



Canadian Bureau for  
International Education



FACULTY MEMBERS AND  
LEARNING ABROAD:  
**A proposed continuum of engagement**

*learning beyond borders*

## INTRODUCING *LEARNING BEYOND BORDERS*

In February 2017, the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), alongside over 90 member institutions, launched *Learning Beyond Borders*—a two-pronged national initiative to promote learning abroad and spark innovative institutional practices.

During the spring and summer of this year, institutions across Canada embarked on the innovation component of the initiative in two steps:

1. Understanding the barriers students face when considering learning abroad opportunities;
2. Identifying which of those barriers are most detrimental to learning abroad for their students, and how they might begin to address them through innovative approaches over the course of the year.

**"The chief challenge for developing and sustaining internationalisation is the engagement of the faculty."**

Michael Stohl,  
*We have met the enemy and he is us*



## FACULTY MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING ABROAD

One strategic opportunity for innovation identified by a critical mass of institutions through this process was enhancing the engagement of faculty members to catalyze learning abroad enthusiasm and experiences amongst their students.

The following resource illuminates the benefits of engaging faculty members to become champions of learning abroad. It outlines key institutional factors which enable faculty engagement and proposes a 5-phase continuum for faculty member engagement. This tool outlines indicators of each engagement phase (from aware to championing), and offers best practice approaches at each juncture to support institutional implementation.

Research inputs:

- CBIE's 2016 Education Abroad Survey of over 7,000 Canadian post-secondary students
- June 26th CBIE-hosted webinar on engaging faculty in learning abroad, with inputs from 11 participating mobility professionals from Canadian colleges and universities
- Additional input and validation from institutional and industry experts

## DEFINING THE OPPORTUNITY

In the literature and through consultation with post-secondary institutions it is apparent that faculty members play a key front-line role when it comes to connecting with students to foster their enthusiasm and catalyze their potential to pursue learning abroad.

The data from the 2016 CBIE Education Abroad Survey of over 7,000 Canadian post-secondary students supports these consultative inputs and provides cues on how faculty members could become effective influencers:

1. Fostering students' *interest* in learning abroad

The influence of faculty members in growing the interest of students is evident, yet modest according to the data. While 86% of students who did not receive faculty member encouragement were interested in learning abroad, the number of students showing interest jumps to 95% when students were encouraged by a faculty member.

2. Growing students' awareness of the *feasibility* of learning abroad

The data show that faculty members' influence to inspire learning abroad by sharing information on opportunities, resources and credit transfer possibilities with students is pronounced. Only 28% of students who had not received faculty encouragement agreed that learning abroad was feasible for them, while 50% of students who had received encouragement agreed that learning abroad was feasible for them.

**"It's really important to have our faculty buy-in and faculty support to actually make this happen because that is the group of people who can action our students at a very practical level."**



Despite the data showing the potential influence of faculty, the 2016 CBIE Education Abroad Survey data reveal that over 40% of Canadian post-secondary students reported having no encouragement to pursue learning abroad, and that only 15% of respondents had been encouraged to pursue learning abroad by their faculty (see Figure 1).

The likelihood of faculty member-to student encouragement for learning abroad varies by major field of study, with students in humanities, environmental studies, hospitality and art and design being most likely to receive encouragement from their faculty members. That said there is a sizeable margin of opportunity for increased engagement across all faculties.

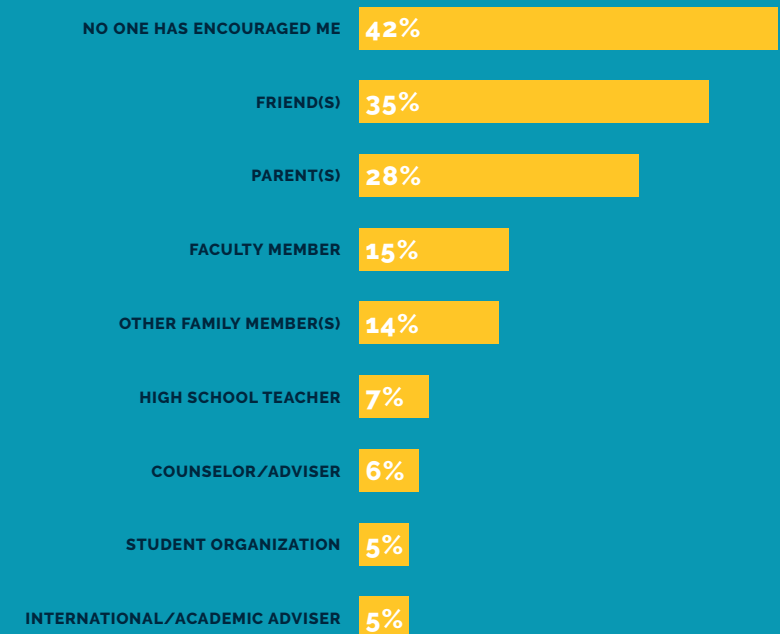
Figure 2

### Yes, a Faculty member has encouraged me to participate in an education abroad program.



Figure 1

### TOP SOURCES OF ENCOURAGEMENT





## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF TRENDS IN FACULTY ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONALISATION

Canadian post-secondary institutions are recognizing the opportunity to foster enthusiasm for international engagement and learning abroad at the faculty level. This includes efforts to grow faculty member competencies to internationalize their curricula and engage internationally in research and partnerships, in addition to championing and delivering learning abroad programming of excellence for students. This shift has begun to manifest through institutional internationalisation strategies, professional development offerings and budgets.

Universities report that funding faculty research experiences abroad, followed by faculty-led programming for students abroad are their second and third top spending priorities when it comes to learning abroad within their institutions (Universities Canada, 2014). Approximately 80% of universities reported that they undertake some effort to support faculty to internationalise their work: In the five years preceding the survey, 42% had offered workshops on internationalising the curriculum, 27% had offered opportunities for faculty to improve their foreign language skills and 21% had offered specific recognition awards for international activities or partnerships. Incentives to internationalise university faculty members' work is widely understood as an important way to foster this time and resource-strapped group's engagement in learning abroad, yet the vast majority (87%) of institutions have no formal guidelines for remuneration or other rewards for learning abroad initiative amongst faculty.

In its most recent internationalisation survey, Colleges and Institutes Canada (2010) found that 35% of respondents' institutions were not facilitating any international mobility of their faculty. In this same survey, "low awareness and commitment of faculty" was the third most important challenge facing colleges and institutes in their effort to increase learning abroad amongst their students. The survey also found that training for faculty regarding international activities is a key starting point for colleges and institutes, "College faculty and staff play an important role in promoting and facilitating international academic mobility for students. In order to be able to do this efficiently, faculty and staff need sufficient international opportunities and skills themselves." The survey showed 76% of institutions were providing opportunities for faculty to grow their own international competencies in this regard.

Cégeps wish to engage their teachers more intentionally to inspire learning abroad, and have increased support to do so during the last decade. Among cégeps mobility priorities, promoting mobility and growing teacher participation was the top priority for 61% of these institutions (Fédération de cégeps, 2014).



## FACULTY ENGAGEMENT BEGINS WITH INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT AND RECOGNITION

For faculty to become engaged, institutions at the highest level must show their commitment to internationalisation and learning abroad for Canadian students. Many institutions have expressed their internationalisation commitment but it often is focused on the recruitment of international students, leasing their curriculum overseas or other revenue generating activities.

With leadership's commitment to learning abroad it becomes possible to include departments in an exploration across the institution to identify priority activities and partnerships, and find alignment with the institutional learning abroad goals.

Senior leadership must also develop its human capital through the hiring of staff and faculty. An institutional commitment through mission and strategy documents can influence the creation of hiring criteria when new faculty are being recruited. Candidates with proven intercultural and international engagement may be identified for their potential to enhance the institutional skill base for international activities.

The foundation of faculty engagement in learning abroad is built upon institutional commitment and practices. For this reason, the faculty engagement continuum is complemented with best institutional practices as well as institutional conditions and resources which support direct engagement of faculty members in learning abroad (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

### AWARENESS

#### Faculty

↑ INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

↑ INSTITUTIONAL ENABLING CONDITIONS

### CONSIDERATION

#### Faculty

↑ INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

↑ INSTITUTIONAL ENABLING CONDITIONS

### ENGAGEMENT

#### Faculty

↑ INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

↑ INSTITUTIONAL ENABLING CONDITIONS

### ACTION

#### Faculty

↑ INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

↑ INSTITUTIONAL ENABLING CONDITIONS

### CHAMPIONING

#### Faculty

↑ INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

↑ INSTITUTIONAL ENABLING CONDITIONS



## INTRODUCING THE FACULTY MEMBER LEARNING ABROAD ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM

CBIE thus proposes a 5-point engagement continuum of faculty in learning abroad. This tool enables practitioners to first identify the extent to which a faculty member engages in learning abroad, and then apply proven, peer-sourced practices to deepen engagement at each level. The continuum will support institutions to advance faculty member engagement progressively, from those who are just becoming aware of learning abroad, to those who champion learning abroad within the classroom, across campus and around the globe. The tool, although designed in a linear fashion may be applied by practitioners in a non-linear way, especially recognizing the ongoing transformations in learning abroad and the incessant need for faculty member professional development. Of note, the continuum leverages the power of peer-to-peer advocacy for learning abroad whereby those faculty members who become champions inspire not only their students but also their faculty member peers at home and abroad.

With the understanding that there are many competing interests for faculty time, our goal is to take a supportive approach with faculty. Ideally, faculty members will discover learning abroad and facilitate the creation of pathway opportunities for students to participate. Then, with deeper knowledge and confidence they will encourage students to participate. In the long run, when faculty have developed confidence in their practice and feel included in building strong partner relationships, they are likely to consider integrating learning abroad into their program offerings and championing relevant offerings to their students.



Figure 4

## FACULTY MEMBER LEARNING ABROAD ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM

	FACULTY MEMBER ATTRIBUTES	INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES	ENABLING CONDITIONS & RESOURCES
<b>AWARENESS</b>	<p>Aware of institution's internationalisation strategy and its key objectives</p> <p>Aware of benefits of learning abroad, as well as barriers students encounter</p> <p>Aware of different types of learning abroad experiences</p>	<p>Circulate <a href="#">CBIE 2016 Special feature on Learning Abroad</a> and <a href="#">CBIE presentation on Learning Beyond Borders Initiative</a></p> <p>Circulate institution's internationalisation strategy (when launched, revised and during onboarding)</p> <p>Communicate the goals of learning abroad and its contribution to student global knowledge and attitudes, school reputation, and future joint ventures and partnerships</p>	<p>Internationalisation strategy is developed and widely available. It includes explicit learning abroad objectives and roles (registrar, international office, faculty, financial services, etc.)</p> <p>Mission and Values of the institution include internationalisation as a key component</p> <p>Resources are dedicated to supporting learning abroad expansion and initiatives</p>
<b>CONSIDERATION</b>	<p>Considers the faculty member role in the different types of learning abroad experiences</p> <p>Considers the benefits for faculty as well as students in being more involved in learning abroad promotion</p> <p>Participates in campus activities that highlight learning abroad activities and models currently in practice</p> <p>Explores examples of learning abroad activities and testimonials</p>	<p>Conduct departmental meetings, one-on-one coaching, open houses, lunch and learns to orient faculty to internationalisation strategy, the work of the international office and learning abroad programming</p> <p>Develop and share resources on categorized learning abroad programming and activities undertaken by the institutions</p> <p>Organize campus-wide learning abroad/internationalisation event to gather, celebrate, share and learn</p>	<p>Institutional leaders champion internationalisation strategy publicly and consistently</p> <p>Institution has internal and/or external web page(s) dedicated to learning abroad and international engagement</p>

**"We are working on an internationalisation strategy. We hope this will help propel the momentum we have established. The bottom line is that the conversation needs to keep filtering down from upper management"**



	FACULTY MEMBER ATTRIBUTES	INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES	ENABLING CONDITIONS & RESOURCES
ENGAGEMENT	<p>Understands credit transfer processes and the value of credit transfer in enabling student learning abroad</p> <p>Aware of learning abroad opportunities and programming specific to their subject matter expertise and involving known international partners in their field</p> <p>Aware of partnership priorities of the institution and able to articulate partnership-building process as well as find more information/support</p> <p>Pursues professional development in internationalisation, engagement and learning abroad</p>	<p>Provide and communicate accessible 'hub' services for faculty to reference and be informed</p> <p>Develop major-specific advising web-pages featuring partners and programs</p> <p>Collaborate with deans to identify and/or develop signature learning abroad programs in each faculty</p> <p>Engage with teaching resource centres to offer professional development including language learning, cross-cultural competency building, partnership development, credit transfer, safety abroad, etc.</p> <p>Develop international learning certificate for faculty</p> <p>Facilitate one-on-one, how-to meetings, shadowing, and formal mentorship between faculty members</p> <p>Offer departmental presentations on how to lead a learning abroad program</p> <p>Facilitate faculty members to join networks of subject matter peers at partner institutions (e.g. web conference introductions)</p>	<p>Partnership development priorities (by geography, theme) are set and processes are standardized</p> <p>Established partnerships and key contacts across institution are accessible and timely</p> <p>Professional development funding as it relates to learning abroad is available</p> <p>Faculty members have institutional encouragement to pursue international sabbatical leaves, participate in international site visits and partnership reviews, undertake short-term international field training or study tours and shadow existing field school offerings.</p> <p>Individual departments are ready to work with partners for transparent credit transfer and recruit students to travel</p>
<p><b>"We have the most success when we get faculty involved in very specific initiatives that they can see how that's going to impact their program and if we get them involved right from the beginning."</b></p>			

	FACULTY MEMBER ATTRIBUTES	INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES	ENABLING CONDITIONS & RESOURCES	
ACTION	<p>Designs and leads programming abroad, following best practices in credit transfer planning</p> <p>Identifies and pursues partnership agreements according to institutional priorities</p>	<p>Provide ongoing support, information and referral before, during and after program and partnership development.</p> <p>Identify areas of development or priority to ensure gaps in learning abroad options are addressed</p> <p>Ensure new partnership selection is strategic and sustainable for learning abroad experiences</p> <p>Develop processes and mechanisms that serve to acknowledge learning abroad work of faculty members</p> <p>Course planning and pathways are developed in all program areas to ensure students can participate in learning abroad options without a delay in graduation</p>	<p>Funding for developing faculty-led programming</p> <p>How-to resources and checklists developed and circulated to guide faculty</p> <p>Structures in place to recognize faculty efforts (awards, course load adjustment, remuneration, etc.)</p> <p>Examples of strong strategic international partnerships are in place</p>	
CHAMPIONING	<p>Welcomes in-class presentations and testimonials about learning abroad</p> <p>Informs and encourages students to consider learning abroad opportunities, funding and credit transfer information</p> <p>Champions sharing of credit transfer information</p> <p>Shares experience in designing and delivering faculty-led learning abroad programming with faculty colleagues</p> <p>Sustains and champions institution's international partnerships</p>	<p>Identify and feature learning abroad champions amongst faculty members in order to reproduce positive learning abroad culture</p>	<p>Communications efforts include featuring faculty excellence in learning abroad programming</p> <p>Ongoing communication with faculty about opportunities, resources and funding for students and for faculty to pursue international experiences (research, partnerships, learning abroad)</p>	
		<p><b>"We have been exploring the issue of how to 'compensate' faculty to lead group study abroad programs to provide them with a stipend for their time. Many faculty members do these programs on their own time with no remuneration. We feel that this will encourage more to get involved to develop and lead such courses."</b></p>		<p><b>"Faculty members are much more easily convinced by other faculty members."</b></p>

## CONCLUSION

This resource has identified and described the opportunity and benefits of supporting faculty to become champions of learning abroad. It introduces an industry-sourced faculty engagement continuum with practical and promising engagement activities for faculty. This tool will support institutions to build a foundation of institutional support and advance faculty member engagement progressively, from those who are just becoming aware of learning abroad, to those who champion learning abroad within the classroom, across campus and around the globe. As a national leader in international education, CBIE will continue to support institutions in engaging faculty members to champion learning abroad.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Photos: Learning Abroad photo contest 2017*



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