



Learning Beyond Borders

A National Conversation on Learning Abroad
and Canada's Global Engagement Challenge



Canadian Bureau for
International Education

Why is this so important?

Canada's global engagement challenge

Canada faces a great challenge: getting more of our students to take advantage of learning experiences in other countries and preparing them to become global citizens in all the ways the term implies.

For Canada, a major trading nation whose continued prosperity hinges on the cross-border mobility of people, goods and services, ensuring Canadians are prepared to participate and contribute as global citizens, working across borders, cultures, languages and values to mutual benefit is vitally important.

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

Making learning abroad a reality for a critical mass of Canadian students requires a culture shift

Cultivating the talent Canada needs to address its global engagement challenge calls for a multifaceted approach that will catalyze a culture shift when it comes to learning abroad for Canadian students at all levels of education. Learning abroad must not be viewed as a luxury but rather accepted as an integral part of Canada's high quality education for the 21st century. Students and families need to better understand that learning abroad opportunities are personally enriching and lead to concrete learning outcomes that enhance career prospects and career development; institutions need to address barriers that research shows reduce the impact of their efforts to engage Canadian students in learning abroad including but not limited to flexibility in learning abroad models, credit recognition and on-campus promotion; business, political and thought leaders need to join institutional leaders in speaking out about the necessity for Canada's young people to engage with the world, not only for our country's economic competitiveness in global markets but also to enhance Canada's image on the world stage.

**The students themselves
have told us how to start.**

Canada's education institutions are essential change agents in realizing this culture shift

Other countries are making huge advances in internationalizing their next generation. In the United States there are initiatives such as the 100,000 Strong Initiative with both China and the Americas, as well as the Generation Study Abroad campaign; the European Union's Erasmus Program has been active for more than 25 years supporting learning abroad for over three million students; the Mexican government has developed Proyecta 100.000 and Australia's New Colombo Plan is expected to send more than 10,000 students across the Indo-Pacific region over 3 years.

Unlike these countries, which understand the strategic value of such investments, Canada has not approached the internationalization of its talent pool as a national imperative. It is time to leverage the leadership role of education institutions in a concerted and coordinated effort to give our young leaders the knowledge, skills and global outlook they will need to thrive in our interconnected world.

CBIE's new research findings, based on a survey of some 7,000 students across the country, confirm that financial support for Canadians to undertake learning abroad remains a key barrier: 86% of student respondents said they are interested in participating in a learning abroad experience, but 80% require financial assistance to do so. More must be done to make learning abroad affordable for students.

But money is not the only barrier. Attitudes, institutional policies and practices, effective promotion of existing opportunities and supports, as well as lack of awareness of the important benefits of learning abroad are also significant obstacles which must be addressed in order to facilitate a sustainable culture shift.

These are barriers that CBIE and its member institutions can work together to reduce, reinforcing each other's efforts and building momentum collectively.

Championing the conversation

CBIE invites institutions representing all levels of education, including universities, colleges, polytechnics, cégeps and K-12 school boards, to get involved in the national conversation on learning abroad and become champions for change.

Learning abroad innovation zone

In the learning abroad innovation zone institutions commit to identifying and addressing internal barriers to learning abroad and to participating in peer discussions with institutions across the country that are tackling similar issues and challenges.

In **February-March 2017**, institutions will convene key stakeholders, including students, in a structured dialogue to assess the most important barriers to learning abroad in their particular institutional context.

By **March 31 2017** they will have developed an action plan to address 3-5 key issues that will catalyze institutional change. They will prepare a summary of lessons learned to date for discussion at a special roundtable event and workshops during CBIE's 51st Annual Conference in Halifax.

CBIE will provide a toolkit to support institutions' on-campus process that will include national-level data from CBIE's 2016 Education Abroad Student Survey (institutions that participated in the survey already have data specific to their institution). In addition CBIE will organize webinars and thematic peer discussions throughout the year to allow institutions to discuss challenges and potential approaches to common goals, identify best practices and disseminate supporting research and case studies as needed.

Learning abroad promotion zone

In the learning abroad promotion zone institutions commit to contributing to a national communications campaign to promote the value of learning abroad to students and other stakeholders by creating and disseminating shareable content on the impact and outcomes of learning abroad.

Specifically, institutions will develop a minimum of five new pieces of value added content that will target the key audiences of students, business and political thought leaders, and local community influencers. Types of content might include blogs, interviews with students and alumni, opinion pieces by education leaders, and videos of senior executives that highlight key messages. Institutions will be expected to engage with their internal and external communities and may organize events and panel discussions to raise awareness of the importance of learning abroad.

By **end of February 2017**, each participating institution will have developed a communications action plan outlining planned activities and anticipated timelines with respect to the above-mentioned commitments, such that CBIE can coordinate the national level implementation of the learning abroad campaign.

CBIE will launch the initiative with a webinar outlining how it will support institutions in their communications roll out and provide a toolkit, including templates, facts and figures and key messages, to support content creation. On its website it will promote the initiative on the homepage and create a special landing page to showcase all CBIE and institution created content. CBIE will also regularly disseminate content through its social media and member communications channels. Regular meetings will be organized as needed to provide feedback on challenges and opportunities and share ideas and best practices.

Launching of the national conversation on learning abroad

Institutions that are committed to helping create a culture shift are asked to sign on with CBIE by **end of January 2017**, specifying their level(s) of engagement and identifying a lead contact person for ongoing liaison with CBIE.

A formal reporting back on the progress of the Learning Beyond Borders campaign will be provided at CBIE's 51st conference in Halifax in November 2017.

Working together we can address Canada's global engagement challenge and begin to catalyze a culture shift. Through cooperation, collaboration and networking we invite all of you to lend your voices to the national conversation on learning abroad.

To sign up as a champion for change, the executive head of CBIE member institutions should communicate directly with Karen McBride, CBIE President and CEO, at kmcbride@cbie.ca.

For more information on the national conversation, contact Jacquelyn Hoult, Director, Communications, at jhoult@cbie.ca.



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