

International Education and Ontario's Colleges

Policy Paper

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About Our Organization:

The College Student Alliance (CSA) is a member-driven advocacy organization that has proudly served Ontario's college students since 1975. The CSA currently represents 21 student councils from 15 colleges, with over 135,000 full-time student members throughout the province.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines the policies surrounding international students and international education from the perspective of college students in Ontario. The goal of this paper is to inform the discussion on the federal, provincial, and institutional policies surrounding international students as they pursue Ontario credentials and international education in general. International students currently represent about 10% of the overall college population. Their experiences are different from typical college students', in part because international students undergo a different process of applying to an Ontario college. Furthermore, these students typically come from cultures that are different than that of Ontario, and may have difficulties in adapting to the way of life and the stresses associated with being an international student. It is important to make sure there are supports in place to address the differing needs these students have as they study in Ontario.

This paper provides an overview of international education in Canada and examines the different actors, programs, and policies in place that international students encounter as they make the decision to come to Canada. One of the explorations results in a recommendation to encourage international students to apply for multiple-entry temporary resident visas, as opposed to single-entry temporary resident visas, which limit their mobility because they are not able to leave and re-enter into Canada for the duration of their visas. Another recommendation may improve the Co-op/Internship Work Permit Program through merging its application with the Study Permit and Off-Campus Work Permit application; the federal government is examining this suggestion.

With respect to the federal government's proposed changes to the International Student Program, the College Student Alliance recommends that Citizenship and Immigration Canada work with post-secondary institutions to develop flexibility in evaluating students' status in Canada as related to their permit, especially in the case of human error or extenuating circumstances. Another recommendation examines the Student Partners Program (SPP) and calls for the expansion of the SPP to allow the government to meet enrolment targets and allow students from various countries to access the quality education system available in Canada's colleges.

In looking at international education and the Ontario Government, the CSA suggests the International Student Recovery fee should be eliminated or absorbed by the institution; it is counteractive to the Government of Ontario's goal to attract more international students to the province's colleges and universities. Furthermore, to increase the presence of international students in Ontario, the funding that was taken away for institutional marketing and recruitment should be reinstated to the institutions so they can continue their recruitment efforts. To give domestic students the opportunity to travel and study abroad, the funding for the Ontario International Education Opportunity scholarship should be reinstated to promote global citizenship and further personal development.

As the terminology, language, and jargon in Ontario vary from the nomenclature used in other jurisdictions, student mobility is impeded; there is a lack of understanding and transferability in the global sphere for Ontario's graduates. The college and university systems need to align the nomenclature of their credentials better with those of other institutions in the world. Furthermore, institutions must consider the transferability of credits in the early development of new programs, and the government must support and provide incentives to institutions to fulfill transferability goals. As Ontario's college students' credentials and achieved learning outcomes are not easily understood by employers and institutions outside of Ontario, the government should institute credential supplements that can increase employer awareness of the skills and proficiencies that students attain with their qualifications.

This paper also examines international education at the college level, both with respect to international and domestic students' experiences. It identifies a gap: institutions may have staff members who are not trained to deal with the specific needs the growing international student population brings to Ontario's colleges. Therefore, institutions should fund training programs for staff and faculty members so international students can be better supported as they pursue Ontario credentials. One potential issue is discrimination against international students; some international students in Canada believe they have experienced some form of racism during their times as a student in Canada. Institutions must be active and have mechanisms in place to combat racism on college and university campuses. Furthermore, institutions must do all they can to provide a safe and respectful campus atmosphere for all students.

One way to ensure that the different levels of personnel can effectively support international and domestic student is by having each college develop an international education strategy and strategic plan to support international education in the curriculum and international students on campus. Only a few post-secondary institutions have a formal international education strategy to guide the internationalization process at their schools. Furthermore, to become aware of the levels of satisfaction of international students at specific institutions, colleges should use the Student Satisfaction data from the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) survey to identify the challenges students may face. This could improve the college experience for international students.

International students have the potential to make significant contributions to Canada and Ontario's post-secondary education institutions. These students contribute greatly to Ontario's society and economy in many ways. Not only do international students benefit from their study-abroad experience, but the domestic students, institutions, and their host communities do as well. To maintain the increasing international student enrollment rates at Ontario's colleges and other post-secondary institutions, the different levels of government and institutions must ensure that international students have all of these needed supports available to them at every level to have a successful study experience.

INTRODUCTION

Ontario is Canada's most populous province, home to 24 public colleges and 20 public universities, making it the province with the most publically-funded post-secondary institutions. This contributes to Ontario's status as an attractive option for international students. As a result, Ontario attracts the most post-secondary education students in Canada.

Canada welcomed a record number of international students in 2012, bringing the international enrolment to 100,000 students, an increase of 60% from 2004.¹ International students have studied in Canada for decades, with the university system being the primary recipient of international students in Ontario. With the recent growth of the international student population in the college system, international students now represent 10.2% of the full-time college population.^{2,3} This rise of international students studying in Ontario brings about a variety of different challenges in the college system; these center on making sure international students have the supports available to succeed in Ontario.

In 2011, 63% of Ontario's adults had completed some post-secondary education. This is the highest rate in the member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁴ The target adult post-secondary education attainment rate Ontario has set is 70%, as that is roughly how many jobs will require post-secondary credentials in the near future. In the 2010 provincial Throne Speech, the government introduced the Open Ontario Plan, of which one of the targets was to increase international student enrolment by 57,000 international students by the 2014-15 academic year. This target called for a 50% increase over the 2010 enrolment, which translates to 19,000 additional students. The government will undoubtedly meet this goal in the coming year. As the international student population continues to increase in Ontario, the different levels of government and institutions must work to ensure these students are not hampered in their pursuit of Ontario credentials.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IN CANADA

While education is the constitutional responsibility of the provinces, immigration is the responsibility of the federal government. These responsibilities come together when discussing the education of international students in Ontario. On the federal level, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) screens and approves international students for admission into Canada, with the exception of Quebec. CIC works in tandem with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) to manage Canada's diplomatic relations and to encourage the country's international trade, as well as with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to facilitate entry into the labor market. CIC and DFAIT also work with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), "an intergovernmental body founded in 1967 by

¹ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2013). "News Release — Canada welcomes record number of international students in 2012." Retrieved from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2013/2013-02-26.asp>

² For the 2011-12 year, with 18,025 international students in comparison to the 197,700 domestic students

³ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁴ Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2011). Archived backgrounder: Strengthening student support in Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2011/01/strengthening-student-support-in-ontario-3.html>

ministers of education”⁵ that represents the provinces and territories and “provides leadership in education at the pan-Canadian and international levels”.⁶

International education has been a visible priority of the federal government since DFAIT’s “Edu-Canada” unit was established in 2006 to promote the educational opportunities in Canada to perspective students abroad. In 2008, DFAIT, in partnership with CMEC, launched the “Imagine Education au/in Canada” brand.⁷ To use this brand, an institution must meet specific guidelines and have successfully applied to use the brand in their recruiting of international students. Participation in the brand is voluntary and brand holders must provide “high quality education programs, [deal] with international students in accordance with recognized codes of practice, and [be] subject to quality assurance mechanisms that monitor adherence to set standards”.⁸ This brand allows for greater consistency in Canada’s recruitment efforts and allows prospective students to understand which institutions can support them. In March 2012, Ontario extended brand eligibility to its publically-funded colleges and universities.

This brand is not without its issues. A study commissioned by DFAIT revealed there is significant room for improvement of the brand. The study found “Canada is not a top-of-mind destination for foreign study for participants of any of the three countries” in which the survey was carried out, namely India, China, and Brazil. The report mentioned that unlike its competitors, Canada lacked a specific national brand and that to improve its visibility, “Canada needs to put more effort into communicating its post-secondary education advantages”.⁹ However, even if the study found that the brand was not easily recognizable, the enrolment of international students has increased in Canada.

“My overall experience as an international student transitioning into Canada and its educational system was a good one.” –An international student at an Ontario College

When international students studying in Canada were asked why they chose Canada to study, they indicated, “the single most common factor appears to be the quality of education in Canada, with almost 3 students in 4 considering it very important in their decision to study in Canada”.¹⁰ Following that, “the second most commonly cited reason for choosing Canada is that Canada is a safe country”.¹¹ These survey findings and the increase in enrolment in Ontario can serve to neutralize the worry that could materialize with the brand recognition concerns raised in the abovementioned study. It should also be noted that with regard to students’ decision to study in post-secondary institutions, that “36% of

⁵ The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (n.d.). What is CMEC? Retrieved from: <http://www.cmec.ca/11/About/index.html>

⁶ The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (n.d.). What is CMEC? Retrieved from: <http://www.cmec.ca/11/About/index.html>

⁷ The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (n.d.). Imagine Education au/in Canada: Chronology. Retrieved from: <http://imagine.cmec.ca/en/>

⁸ The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (n.d.). The Imagine Education au/in Canada brand. Retrieved from: <http://www.cicic.ca/723/imagine-the-brand.canada>

⁹ Reid, I. (2012). Imagine Education au/in Canada: Executive summary of qualitative research - March 23, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/recherche_qualitative_research.aspx?view=d

¹⁰ Prairie Research Associates, Inc. (2009). Canada first: The 2009 survey of international students. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Canada-First-20091.pdf>

¹¹ Prairie Research Associates, Inc. (2009). Canada first: The 2009 survey of international students. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Canada-First-20091.pdf>

International students in Canada have prior experience with a Canadian institution”. Of the 36% of students with previous studies in Canada, “27% of them [had experience within a Canadian] secondary school and 22% student [had Canadian experience] in a language school”.¹²

In the 2011 budget, the federal government allocated \$10 million over two years to “develop and implement an international education strategy that will reinforce Canada as a country of choice to study and conduct world-class research”.¹³ This budget also called for an establishment of an advisory panel, appointed in October 2011 with the primary mandate to make recommendations on a strategy to maximize economic opportunities for Canada. The Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy presented their Final Report on Canada’s International Education Strategy in August 2012, making fourteen recommendations, some of which will be discussed throughout this paper.

With regard to global trends in higher education, the OECD estimates that “the global demand for international higher education is set to grow from nearly 4.1 million students in 2010 to 7.2 million students in 2025”.¹⁴ This trend will give Canada the chance to compete for more worldwide talent as well as improve its standing in the global international education market. As it stands now, Canada is 6th in the world with 5% of the global enrolment of international students.¹⁵ The improvement in Canada’s share has been identified as a priority by different levels of government and stakeholders, due in part to the social and economic gains Canada stands to achieve. To put this in perspective, it has been estimated that international students have spent over \$7.7 billion on tuition and living costs and have helped create 81,000 jobs across Canada in 2010.¹⁶ As a result of this shared responsibility to increase international student enrolment, both the federal and provincial governments have a shared responsibility for international education.

One of the fourteen recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy Final Report was to set what the panel saw as an achievable goal in enrollment, namely that they wished to double the number of full-time international students—from the kindergarten to post-secondary levels—from 239,131 in 2011 to 450,000 by 2022. They believed this could be achieved by increasing international enrolment at a rate of 7% per year, year over year.¹⁷ While there are numerous benefits to enrolment growth, it is important that support services and facilities grow with the increasing number of students; otherwise, the quality of education would begin to suffer.

Canada will receive other benefits from international students, especially those who choose to stay in Canada upon graduation. A highly skilled graduate educated in Canada can function in Canada and also adapt to the workforce as a result. In addition, international students can bring their culture and further enrich the Canadian landscape. The diversification of Canadian society has had an impact on the social and cultural fabric of our country and our province. The diversity international students bring to

¹² Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 51

¹³ Government of Canada. (2011). Chapter 4.3: Investing in innovation, education and training. Retrieved from: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2011/plan/chap4c-eng.html>

¹⁴ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P. 21

¹⁵ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2011). *Education at a Glance 2011*. P 321

¹⁶ Kunin and Associates. (2012). *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada -- An Update: Final Report*. Retrieved from: http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/economic_impact_en.pdf p iii

¹⁷ Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy (2012). *International education: A key driver of Canada’s future prosperity*. Retrieved from: http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies_report_rapport_sei-eng.pdf

Ontario's colleges is mutually beneficial to both the domestic and international students. The interactions students can have with one another can expand their worldviews and prepare students for the global society, as well as promote creative and new ways of thinking.

Canada has room to improve its enrolment rates for international students. The government of Canada, in partnership with the provinces and territories, should work to achieve higher enrolment of 450,000 international students from all levels of education by 2022, as recommended by the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy. The recruitment and enrolment of International students not only benefits Canada in social, cultural, and economic ways, but provides international students the experience of studying abroad. Adapting a target for international enrolment will increase the pool of skilled workers who may wish to pursue Canadian citizenship.

In a 2009 comprehensive survey of international students, many indicated they found the work opportunity aspect attractive. For example, "63% of college students and 29% of university students report off-campus work opportunities are very important in their decision to come to Canada. In each case, even more students rate post-graduation work opportunities as very important (74% of college and 49% of university students)."¹⁸ Canada is an attractive place for skilled immigrants, and among the OECD countries, Canada has the highest stay rate of 33% in comparison with the OECD average stay rate of 25%. These stay rates measure the share of international students who stay in the host country for work or other reasons.¹⁹ In Canada, 80% of students who change their status do so for work-related reasons.²⁰ These stay rates can be explained due to increased work opportunities, "ease of integration into their host country, and future career advantages when returning to their country of origin or when moving to a third country".²¹

"International students may have the possibility to stay and work in Canada after graduation, which is very important." –An international student at an Ontario College

It is also important to note that Canada must be cautious about navigating the potential backlash against international students that countries such as Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have recently encountered. Many developed nations have experienced a shift in public opinion against international students, because they are seen as displacing the entry of domestic students in the post-secondary education sphere.²² This can contribute to the false impression that post-secondary education institutions favor the entry of international students.²³

¹⁸ Prairie Research Associates, Inc. (2009). Canada first: The 2009 survey of international students. Prepared for: Canadian Bureau for International Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Canada-First-20091.pdf>. p. 1

¹⁹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2010. International Migration migration Outlook 2010. Recent Flows, Demographic Developments and Migration. Retrieved from: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2010/status-changes-of-international-students-and-stay-rates-in-selected-oecd-countries-2007_migr_outlook-2010-table12-en p 44

²⁰ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2011). Education at a Glance: Highlights. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/education/highereducationandadultlearning/48631550.pdf> p. 34

²¹ OECD. 2011. Education at a Glance: Highlights. Website name or publisher. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/education/highereducationandadultlearning/48631550.pdf> p. 34

²² Kell, Peter and Gillian Vogl. (2012). *International students in the Asia Pacific: Mobility, risks and global optimism*. p 18.

²³ Kell, Peter and Gillian Vogl. (2012). *International students in the Asia Pacific: Mobility, risks and global optimism*. p 18.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

International students apply to study in Ontario at the beginning of each year, with the primary deadline for applications being on February 1st. Colleges have more than one intake period and some have no set datelines for the application if there is space available for students at the college. Upon their acceptance into an Ontario college program, the incoming students have to apply for a study permit to begin their education in Canada if the duration of their program is six months or longer. If a student wishes to study in Canada for six months or longer, the student must also apply for a temporary resident visa.

There are two main types of temporary resident visas students can access: a single-entry visa and a multiple-entry visa. In basic terms, “a multiple-entry visa lets you enter and leave Canada repeatedly while it is valid” while a “single-entry visa allows you to enter Canada only one time [and] once you have left Canada... you will need a new visa to travel back to and enter Canada.”²⁴ The application processing fee to apply for a single-entry visa is \$75 and the cost for a multiple-entry visa is \$150.

Barrier: International students who apply and receive the single-entry temporary resident visas have limited mobility, because they are not able to leave and re-enter into Canada for the duration of their visas.

Recommendation 1: International students should be encouraged to apply for multiple-entry temporary resident visas.

Benefit: the multiple-entry temporary resident visas encourage tourism²⁵, and can help students suffering from homesickness visit their country of origin.

Once a potential student has obtained a temporary residence visa, the student also needs to obtain a study permit. This requires the international students to demonstrate proof of acceptance (a letter of acceptance from the college), proof of identity (valid passport or other specified document) and proof of financial support. The proof of financial support requirement specifies that students must be able to pay the cost of “tuition plus \$10,000 for a 12-month period (or \$833 per month)” to support themselves. Students must prove these funds are available to them through a variety of different avenues, including bank draft, loan, proof of payment, or bank account information.^{26,27}

“Being an international student is really difficult in Canada as the students and their families have put so many efforts behind arranging the fees and all the visa process charges”

²⁴ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2012. What kind of visa should I get? Retrieved from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?q=417&t=16>

²⁵ One additional benefit of international education to the host country is the increased tourism activities due to family and friends visiting the host country while students remain in the country. From Kunin & Associates, Inc. (2012). Economic impact of international education in Canada -- An update. p 38

²⁶ proof of a Canadian bank account in your name if money has been transferred to Canada; proof of a student/education loan from a financial institution; your bank statements for the past four months; a bank draft in convertible currency; proof of payment of tuition and accommodation fees; a letter from the person or institution providing you with money; and proof of funding paid from within Canada if you have a scholarship or are in a Canadian-funded educational program.

²⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (n.d.). Get the right documents – Study in Canada. Retrieved from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study-how-documents.asp>

If students enter Canada with one or more family members, the onus is on the students to provide the proof of financial support for themselves and the family members who them while they are in Canada. With respect to study permits, some students may apply for a study permit even if they do not immediately need it, if they are a short-term course or program. An example of this is students who come to study English as a second language and pursue a higher education program upon the completion of their language classes.

This process is relatively streamlined for most students. The government of Canada and government of Ontario provide the forms, updated rules and regulations, and supports to make the application process as simple as possible. Canada's visa and permit applications are handled by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). As the enrolment of international students continues to grow, there are concerns that CIC will not have the resources available to process the applications in a way that would allow Canada to remain competitive with other countries.²⁸

Approval rates for study permits have "stayed consistent over the last two years with approximately three out of every four applicants being approved to study in Canada."²⁹ In 2011, it took an average of forty-two days to finalize the applications, which was an increase of seven days from the previous year.³⁰ This was due to a variety of factors, such as an increase in applications containing fraudulent information, or the end of processing visas at several missions abroad.³¹ Study permits in Canada cost much less for students than in other countries, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.³²

Off-campus work permits authorize students to work for up to 20 hours a week during their studies and full time during their scheduled study breaks.³³ This program has increased by approximately 66% since 2007, with 90% of college and university students surveyed working at least six hours per week at an off-campus job.³⁴ Another program that has experienced a rapid increase is the Post-Graduate Work Permit program, which allows graduates to work in Canada for the same length of time as the student's education program, limited to 3 years. The rates of students applying for and extending this permit increased 108% since 2007, partly because of the removal of restrictions that were in place up until 2008.

CIC issued a notice of proposed regulatory changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR)³⁵ in the summer of 2012. These proposed changes, which will come into effect in January 2014, will impact the International Student Program (ISP)³⁶. The proposed amendments are

²⁸ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 33

²⁹ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 34

³⁰ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning* P 34

³¹ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning* Pp 34- 35

³² Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy. (2012). International education: A key driver of Canada's future prosperity. Retrieved from:
http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies_report_rapport_sei-eng.pdf p. 64

³³ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (n.d.) Work off campus". Retrieved from:
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-offcampus.asp>

³⁴ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 36

³⁵ The Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR) contain the laws created to fit within the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) to specify how the IRPA is to be applied.

³⁶ International Student Program (ISP) is the umbrella term applied to CIC's approach to international students.

meant to counter the fraudulent activity that “poses risk to the immigration system and to public safety.”³⁷ The issues that these proposed changes stem from include foreign nationals³⁸ using the study permit as a way to enter Canada for purposes other than study, including committing illegal activities with links to organized criminal activities such as prostitution, drug and gun smuggling.³⁹ Some institutions have also promised to students programs they are unauthorized to or unprepared to deliver, while other institutions operate as visa mills, whose primary purpose is to allow foreign nationals into Canada.

Once enacted, the proposed changes will have a strong impact on the international students who will come to Canada next year, as well as on the institutions. There are many specific proposed amendments in place⁴⁰ but for the purpose of this paper, the three major amendments focus on: letting only designated institutions host international students; merging the off-campus work permit with the study permit; and requiring holders of study visas to study after arrival in Canada.

With the proposed amendments, CIC has requested the government of Ontario develop a framework to designate which educational institutions will be permitted to host international students. Ontario’s public colleges and universities have automatic recognition as designated institutions. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities’ Draft Discussion Document outlines the Ontario criteria for designation. It states that the “criteria are intended to reflect the high standards for the delivery of education and the protection of students that are both explicit and implicit in the legislative and policy frameworks governing the education of Canadian students, and to ensure that international and Canadian students have an equivalent educational experience when attending a designated institution”.⁴¹

Another proposed change is a de facto merger of the part-time off-campus work permit and the study permit. Eligible international students attending the aforementioned designated institutions would be able to work part-time off-campus (no more than 20 hours a week during regular classes) if they have a study permit, and therefore they would not have to apply for a separate work permit, as is the case now. This will allow students greater flexibility and will reduce the workload on the CIC and institutions associated with processing off-campus work permit applications.

The permit merger that is proposed with regard to the study permit and the off-campus work permit has not been extended to include the Co-op/Internship Work Permit Program. Many college students have an experiential learning component in their program, as the mandate of the colleges is to help a student learn employable skills. These work-integrated learning opportunities can help students “apply theory to practice in real workplace and community settings; [develop] marketable, workplace skills; and

³⁷ Canada Gazette. (2012). Regulations amending the immigration and refugee protection regulations. ” Retrieved from: <http://www.canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2012/2012-12-29/html/reg1-eng.html>

³⁸ A foreign national is an individual who is not a permanent resident or citizen of Canada, including a citizen or national of another country, or a stateless person who has been displaced from their country.

³⁹ Canada Gazette. (2012). Regulations amending the immigration and refugee protection regulations <http://www.canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2012/2012-12-29/html/reg1-eng.html>

⁴⁰ For more information, please go to <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2012/2012-12-28.asp>

⁴¹ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2013). Proposed approach for designation of institutions eligible to admit international students. Retrieved from: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/pcc/details.pdf> p. 3

[increase] self-confidence, personal growth, and civic engagement”.⁴² Colleges are mandated to provide a career-oriented education that meets the labor needs of their communities.

Barrier: International Students in a program with an experiential learning component will still have to apply for the Co-op/Internship Work Permit. This program is not being streamlined with the study permit and the off-campus work permit program.

Recommendation 2: The CIC should merge the Co-op/Internship Work Permit Program application with the study permit and off-campus work permit application to make it easier for international students to access internship and co-op opportunities, especially as many college programs have a work-integrated learning component.

Benefit: Having less paperwork will simplify processing for the students and the government, and allow students easier access to Canadian work experience related to their studies. Students will be able to avoid processing delays for the Co-op/Internship Work Permit and the consequent delay of starting placement and eventually graduation. Furthermore, an administrative burden on the CIC and the institution would be alleviated.

Changes are being made to the regulations to ensure that the primary intent of an international student in Canada is to study. While this seems like a reasonable expectation to place on a student, currently, foreign nationals are able to apply to any Canadian school and only need to demonstrate an intent to study—there is no requirement for them to pursue studies once in Canada and no way to track whether they do. These changes would provide CIC the authority to request evidence from study permit holders to verify their compliance with study permit conditions.

While this change will ensure cooperation with the study permit guidelines, there are concerns that arise with the requirement for schools to confirm that students are in good academic standing. Post-secondary institutions already report on students’ academic standing for those students with off-campus work permits. If the same criteria were applied to all international students, this reporting mechanism could be challenging for students who are not doing well academically. The proposed changes are not clear about the measure or criteria the CIC will require institutions to use for reporting purposes. Most institutions do not record their students’ attendance; therefore, attendance would not be the measure of good standing. As a result, institutions would report on the students’ progress or registration in classes.

“Communication is a major barrier in getting comfortable in the educational and cultural environment.” –An international student at an Ontario College

This could have a negative impact on students who do poorly in their chosen program but may switch to another program, or on students who may struggle with the initial transition from their home country to Canada. If the CIC asked the institution to use registration as a benchmark, this could pose another problem: students who continue to fail, but keep re-registering could work and study, because the proposed changes will make the study permit the same document as their off-campus work permit. Furthermore, international students would be removed from Canada if they failed to meet new requirements. The rationale for these proposed changes is that Canada is the only country among its

⁴² Sattler, P. (2011). Work-integrated learning in Ontario’s postsecondary sector. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. pp. 5-6.

competitors that does not place requirements on international students to pursue study after entry, and does not limit the types of educational institutions eligible to host international students.⁴³

Barrier: International students are in a vulnerable position as these proposed changes are developed. More attention must be paid to the rights of international students, especially in relation to their privacy and their potential deportation for failure to comply with the permit standards.

Recommendation 3: The CIC must work with post-secondary institutions to develop flexibility in evaluating students' status, especially in the case of human error and extenuating circumstances. At the very least, consent forms like those in the Student Partners Program should be utilized to make students aware of the access to their information the Canadian government will have.

Benefit: Respecting students' privacy and considering the student's experience while formulating the new regulations will improve the ongoing brand development that Canada cares about its international student population and seeks a mutually beneficial relationship.

THE STUDENT PARTNERS PROGRAM (SPP)

The Student Partners Program (SPP) is a successful collaboration between the Association of Canadian Community Colleges' (ACCC) and CIC in India that has "enhanced federal understanding of the region's education challenges and has resulted in at least 13,000 students being accepted into Canada's public colleges and institutes, from India alone, this year. That is up from roughly 1,500 Indian students four years ago".⁴⁴ The Student Partners Program is an administrative framework designed and implemented in partnership between the Canadian visa offices in India and the ACCC.⁴⁵ It is also available in China, but the criteria are slightly different.

Prospective students do not apply to the SPP program directly but to the college. They are considered for the program if they are able to meet a set of criteria. The success of this program is due in large part to the proof of funds section of the program. As mentioned above, students have to provide a proof of funds to have their study permit approved.

The SPP program allows student to do this is in one of two ways: a guaranteed investment certificate or a copy of receipt from tuition payments with an educational loan.⁴⁶ The participation of the Bank of Nova Scotia, commonly called Scotiabank in the Student Partners program, offers students the chance to purchase a guaranteed investment certificate or GIC. This allows the student to have a Canadian

⁴³ Canada Gazette. (2012). Regulations amending the immigration and refugee protection regulations. Retrieved from: <http://www.canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2012/2012-12-29/html/reg1-eng.html>

⁴⁴ Association of Canadian Community Colleges (2013). ACCC response to the Postmedia article "Career colleges raise concerns about student visa reforms. Retrieved from: <http://www.acc.ca/xp/index.php/en/comm/news-releases/612-lte-20130111>

⁴⁵ Government of Canada. (n.d.). Student partners program. Retrieved from: <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/india-inde/visas/spp-ppe.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>

⁴⁶ The preferred option for proof of funds is the evidence of purchase of a special Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) from a participating Canadian financial institution, - in this case Scotiabank - in the amount of \$10,000 CAD to cover living expenses for students' first year in Canada and evidence of payment for their first year's tuition (two semesters). As an alternate option, students can fulfill the financial requirement by submitting a copy of the receipt for the first year's tuition fee (two semesters) AND a copy of an Educational Loan from an Indian Chartered Bank equivalent to \$10 000 CAD.

investment with a guaranteed rate of return over a fixed period of time, which for the purpose of the SPP is a one-year term.⁴⁷ Once in Canada, the student opens a deposit account; \$2,000 is deposited into the new account initially, and an installment of \$2,000 is deposited automatically from the GIC to the account every two months to cover living expenses.

Every application submitted for the SPP is approved by the participating college, and the acceptance of a student into a college program is at the discretion of each participating college. The SPP is successful in part due to the close cooperative partnership and feedback from the participating colleges to ensure student compliance with the terms of their study permits. The program has a feedback mechanism that allows the institution to provide information on permit compliance, with the student's consent. The student must sign the consent declaration on the SPP checklist to be processed under this program.

Due to the success of this program, the ACCC is "already looking for ways to create new opportunities for international students and will seek to replicate our Indian success story in China and other countries in the coming years".⁴⁸ Furthermore, the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy mentioned that because of the success of the partnership, "CIC is working toward the implementation of regulations that will ensure that the principles of the SPP—quality applicants, quality educational institutions and increased educational institution responsibility—can be applied to all Canadian education subsectors".⁴⁹ The CIC's proposed regulatory changes to the International Student Program (ISP) mentioned above will result in a more stringent application process for all international students once the changes are implemented in 2014, and not just those in the Student Partners Program.

Barrier: Despite its success, the Student Partners Program (SPP) is only available to some students at this time, and excludes potential students from other countries.

Recommendation 4: Resources should be allocated for the expansion of the Student Partners Program (SPP) to students from other countries that have had successful student experiences in Canada

Benefit: The expansion of the Student Partners Program (SPP) will allow the government to meet enrolment targets and allow students from various countries to access the quality education system available in Canada's colleges.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

As mentioned above, Ontario is Canada's most populous province and is home to the most publicly-funded post secondary institutions, with a total of 44 public colleges and universities. Ontario also has the greatest number of full-time international students in Canada, with 52,373 international students studying at the college, undergraduate, and graduate levels as of 2011-2012.⁵⁰ Many students find

⁴⁷ Scotiabank. (n.d.) Student GIC program: Details". Retrieved from:

<http://www.scotiabank.com/ca/en/0,,5698,00.html>.

⁴⁸ Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2013). ACCC response to the Postmedia article "Career colleges raise concerns about student visa reforms. Retrieved from: <http://www.acc.ca/xp/index.php/en/comm/news-releases/612-lte-20130111>

⁴⁹ Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy. (2012). International education: A key driver of Canada's future prosperity. Retrieved from:

http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies_report_rapport_sei-eng.pdf p. 64

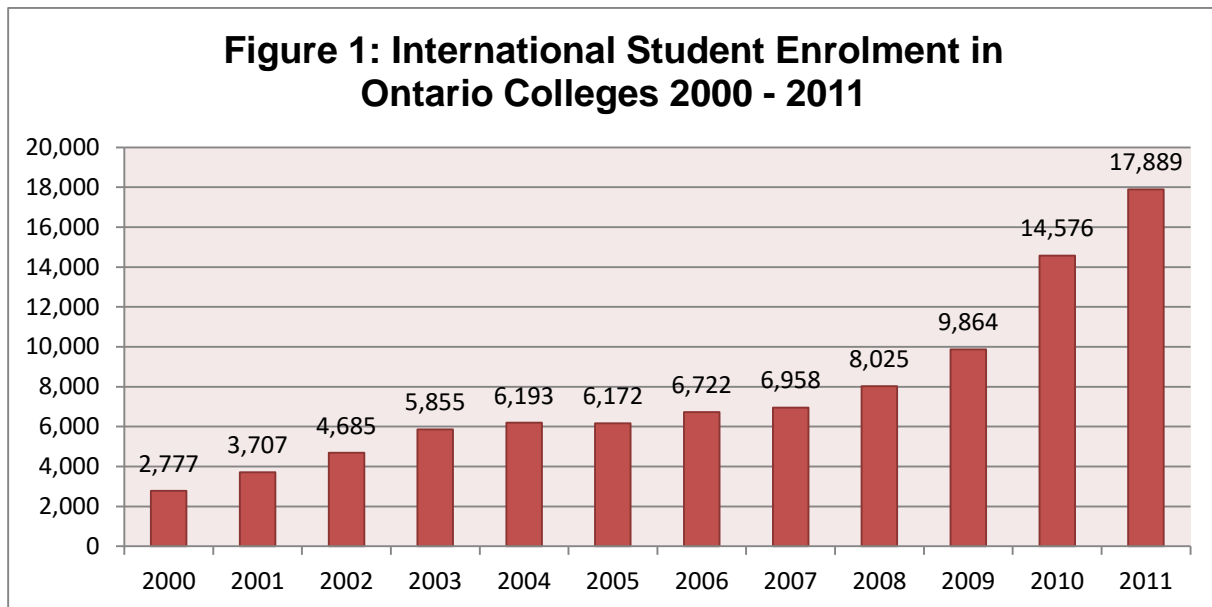
⁵⁰ As of 2011-2012, with 18,025 college, 24,932 undergraduate, 5,773 Master's, and 3,703 PhD students in Ontario.

Ontario an attractive location to pursue their studies, which speaks to the high quality of our educational institutions.

“I feel that I am receiving a good education in Ontario. I like that students receive not only theoretical knowledge but also practical, there are many different extracurricular activities that help students enjoy their college experience.” –An international student at an Ontario College

The number of international students on college and university campuses across Ontario has risen steadily. In the past, Ontario’s universities have been the primary host of international students, but colleges have gained a lot of ground in the past ten years. The effort to attract international students to Ontario was a priority in the government of Ontario’s 2010 Speech from the Throne, with a goal of increasing international student enrolment by 50% by 2014-2015.

To put this in perspective, the Open Ontario Plan was a call for an increase of 19,000 students in five years, to bring Ontario’s number of international students to 57,000 by 2014-15. There have been strong indicators that this enrolment target is achievable. The number of international students in Canada increased by 10% from 2010 to 2011,⁵¹ bringing the international enrollment to 52,000 in Ontario’s publically funded colleges and universities.⁵² Based on this increase of enrolment, the target could be met in advance of the 2014-15 deadline. This increase in enrolment has resulted in international students representing 10.02% of the college population.^{53,54}



⁵¹ Humphries, Jennifer. (2012). CBIE’s hot topics in Canadian international education. Retrieved from:

<http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/CBIE%20-%20Hot%20Topics%20in%20Canadian%20Intl%20Education%20May%202012.pdf>

⁵² Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁵³ For the 2011-12 year, with 18,025 international students in comparison to the 197,700 domestic students

⁵⁴ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. May 2012. “Ontario's PSE international education strategy”. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

As of 2011-2012, the number of international students in Ontario's colleges was 18,025.⁵⁵ In the college sector, this growth translated to a 23% increase from the 2010-2011 year. Most international students in Ontario's college system are enrolled in the GTA schools, namely Centennial College, Humber College, Seneca College, Sheridan College, and George Brown College. Together, these schools represent 72% of international students in the college system.⁵⁶ The majority of these students come from India, China, South Korea, Nigeria, Russia, Vietnam and Pakistan. International students enroll into programs such as Business (50%) Technology (25%) Applied Arts (18%) and Health (7%).⁵⁷ For a breakdown of the number of students per college, please refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1: Full-Time International Student Enrolment 2011 to 2012 – All Years

College Name	2011	2012	Growth
Algonquin College	837	779	-6.9%
Cambrian College	84	72	-14.3%
Canadaore College	86	118	37.2%
Centennial College	3,503	3,655	4.3%
College Boreal	12	15	25.0%
Conestoga College	616	759	23.2%
Confederation College	53	93	75.5%
Durham College	151	297	96.7%
Fanshawe College	806	1,059	31.4%
Fleming College	54	204	277.8%
George Brown College	1,815	1,973	8.7%
Georgian College	394	451	14.5%
Humber College	2,771	3,086	11.4%
La Cite Collegiale	51	82	60.8%
Lambton College	351	296	-15.7%
Loyalist College	43	60	39.5%
Mohawk College	724	903	24.7%
Niagara College	826	1,222	47.9%
Northern College	5	4	-20%
Sault College	1	6	500.0%
Seneca College	2,432	2,553	2.4%
Sheridan College	1,927	2,343	21.6%
St. Clair College	169	228	34.9%
St. Lawrence College	118	113	-4.2%
Total	17,889	20,371	13.9

The guiding provincial international strategy Ontario has followed is the Open Ontario Plan, the Government of Ontario's five-year plan launched in the 2010 provincial Throne Speech. Its goal was to increase international students by fifty percent by the 2014-15 academic year. The Government of

⁵⁵ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁵⁶ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁵⁷ Colleges Ontario. (2012). Graduate and student profiles. Retrieved from: http://www.collegesontario.org/research/2012%20Environmental%20Scan/CO_EnvScan_12_Stu&GradProfiles_WEB.pdf p 9.

Ontario does not have an explicit international education strategy; however, one is in development. During the May 2012 Ontario Association of International Educators Conference, the Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities presented on international activity in the post-secondary education sector, including a section on emerging post-secondary education international strategy.⁵⁸

The emerging strategy develops six main areas: policy development, standards setting, strategic coordination, support for institutions' recruitment efforts, fostering sound business practices, and development of data systems. The development of this strategy will go a long way in providing coordination and direction of international efforts. One focus the emerging strategy covers is strategic coordination. This is extremely important, as international education is becoming a growing priority for not only the provincial but also the federal government. This focus will allow both of the levels of government to review and enhance collaboration with provincial ministries and international education stakeholders.

An Ontario initiative that has garnered a lot of attention is from the 2012 provincial budget: , namely the International Student Recovery Fee. With this initiative, the provincial government will recover \$750 per each international student; this money will be recovered from each institution's operating grant allocation that is based on the number of domestic students. In other words, the Ministry will reduce each institution's operating grant allocation by \$750 per international student. It is estimated that the government will be able to recover an estimated \$19.7 million in 2013-14 (with a total of \$10.3 million to colleges) and \$36.4 million in 2014-16 (with \$19.1 million to colleges).⁵⁹ The International Student Recovery Fee will be introduced in the 2013-14 entering cohort: Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is preparing a Reporting Guidelines and Principles document to guide the institutions in their collection of these fees.⁶⁰ The development of the fee came about as the Ontario government is working to resolve the estimated \$11.9-billion deficit that the province is grappling with.

This fee is problematic and counterintuitive for a variety of reasons. The first concern is it may deter students from accessing an Ontario education. This initiative will undoubtedly result in institutions charging this recovery fee to the students rather than having the institution absorb the fees, even though international tuition fees have been steadily increasing, bringing into question the affordability of education for international students and their families. The unintended consequence of this initiative is that Ontario may become less attractive than other provinces. Moreover, the higher costs may limit international students from even applying to an Ontario college and university due to fiscal constraints. As the CBIE's report reads, "The cost of studying in Canada is identified by students as important in their decision to study in Canada. Given the rising cost of education, as well as the challenges students identify in terms of financing their education, the cost factor may become more crucial over time."⁶¹

The institutions themselves may have to cut back on recruitment efforts if they try to absorb this fee themselves, further limiting the reach of Ontario's post-secondary education sector. This not only

⁵⁸ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁵⁹ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Memorandum: Multi year funding outlook. Retrieved from: http://www.brocku.ca/webfm_send/21193

⁶⁰ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from [http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁶¹ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 58

penalizes institutions that attract the most international students but also increases costs of higher education for these students. Furthermore, this fee was introduced as Ontario institutions worked to achieve the targeted enrolment set out in the Open Ontario Plan. A recent Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario report cautions that “financial disincentives that impede enrolment of international students in the Ontario system should be removed”.⁶²

Another \$75 fee has been developed due to the elimination of transfer funding related to non-PhD international student enrolment. Prior to the fee’s development, institutions received an international student grant that was “provided to institutions to pay for municipal taxation in lieu of property taxes”.⁶³ This \$75 will still be covered for domestic students by the government, but not for non-PhD international students.⁶⁴ This will result in a cost savings of 3.6 million for 2012-13 and 2013-14, with \$1.3 million for colleges.

Barrier: The International Student Recovery Fee is counteractive to the government Open Ontario policy and will limit the institutions’ abilities to support international students. Furthermore, the fee will likely be passed on to international students to cover, thereby increasing the cost of an Ontario education.

Recommendation 5: The International Student Recovery Fee should be eliminated or absorbed by the institution.

Benefit: Removing this fee will allow Ontario to realign its priorities to increase international enrolment and allow the province to remain competitive in the global post-secondary education market.

Because international students’ tuition fees are not governed by the Ontario tuition framework, institutions can raise international student tuition as they see fit to recover the costs of providing their programs. This is because international students’ tuition fees were deregulated in 1996–97. Colleges were allowed the discretion to establish tuition fees for international students at levels the colleges deemed appropriate, with certain exceptions.⁶⁵ International students in the college system have some fee predictability: there is a stipulation that tuition fees cannot increase by more than 20% from year to year, a policy first introduced in the 2004 Tuition and Ancillary Fees Reporting Operating Procedure.⁶⁶ However, on average, international tuition fees have increased by much less than 20% from year to year.

⁶² Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. (2013). Quality: Shifting the focus. A report from the expert panel to assess the strategic mandate agreement submissions. *Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario*. Retrieved from: <http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/FINAL%20SMA%20Report.pdf> p 18

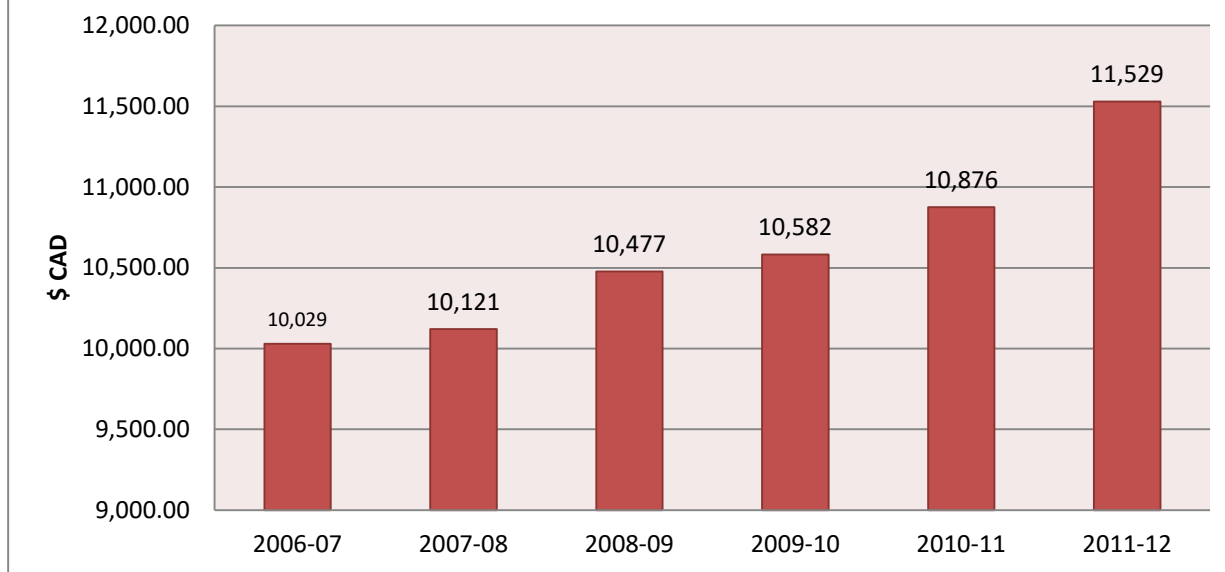
⁶³ University of Toronto. (2012). Revision to 2013-14 international tuition fees reported for information. Retrieved from: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=8448>

⁶⁴ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Memorandum: Multi year funding outlook. Retrieved from: http://www.brocku.ca/webfm_send/21193

⁶⁵ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Tuition and ancillary fees operating procedure.” P 4

⁶⁶ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2004). Tuition and ancillary fees operating procedure.” P 22.

Figure 2: Historical Average International Student Tuition Fees in Ontario's Colleges



Another two important funds were eliminated in the 2012 provincial budget. The marketing and recruitment subsidies for institutions and the Ontario International Education Opportunity Scholarship, which is a scholarship for domestic students to study abroad, were removed. The rationale provided in the elimination of the marketing and recruiting subsidies was that it prevented duplication of investments that institutions and the federal government already invested in marketing and recruiting.

The elimination of the recruitment and marketing subsidies in the budget will impact institutions' activities abroad. Institutions in Ontario have managed to attract the world's best and brightest with the subsidies provided from the provincial government as well as from the institutions themselves. Marketing and recruitment will be needed to meet the Open Ontario goal as well as to counter the negative impact on Ontario's reputation that will likely come from the initiation of the International Student Recovery fee. International students in Ontario's colleges bring an estimated \$67 million annually in total spending.^{67,68}

Barrier: Colleges will have to limit their recruiting and marketing campaigns due to a lack of subsidies; coupled with the above concerns, this may result in lower enrolment of international students and potentially a failure to meet the Open Ontario target.

Recommendation 6: The funding that was taken away for institutional marketing and recruitment should be reinstated to the institutions so they can continue their recruitment efforts.

⁶⁷ Kunin and Associates Inc. (2012). Table 13 estimated total expenditure of international students in Canada by level of study, by province and territory, 2010 Retrieved from: http://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/economic-impact-economique/sec_6.aspx?view=d

⁶⁸ When looking at the total spending estimates for "Other Post-Secondary"

Benefit: Institutions in Ontario wish to remain competitive not only in Canada, but globally. Reinstating the subsidies will allow them to increase their efforts and build upon an international brand.

With regard to the cuts to scholarship funding for domestic students looking to study abroad, this move by the government will negatively impact the ability of domestic students to experience international education outside of Canada. This goes against the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy's specific recommendation to increase the presence of Canadian students abroad to 50,000 by 2022.⁶⁹ This move also took place as other Canadian provinces increased funding to help domestic students fund their studies abroad, as in the case of British Columbia's \$5 million investment for study abroad programs, or Quebec's Ministry of Education's annual allocation of \$7.5 million for student mobility programs.⁷⁰

Barrier: Ontario's domestic students are limited in comparison to students in other provinces because the scholarships for study abroad were completely cut in the 2012 provincial budget.

Recommendation 7: Reinstating the Ontario International Education Opportunity scholarship for domestic students' study abroad.

Benefit: Ontario students will be better able to afford the high costs of studying as international students abroad. This experience will be socially and culturally important for their personal and professional growth, and thus for Ontario.

The benefits of supporting domestic students' studying abroad are numerous, least of which are to increase their employment opportunities and add value to their Canadian credentials. The societal, cultural, and social benefits of studying abroad will positively impact students and expand their world views.

Another way to help domestic and international students is to make Ontario college credential more globally compatible. An argument has been made that Ontario could and should be compatible to other systems of credentials, like the Bologna process⁷¹ that started in Europe and expanded across the world.⁷² These arguments are based on the need for greater student mobility and the increasingly competitive global workplace. One of the arguments against Bologna compatibility is that North American degrees and program structures are similar to one another and should not be changed. However, the restructuring of the Ontario credentials to be more similar to those abroad is worth exploring. This is especially true with regard to the mobility issues students face.

Both domestic and international students in Ontario's colleges may have their mobility limited by policies in the Ontario post-secondary education system. For example, there may be greater opportunity

⁶⁹ Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy. (2012). International education: A key driver of Canada's future prosperity". Retrieved from:

http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies_report_rapport_sei-eng.pdf p 37

⁷⁰ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 60

⁷¹ With regard to degree programs, many countries in the world have accepted a European-wide transfer system based on three cycles, with a 3-2-3 credential system (three-year bachelor, two-year Master's and three-year PhD degree program), with this idea stemming from the Bologna Accord.

⁷² Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. (2011). The Bologna process and implications for Canada's universities: Report of the 2009 AUCC Symposium. Retrieved from: <http://www.aucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/bologna-report-20091.pdf>, p. 3

for students from Ontario colleges with advanced diplomas to pursue a Master's credential in Europe and some Bologna-compatible countries. The same opportunities do not exist in Ontario and current research shows "there are a handful of Master's programs in Ontario that will consider applications from college graduates of advanced diploma programs ... [but] formal agreements of this type are few and far between."⁷³ This is partially because graduates of an Ontario advanced diploma program "do not have formal rights [and clear pathways to] the Master's level (or even at the Bachelor's level) [which] may be a substantial impediment to entering a Master's program."⁷⁴ In this instance, an advanced diploma does not grant students access to a degree, even if the learning outcomes show alignment.

Ontario college students may enjoy more credential recognition abroad when seeking to further their education at a Master's level. Many such pathways exist for Ontario college students to study abroad: two notable examples of this are Conestoga College's pathway with Griffiths University in Australia, which will allow students entry to Griffiths' Master of Engineering (Engineering Management) program if the students complete a four-year Bachelor's degree in Architecture–Project and Facility Management.⁷⁵ The other is the imminent articulation agreement between Fanshawe College and the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, in which students of the Architectural Technology advanced diploma program at Fanshawe College will be eligible to apply to the Master's programs at the university.⁷⁶

Barrier: The terminology, language, and jargon in Ontario vary from the nomenclature used in countries participating in the Bologna process. This impedes understanding and transferability in the global sphere and therefore impedes student mobility.

Recommendation 8: The college and university systems need to better align the nomenclature of their credentials to those of other institutions in the world. Furthermore, institutions must consider the transferability of credits in the early development of new programs, and the government must support and provide incentives to institutions to fulfill transferability goals.

Benefit: Students will have improved access to further education at home and abroad; there will be more compatibility and consistency in the post-secondary education system as well as ease of movement, thus affording students more opportunities to be mobile, more competitive, and to pursue further education, as well as help with the recruitment of foreign students.

One other opportunity to make Ontario credentials more globally compatible is to provide a diploma supplement, like institutions across Europe and Australia have implemented. The diploma supplement is fundamentally a communication tool that aims to describe in an explicit and understandable manner the students' qualifications and skills when they wish to continue their studies or seek employment at home

⁷³ Mitchell, A., Trotter, L., & Wilson, W. (2012). Facilitating college to university transfer in the European higher education area and beyond: The case of Fanshawe College's advanced diploma in architectural technology. *Unpublished Paper – Draft*, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Mitchell, A., Trotter, L., & Wilson, W. (2012). Facilitating college to university transfer in the European higher education area and beyond: The case of Fanshawe College's advanced diploma in architectural technology. *Unpublished Paper – Draft*, p35.

⁷⁵ For more information, please see

<http://www3.conestogac.on.ca/degreecompletion/DegreeEntries?programID=24>

⁷⁶ Mitchell, A., Trotter, L., & Wilson, W. (2012). Facilitating college to university transfer in the European higher education area and beyond: The case of Fanshawe College's advanced diploma in architectural technology. *Unpublished Paper – Draft*, p. 2

or abroad.⁷⁷ It is a supplemental document issued to graduates by the awarding institution in addition to the degree or diploma document. This supplement outlines the tangible skills, qualifications, and attainments students achieve at the program level, and it is most useful outside of the country.

Just as instructors explain the learning outcomes to students at the time of study, the diploma supplement describes those outcomes to graduates, potential employers, and others upon graduation. This practice could help Ontario college graduates better communicate their skills and qualifications. There is a lack of clarity for employers regarding Ontario college credentials, especially college degrees. This is particularly troublesome because college credentials have learning outcomes that must meet occupational learning objectives.

Barrier: Qualifications earned and the learning outcomes achieved are not easily understood by employers and institutions outside of Ontario.

Recommendation 9: The government should institute credential supplements to increase employer awareness of the skills and proficiencies that students attain with their qualifications.

Benefit to students: Students will have increased ease to enter world labor markets by being able to communicate specific skills and abilities that stem from their qualifications; they will also be able to communicate learning outcomes and align them to other PSE institutions outside of Ontario, making them globally compatible.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

Post-secondary education institutions in Ontario are among the most important actors in the international education sphere. As mentioned above, international students in Ontario's colleges are mostly situated in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) schools, with seventy-two percent of all internationals studying at Centennial College, Humber College, Seneca College, Sheridan College, and George Brown College.⁷⁸ These schools and other schools in the college system have worked to make international students' experiences in Ontario's colleges academically and personally successful. Institutions that seek to provide an enriching experience for international students must make specific necessary support services available to international students, such as introducing immigration advising in the co-op and careers services. .

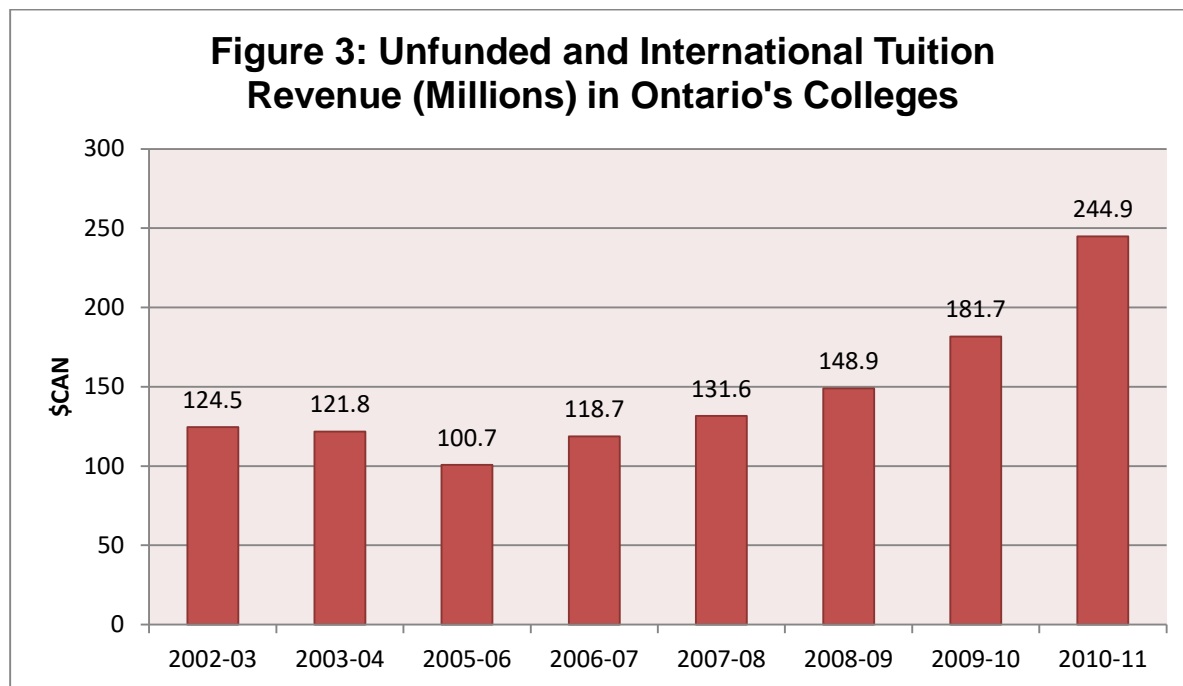
Colleges have benefited not only socially and culturally, but also economically from the revenues that international students bring into the system. Figure 3 below illustrates the rise in revenue from unfunded and international sources.⁷⁹ In Canada, the estimated economic impact of international education is positive: "in total, the annual expenditure of \$8.0 billion by international students

⁷⁷ Aelterman, G., Curvale, B., Erdoğan, A., Helle, E., Kärki, S., Miles, C., & Profit, F. (2008). Study on the diploma supplement as seen by its users. Retrieved from:
http://www.enqa.eu/files/Diploma%20Supplement%20Study_Edit%20MS.pdf

⁷⁸ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2012). Ontario's PSE international education strategy. *Presentation to the Ontario Association of International Educators (OAIE)*. Retrieved from
[http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU\(1\).pdf](http://quic.queensu.ca/resources/resource/files/May%202012%20OAIE%20presentation%20-%20MTCU(1).pdf)

⁷⁹ Developed from aggregate data from Colleges Ontario's Environmental Scans from 2005-2011. 2004-05 data not available. Data from 2004-05 was unavailable. To see the College Resources data available for each year, please go to http://www.collegesontario.org/research/2012_environmental_scan.html

translated to estimates of almost \$4.9 billion worth of contribution to GDP, 86,570 jobs, and \$455 million of government tax revenue".^{80, 81}



Colleges across Ontario are not only welcoming more international students than ever but are developing an international presence throughout their institutions. This process, sometimes referred to as internationalization, is “the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research, and service) and delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels”.⁸² The integration of international education is a resource-heavy and personnel-driven process that needs direction to develop into a campus-wide success.

As international activity increases, institutions must have trained professionals who are sensitive and able to adequately address international students’ needs. While many support staff have workshops to aid in their professional development, there is a need for more formal training, like that provided by the International Education Training Program (IETP), which was originally run from the Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC).⁸³ The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities sets aside money for every PSE institution in Ontario, but this agreement is renegotiated each year.

Barrier: Institutions may have staff members who are not trained to deal with the specific needs the growing international student population brings to Ontario’s colleges.

⁸⁰ Kunin and Associates. (2012). Economic impact of international education in Canada -- An update: Final report. Retrieved from: http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/economic_impact_en.pdf p iii

⁸¹ This is an estimate and includes the K-12 sector, private institutions, and language schools.

⁸² Knight, J. (2008) Higher education in turmoil: The changing world of internationalization. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Education Library p 21

⁸³ Queen’s University International Centre. (n.d.) About IETP. Retrieved from: <https://quic.queensu.ca/training/ietphistoryandphilosophy.asp>

Recommendation 10: As institutions' revenue and international student populations have continued to increase in colleges, these institutions should fund training programs for staff and faculty members to support international students better as they pursue Ontario credentials.

Benefit: The availability of training opportunities for staff and faculty will not only benefit the individual with respect to personal and professional development, but will go a long way in ensuring international students can access the support they need to address their specific concerns.

For an example of international activity at the institutional level, Centennial College has a Global Citizenship and Equity Learning Experience (GCELE) Program. The college administration looked at the revenue generated by international education and decided to create an endowment fund to provide an international experience for domestic students. The program has four key components: a general course on global citizenship; portfolio to document learning; professional development and learning for all college staff; and the incorporation of global citizenship and equity practices across the college.⁸⁴

Niagara College has developed a program for international students similar to the tuition set-aside programs for domestic students. The set-aside-type fund Niagara has developed is similar to what many colleges use for domestic students, and is used to support students working on campus. Over ten years ago, Niagara college noticed that international students were not being selected for on-campus jobs, because the funding that departments were accessing (here being the domestic students tuition set-aside funds), had criteria that you must be a Canadian/permanent resident.

As a result, the college created a fund that departments could access in a similar fashion as they were accessing the domestic on campus work fund—This helped to ensure that the best candidate for the job was selected, not the best Canadian candidate. Niagara College now has over 200 international students per year getting on campus work opportunities. Furthermore, Niagara College established a Top 5% International Student Financial Awards. This helped to both recognize student achievement, but has also worked to motivate others to achieve academic excellence. These financial awards are \$500 per student per semester for the top international students.

“There are some things that could be different. I would want to see ... more bursaries and scholarships for international students.” –An international student at an Ontario College

One possible issue to which institutions must pay attention with respect to international students is maintaining their safety. It is extremely important that international students continue to feel safe in Canada as they study and as they transition into Canadian society. Ontario's recent successes in attracting international students can be negatively impacted if racially-motivated incidents were to occur on its college or university campuses. A national survey showed such incidents have occurred on Canadian campuses. This needs to be addressed immediately by institutions to maintain the safety of international students.

The survey showed while “over 6 students in 10 agree they have *not* experienced any form of racism in Canada, about 3 in 10 disagree. This is particularly pronounced among students from Sub-Saharan Africa, where 42% say they have experienced some form of racism”.⁸⁵ Furthermore, one-fourth of

⁸⁴ Centennial College. (n.d.). The four pillars of the program (Signature Learning Experience (S.L.E.)). Retrieved from: <http://www.centennialcollege.ca/AboutCentennial/sle/FourPillars>

⁸⁵ Prairie Research Associates Inc. (2009). Canada first: The 2009 survey of international students.. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Canada-First-20091.pdf> p. 2

students reported that “his/her instructors do not show sensitivity to racial issues. However, in this case, it is students from North Africa/Middle East (42%) and East Asia (41%) who are most likely to say their instructors are insensitive to racial issues”.⁸⁶

Australia is an often-cited example of how the impact of racially-motivated violence and lack of student safety can impact a country’s international student population. To explain briefly, international students from India studying in Australia believed the government was not doing enough to protect students who were victims of racially-motivated violence from 2009-2010. This caused a sudden drop in Indian students’ presence in Australia and greatly impacted the Australian economy.⁸⁷

Barrier: Some international students in Canada believe they have experienced some form of racism during their time as students in Canada. This not only harms these specific international students and creates an unsafe college environment but has the potential to reduce the successful enrolment of international students in Canada.

Recommendation 11: Institutions must act and implement mechanisms to combat racism on college and university campuses. Furthermore, institutions must do all they can to provide a safe and respectful campus atmosphere for all students.

Benefit: The maintenance and further development of a respectful and safe campus will provide all students with a supportive learning environment and will maintain Canada’s gains as a country of choice for international students.

Many institutions in the sector have developed international education strategies that influence both curricula and the marketing and recruiting activities of the institution. One case study presented in CBIE’s “A World of Learning” report highlighted examples of institutional strategies like the University of Windsor’s strategic plan “Thinking forward... Taking Action,”⁸⁸ which “emphasizes that internationalization is not an isolated notion for a particular group but an essential component for all campus activities including research, teaching and learning, student services and external partner relations [and requires] both horizontal and vertical integration”.⁸⁹

Figure 4: University of Windsor’s “An Integrative Approach for Internationalization”⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Prairie Research Associates Inc. (2009). Canada first: The 2009 survey of international students. . Retrieved from: <http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Canada-First-20091.pdf> p. 2

⁸⁷ The Age. (2012). Indian student numbers falling. Retrieved from: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/indian-student-numbers-falling-20121213-2bcnq.html>

⁸⁸ University of Windsor. (2010). “Thinking forward ... taking action. Retrieved from: [http://athena.uwindsor.ca/units/senate/main.nsf/947f0bc672983a17852568b60051f690/48161cb0e3e904a485257611004f5b1c/\\$FILE/Sa100420-5.7.1%20Draft%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf](http://athena.uwindsor.ca/units/senate/main.nsf/947f0bc672983a17852568b60051f690/48161cb0e3e904a485257611004f5b1c/$FILE/Sa100420-5.7.1%20Draft%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf)

⁸⁹ Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. P 13

⁹⁰ Adapted from figure in Canadian Bureau for International Education. (CBIE) (2012). *A world of learning*. p 13



“I found that my college made a concerted effort to ensure that they equipped us as best as possible to what we may expect regarding academic standards, climate, social life success and living in Canada. Though a somewhat “cut and dry” orientation for me at the time, the information was helpful in the long run.” –An international student at an Ontario College

“I was given the runaround about my issue, and was always redirected to another service at my school. This was very frustrating.” –An international student at an Ontario College

The integration of international education at every level of an institution also includes the support services available to international students during their studies. These services are vital to student success. A comprehensive strategy for how international education can be ingrained in the everyday function of the institution would make institutions more aware and allow them to plan and implement necessary changes.

Barrier: Only a few post-secondary institutions have a formal international education strategy to guide the internationalization process at their schools.

Recommendation 12: Institutions should develop an international education strategy and strategic plan to support international education in the curriculum and international students on campus.

Benefit: A strategic plan will afford members within the institution, from the instruction to senior administration, to improve their support of an international education curriculum and of international students within Ontario’s colleges.

Every public Ontario college has some sort of support for international students, whether it is a centre, office, or dedicated staff person. The strength of support services available usually depends on the number of international students currently enrolled in the institution or upon the college's recruitment and marketing activities in preparation for an incoming international student population. International student support services can vary from one institution to another, but there are similar key elements that institutions share. These supports may include the following: academic English support; orientation events and workshops; residence and housing; settlement; permit and visa support; personal support including counseling health, and wellness; and financial support.

As of the 2011-2012 academic year, the government of Ontario included a question on the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Student Satisfaction survey asking students to identify whether they were international or domestic students. The KPIs measure the success rates and satisfaction levels for students and graduates, and are collected by an independent research firm for the colleges and for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The inclusion of the international student qualifier in the survey will allow institutions to "better gauge the college experience of international students and identify areas of success and those in need of attention. Moreover, analysts at the college level can now determine the services and resources most valuable to international students."⁹¹

In looking at the preliminary results of the KPI Students Satisfaction survey, minor differences were revealed between the experiences of international students and those of domestic students. Overall, the results showed international students were "more apt to take advantage of college resources and facilities. The data demonstrates the centrality of the college to the international student experience."⁹² Another minor difference was that international students had a different "perception with respect to levels of workplace preparation" in that they were less likely to agree with the idea that their "program is giving [them] knowledge and skills that will be useful in [their] future career".⁹³ It also appeared that international students "engage more in extracurricular activities than their domestic counterparts. Further college-level investigation should attempt to determine the factors behind these findings, and will perhaps reveal a more complex picture of the international student experience."⁹⁴

"I remember my first days in Canada being very challenging. Talking to other students and getting involved with extracurricular activities helped me to overcome those challenges." –An international student at an Ontario College

Barrier: Institutions may not be aware of the experiences international students have within their college campuses, as reported by their Key Performance Indicator (KPI) results.

Recommendation 13: Institutions should use the Student Satisfaction KPI data to identify the challenges students may face to improve the college experience for international students.

⁹¹ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Post Secondary Education Division. (2012). What's new with the KPI? *KPI workshop*. June 15, 2012 p 11

⁹² Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Post Secondary Education Division. (2012). What's new with the KPI? *KPI workshop*. June 15, 2012 p 15

⁹³ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Post Secondary Education Division. (2012). What's new with the KPI? *KPI workshop*. June 15, 2012 p 16

⁹⁴ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Post Secondary Education Division. (2012). What's new with the KPI? *KPI workshop*. June 15, 2012 p 16

Benefit: This data is readily available to the institution and can be used to improve the satisfaction of international students within the college, thereby fostering a supportive learning and campus environment.

Supporting international students and making sure their post-secondary education experiences are positive is undoubtedly important for Ontario's colleges. Minor differences between the domestic international student population survey results can show that the goals, experiences, and intent of international students differ from those of domestic students when they pursue a college education. If these minute differences are not addressed, this may impede an institution's ability to support international students to their full extent.

CONCLUSION

International students have the potential to make significant contributions to Canada and Ontario's post-secondary education institutions. These students contribute greatly to Ontario's society and economy in many ways. Not only do international students benefit from their study abroad experience, but the domestic students, institutions, and their host communities do as well. To maintain the increasing international student enrollment rates at Ontario's colleges and other post-secondary institutions, the different levels of government and institutions must ensure international students have all of these needed supports available to them at every level to have a successful study experience. Policies and programs must be in place to make the international students' study experiences at Ontario's colleges as successful as they can be.

International Education is important for Ontario's college system, not only because of the increase of international students studying in the province, but also because of its effect on domestic students' abilities to compete and cooperate in the international marketplace. As our economy continues to become more global, it will become increasingly important to foster global citizenship within Ontario's citizenry as well as recruit and retain the best and brightest in the world. It is our hope that the Government of Ontario and Government of Canada can work with the post-secondary institutions to continue to improve upon the experiences domestic and international students have in Ontario colleges.