

It takes a whole community to tango: International students' quest to become Canadian citizens



Amira El Masri

Session C1: Integrating Newcomer Services: Passing the Baton-
Smooth Transitions from International Student to Newcomer
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International Education, Labour Market and Future Citizens: Prospects and Challenges for Ontario

(2013/14)



Research Team:

Roopa Desai Trilokekar

Saba Safdar

Amira El Masri

Colin Scott

The Global Competition for International Students as Future Immigrants: The role of Ontario universities in translating government policy into institutional practice

(2014/2015)



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Roopa Desai Trilokekar

Saba Safdar

Amira El Masri

Rashelle Litchmore

Melisa Choubak

IS perspective

- **International Education, Labour Market and Future Citizens: Prospects and Challenges for Ontario**
- 2013-14
- **Approach:**
 - ✓ Two Ontario universities
 - ✓ 11 focus groups in total; 48 international students (IS)
 - ✓ IS in their final years of undergraduate study or those who graduated in the last year
 - ✓ Thematic data analysis



Ontario

MINISTRY OF TRAINING,
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



IS perspective: University experience

1. The calibre and quality of education in Ontario is viewed in extremely positive terms.
2. Greater investment in resources and support to IS is necessary, especially beyond the first year.
3. Substantial variation exists among IS with respect to their knowledge and awareness of resources that are available.
4. IS expressed an interest in greater volunteer, co-op and research opportunities as these were viewed as key avenues for networking with Canadian professionals.

IS perspective: Employment experience

1. IS perceived the job market in Ontario as extremely difficult to gain access to and expressed their fear of not finding jobs in their field of study.
2. They voiced concern that IS are not offered the same employment opportunities as domestic students.
3. They reported that employers are often unwilling to support IS applications and/or wait for their processing.
4. IS perceive networking to be the greatest contributing factor to identifying employment opportunities. It is all “...about who you know, not what you know.”

IS perspective: Immigration experience

1. Overall IS found that the student visa, work visa and post-graduation work visa policy and processes were efficient and effective.
2. Students described applying for PR and/or processing of immigration permits as “**head-banging**” given frequent policy changes and poor communication channels between student and bureaucracy.
3. New CIC policy limits the kind of immigration advice that IS offices can give to IS.
4. Ontario is perceived to be not a good place to transition to ‘immigration’ status from ‘international students’ due to a highly competitive job market and more complicated immigration process.

IS perspective: Adjustment & adaptation

1. Feelings of “culture shock,” “home sickness” and feeling “isolated” repeatedly reported by IS.
2. IS highly value their connections with other IS and expressed an interest in opportunities to meet more domestic students with whom they had little interaction.
3. Several participants expressed their discontent in not “get[ting] involved in the culture here” and having greater opportunities for interacting more with “especially Canadians.”
4. Psychological and sociocultural adjustment factors play a critical role in IS labour market integration (i.e., language ability and self-confidence; family support; intercultural contact).

University perspective

The Global Competition for International Students as Future Immigrants: The role of Ontario universities in translating government policy into institutional practice

(2014/2015)

Approach:

- ✓ 11 Ontario universities (14 campuses)
- ✓ Systematic scan of campus web-sites (IS policies and services)
- ✓ Survey (104 respondents)



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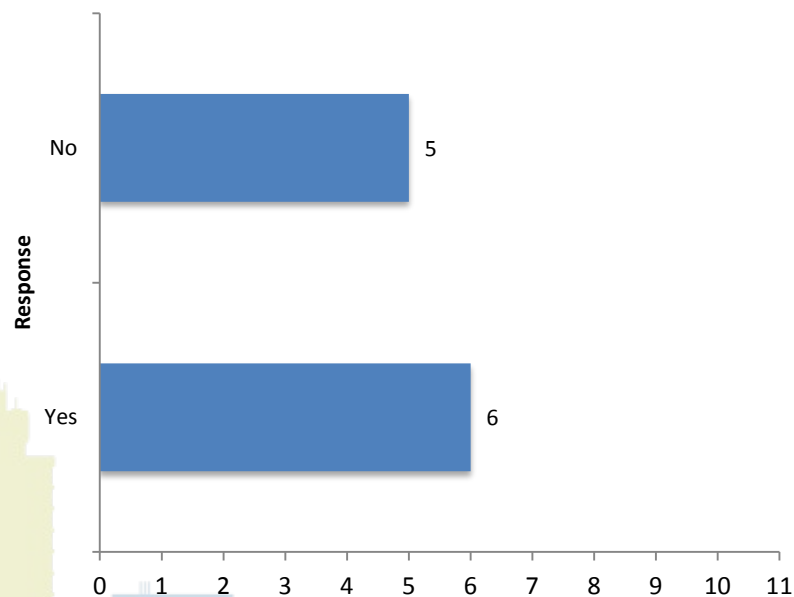


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University perspective: Policies

Ontario universities acknowledge, recognize and respond to federal and provincial policies in their institutional strategies/ policies and practices.

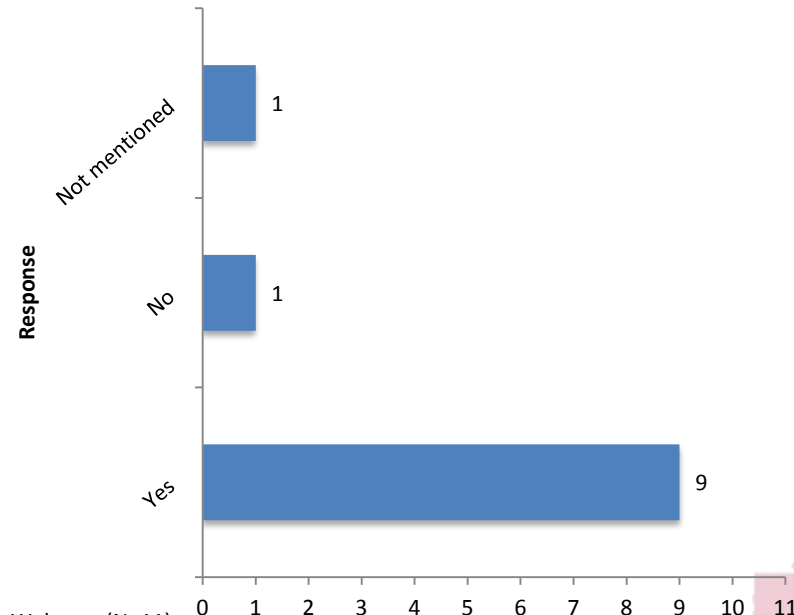
Do University Strategy Documents refer to Federal/Provincial IS Policies?



Webscan (N=11)

Number of Universities

Does the University aim to increase IS Enrolment?



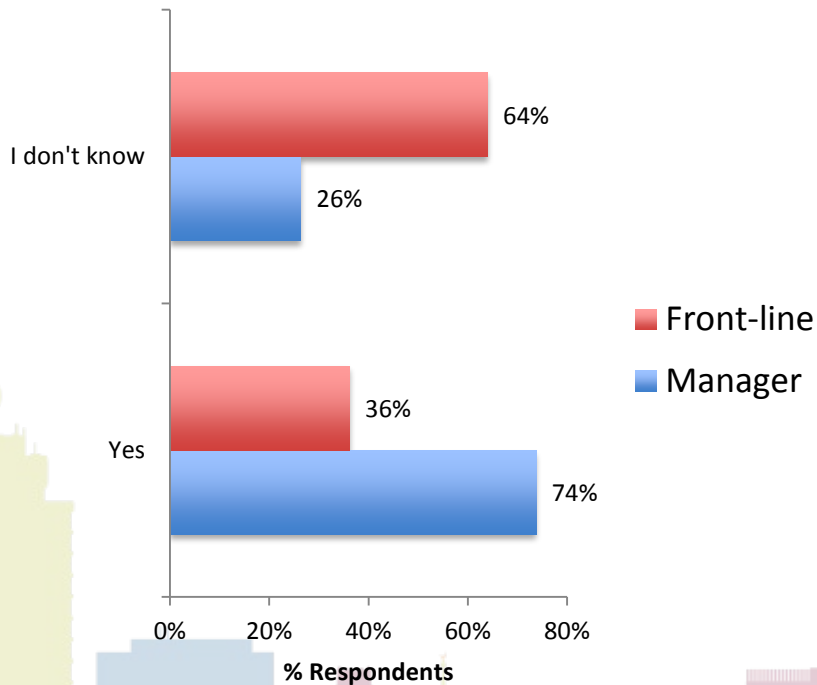
Webscan (N=11)

Number of Universities

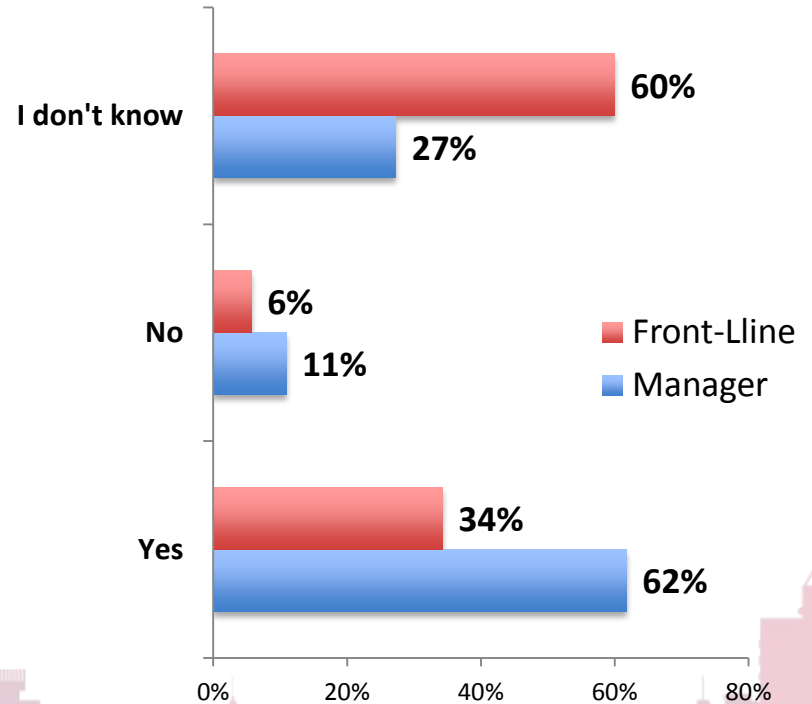
University perspective: Policies

Front-line staff were less aware of changes in government and institutional policies regarding support for IS in last 5 years

Government



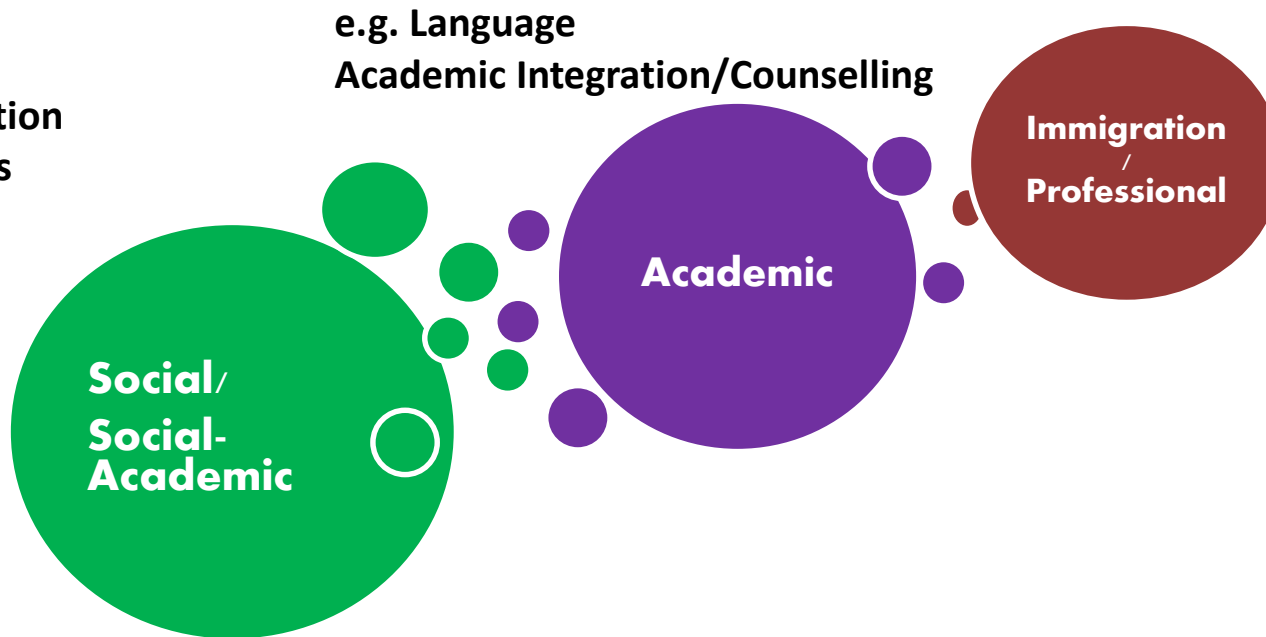
Institutional



University perspective: Services

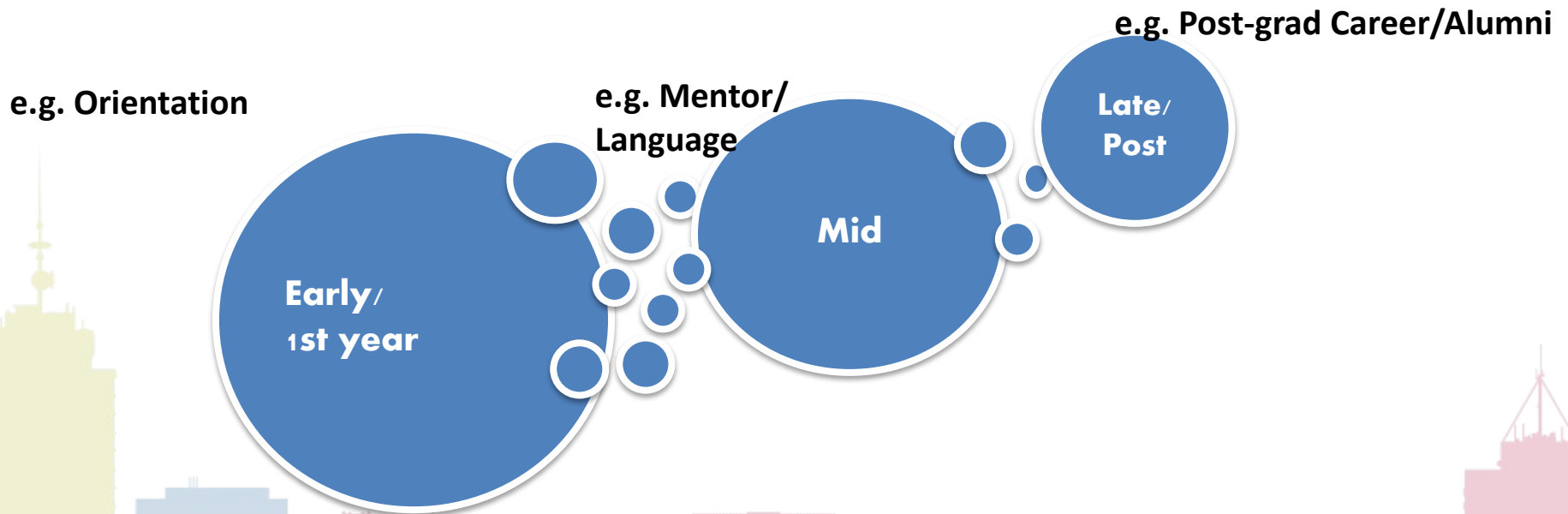
More emphasis on services for social engagement than academic or professional

e.g. Orientation
Social Events
/Programs



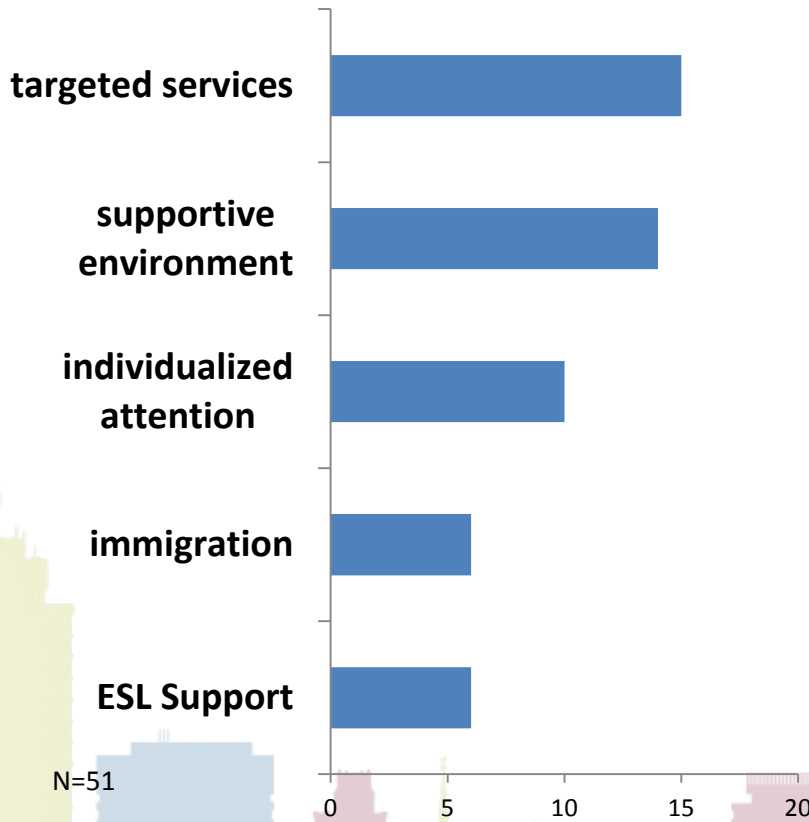
University perspective: Services

More early/1st-year services emphasized in student cycle than later phases

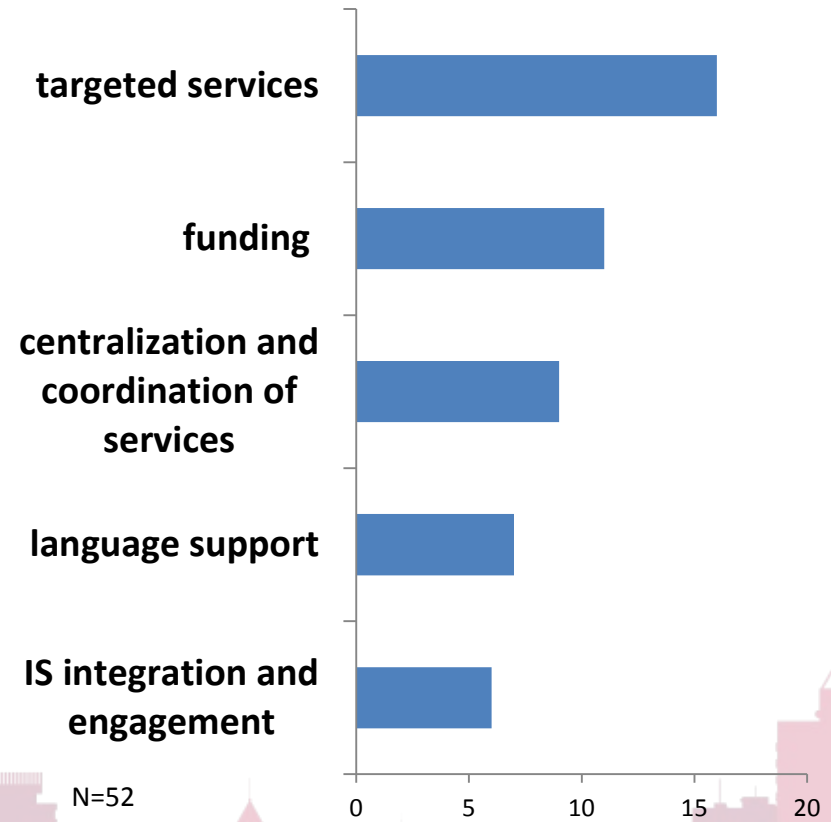


University perspective: Perceived gaps and strengths of services

Strengths



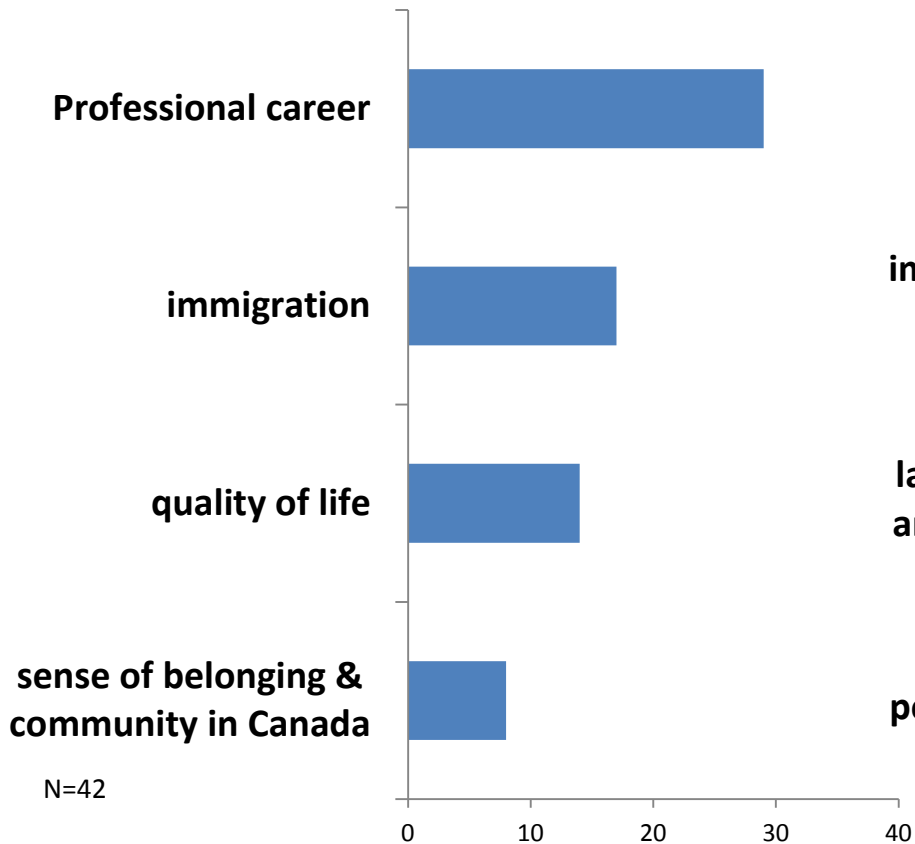
Gaps



University perspective: Immigration

Factors perceived to facilitate/hinder IS transition to PR Status

Facilitate



Hinder



University perspective: Immigration

1. Changing regulations:

- ✓ “Since Bill-C32 Section 91 was passed in 2012, I am no longer able to provide immigration advising to our international student population; there are no staff at the university who are qualified to do so either.”
- ✓ “[the university] provided resources for one of our ISAs to complete the ICCRC training. He is now a registered immigration consultant.”

2. Lack of communication with CIC:

“CIC should make information more accessible and have more consultation with front-line staff when making immigration policy changes”

What can the community do?



What's next?

Social integration:

- ✓ Rethink the type and goals of social activities/programs offered to ensure increased interaction and integration of IS with domestic students.
- ✓ Engage IS throughout whole student life cycle
- ✓ Initiate programs that involve local communities in IS integration (pre, during and post graduation)

Services:

- ✓ Tailor services and programs to IS specific needs
- ✓ Address gaps in services
- ✓ Collaborate across departments – academic and non-academic and coordinate between departments.

What's next?

Employment:

- ✓ Provide meaningful employment (internships/ coops and full-time employment after graduation)
- ✓ Offer tailored career support services after graduation
 - Post secondary institutions
 - Settlement services (CIC and NGOs)
- ✓ Create job databases linking IS with employers
- ✓ Educate employers on IS immigration processes

Immigration Support

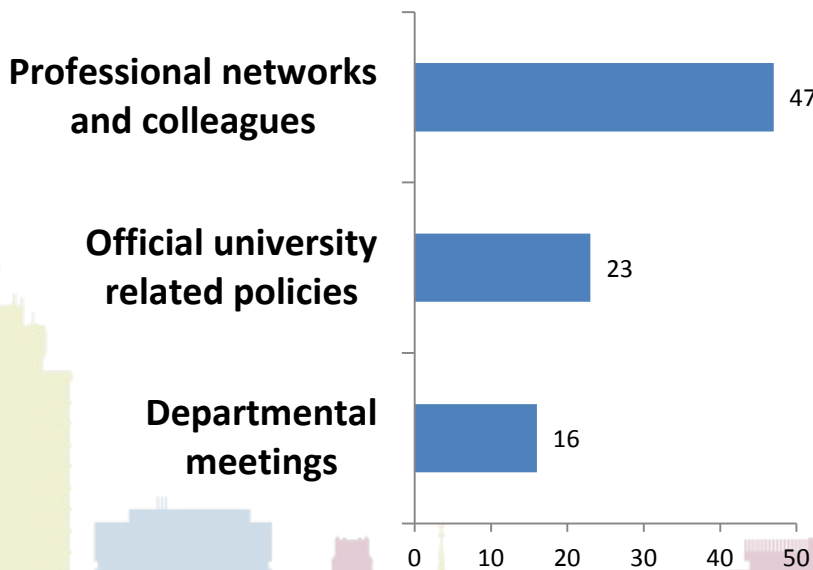
- ✓ Enhance communication between CIC , postsecondary education (PSE) institutions, IS, and employers
- ✓ Ensure more involvement of PSE institutions & IS advisors throughout the policy making process, implementation and evaluation.
- ✓ Create student friendly and up-to-date information tools

What's next? Sharing of best practices:

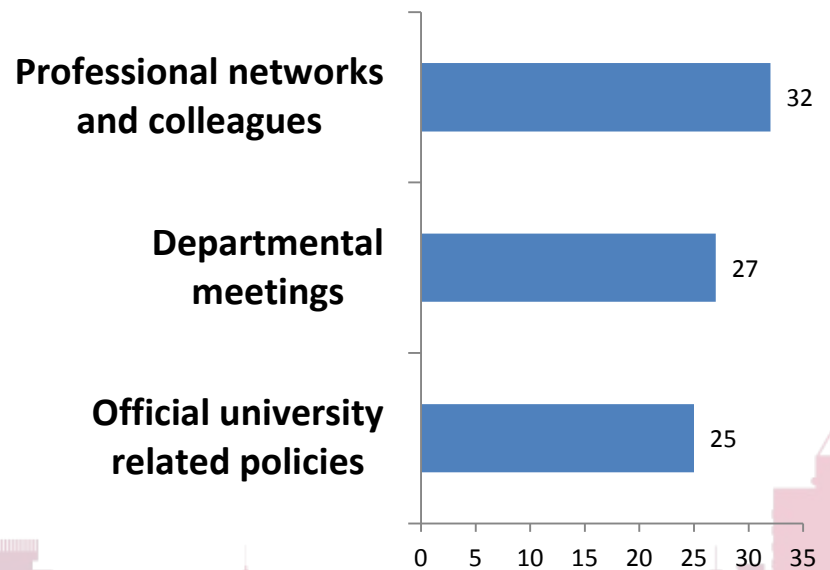
Leverage professional networks to enhance collegial and institutional cooperation, collaboration and sharing of IS best practices.

Sources of information

government policies



university policies



Current Research

International students as "ideal" immigrants: Ontario Employers' perspective

Research Team:

Roopa Desai Trilokekar

Kelly Thomson

Amira El Masri



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THANK YOU!

Contact Information

Amira El Masri

PhD Student – Faculty of Education

York University

Amira_elmasri@edu.yorku.ca

Immigration Policy Context

“Within the next decade, immigration is expected to account for 100 percent of net growth in the workforce, up from 75 percent today”.

(DFATD, 2014, 9)

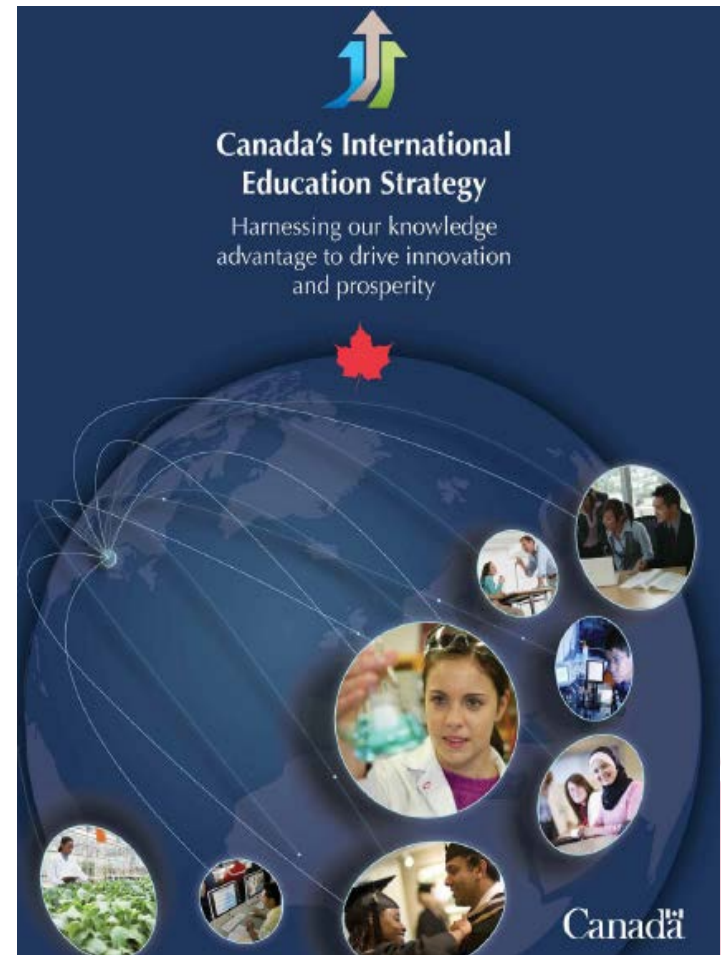
“Canada’s growing shortage of skilled labour” is “becoming desperate, threatening our ability to keep up in a global knowledge based economy” and is a “critical threat to future prosperity”

(DFATD, 2014, 9)

Federal Policy Context

“International students are a future source of skilled labour... are well positioned to immigrate to Canada as they have typically obtained Canadian credentials, are proficient in at least one official language and often have relevant Canadian work experience”

(DFATD, 2014, 12)



Ontario Policy Context

2010 Open Ontario Plan:

Increase the number of international students in Ontario colleges and universities by 50% to a total of 57,000 students in five years by 2015.

43.3% of all IS in Canada choose Ontario as their study destination.

A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy (2012):

“Ontario will face serious worker shortages unless we are able to attract new immigrants” (p.2), so a target is set to “[m]aximize the potential of... international students” through better promoting immigration programs (p.7).

International Education, Labour Market and Future Citizens: Prospects and Challenges for Ontario

Research Questions

- How do IS perceive Ontario universities prepare them for the labour market?
- What are the experiences of IS with the employment process and potential employers in Ontario
- What campus services and programs do IS avail themselves of for purposes of immigration/job search in Ontario? What do they find useful/missing?
- What factors influence the integration of IS into the Ontario labour market/community?

The Global Competition for International Students as Future Immigrants: The role of Ontario universities in translating government policy into institutional practice

Research questions

1. How are provincial and national policies to attract IS as future immigrants acknowledged by Ontario universities and their staff?
2. What are the range and types of programs and services offered for IS by Ontario's universities?
3. What do university staff perceive as factors that facilitate and hinder the transition of IS as future immigrants?



Presents

