

Association of Universities
and Colleges of Canada



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et collèges du Canada

**Notes for a Presentation to
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Paul Davidson
President and CEO

600-350 Albert, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1B1

Phone/Tél:(613)563-3961 Fax/Télec:(613)563-9745

www.aucc.ca

On behalf of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and its 95 member institutions, I thank you for the invitation to contribute to this study. It is a privilege to be here with you to discuss the important role of Canada's universities in engaging with China and India.

My comments today will include:

- How Canadian universities make a significant contribution to Canada's foreign policy
- How universities' internationalization strategies, underpin Canada's engagement with the rising economies of China and India
- Make the case that more can be done to support Canadian universities' recruitment efforts as they seek to tap into the pool of global talent, in particular the vast potential in China and India.

Universities and Foreign Policy

Canadian universities have a long tradition of international engagement that enhances and informs Canadian foreign policy.

A few numbers to illustrate the magnitude of this activity on the world stage:

- AUCC members have approximately 4,400 active academic and research partnerships with other institutions across the globe; (of which approximately 400 are with China and 65 with India)
- Our universities have undertaken over 2,700 international development projects over the years; (of which 250 have been with China and 130 with India)
- currently 77,000 international students are enrolled full-time in our universities (including 15,000 Chinese students and approximately 2,800 from India.)

Universities are important windows on the world for Canada and strive to foster an in-depth understanding of the interconnectedness of today's globalized knowledge economy in Canadian students, as well as providing the international knowledge and cross-cultural skills they need to prosper in a global environment.

International Education as a platform for economic partnership

AUCC believes that the higher education and research sector and its focus on people to people exchanges can be instrumental in creating stronger links between Canada and emerging countries such as China and India and we have a solid 30 year history of academic relations to build on.

The internationalization strategies of Canadian universities in particular can provide a good platform upon which dialogue on economic partnership can be built.

Internationalization involves activities such as: student and faculty mobility; provision of education programs and services abroad; international research collaboration; bringing an international dimension to the curriculum and the recruitment of quality international students.

One example of internationalization: Canadian universities are increasingly becoming more globally oriented in providing educational programs and services abroad such as joint degrees. A recent study by AUCC shows that China is the top country with 34 joint programs offered.

The burgeoning S&T sectors of China and India are also potential sources of stimulus to Canada's own research sector and economic competitiveness.

For example, China and its institutions continue to build their domestic capacity in R&D. Investments there have helped drive a spectacular nine-fold increase in research publications.

India is making strides to enhance its higher education research sector as well - A recent study from Thompson Reuters predicts, for example, that India's research productivity will be on par with most G8 nations within seven or eight years and is positioned to overtake them by 2020.

Canada's universities, with their increasing activities in international research collaboration, are well-positioned to tap into this all-important network of Chinese and Indian researchers and their innovative capacities.

There has been important progress and growing momentum through increased engagement in a number of Canada-India and Canada-China Higher Education partnership fora.

There was most recently a DFAIT sponsored PhD fair in Beijing that was a spectacular success in generating interest there among top students. Eight Canadian universities currently have signed agreements with the China Scholarship Council to host top Chinese grad students, with more agreements to come.

As for India: AUCC is working to advance a Canada-India strategy that is sustainable, scaleable, results-oriented and adds value to members' existing initiatives through activities such as joint workshop of Canadian and Indian Deans of graduate studies, an upcoming practitioners' workshop and a mission of Presidents in November 2010.

Our activities build on the momentum generated by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's education roundtable during his trip to India in November 2009, as well as the likely summer 2010 visit to Canada of Indian Prime Minister Singh for the G-20 and a possible visit of Kapil Sibal, India's Minister of Human Resources Development.

International Student Recruitment

Finally, I now turn to international student recruitment as a critical component of a strategic partnership with these emerging countries. I'd like to leave you with three thoughts:

- why this matters to Canadians
- why some key competitors are outpacing us
- and what we think is necessary to close the gap.

As the Honourable Stockwell Day pointed out to you when he was here in November, there is an immediate economic benefit of welcoming international students to Canada – a report from his department (at the time) indicates a \$6.5 billion contribution to the Canadian economy. This figure is greater than the values of the export of coal and coniferous lumber – two of our traditionally largest export sectors. According to the report, education services are Canada's number one export to China at 1.3 billion. The presence of international students at Canadian institutions provided employment for over 83,000 Canadians and generated more than \$291 million in government revenue.

This measure of economic outcomes is only the most recent indication of the benefits associated with international students.

While studying here, students from abroad bring diverse perspectives, expertise and skills to Canadian classrooms and labs. This positive effect is not restricted to our institutions in just the largest urban centres.

The presence of international students at our institutions in smaller communities brings together many cultures from around the world which in turn, infuses the broader community with diversity.

A wonderful example is the University of Quebec a Chicoutimi - which has 300 int'l students, a good number from China. These links have led to several of Chicoutimi's programs being developed and delivered in China.

At Université de Moncton, the international student population has grown significantly in the past ten years to over 600 students (12% of the overall student body.) In a province that will face one of the country's most significant declines in population over the next decade, the infusion of these students in New Brunswick creates an immediate pool of skilled – and often bilingual – individuals that can contribute both on the cultural and economic level in the province.

Another example of local community impact is Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops which hosts approximately 1200 international students bringing together over 70 different cultures from around the world.

When they choose to stay here, foreign graduates bring significant economic and social benefits to Canada as an ideal source of highly qualified people for the skilled labour market – already integrated into our communities and without any of the barriers related to foreign credential recognition.

When they graduate from our schools and return to their countries of origin, many become business, governmental and academic leaders, creating international networks that strengthen Canada's economic and diplomatic ties abroad. We all know how alumni can be our greatest informal ambassadors and promoters.

A case in point:

His Excellency Lan Lijun, the current Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Canada, attended both McGill and Queen's Universities as a graduate student.

Looking at China, it is important to note that Canada was ahead of the curve by being among the first countries, decades ago, in engaging China through student recruitment and exchange. The federal government's Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program, as an example, was established in 1973 and since then over 900 scholars have participated. Many of those, after having been educated here, have gone on to return to positions of prominence in China – creating crucial contacts for Canada in the future.

However, we have lost that early advantage and other countries are now surpassing Canada in international student recruitment. Taking market share of Indian and Chinese university students as an example, we see how both the UK and Australia, with comparably sized university systems, are doing better than us.

At Canadian universities, the enrolment of Indian students currently stands at approximately 2,800 – far behind Australia which has 28,000 and the U.K with 27,000.

Likewise, enrolment of students from China in Canadian universities – our number one source country – is at approximately 15,000. This however is considerably fewer than Australia with approximately 51,000 and the U.K. with 49,000.

So what are these countries doing that Canada is not?

The governments of United Kingdom and Australia have made major investments in education branding and marketing initiatives: The UK provides approximately \$23 million dollars annually for education marketing in addition to core funding to the British Council. The Australian government funds its main education promotion organization – *Australian Education International* at \$20 Million a year.

Now, it must be said that Canadian universities have been increasing their own promotion and recruitment efforts making significant investments from their own resources to take advantage of the growing demand amongst the increasingly mobile student population.

But still, more support is needed to leverage these investments. Given the national nature of these objectives, the demographic and labour market challenges, and the need to address foreign credential recognition, we believe that there is a role for strong federal leadership on this file.

We need to build on the progress to date in areas such as new welcoming immigration measures, the development of a new Canada education brand, and new magnets for talent such as the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships and the new post-doctorate fellowships announced in Budget 2010.

With Canada in the international spotlight with the Vancouver Olympics and as host of the upcoming G8 and G20 meetings, let's continue to promote the Canada brand abroad including our excellent universities.

That is why we continue to call for a significant federal investment in an international student recruitment strategy that promotes the excellence of Canada's education system to the many talented students abroad, including China and India.

For this reason, we are also cooperating with other national education stakeholders to create a united front of stakeholders to work in partnership with the government to coordinate and deliver promotion and outreach on behalf of the Canadian education sector.

Now is the time to maximize the many benefits of bringing Canadian education to the world.

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to be here. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.