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Center for International Education

December 2006

## FIRST CENTER DIRECTOR, McCANN, TO RETIRE



*First Center director, Frank McCann*

It was the mid '70s. Frank McCann, UNH professor of history, was a Fulbright Scholar in Brazil. In the midst of a religious procession taking place in the streets of Brasilia, a strange wave of excitement washed over him. "I understood what was being said around me," remembers McCann. "I was really a part of the crowd, a part of the culture -- not an outsider. What a feeling!" He continues, "I thought to myself, if we could make this happen for our students, it would change their lives."

And change their lives he did. For the more than 550 students who have completed CIE's International Affairs dual major since the first class graduated in 1985, integrating two majors, demonstrating advanced-level foreign language competency, and living for at least two months in a country where that language is spoken have set UNH students apart from peers

engaged in similar programs across the country.

Getting the program up and running was not without its challenges, however. Efforts to establish a multi-disciplinary international studies program during the late '60s and early '70s met with lack of administrative support. Then, in the late '70s, President Evelyn Handler asked McCann to head up a renewed effort. Securing a \$64,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, McCann and a dedicated group of faculty members from across UNH schools and colleges established the Center for International Perspectives with its blueprint for an undergraduate Program in International Perspectives. The program, which later became known as the International Affairs dual major (IA), was formally approved by the System Academic Planning Council in February 1984.

As first Center director, McCann also launched the New Hampshire International Seminar series in the the early 1980s. The original event, which required presenters to produce a scholarly paper for advance reading by participants, was modeled on seminar programs McCann enjoyed at Columbia University and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

In the early days, the Center office consisted of one room tucked away in the corner of the two-story building located behind the New England Center. The room housed McCann, a student assistant, two old desks, and a lot of cardboard boxes filled with files. By 1985, study abroad had been added to the program mix and McCann's staff had grown to include three full time employees.

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The move to expanded office space on Main Street took place in 1988 when the university infirmary moved to the new Health Services building. Recalling how difficult it was to obtain space for the new academic program in a central campus location, McCann smiles, "It's an odd sort of thrill for me now to walk into Hood House."

Frank McCann will retire in the spring after 36 years at UNH. Through his relentless efforts to provide meaningful international experience for UNH undergraduates, McCann made a personal dream come true, and in doing so changed the lives of hundreds who, as alumni, regularly express their gratitude for the opportunities they enjoyed at UNH.

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223 Hood House • 89 Main Street • Durham, NH 03824  
tel: 603-862-2398 • fax: 603-862-0169  
[study.abroad@unh.edu](mailto:study.abroad@unh.edu) • [international.affairs@unh.edu](mailto:international.affairs@unh.edu)