



Bringing Education in Canada to the World, Bringing the World to Canada:

An International Education Marketing Action Plan for Provinces and Territories



A Response to the Council of the Federation
from Provincial and Territorial Ministers of
Education and of Immigration

June 2011



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recognition of the benefits that international students bring to Canada, provincial and territorial Premiers, through the Council of the Federation, directed ministers of education to work with provincial and territorial ministers of immigration to further develop an international education marketing action plan by June 2011 that identifies areas for investment and opportunities for federal-provincial collaboration on marketing. This plan is presented below.

The plan was developed by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in partnership with provincial and territorial ministers of immigration. It applies to all education sectors. While much of it focuses on the recruitment of international students, the plan also addresses the issue of retaining international students in Canada after they graduate. Seeking to complement the existing activities undertaken within each jurisdiction by provincial and territorial governments and educational institutions, the plan focuses on actions that provinces and territories can undertake individually, collectively, and in partnership with the federal government. Lastly, the plan supports objectives not only in international education and immigration, but also in economic recovery and development, as well as enhanced competitiveness for provinces and territories.

The expected outcomes of an international education marketing action plan are as follows:

- a greater number of international students studying in Canada;
- an increased share for Canada of the international student market;
- more opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad; and
- a greater number of international students choosing to remain in Canada as permanent residents after graduation.

To accomplish this, the plan proposes a series of actions designed to support five specific objectives.

The plan focuses on actions that provinces and territories can undertake individually, collectively, and in partnership with the federal government.



Objective 1: Increase Canada's competitiveness in the international marketplace through the promotion of the Education au/in Canada brand and the development of a global identity that reflects the value of educational opportunities in Canada.

Actions:

- Provide direct outreach to prospective students and their families, or fund the initiatives of jurisdictions already doing so, through trained personnel operating out of Education au/in Canada offices in key markets.
- Implement a publicity and brand strategy in key foreign markets to complement the campaigns of individual jurisdictions and educational institutions.
- Offer an enhanced Web presence for the brand via social media.
- Present a more consistent and visible presence for the brand at international education trade events and conferences.

Objective 2: Increase the efficiency and transparency of the processes through which international students obtain the necessary permissions to travel to and study in Canada and to remain in Canada after graduation.

Actions:

- Work with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and other partners to strengthen the International Student Program and other student immigration initiatives.
- Work with CIC to explore ways to enhance visa-processing operations in key markets, building on the success of the Student Partners Program.
- Ensure that annual immigration-level plans allow room for students who wish to remain permanently in Canada.
- Expand opportunities for international students to work off-campus and after graduation.

Objective 3: Protect and enhance Canada's reputation as a provider of high-quality educational opportunities.

Actions:

- Develop a periodic survey of international students in Canada to provide information about their satisfaction with their studies, financial situation, perception of their security and quality of life in Canada, and plans after graduation.
- Create communications materials that are accessible to an international audience and that convey the nature of the Canadian regimes of quality assurance in all education sectors.
- Share information about leading Canadian and international practices to support international students.
- Work with CIC to balance the need to prevent fraudulent entry into Canada with the need to remove obstacles to the entry of legitimate international students.

Objective 4: Provide the data and intelligence education providers require in order to meet the needs of clients, react to market developments, and measure success in recruiting and graduating increased numbers of international students.

Actions:

- Provide data, market intelligence, and support to government officials and educational institutions in Canada to allow them to react more quickly and adjust their marketing activities.
- Conduct regular market research to better understand the aspirations and priorities of prospective international students and their families and to test recognition of Canada's education brand and its message.
- Strengthen pan-Canadian data sources on the enrolment and graduation of international students.

Objective 5: Provide more opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad.

Actions:

- Develop a plan which jurisdictions may use to significantly increase the proportion of their students studying abroad over the next decade and convey the message that international educational experience is increasingly part of the necessary core competencies of Canadian graduates in the 21st century.
- Develop a network of Canadians living, studying, and working abroad to serve as ambassadors for international student mobility.
- Propose measures to increase the number of Canadians studying in China in the context of the Second High-Level Consultation on Education Collaboration between the Provinces and Territories of Canada and the People's Republic of China, and as appropriate for each province and territory.

The actions outlined above have been subjected to a preliminary costing exercise, are subject to appropriations, and could be implemented through phases of investment.

Recommendations

Ministers responsible for education and provincial and territorial ministers of immigration recommend that:

- Premiers accept the actions, areas for investment, and opportunities for federal-provincial collaboration proposed above as the basis of a pan-Canadian international education marketing action plan;
- ministers responsible for education and provincial and territorial ministers of immigration, to the fullest extent possible within the context of existing resources, begin work immediately to implement the plan;
- ministers responsible for education and provincial and territorial ministers of immigration pursue discussion with federal ministers of international trade and immigration with a view of aligning federal initiatives relating to international students with the priorities outlined in this action plan.

A. INTRODUCTION

Around the world, education is being recognized as the driver of economic, social, and personal development. This recognition has led to increased demand for access to the world's leading education systems, manifested in increased student mobility and greater interest in learning from the experiences of leading countries. At the same time, the increasing mobility of people, knowledge, and information has led to a proliferation of international academic networks and to the creation of an environment in which the benefits of discovery and innovation flow to those best able to link top domestic talent with leading researchers from abroad.

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In its efforts to attract students from around the world, Canada competes with many other countries. This competition is expected to intensify as the benefits of attracting international students become more widely recognized and the global demand for international education grows. It is estimated that, by 2025, the number of students studying outside of their home countries will have grown from 1.8 million to 7.2 million.¹

In view of this and in recognition of the benefits that international students bring to Canada, provincial and territorial Premiers, through the Council of the Federation, directed ministers of education to work with provincial and territorial ministers of immigration to further develop an international education marketing action plan by June 2011 that identifies areas for investment and opportunities for federal-provincial collaboration on marketing. This plan is presented below.

The plan was developed by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in partnership with provincial and territorial ministers of immigration. It reflects the outcome of discussions of international education within and across jurisdictions that took place between September 2010 and February 2011, and is also informed by consultations that took place with international education stakeholders and between provinces/territories and the federal government.

The plan applies to all education sectors. While much of it focuses on the recruitment of international students, the plan also addresses the issue of retaining international students in Canada after they graduate. Seeking to complement the existing activities undertaken within each jurisdiction by provincial and territorial governments and educational institutions, the plan focuses on actions that provinces and territories can undertake together or in partnership with the federal government, and not on the actions best undertaken individually by each jurisdiction. Lastly, the plan supports objectives not only in international education and immigration, but also in economic recovery and development, as well as enhanced competitiveness for provinces and territories.

¹ IDP Education Australia. (2002). Global student mobility 2025: forecasts of the global demand for international higher education.

B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Efforts to promote Canada's education systems abroad involve multiple actors, not only provincial/territorial departments of education and educational institutions, but also the immigration departments of both levels of government, as well as the federal departments responsible for foreign affairs, international trade, and international development. At the same time, provinces and territories are competitors for students in the international market, a reality that places some limits on the potential for collective action. Thus, the challenge in Canada is one of multilaterally coordinated government action to promote its education systems abroad. Stakeholders have consistently complained that the lack of coordinated action harms marketing efforts and, in the absence of a clear collective vision of how to proceed, they have called upon the federal government to exercise greater leadership in this area.

In this context, it is important that provinces and territories lead in promoting Canada's education systems on the international scene. Under the aegis of the shared Education au/in Canada brand and with the assistance of the infrastructure maintained in foreign markets by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the promotion of education in Canada can be carried out effectively through individual provincial and territorial strategies that are aligned with the respective priorities of each jurisdiction. Unlike countries with centralized strategies, Canada's federal nature should allow it to benefit from multiple strategies that deploy different approaches and target different markets (including both markets that have students who are seeking English-language educational opportunities and those whose students wish to study in French), while still leveraging the advantages of the shared brand.

Provinces and territories must work together to ensure that Canadian education is present and visible on those occasions where it is important to speak with one voice on education to foreign governments or international organizations, in cooperation with the federal government.

While developing and implementing their individual strategies to respond to their respective priorities, provinces and territories must nonetheless ensure that the promotion of international education in Canada is sufficiently coordinated. This entails:

1. ministers responsible for education working through CMEC to implement the Education au/in Canada partnership with DFAIT;
2. relevant provincial/territorial ministers of immigration working with CIC to address issues of concern regarding the immigration process;
3. provinces and territories working through CMEC to implement CMEC's international strategy, which has as its objective the enhancement of the visibility and reputation of provincial/territorial education programs and educational institutions abroad;
4. ministers responsible for education and for immigration ensuring that the goal of increasing the number of international students in Canada is achieved without compromising the integrity of immigration systems.

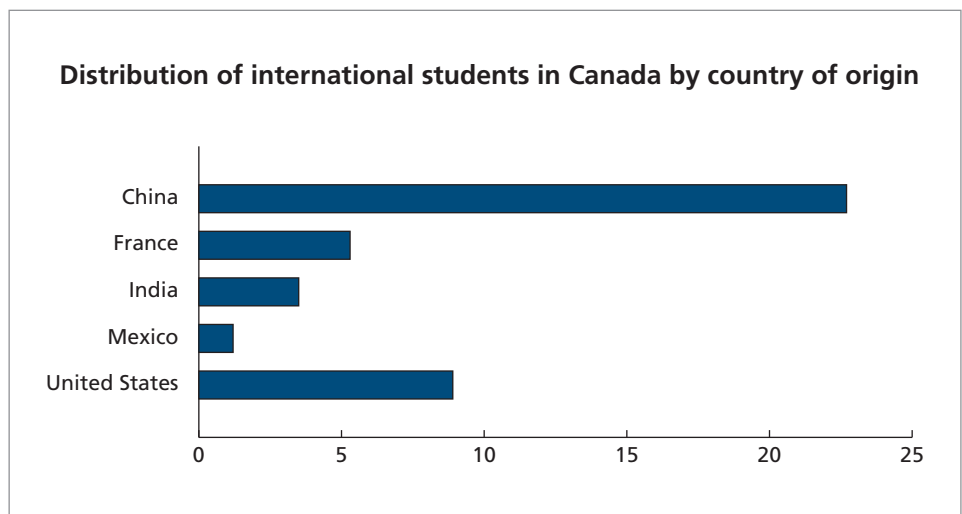
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C. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CANADA

In 2008, there were 178,227 international students² who stayed in Canada for at least six months, generating more than \$6.5 billion for the Canadian economy.

In 2008, there were 178,227 international students² who stayed in Canada for at least six months (long-term), generating more than \$6.5 billion for the Canadian economy. This included 42,154 Chinese and 27,440 South Korean citizens studying in Canada. Nearly 40 per cent of revenue generated by international students came from two countries: China (\$1,300,856,778) and South Korea (\$846,788,205).³

More than 71 per cent of all foreign students in Canada in 2008 were studying at the postsecondary level or training in the trades; 42.2 per cent were studying at the university level, up from 38 per cent in 2000. Forty-five per cent of international students enrolled in postsecondary education in Canada originate from Asia, and 22.7 per cent originate from China.

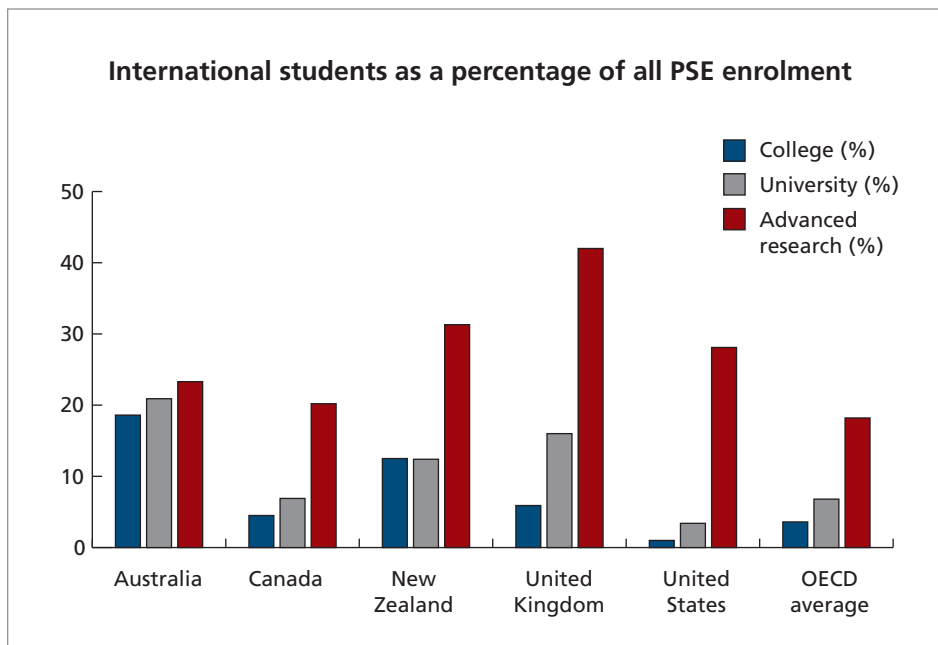


Source: OECD. Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators. Table C2.2.

² "International students" include students who are not citizens and who do not hold a permanent-residency permit in the country of study. "Foreign students" refer to those who are educated in a country for which they do not hold citizenship; in Canada, this includes permanent residents.

³ Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc. (2000). *Economic impact of international education in Canada: final report*. Retrieved August 16, 2010, from http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/RKA_IntEd_Report_eng.pdf

In Canada, 6.5 per cent of all students in postsecondary education are international students; the OECD average in 6.7 per cent.



Canada has 4% of the world's market share of international students, compared to 7% for Australia, 12% for the U.K., and 20% for the U.S.⁴

Source: OECD. Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators. Table C2.1.

Canada has 4 per cent of the world's market share of international students, compared to 7 per cent for Australia, 12 per cent for the U.K., and 20 per cent for the U.S.⁴ Between 2003 and 2007, Canada's population of international students grew by 6 per cent, while Australia saw a 41-per-cent increase, the U.K. 89 per cent, and the U.S. 27 per cent.⁵ Significant real gains in recruiting foreign students were made at the university level (an increase of nearly 27 per cent) and in other postsecondary institutions⁶ (an increase of 158 per cent). The number of foreign students studying at the elementary-secondary level grew more modestly, while the number of foreign students studying and training in the trades dropped 33 per cent in the same period.⁷

⁴ Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2010). *Canada's demographic and advanced skills crisis: people without jobs, jobs without people*. Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations 2011. Retrieved January 17, 2011, from http://www.accc.ca/ftp/briefs-memoires/201008_FinanceBrief.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Glossary of terms and concepts*. Retrieved February 17, 2011, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2008/glossary.asp>

⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Canada – total entries of foreign students by gender and level of study*. Retrieved February 17, 2011, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2009/temporary/17.asp>

International students strengthen Canada's schools, universities, and colleges, as well as the Canadian communities in which they study and live.

Despite the overall increase in the number of foreign students studying in Canada, concerns remain about whether or not Canada is "punching its weight" in capturing its share of the market for international students.⁸

International students strengthen Canada's schools, universities, and colleges, as well as the Canadian communities in which they study and live, and they contribute to the quality of the educational experiences of all students in Canada. The education services targeted at international students contributed to 64,940 jobs in the Canadian labour market. Short-term and long-term international students spent over \$6.5 billion on tuition, accommodations, and discretionary spending in 2008, and generated more than \$291 million in government revenue.

The economic benefits of recruiting foreign students to study in Canada go beyond their immediate impact in terms of spending and jobs. Like others in the global landscape, Canada is facing acute demographic pressures as its population ages and baby boomers retire. The demands on the country's social infrastructure that these changes imply will put pressure on government bottom lines. In addition to improving access and outcomes for domestic students, part of the solution lies in increasing the number of foreign students studying in Canada, encouraging some of them to stay, and facilitating their immigration.

Many foreign students who graduate in Canada apply to stay in the country permanently through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). CIC accepted 2,544 CEC applicants in 2009. Many temporary foreign workers are also selected to remain in Canada permanently through Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs).⁹

8 Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2010). Canada's demographic and advanced skills crisis: people without jobs, jobs without people. Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations 2011. Retrieved January 17, 2011, from http://www.acc.ca/ftp/briefs-memoires/201008_FinanceBrief.pdf

9 Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (May 13, 2010). *Supporting Canada's economy, Government of Canada maintains historically high rate of immigration in 2009*. Available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2010/2010-05-13.asp>

D. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Council of the Federation's request for an international education marketing action plan comes at a time when international education is taking on an increasingly important role for provincial and territorial governments and for schools and postsecondary institutions looking to increase enrolments, develop globally conscious students, and connect with opportunities around the world. Accordingly, this action plan is being developed in the context of a number of important recent developments in the area of international education. Much of the provincial/territorial activity in international education marketing is undertaken individually by jurisdictions or by educational institutions. A summary of recent developments specific to individual jurisdictions is beyond the scope of this paper.

i. The Education au/in Canada brand

Research has shown that "country" is the primary factor in the decision-making process for international students who are identifying potential study destinations.¹⁰ A brand for education in Canada was needed so that governments, educational institutions, and stakeholders could speak to international students using a consistent message that addresses the key influences on international students' choice of destination (quality of education, internationally accepted degrees, and a good living and studying environment) and highlights the factors that distinguish Canada in the market (facility in obtaining a visa, affordable tuition and cost of living, opportunities for work and migration).

The Education au/in Canada brand developed by federal and provincial/territorial partners appeals to international students who are seeking a quality education in an environment that enables them to realize their potential. The brand promotes a unique cultural experience in safe, diverse, and beautiful surroundings. The brand promises students that their Canadian credentials will be recognized worldwide.

The brand has been made accessible to educational institutions and nongovernmental organizations, with 108 authorized members since September 2009. The brand has been present at 150 events in 70 countries.

Federal funding to support the deployment of the Education au/in Canada brand will sunset in 2012.

¹⁰ For example: British Council. *PMI2 Overview – the Prime Minister's initiative for international education*. Retrieved February 16, 2011, from <http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2-overview.htm>

ii. Immigration developments

Significant progress has been made to strengthen the federal-provincial/territorial partnership in managing immigration. The federal-provincial/territorial immigration ministers' table¹¹ continues its work. Provincial/territorial engagement in shaping all aspects of the immigration pathway, from attraction to integration, is increasing.

This enhanced collaboration has led to such activities as the development of a federal-provincial/territorial vision for immigration¹² that includes the following strategic objectives relating to the attraction and retention of international students:

- Ensure that Canada is competitive with other destination countries in attracting new permanent residents, investors, entrepreneurs, temporary workers, and international students.
- Improve the design and management of all immigration categories, both permanent and temporary, to achieve stronger economic benefits.

In addition, there has been a more collaborative approach to the planning of immigration levels as a platform for setting targets for Provincial Nominee Programs and the Canadian Experience Class, which allow for the retention of international students in Canada.

More recently, CIC, together with the provinces and territories, has undertaken a process of reflection with a view to improving the integrity of the International Student Program (ISP). The changes under discussion aim to:

- ensure that applicants are destined to legitimate institutions and, in fact, pursue studies;
- protect Canada's status and image as a destination of choice of international education.

¹¹ Quebec sits as an observer at this table.

¹² Quebec exercises control over immigration policies, programs, and services within its jurisdiction, under the Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens; therefore, Quebec considers federal-provincial/territorial decisions on such issues to be non-binding.

Provinces and territories are working to ensure that the objective of improving program integrity is balanced against that of removing obstacles to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified international students and immigrants.

Progress on retaining more of the talented students who come to Canada to study has been made through more integrated use of the PNPs and of innovative initiatives under immigration agreements, such as a pilot project in British Columbia to extend post-graduation work permits to international students graduating from select institutions. Provinces and territories continue to make progress on facilitating the mobility and successful labour-force attachment of immigrants, through improvements to foreign-qualifications recognition.

iii. Developments in competitor countries

Recent developments in countries with which Canada competes for international students have opened up new opportunities for successful Canadian marketing initiatives:

- Australia has experienced significant challenges since 2009, stemming in part from publicized negative incidents involving Indian students. Their intake of international students has dropped 20 per cent from last year.
- In an effort to curb immigration, the U.K. has announced restrictions to the number of study visas it will allow to be issued. This is likely to affect students seeking education opportunities below the university level, in particular. In addition, the U.K. has announced that it will introduce substantial increases to student fees.
- The U.S. remains a favoured destination for higher education, but it is also known for high student costs, which are likely to continue to increase.

Canada, therefore, has an opportunity to distinguish itself as a country that offers high-quality education, relative affordability, and a high level of comfort with cultural diversity.

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iv. Canadian Consortium for International Education Marketing (CCIEM)

In 2009, five national education organizations — the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the Canadian Association of Public Schools-International (CAPS-I), the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), and Languages Canada (LC) — came together to form the Canadian Consortium for International Education Marketing (CCIEM). CCIEM coordinates the advocacy efforts of the five organizations and has lobbied the federal government extensively for new investments (approximately \$20 million per year) to improve education marketing to international students. CMEC has agreed to observe meetings of the CCIEM steering committee.

v. Developments at the federal level

In its budget tabled in the House of Commons on March 22, 2011, the federal government committed \$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.” The funds would support promotion and marketing, representation in key markets, and market intelligence.¹³ The budget was not passed before Parliament was dissolved.

The budget did not signal the need for federal-provincial/territorial collaboration on implementing an international education marketing strategy. The budget went on to propose that “an advisory panel reporting to the Ministers of Finance and International Trade [...] be established to make recommendations on the strategy and to set out the contributions of all partners,” with no mention of whether or how provinces and territories might fit in.

vi. Developments at ACDME

The Chair of the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) requested of the deputy minister of international trade that federal funding parameters remain flexible so as to allow new spending to be directed according to priorities established by provinces and territories in the international education marketing action plan and in support of their initiatives.

¹³ The budget also committed to changing eligibility rules for education-related tax credits and RESP benefits for Canadian students studying abroad in short-duration postsecondary education programs. These changes would cost an additional \$10 million annually.

E. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations with stakeholders

The provincial and territorial members of the Federal-Provincial Consultative Committee on Education-Related International Activities (FPCCERIA) (a committee of CMEC) invited national and provincial education stakeholders, education marketing agencies, and other interested parties to a consultation on international education. The meeting took place on November 30, 2010, in Ottawa. Stakeholders who could not attend the meeting and those wishing to provide more specific contributions were able to submit written responses.

A number of key themes emerged from the consultation process:

- **Need for leadership:** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of a collective and unified voice, and of a comprehensive pan-Canadian approach to international marketing. Others noted the importance of an approach that is coordinated across government sectors (e.g., health, labour, education, immigration).
- **Strong brand:** Stakeholders noted that while the Education au/in Canada brand has been a positive development, it can be made even more useful for marketing by expanding brand eligibility, overhauling the Web site, and continuing to evaluate its success.
- **Greater visibility:** Stakeholders suggested that positive results could be achieved from strategic efforts to raise the profile of education in Canada through traditional marketing initiatives, such as advertising in major print publications, broadcast media buys, and signs and billboards in key markets.
- **Physical overseas promotion:** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of representation abroad to support the promotion of education in Canada. It was suggested that offices be set up in strategic student-market locations around the world that would serve to counsel students, promote the national brand, and act as consultants to visiting delegations from Canada.
- **Increased investment:** Stakeholders stressed the importance of securing funding, particularly to focus on brand promotion.
- **Easing the visa pipeline:** Stakeholders noted the difficulty for international applicants to obtain study permits in a timely fashion as a major challenge. Several stakeholders recommend working on improved transparency within the system so that potential students understand better the process for getting their visa, studying, and then settling in Canada after their studies.

F. PARAMETERS OF AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARKETING ACTION PLAN

A consensus exists among both the federal and the provincial/territorial governments, as well as among Canadian international-education stakeholders, that . . . the time is right for more concerted action to promote education in Canada as a top choice for international students.

While the Education au/in Canada brand has been successfully introduced, it has yet to be deployed to its full potential in the context of a comprehensive marketing campaign. Having created the brand and established processes to provide access to it to educational institutions, the next step is to make effective use of the brand to create a recognized identity for educational opportunities in Canada in the international marketplace. This is especially pertinent to a discussion of areas for investment and opportunities for federal-provincial collaboration.

A successful marketing action plan must, however, be comprehensive in nature, addressing areas that support the promotion of the brand. For instance:

- Efforts to promote education in Canada as a top choice will fall flat if the visa applications of students enticed to choose Canada cannot be processed in a timely manner. Canada's brand must be supported by a regulatory regime and infrastructure that reinforce rather than undermine its message to students about the attractiveness of Canada as a destination for study. The plan acknowledges that the implementation of immigration-related action items will require engagement and collaboration with CIC in the context of provincial/territorial relationships with CIC.
- In a highly competitive global market, Canada must match other countries in its efforts to emphasize the high quality of the educational opportunities it offers. Among other things, this requires clear communication about Canada's approach to quality assurance and developments in foreign-qualifications recognition. Provinces and territories must also work together to protect Canada's reputation by monitoring the experience of international students and addressing potential risks.
- No promotional activity can succeed in the absence of market analysis and intelligence about trends and performance in the marketplace. Ministers responsible for education, therefore, require timely and comprehensive data about international student mobility, the number of international students enrolled in Canada, and their progress through their programs of study toward graduation.

- International student mobility is increasingly a two-way street. Ensuring that Canada remains innovative and economically competitive requires not only attracting top talent to this country but also exposing Canadian students to learning experiences and networks abroad. Canadian students studying abroad are also often the best ambassadors for educational opportunities in Canada. More strategically, many source countries are increasingly wary of partnering with countries that are interested only in a one-way flow of students.¹⁴

Much of the action required in these areas must be provincial/territorial in nature or coordinated with the federal government. Specific efforts to recruit international students to Canada will be conducted by individual provinces and territories and by individual educational institutions implementing strategies that reflect their distinct priorities. A pan-Canadian action plan must neither duplicate nor constrain these multiple and varied efforts. It must also take into account its potential impact on the plans and priorities of educational institutions. Bearing these considerations in mind, a pan-Canadian approach is required for two main reasons:

- First, in selecting a destination for study, the choice of country (as opposed to institution or province/territory) is paramount in the minds of international students. Provincial/territorial or institutional marketing efforts that do not build on the promotion of Canada as a destination will be at a disadvantage compared with those of competitors that are based on the promotion of their respective countries. Successful common efforts to promote Canada will add considerable value to individual provincial/territorial and institutional initiatives.
- Second, the domain of international education involves services and infrastructure relating to education, immigration, international trade promotion, and foreign affairs. The degree of federal-provincial/territorial collaboration required by an effective and coherent marketing action plan will be greatly facilitated by the development of pan-Canadian positions and approaches by provinces and territories.

A pan-Canadian action plan will focus on activities that can be accomplished more effectively through collaboration across jurisdictions and that add value to jurisdictional and institutional initiatives without duplicating or constraining these. It will also focus on actions that can benefit all education sectors and all jurisdictions.

. . . the time is right for more concerted action to promote education in Canada as a top choice for international students.

¹⁴ In discussions to prepare for the Second High-Level Consultation on Education Collaboration between the Provinces and Territories of Canada and the People's Republic of China, Chinese officials have asked that education ministers speak to the issue of the number of Canadians studying in China, mentioning by way of comparison US President Barack Obama's 2009 commitment to the Chinese president to send more American students to China.

G. PROPOSED ACTIONS

The expected outcomes of an international education marketing action plan are as follows:

- greater number of international students studying in Canada;
- increased share of the international student market;
- more opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad;
- greater number of international students choosing to remain in Canada as permanent residents after graduation.

To accomplish this, the plan proposes a series of actions designed to support five specific objectives.

Objective 1: Increase Canada's competitiveness in the international marketplace through the promotion of the Education au/in Canada brand and the development of a global identity that reflects the value of educational opportunities in Canada.

Actions: Provincial and territorial ministers of education will work with DFAIT, their partners in the Education au/in Canada brand, to develop and implement a strategy to enhance the presence of the brand in foreign markets and its message regarding the value of educational opportunities in Canada. This strategy should include the following elements:

1. Providing *direct outreach* to prospective students and their families, or funding to provinces and territories that already offer such services, notably through trained personnel operating out of Education au/in Canada offices at strategic locations in key markets: The offices must be more accessible (both in terms of location and the availability of staff) to students than embassies and consulates, and should offer information and counselling about educational opportunities, the status and equivalencies of Canadian diplomas and degrees, visas and other regulations, employment opportunities, and immigration. These personnel can also provide on-the-ground assistance to Canadian governments and educational institutions.

2. Implementing a *publicity strategy* in key foreign markets to complement the campaigns of individual jurisdictions and educational institutions: A publicity strategy would include, among other things, earned and purchased media coverage and information events for foreign educators, students, and their families.
3. Providing an *enhanced Web presence* for the brand that makes effective use of information technologies and social media: This would make it easier for students to navigate through the education-related information offered by different governments, institutions, agencies, and associations in Canada.
4. Providing a more consistent and visible presence for the brand at a range of *international education trade events* and related international education conferences: This could include providing prominent conference speakers to communicate directly about educational opportunities in Canada.

Objective 2: Increase the efficiency and transparency of the processes through which international students obtain the necessary permissions to travel to and study in Canada and to remain in Canada after graduation.

Actions: Provincial and territorial ministers of immigration will continue to work with their federal counterpart to identify and address obstacles to the recruitment and retention of international students, including bottlenecks in the visa-processing system. Specifically, ministers will:

1. Work with CIC and other partners to strengthen the integrity, efficiency, and transparency of the International Student Program and other immigration initiatives related to international students, to ensure that these efforts increase the attractiveness of education in Canada as an option for international students.
2. Work with CIC to explore ways to enhance visa-processing operations in key markets, building on the success of the Student Partners Program.
3. Work within existing arrangements for decisions regarding immigration levels, which may include working with CIC, to ensure that annual immigration-level planning allows room for students who wish to remain permanently in Canada.
4. Expand opportunities for international students to work off-campus and following graduation, building on successful pilot projects and initiatives.

Provincial and territorial ministers of immigration will continue to work with their federal counterpart to identify and address obstacles to the recruitment and retention of international students.



Objective 3: Protect and enhance Canada's reputation as a provider of high-quality educational opportunities.

Actions: The following actions are proposed:

1. *Pan-Canadian survey of the international-student experience:* CMEC will develop, by 2012, a periodic survey of international students in Canada that will provide information about their satisfaction with their studies, financial situation, perception of their security and quality of life, and plans after graduation regarding further study, employment, and country of residence. This pan-Canadian information will help to ensure that education providers in Canada understand the market and their clients and are able to develop responses to serve them better. It will also enable education ministers to ensure that the quality of the experience of international students is maintained or improved over time, and enable immigration ministers to better understand the factors that affect the retention of top international talent in Canada. The survey will build on and complement existing jurisdictional and institutional surveys to avoid duplication.
2. *Communicating about quality assurance in Canada:* By 2012, CMEC will develop communications materials that convey, in a manner accessible to an international audience, the nature of the Canadian regimes of quality assurance and the steps taken to ensure that schools, institutes, colleges, and universities in Canada provide high-quality education. These materials will build on the information already developed by the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). The materials will be made available in multiple languages, in Web-based and printed form, and will be suitable for use in promotional activities that take place in other countries.
3. *Sharing practices to improve quality and ensure safety:* Provinces and territories will continue to work together to share information about leading Canadian and international practices to support international students and ensure that their educational experiences in Canada are positive. This includes practices to address potential risks, for example, providing information about the regulation of home-stay programs, the use of agents to recruit students, and orientation programs for international students.

4. *Maintaining program integrity*: Provincial and territorial ministers of immigration will work with CIC to balance the need to prevent fraudulent entry into Canada with the need to remove obstacles to the entry of legitimate international students.

Objective 4: Provide the data and intelligence education providers require in order to meet the needs of clients, react to market developments, and measure success in recruiting and graduating increased numbers of international students.

Actions: In order to strengthen the capacity of education providers to develop and adjust strategies based on data and market intelligence, ministers responsible for education will work through CMEC and with DFAIT to:

1. *Provide market intelligence* — information about key developments and events in priority markets — and support to government officials and educational institutions in Canada to allow them to react more quickly and adjust their marketing activities.
2. Conduct regular *market research* to better understand the aspirations and priorities of prospective international students and their families, to learn why they do or do not select Canada as a destination, and to test recognition and resonance of Canada's brand and its message.
3. Strengthen pan-Canadian *data sources* on enrolment and graduation, such as the Post-Secondary Information System (PSIS) survey conducted by Statistics Canada and funded by Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). While provinces and territories have funded the infrastructure that enables colleges and universities to report this information to Statistics Canada, funding from HRSDC is not guaranteed after 2010-11. Provinces and territories will work through CMEC and the Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC) to convey to HRSDC the importance of adequate and sustainable funding for PSIS so that enrolment and graduation figures for international students can be reported annually through the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program (PCEIP).



Objective 5: Provide more opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad.

Actions: Ministers responsible for education will work with educational institutions to develop strategies and programs to encourage more Canadians to study abroad. Actions to be taken include:

1. Develop plans which jurisdictions may use with a goal of significantly increasing the proportion of postsecondary students who study abroad over the next decade. These plans will address current barriers to international mobility, including funding, language skills, and credit recognition. In launching these plans, ministers and institutional leaders will convey the message that international educational experience is increasingly part of the core competencies expected of Canadian graduates in the 21st century.
2. Develop a network of Canadians living, studying, and working abroad to serve as ambassadors for international student mobility.
3. Propose measures to increase the number of Canadians studying in China in the context of the Second High-Level Consultation on Education Collaboration between the Provinces and Territories of Canada and the People's Republic of China, and as appropriate for each province and territory.

H. CONCLUSION

Provinces and territories are already engaged in efforts to implement parts of this action plan within the context of existing funding. Provincial and territorial immigration departments, in consultation with education departments, are working with CIC to enhance the integrity of the International Student Program. Both the promotion of the quality of education in Canada and the strengthening of enrolment and graduation indicators are among CMEC's current activity areas. Provinces and territories will have a strong joint presence at the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) Annual Conference & Expo in Vancouver in spring 2011 and at the Second High-Level Consultation on Education Collaboration between the Provinces and Territories of Canada and the People's Republic of China, to take place in Beijing on June 20, 2011.

Discussion of the funding and implementation of the activities put forward in this action plan will need to take into account the fact that all jurisdictions currently face resource constraints. The actions outlined above have been subjected to a preliminary costing exercise and could be implemented through phases of investment.

Actions relating specifically to the efficiency and transparency of immigration programs have not been costed and must be accomplished through consultation with CIC because the associated costs would largely be borne by the federal government (or through arrangements between the federal government and jurisdictions).

While it is unwise for provincial and territorial governments to rely exclusively on the outcome of federal funding decisions, parameters for federal government funding should remain flexible so that new funding can be applied according to priorities established by provinces and territories in the international education marketing action plan and in support of their initiatives.

It should be noted that most of the activities (except for those to be funded exclusively by the federal government, such as those that affect the capacity of CIC's International Student Program) could be funded through the "pooling" of provincial-territorial resources, either through funding of an existing instrument such as CMEC, through co-funding agreements directly with DFAIT, or through the funding of another agency or subcontractor. This cost-sharing of common activities across jurisdictions could create significant efficiencies and added value-for-money. Certain activities, such as the funding of more Canadian students to study abroad, are likely best to be funded separately by each jurisdiction. In all cases, decisions regarding provincial/territorial involvement will be made on a case-by-case basis to determine when collective or individual action is most appropriate in respect of the priorities of provinces and territories.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

Ministers responsible for education and provincial and territorial ministers of immigration recommend that:

- Premiers accept the actions, areas for investment, and opportunities for federal-provincial collaboration proposed above as the basis of a pan-Canadian international education marketing action plan;
- ministers responsible for education and provincial and territorial ministers of immigration, to the fullest extent possible within the context of existing resources, begin work immediately to implement the plan;
- ministers responsible for education and provincial and territorial ministers of immigration pursue discussion with federal ministers of international trade and immigration with a view of aligning federal initiatives relating to international students with the priorities outlined in this action plan.

ATTACHMENT A

Preparations for a Strong Joint Presence at the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) Conference

In addition to the development of an action plan for marketing international education, Premiers agreed to have a strong joint presence at the upcoming Association of International Educators (NAFSA) conference in Vancouver in May 2011. The following summarizes the activities undertaken in response to Premiers' direction.

NAFSA is the largest organization promoting international education and providing professional-development opportunities to the field. Over 10,000 delegates are expected to attend the conference. This year, the event offers an extraordinary opportunity to showcase Canada, the host country.

Previously, there has been no unified and integrated Canadian presence at NAFSA conferences, as provinces hosted their own pavilions. The development of the Education au/in Canada brand provided the impetus for a collaborative approach to a Canadian pavilion at NAFSA conferences and other international education events. Since the initial joint pavilion in 2009, the unified Canadian presence has grown, in the number of provinces participating and also in brand recognition and profile.

Eight provinces,¹⁵ together with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), are collaborating to create a strong Canadian presence at the NAFSA conference in Vancouver this May. The Canadian consortium has secured premium exhibition space adjacent to the main entrance of the exhibition hall. The Canadian pavilion will be the largest single pavilion at the conference, encompassing over 325 square metres.¹⁶ Over 200 Canadian delegates are expected to attend.

The Canadian pavilion will have a very integrated look, making use of the brand while allowing provinces the opportunity to showcase their own profiles within the pavilion. The pavilion is designed to facilitate face-to-face meetings and networking activities. Canadian institutions, as represented by the Canadian Interest Group, will host a reception for NAFSA delegates on Wednesday, June 1. It is anticipated that Canadian institutions will host over 2,000 delegates at the event.

¹⁵ Quebec has chosen to exhibit independently; Prince Edward Island has declined to participate.

¹⁶ By comparison, the next largest pavilion will be 167 square metres.

Plans for an international education round table

In 2010, two international education round tables involving international education officials from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand were convened in London, U.K. These round tables focused on issues of interest to international education officials, including the integrity of international education programs, student well-being, and the use of education agents.

At the most recent round table, held in December 2010, Canada offered to host the next round table in Vancouver at a time coinciding with the NAFSA conference. This round table will be co-hosted by CMEC and DFAIT, along with Australia (which initiated the rounds). The round table will take place on Friday, June 3, 2011.



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