

Canada's Global Engagement Challenge:

CBIE's Pre-Budget Submission 2014 to the Finance Committee of the House of Commons

Executive Summary

CBIE, Canada's international education organization, addresses the consultation theme of increasing the competitiveness of Canadian business in the context of the Global Markets Action Plan and the International Education Strategy.

Canada is not doing enough to develop Canada's internationally aware and competent leaders of tomorrow, creating "Canada's Global Engagement Challenge." Canada lags behind major competitor countries which recognize the strategic economic imperative of supporting flagship international scholarship programs for their students.

Canada needs to rethink its approach to international education and mobilize a critical mass of our next generation.

CBIE urges a substantive program initiated in 2015 to make measurable progress toward the target of 50,000 awards annually by 2022 (as recommended by the government's Advisory Panel). Marking Canada's 150th Anniversary, 15,000 awards would be offered in 2017.

Canadian Bureau for International Education

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is Canada's international education organization. Our vision is to make Canada a global leader in international education, engaging our 150 member institutions from coast to coast in an array of partnerships and mobility opportunities worldwide. Our mandate is to build Canada's capacity to contribute and to participate fully in the world through educational connections.

Central to our mandate is the development of Canada's leaders of tomorrow through international education experiences. Our submission to the Finance Committee will focus

exclusively on this aspect of our work, which is increasingly critical and where Canada lags behind much of the world.

Through developing the next generation of leaders, we address the consultation theme of increasing the competitiveness of Canadian business. Our submission links to two key government documents: the [Global Markets Action Plan](#) (Nov. 2013), herein referenced as the GMAP, and the [International Education Strategy](#) (Jan. 2014), or the IES.

We propose an initiative to respond to what we call *Canada's Global Engagement Challenge*. CBIE is uniquely positioned to champion, contribute to and implement such an initiative. Since its inception in the late 1940s, CBIE has been building bridges to the world for the education sector and for Canada.

Canada's Global Engagement Challenge

Canada faces a grand challenge: getting more of our students outbound for educational experiences in other countries and preparing them to become global citizens in the range of ways that the term implies.

Why is this so important?

For Canada, a major trading nation whose continued prosperity hinges on cross-border mobility of people, goods and services, ensuring we have a critical mass of professionals who are well prepared to navigate the risks and maximize the benefits of international business is essential. As the GMAP reports, international trade currently represents more than 60 percent of Canada's GDP and one in five jobs in Canada is linked to exports.

Beyond business, it's no secret that the world we inhabit is fraught with issues of a global nature.

Canadians need to be prepared to participate and to lead in the global village, working across borders, cultures, languages and values to mutual benefit.

For Canadians, meaningful international engagement and support for those in need is a core value. Involvement in efforts beneficial to the planet and its people is in our DNA.

What are we doing to develop Canada's leaders of tomorrow, the individuals who can negotiate, analyze, connect and engage in meaningful ways at the international level?

Where We Stand

Recently CBIE wrote an article commending the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) for including an international dimension in its *Taking Action for Canada: Jobs and Skills for the 21st*

Century initiative. In partnership with the Canadian International Council (CIC), CCCE commissioned a report on the IES entitled [Canada's International Education Strategy: Time for a fresh curriculum](#). As the report states, the IES focuses on attracting international students, addressing the skills gap, and benefitting the economy and society. For this, CBIE applauds the government. The IES sets an ambitious target of doubling the number of international students – to 450,000 – by 2022, and CBIE is committed to helping achieve this target.

However, as highlighted in the above report and as CBIE has long argued, inbound mobility of international students is only one pillar of a comprehensive international education approach. Equally important is outbound mobility.

Where, for example, more than 30 percent of German students go abroad – and there is a concerted effort to increase this to 50 percent – it is estimated that a miniscule 3 percent of Canadian students participate in their Canadian university or college exchange programs. This is proving to be the Achilles' heel in Canada's aspirations for greater global engagement and competitiveness.

CBIE urges a national target of five times the current percentage. No less than 15% of Canadian students should have an education abroad experience.

The 2012 report of the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, appointed by the government, is titled [International Education: A Key Driver of Canada's Future Prosperity](#). It recommends that, by the year 2022, 50,000 study abroad awards be offered to Canadian students each year in order to overcome Canada's critical international skills deficit.

Achieving this target will take investment. It will not take us to 15%, but it is ambitious and will set us on the right course.

Achieving the target will also take bold vision. We need to galvanize a critical mass of students to help them access the full value of educational experiences abroad. Leaders need to speak out more forcefully on the importance of the skills engendered through international exposure – witness the insightful [report](#) of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and the Munk School of Global Affairs on the urgent need to create "Asia competence."

CBIE believes that Canada's future position on the world stage and in the world economy demands this.

Making Education Abroad a Priority

Other countries are making huge advances in internationalizing their next generation.

Examples:

- Brazil's [Ciências sem Fronteiras](#) (CsF, Science without Borders) scholarship program begun in 2011 builds theoretical knowledge and practical skills for 101,000 students. In June 2014 Brazil's President announced CsF's second phase, comprising a further 100,000 awards. CsF is designed to catapult Brazil into the knowledge economy.
- The United States has taken bold steps. President Obama personally announced the 100,000 Strong Initiative with China, now an independent non-profit foundation that enables US students to undertake a semester at Chinese educational institutions. The President recently announced a similar program with Latin America. As stated on the program [website](#): "In today's interconnected, technology-driven world, quality education alone is not enough. We need to be more internationally-aware and cross-culturally adept. We need a generation of leaders who can reach across borders. For this, students need a broad base of skills and experiences, including exposure to other countries and cultures. That is the vision of 100,000 Strong in the Americas."
- The European Union's Erasmus program celebrated 25 years in 2013, having supported over three million study abroad scholarships among EU countries. In large measure aimed at creating a European identity, the EU nevertheless has reached out beyond its member countries to engage with other nations through two major cooperation and mobility programs: [Erasmus Mundus](#) and [Erasmus Plus](#).
- Under the [New Colombo Plan](#), Australia's government has committed \$100 million over five years to augment Australian students' ability to study and work in Indo-Pacific region. The plan supports year-long study and semester-long internships abroad, and provides grants for shorter term opportunities that are more feasible for a broad range of students.

Unlike these countries, Canada has not approached internationalization of the next generation as a grand challenge or national imperative but rather has offered boutique programs that are helpful to a limited cohort, for a limited time.

Looking at what is happening in international business and what our competitors are doing to consolidate their success, and set alongside our important GMAP and IES objectives, Canada urgently needs to develop a critical mass of globally prepared young leaders to impact our overall capacity to engage with the world in the medium-term and long-term. Boutique programs or one-offs are no solution. Without concerted effort and substantial investment, we risk raising a generation of non-competitive Canadians. The implications for our economic well-being are grave.

Where to Next?

How can Canada effectively address the Global Engagement Challenge?

Fundamentally, we need to view it as an imperative – not secondary and certainly not a frill. And we need to aim high. We need to put in place, in short order, a substantive program that will make measurable progress toward the Advisory Panel’s recommended target of 50,000 awards annually by 2022.

International education is explicitly identified in the GMAP as a competitive strength and, along with two others, earmarked “to be developed into comprehensive strategies that will keep Canada at the forefront of key economic sectors and strengthen Canada’s trade, investment and people-to-people ties in priority markets.” Further, it alludes to “the launch of an international education strategy to attract international students to Canada and entrench the ties of world-class Canadian educational institutions with their global counterparts.” Embedded in the second objective – a central element of entrenching institutional ties – is the exchange of students and young researchers. We *absolutely* need to address this other major pillar of international education that enables Canadian students to develop their potential to become our leaders of tomorrow.

Leaving it out of our evolving IES would be a serious mistake.

Recently CBIE spoke with business and government leaders to get their views of education abroad. They see it as increasingly important but with a twist. The kind of educational experience that they most value blends classroom study and practical work to build a range of skills such as teamwork, critical analysis and second (or third) language competency.

Leaders are also keen to see that Canada’s First Nations students can build their international exposure, which will translate into better social and economic outcomes for their communities here in Canada.

There are ample opportunities to link a broad program with the GMAP priority countries and sectors, and to ensure participation by our First Nations students. Such linkages would be welcomed by the business community and offer a platform for its own engagement and support.

The connection of international education and economic development is illustrated by many of today’s leaders. In a recent [blog](#) for CBIE, alluding to his own exchange experience in Germany while an undergraduate at McGill University, the Hon. Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, said:

Our economic future is tied to these inward and outward flows of young people seeking education and exciting new careers. As we seek to build strategic economic relationships in Asia, to partner with the Pacific Alliance in Latin America, and to capitalize on the historic Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement,

we are literally building an agenda of growing human, academic, innovation, investment and trade ties that can underpin our growth over the coming decades.

CBIE recommends that the government invest in a major program that will progressively provide grants to Canadian secondary and post-secondary students, ramping up to the full 50,000 awards targeted by the Advisory Panel by 2022.

Our research demonstrates that students do not seek massive funding, but a supplement to their personal contributions and the modest grants offered by some institutions.

CBIE urges that a minimum of 10,000 awards of \$1,000 each be offered in 2015 rising to 12,500 in 2016, and that Canada's 150th Anniversary be marked by 15,000 awards in 2017.

Over the ensuing five years, CBIE urges that the awards volume rise regularly each year such that a full 50,000 are offered in 2022 and following.

CBIE hopes this brief has provided useful information on the significant contribution that international education makes to Canada's success. By making a relatively modest investment in study abroad, the Government of Canada will be acting in best interests of Canada and Canadians.

CBIE would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue and the opportunity with the Finance Committee.