

Proposed Section

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS  
IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Vocational educators have long held a special interest in the international education community. However, more recently, this interest has seemed to grow and mature. Many professionals are beginning to recognize that international collaboration and assistance serve as means by which we may improve our own programs. Others, particularly those in less developed nations, note the benefits that may accrue through learning about programs in "developed" countries.

Over the past three years, AVA member interest in international programs has grown tremendously as evidenced by increasing attendance at the two sessions that are routinely arranged by the International Education Committee. Last December in St. Louis, interest in becoming a NRSB section was voiced by more than 50 individuals; persons from public schools and postsecondary institutions in the U.S.; persons from businesses, industries, firms, and governmental agencies doing contractual work overseas; and a few foreigners who were attending the AVA Convention.

In collaboration with the National Center and AVA Headquarters, the Committee has organized a conference for vocational educators worldwide to which representatives of 150 nations have been invited. The conference will run from December 1 to 6, 1983 in Anaheim and dovetail with AVA convention programs and activities. This activity has generated a great deal of interest worldwide and will, hopefully, serve as a foundation for formulating relevant goals and plans.

In terms of purposes, it is felt the proposed section will

1. promote professional linkages among international vocational educators;
2. serve as a forum for sharing of vocational education problems and solutions;
3. foster the development of vocational education as an international enterprise; and
4. facilitate the worldwide dissemination of knowledge about vocational education.

Other purposes will certainly emerge after the section has been formally accepted into the NRS Division.

The purposes of this proposed section are not represented in any other section or division of the AVA structure. Many persons attending the Committee-sponsored program sessions in the past have voiced concern about the perceived need for sharing information and materials about overseas programs, while quite a few displayed interest in employment in overseas programs on both long-term and short-term bases. Others were interested because of their contacts and interactions with foreigners who participate in various educational and professional visitation programs here in the U.S. As a section in NRS, we feel our sessions at future AVA Conventions would receive greater visibility as a result of being included in the printed program booklet, being given space in the annual Voc Ed edition that contains the convention and trade show preview, and being placed in other AVA public relations media. Such visibility should, in turn, aid in recruitment of members into this special interest section.

A rough estimate by the International Education Committee indicates that membership in such a section may initially reach 150. It seems reasonable to think, based on Committee members' discussions, that membership would increase at an acceptable rate. Whether it would ever reach the number required to become an AVA division is open to speculation.

Please consider this as a formal request for the establishment of an International Concerns Section within the New and Related Services Division. The AVA International Education Committee as well as numerous AVA members believe the time has come to formally recognize this important area and get on with the task of better meeting AVA members' needs as well as needs generated by the international vocational education community.