Institute's foreign specialists seek out and share a world of information and technology

By MICHELE L. KLAPE
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After Alexandre Battistella graduated from a university in Brazil, he decided he wanted to go abroad. His degree in forest engineering led him to Portland, where he took a job as an information specialist at the World Forest Institute.

Now he spends his days researching and passing on the latest information on forestry, and spends his nights enjoying the Portland night life.

"It's an experience you cannot measure," Battistella said.

Battistella is one of eight international, forest product or forest resource specialists working at the institute, which is associated with the World Forestry Center.

"It is an internship, but they aren't interns," said Eric Landis, institute director. They are college-educated professionals from around the world who have selected and are pursuing careers in the field of forestry.

"Our vision is to improve the flow of technology and scientific information around the world. We are not a research institute, we are an information institute," said Eric Landis, institute director.

"We get a real sharing of ideas from around the world. It's an excellent situation for the specialists and for our customers," Landis said.

The specialists are an ideal way to speed the international flow of forestry-related technology and science.

The international flavor is why Rainer Hummel of Germany is happy he came to the program. "The fact that it is so international is what is important to me," he said. "It gives me an idea of what I want to do. It's on-the-job training."

The specialists will continue to be colleagues and friends as well. Past program participants have already been bumping into each other at international forest conferences.

"I'll always be ambassadors of the institute," Landis said.

As Battistella puts it, what really makes the program unique is that "we are going to have friends and colleagues all over the world."