

Supporting International Student Success

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CBIE 2009 Survey of the International Student Experience

- 5,925 international students
- Respondents from 22 universities and 4 colleges across Canada
- 4th CBIE survey: previous studies provide benchmarks

Choosing Canada

- **Canada was the first choice country for just over half (53%) of respondents down from 59% in 1999.**
- **Why Canada?**
 - ▶ **Quality of Education**
 - ▶ **Safety**
 - ▶ **Work opportunities both during studies and post graduation**
- **95% use the internet in choosing an institution**

Choosing an institution

- **Why Dal, York, Carleton, UBC, Kwantlen, etc.?**
 - ▶ **Quality of education**
 - ▶ **Availability of programs**
- **8 in 10 students say their courses are as expected or better than expected**
- **9 in 10 are satisfied with their decision to attend their current institution**

Financial Issues

- **Higher costs:**

- ▶ **Average international tuition & books is \$14,000 up 86% in the last 10 years**

- **Less resources:**

- ▶ **Students largely dependent on their families or personal saving and a decreasing number of students from poorer families**
- ▶ **1 in 4 students struggle to pay their living expenses**
- ▶ **4 in 10 have problems obtaining money for living expenses**

Experience at their institutions

- **Generally happy:**
 - ▶ **Students are generally pleased with the services and facilities within their institutions**
 - ▶ **Almost 9 in 10 say their instructors treat them fairly**
- **But some clear disappointments:**
 - ▶ **Only 6 in 10 report that their instructors have taken a personal interest in them**
 - ▶ **3 in 10 have experienced some form of racism**
 - ▶ **1 in 4 report professors as racially insensitive**

What next?

- **6 in 10 will continue their education**
- **1 in 5 want another degree in Canada**
- **3 in 4 plan to work in Canada and then return home**
- **Half of students plan to apply for permanent resident status**

The Economic Impact

- **2009 Comprehensive study of the Economic Impact of International Students Enrolled In NS Universities**
 - ▶ **3,524 international students make a \$241 million impact including a \$91 million injection of new money**
 - ▶ **Generally, international student had a positive impression**
 - ▶ **Could be a good source of future immigrants to help address the Province's demographic challenges.**

Dalhousie's investments in internationalization

- **new position: AVP Academic (Outreach & International)**
- **Building expertise in international admissions and transfer credit**
- **Increased investment in international recruitment**
- **DISC (Dalhousie International Strategy Council)**
- **More strategic international partnerships**
 - ▶ **2+2 partners**
 - ▶ **Network of recruiting agents**

Dalhousie's Issue

- **Despite largely positive feedback from our international students:**
 - ▶ **retention still remains lower than that of domestic students both due to overall lower performance, and more loss among those eligible to continue**
 - ▶ **International students are less likely to remain in residence**
 - ▶ **International students are more likely to experience academic integrity issues**

International Student Experience Committee

- **Director of Academic Success Services**
- **AVP Academic(International & Outreach)**
- **AVP Enrolment & Registrar**
- **2 international students**
- **Faculty representatives**
- **Centre for Learning & Teaching**
- **Dean, College of Continuing Education**
- **Graduate Studies**

Academic Challenges

- **Different expectations regarding what learning entails**
- **Exclusion/marginalization in group work**
- **Different understanding of academic integrity**
- **ESL**
 - ▶ **Listening comprehension (understanding lectures/clinical work/classmates)**
 - ▶ **Reading (processing time – i.e. exams)**
 - ▶ **Writing**
 - ▶ **Understanding processes and regulations**

Housing challenges

- **Need help finding off-campus housing**
- **Need help understanding lease agreements**
- **Need help understanding neighborhoods**
- **Students in residence: noise factor, December break, meal plan options**
 - ▶ **Residence: those who opt for it tend to stay (traditional res appeals to some)**

Social challenges

- **Difficulty meeting Canadians – few opportunities for interactions**
- **Experience of racism (becomes the lens through which experience is filtered)**
- **Disconnect with traditional Canadian socialization and cultural norms**

Improving the Campus Experience

- **Sensitization/training of the University community: faculty, staff and students**
- **Build intercultural expertise within the Centre for Teaching and Learning**
 - ▶ Workshops for faculty and staff
 - ▶ Handbook for faculty/staff
- **Training faculty/staff to better LISTENING when accents are a barrier**
- **Internationalizing our curriculum – are we creating a classroom experience that engages students from across cultures in the discussion?**

Housing Support Options

- **Development of a greater variety of housing options, including apartmentt/suite style**
- **International House?**
- **Better facilitating off-campus housing**
- **Homestay families?**

Support options

- **‘Dal 101’ class: credit or non-credit**
- **Appropriate and timely ESL/Writing support**
- **Transition services:**
 - ▶ **Pen friends pre-arrival**
 - ▶ **What can we learn from the “Cadillac service” received by exchange students?**
 - ▶ **Extensive (i.e. two-week) orientation**
- **Ongoing social integration with Canadians**
 - ▶ **Peer Partnership Program**

- **Specialized transition year program**
- **More meaningful work opportunities – bringing financial aid and social integration together**
- **Increase international services staff – to achieve a more intrusive, less reactive, service model**

Certificate in Intercultural Understanding

Early stage of development, but could include:

Academic Component

Experiential Learning Component

Seminars

Mentoring

Communication Skill Building

Improved opportunities for international students and domestic students to integrate, build competency

Other ideas or approaches?

Questions?

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