Harvard's global ambitions to study and know more about the world, and to send more students out into it, were triply boosted at the end of the spring term with the creation of a new post—vice provost for international affairs—and the announcement of two major gifts to foster that work in Latin America and Asia.

Dillon professor of international affairs Jorge I. Domínguez, director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs from 1996 through this June, will fill the new position. “His appointment will address an important need at Harvard for leadership, coordination, and oversight,” said Provost Steven E. Hyman. Domínguez’s brief includes developing University-wide programs and policies for international research and education, working with deans and faculty members to create research collaborations and facilities, and maintaining information about Harvard activities outside the United States. He chaired a task force that reported to the provost on these matters in 2004.

On May 12, David Rockefeller ’36, LL.D. ’69, pledged an additional $10 million to support the Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS), which he helped found in 1994 and which bears his name. The gift helps to endow the center’s work as a new director takes its helm and as its network of field offices expands, accommodating a large number of visiting students and faculty members.

On June 7, Harvard announced that the family foundation of Victor Fung, Ph.D. ’71, and William Fung, M.B.A. ’72, had made a $15-million gift to enhance Asia studies throughout the University. The three-part gift supports the regional- and international-studies libraries newly consolidated in the Center for Government and International Studies complex and named for the brothers’ father, H.C. Fung. It also endows the directorship of the Asia Center, home to conference and publication series, fellowship programs, and undergraduate education and research (www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr). And it will enable undergraduates to travel to Asia for research, study, and internships.
and will bring Chinese students to Harvard to pursue degrees in fields such as architecture, business, education, government, or public health.

Both President Lawrence H. Summers and Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) dean William C. Kirby made international education a recurrent theme of their administrations. Kirby helped liberalize study-abroad procedures before becoming an administrator; in his final decanal letter to the faculty, he noted that 933 College students studied, worked, did research, or interned outside the United States in 2004-2005. (For data on student participation, see “Elsewhere,” January-February, page 59.)

In the most recent 12 months, that number has grown to about 1,100, according to Jane Edwards, director of the three-year-old Office of International Programs—strategically and symbolically located in the center of Harvard Yard, directly below the FAS dean’s office in University Hall. The office informs undergraduates about the array of experiences available (there are 15 Harvard Summer School programs abroad, for example), and works with faculty members to create more opportunities.

Edwards (who in August becomes associate dean of international affairs at Yale College) spoke at a symposium on international education, sponsored by her office and DRCLAS, on the afternoon of May 12. Gutman professor of Latin American affairs John Coatsworth, DRCLAS director and chair of the FAS committee on education abroad, reviewed the growth in financial aid for summer study, and the use of funds to prompt professors to develop courses incorporating international experiences. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies associate director Theodore J. Gilman seconded that point, noting that faculty members no longer simply urged students to “go away,” but now offered, “Let’s do this together” in field-based classes.

The final speaker, Steve Reifenberg, director of the DRCLAS office in Santiago, Chile, explained how it facilitates faculty research and orients visiting students to their host families and new culture. A second DRCLAS field office opens in São Paulo on July 1, with a third planned for Mexico City in the near future. The São Paulo outpost will help implement a program supported by Jorge Paulo Lemann ’61, through which Harvard will recruit Brazilian students to study in Cambridge, and Harvard students will study in Brazil. A Brazil-studies program has simultaneously been launched within DRCLAS, directed by visiting professor of history Kenneth Maxwell.

At a dinner that evening, President Summers noted that 250 University students had been in Latin America this year and cited DRCLAS as a model for Harvard in bringing faculty together, engaging professors and students in the world, and involving peers in other nations with the University—essential elements in helping Americans “develop deep understanding of and empathy with the rest of the world.”

David Rockefeller, who has seen more than six decades of prosperity and progress, struggle and conflict in Latin America, said great changes are under way there, of a direction “quite unclear.” DRCLAS participants, he hoped, would make a difference in how the hemisphere evolves. Citing the “pleasure and satisfaction” the center’s work had brought him, he earmarked $1 million of his gift for doctoral fellowships in Latin American history, in Coatsworth’s honor. The torch then passed to the Kennedy School of Government’s Merilee Grindle, Mason professor of international development, who succeeds Coatsworth as DRCLAS’s second director. A political scientist who has written seven books on rural development, democratic governance, and education reform, she has been associated with the center since its founding.

Meanwhile, as the new Harvard Business School field office in Mumbai, India, assists faculty members from all parts of the University, as enrollment in the summer school in Beijing grows, and as Fung scholars and fellows cross the Pacific in numbers comparable to those using the DRCLAS offices in Santiago and São Paulo, Jorge Domínguez will have an ample agenda. Taking up his new duties, he said, “[I] very much look forward to help[ing] to connect professors and students to the places they want to discover, wherever they may be.”