practical on-the-job training – particularly for developing countries, to train senior specialist maritime personnel. The courses of study are attuned to train maritime teachers, surveyors, examiners, technical advisers to Government Ministries, general maritime administrators, and technical managers of shipping companies. The training is intended to supplement and in no way to duplicate the training which is already being provided at the national and regional levels for navigating and engineering shipboard personnel. The training is expected to enhance the efficiency of shipping and port operations throughout the world and to promote effective and peaceful global cooperation to the benefit of the entire world maritime community. It is a development of great interest to all maritime States, shipowners, shipbuilders, ship repairers and equipment suppliers, and to all others who are involved in the world's maritime activities.

The compelling reason for its creation, as stated by the Secretary-General of IMO, is the urgent requirement for many more well trained and highly qualified people in the field of marine transport in the developing countries. The shortage of expertise in these countries has caused 'a weakening of their links with the world system of commerce and transport and excessive dependence on imported experts at very high cost'.

The University is unique in several respects. It is an example of global cooperation between the countries of the North and South, a genuine international effort in which the traditional maritime nations are giving their experience and in many cases their financial support as well, to help the developing world make shipping safer and the oceans cleaner, and at the same time raise the level of management, efficiency and general maritime expertise. It is the only institution of its kind in the world, providing advanced maritime education and training to senior personnel from many developing

countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere. The student body is *sui generis*. They are not young people embarking on their careers; a typical student has already achieved academic success and had considerable professional experience.

The fact that the University has been in existence for only a short period of time – just two years – does not permit a full assessment of the success of its three main programmes of teaching – the degree, the certificate and the short-term course. Each of the programmes is at a different stage of development, and has devised different methods of operation to suit particular needs.

Nevertheless, the University has made an impressive beginning. It offers the developing countries their best opportunity to close the technological gap between themselves and the traditional maritime countries. By putting their newly acquired knowledge into practice, shipping will not only be made more efficient, but safer as well. From an academic point of view, it may be said that the University has already proved to be popular and successful. As a result, the Board of Governors has decided that 10% of the places at the University from 1985 will be open to students from established maritime, as well as developing, countries.