

## CONCLUDING REMARKS/WRAP-UP COMMENTS

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### “LESSONS LEARNED FROM OUR CONFERENCE ON *ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND CIVIL SOCIETY*”

#### PREFACE:

As we conclude this conference, it is important that we recognize the invaluable support provided by the Tinker Foundation that made this conference possible. Created in 1959, the Tinker Foundation strives to support the interchange and exchange of information between individuals who are concerned about the affairs of Spain, Portugal, and the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of the Western Hemisphere. Programmatically, the Foundation is particularly interested in projects that address environmental policy, economic policy, and governance issues. The Tinker Foundation generously awarded Pace University a grant that has funded a two-year project entitled “The Dynamics of Civil Society in the U.S. and Brazil.” That project has produced wondrous and enduring results.

Thanks to the Tinker Foundation – and the partnerships forged through our FIPSE-CAPES consortium – we have held two highly successful international conferences on “*Civil Society, Economic Globalization, Environmental Responsibility, and Sustainable Development in the United States and Brazil*.” The first conference was held on June 10 and 11, 2004 at Pace University in New York City. We are now concluding the second conference that has been organized by Dr. Claudia Lima Marques and held here in Porto Alegre June 2 and 3, 2005 at the Federal University Rio Grande do Sul.

We should also give thanks to the leaders of our two Universities. Dr. David A. Caputo, President of Pace University, and Dr. Jose F. Hennemann, Rector of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, have presided over this conference. If we are to build strong

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partnerships between US and Brazilian universities, it is essential that the leaders of our institutions embrace and encourage such collaboration. We are grateful to the Presidents of Pace and UFRGS for their commitment to our efforts and we are especially appreciative of Dr. Caputo from Pace who traveled to Brazil to join Reitor Hennemann in giving opening addresses at this 2005 conference.

As we bring this conference to a close, I would like to set forth some of the themes and insights that we presented over the past two days by various conference speakers. Then, I will try to suggest some of the lessons that we have learned from this gathering. In particular, I will identify lessons as to how we in universities might act (or should act) when we confront the challenges of "Economic Globalization, The Environment, and Civil Society."

The fundamental premise on which this conference (and the overall partnership between Pace and UFRGS) is based is this: a strong civil society is essential to the viability and development of a democratic society and to the reduction of poverty. Certainly, we recognize that efforts in the U.S., Brazil, and globally to develop reasonable policies on the environment and sustainable development have often been led by actors (and activists) from civil society.

## LESSONS LEARNED:

### Nº 1 - Human Nature

A key lesson that we have learned was offered early in the proceedings by Professor Barton H. Thompson, Jr. from Stanford Law School and Director of the Stanford Institute for the Environment. Yesterday, Dr. Thompson presented the "Tuiskon Dick Lecture" entitled "Psychological Barriers to Protecting the Environment." Dr. Thompson advised us to recognize two fundamental attributes of human behavior that one must reckon with when devising plans for sustainable development.

First, human goals and actions are often shaped by two sets of values that are – at times- in conflict. Let me suggest that one set of values, drawn from classical liberal political philosophy as well as premises of capitalist economic theory, focuses on private interests (of individuals, corporate entities, nations...) and enshrines values of individual rights and freedoms. Another set, reflected in democratic political philosophy as well as in socialist economic thinking, focuses on the community or social entity (instead of the isolated individual) and advocates the values of equality and the common good.

Second, more often than not, humans tend to behave in such a way as to maximize their short-term (or immediate) private interests. The examples offered by Professor Maria Cristine Cezar de Oliveira from the UFPA Law School, Belem and by Professor Carlos Alberto Ghersi from UBA, Buenos Aires in their remarks illustrate this behavior pattern.

Accordingly, those who design plans for sustainable development and who seek to inspire environmental responsibility would be wise to redirect human behavior away from an obsession with immediate private interests and toward the longer-run good of the community as a whole.

## **Nº 2 - International Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity**

This Conference is an example of binational collaboration and exchange of information and ideas. By bringing together scholars from the natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, law, humanities, business, nursing, and computer science, we have stretched well beyond disciplinary boundaries to approach environmental challenges from cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Real world problems are just that: international and interdisciplinary. We in academia should encourage and host further international and interdisciplinary gatherings.

## **Nº 3 - The Importance of Individual Efforts**

While we have focused on the roles played by organizations or civil society actors, we should also recognize that single individuals – through their intellectual contributions, vision, and astute efforts – can act as powerful emissaries who, through personal charm and dogged commitment – can build bridges and shape history. .

This Conference has been dedicated to a truly remarkable leader and visionary, Dr. Tuiskon Dick. Dr Dick, former President of the Federal University Rio Grande do Sul (1989-1992), is a distinguished Professor of Ecology. On July 21, 2000 he was inducted into the National Order of Scientific Merit by the Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology in recognition of his contributions to science and to education in general in Brazil. Dr. Dick personifies the goals of our FIPSE-CAPEs collaboration. Indeed, we are all indebted to Tuiskon Dick for the very existence of this Brazil-US partnership. In 2000-2001, when Tuiskon Dick was General Coordinator of CAPEs, he was one of the visionaries who conceived of the FIPSE-CAPEs program and who has been stalwart in his leadership and commitment to its success. It is fitting that our Porto Alegre Conference is dedicated to Dr. Dick for he is directly and intimately committed to the goals of this conference. He is dedicated to international collaboration and partnership, having led efforts to cement ties between Brazil and numerous other nations, including the US, Chile, and Germany. He is also committed to interdisciplinarity – having created UFRGS's Center of Ecology, the University's first interdisciplinary effort. Finally, he is committed to principles of economic sustainability and environmental responsibility – and he appreciates that strides will be made toward such goals only when scientific and social researchers join with advocates and policy makers to share knowledge and to design and implement action plans.

## **Nº 4 - Research and Scholarship**

In the United States, faculty are judged annually in terms of their performance in three fundamental areas of activity: Research, Service, and Teaching. I suspect that faculty in Brazil are also held to standards in these three areas of activity. With regard to research, one lesson that we have learned by the example of our conference and, in particular by the

comments of Senator Joao Capiberibe, is that we in academia must form partnerships with actors outside of the university.

This conference has been notable by those who have attended and participated in these discussions. Practitioners, experts, and policy-makers from outside of the university setting have joined with academics and their students for serious discussions and exchange of ideas. If those of us in universities wish to see our research find its way into real policies and programmatic initiatives that improve the lives of people, we need to exchange ideas and partner with leaders of government, business, education, health care, and civil society.

Furthermore, as scholars, we in academia should vow to pursue objective, scientific research that is not politicized. We would also be wise to strive to be both interdisciplinary and comparative. Professor Michael Will from the Europe Institut in Saarbrücken Germany advised us of the political utility that comes from “looking out the window.” In a similar vein, Dean Sergio Jose Porto from the UFRGS Faculty of Law and Associate Dean Mark Shulman from the Pace Law School both suggested that, by comparing Brazilian and American Law, we might find new ways of identifying and solving problems. Simply put, by incorporating knowledge, perspectives, and methodologies from other disciplines – and by comparing findings and practices from different nations and societies – it is likely that our eyes and minds will be opened to a wondrous kaleidoscope of new insights and knowledge that would otherwise have been denied us.

### **Nº 5 - Service and Teaching**

The ivory town should not endure. It is incumbent upon us as scholars to reach out beyond the walls of academia and to share ourselves and our knowledge with the society beyond – at all levels – local, state, national, and international.

As teachers, it is our obligation to build a vibrant democracy and better world by nurturing in our students a strong sense of social responsibility and commitment to civic engagement and the common good. The examples offered by Professors Gregory Julian and Christelle Scharff from Pace University have illustrated that pedagogy that encourages hands-on practical learning can be effective in this regard. Furthermore, the successful efforts to made by Professor Claudia Lima Marques here at UFRGS to create an International Model United Nations Conference also attest to the efficacy of engaged and hands-on learning. Let's help our students find ways to think globally by acting locally. Let's also encourage them to participate in international exchanges.

As teachers and mentors of future generations, we should ever be mindful of the awesome responsibility that is ours. In the spirit of the lessons that we have learned from this Conference on “Economic Globalization, the Environment, and Civil society,” let us heed these words from Kofi Annan:

We have to choose between a global market driven only by calculations of short-term profit and one which has a human face. Between a world which condemns a quarter of the human race to starvation and squalor and one which offers everyone at least the chance of prosperity in a healthy environment. Between a selfish free-for-all in which we ignore the fate of losers and a future in which the strong and successful accept their responsibilities, showing global vision and leadership.

*Kofi Annan quote: World Economic Forum 1999- Davos, Switzerland*

## CONCLUSION:

On behalf of my dear colleague, Dr. Claudia Lima Marques, I offer you my sincere thanks and appreciation of your contributions to this most successful and important dialogue.

