



Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance

POLICY PAPER

International Students & Education

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ABOUT OUSA

OUSA represents the interests of over 140,000 professional and undergraduate, full-time and part-time university students at eight student associations across Ontario. Our vision is for an accessible, affordable, accountable, and high quality post-secondary education in Ontario. To achieve this vision we've come together to develop solutions to challenges facing higher education, build broad consensus for our policy options, and lobby government to implement them.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	4
TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID	6
TUITION REGULATION	6
NEEDS-BASED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	7
EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION	9
CAREER ADVISING	9
ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET	10
POST-GRADUATION WORK PERMIT LEGISLATION	11
STUDY PERMIT LEGISLATION	12
HEALTH SERVICES	14
AFFORDABLE COVERAGE	14
STUDENT OVERSIGHT	15
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	17
BEST PRACTICE TRAINING AND SUPPORT	17
CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION	18
EXCHANGE AND CREDIT TRANSFER	23
FINANCIAL BARRIERS	23
CREDIT TRANSFER	24
POLICY STATEMENT	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International education comprises several elements: increased international student access and retention within domestic institutions, growth in numbers of domestic students pursuing opportunities to study abroad, and diversifying institutional administration, staff, faculty, and services to promote internationalization. It is imperative that the Government of Ontario takes steps to enhance each of these areas in order to internationalize its university sector and remain competitive with other jurisdictions around the world.

International students are accessing undergraduate education in Ontario's university sector at a substantial rate. This growth is highly valued by institutions, as the Council for Ontario Universities maintains, "international students contribute significantly to excellence in education and research, bringing a diversity of perspectives, experiences and languages that enhance the university experience for all students."¹ The growth of international students contributes substantially to Ontario university budget revenues as a result of their high, deregulated tuition rates. In fact, the average undergraduate tuition rate for international students in Ontario universities is \$32,278, and while universities receive extra grants for domestic student enrolment numbers, the combined contributions received by the university sector are still below international student tuition revenues.² In short, international students account for approximately 28 percent of the total tuition revenue generated in the Ontario university sector despite only comprising 11 percent of the Ontario undergraduate student population.³

While Ontario's universities continue to be the primary destination for international students studying in Canada, the number of Ontario residents pursuing studies outside of Canada is quite low. In fact, during the 2014-15 academic year, only 2.3 percent of Canadian students studied abroad, with France (14 percent), the United Kingdom (9 percent) and the United States (8 percent) being the most often selected destinations.⁴ It is also noteworthy that despite the presence of various financial aid programs from the federal and provincial governments, Ontarians still cite a lack of finances as their greatest barrier to pursuing education abroad.⁵ As such, despite the fact that Ontario's university sector continues to lead in international student recruitment, it is far behind in terms of its outbound students.

THE PROBLEM

Deregulated tuition rates and lack of financial assistance

International students should have the same predictability in their annual tuition costs as domestic students, and should only be paying for the true cost of their education. However, international tuition is currently unregulated, creating an unstable and unpredictable environment. As such, international students are forced to disproportionately bear the rising cost of university operations, particularly in light of declining provincial funding. Financial aid options should be available for all willing and qualified international students hoping to study in an Ontario undergraduate degree program. Unfortunately, very few financial assistance options are available to international undergraduate students in Ontario.

Inadequate career advising and access to the labour market

International students should benefit from targeted career advising from staff familiar with current federal and provincial work permit policies and legislation. Yet, on-campus career advising is predominantly geared towards domestic students and the guidance provided by career advisors is not

¹ Council of Ontario Universities, "International: Why is it important to attract international students to Ontario universities?" accessed February 28, 2017, <http://cou.on.ca/faq/important-to-attract-international-students/>

² Council of Ontario Finance Officers, "Financial Reports: Table 2 – Revenue, Year 2015/2016," accessed January 30, 2017.

³ Roslyn Kunin and Associates Inc., "Economic impact of international education in Canada – 2016 update," Global Affairs Canada, <http://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2016/index.aspx?lang=eng>

⁴ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "Canada's performance and potential in international education: Canadian students abroad, 2016," http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Study-Abroad_EN.pdf

⁵ Government of Ontario, Study abroad: What you need to know if you plan to study at a college or university outside of Canada. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/study-abroad>. Canadian Bureau for International Education, "Canada's performance and potential in international education: Canadian students abroad, 2016," http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Study-Abroad_EN.pdf

always informed by the most up-to-date and relevant federal and provincial work permit policy or legislation. International students should also have similar employment prospects as their domestic peers and all international students should be able to access the domestic labour market post-graduation. Nevertheless, employers often look globally for skilled foreign workers, rather than looking at Ontario's international student population. International students are also burdened with paying a \$1500 application fee to apply through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program.

Inflexible study and work permits

International students should not have their study permits negatively impacted by academic disruptions, such as strikes. Unfortunately, academic disruptions impact the ability of international students to complete their studies due to the restrictive length of their permits. Government policy should also not restrict Ontario's international student graduates from accessing employment opportunities. However, complicated government policies often make it difficult for international students to gain the credentials required to obtain employment. As a result, many employers opt to avoid hiring international students due to difficulties in following appropriate onboarding processes.

Limited health coverage and student oversight

International students must have access to affordable health services in Ontario for the duration of their studies. However, international students are automatically enrolled into the University Health Insurance Plan, wherein costs are unregulated and increases are unpredictable. These costs can be unaffordable, and excluded service offerings may result in additional fees for international students. Furthermore, students may not choose to seek out medical care if additional costs are unknown. International students should also be represented on the University Health Insurance Plan's steering committee to oversee their health plans and services, but there is currently a lack of international student representation.

Insufficient support services and cultural integration

All international students in Ontario should be adequately supported during their studies through well-resourced offices that provide access to training and support resources. Though all Ontario institutions offer services for international students, the quality of programming varies between institutions, and some institutions do not provide critical services. Rising international enrolment has yet to bring about increased investment in international student support services, leading to negative pressures on service delivery. International students should also be able to access support services that are culturally appropriate and on-campus health services should be welcoming to all international students, regardless of language spoken, ethnicity or religion. Nevertheless, international students often struggle to integrate with domestic students and faculty members due to language barriers, while also being victims of racism. International students who are also from marginalized groups face even more cultural barriers when studying in Canada.

Inaccessible foreign exchange and credit transfer

Ontario's domestic students should be able to take advantage of study abroad opportunities without significant financial barriers. However, domestic students are declining these opportunities due to both real and perceived financial barriers. Students studying abroad through exchange agreements should also receive full recognition of the course credits they have completed. Unfortunately, many credits students earn on exchange do not get recognized or transfer back to their home institutions in Ontario.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulate fair and predictable international tuition

The provincial government should regulate annual in-program international students' tuition rate increases at the same percentage as domestic tuition. Furthermore, the provincial government should mandate that international students' tuition rates be predicated on the cost of their education—as calculated and defined by the Ministry—throughout the length of their degree.

Establish an international tuition set-aside program

The provincial government should mandate that a tuition set-aside – valued at the same percentage as the domestic set-aside – be established from international student tuition in order to provide needs-based

financial aid for international undergraduate students. This would ensure that international students from diverse income backgrounds can access the Ontario university sector.

Improve access to employment and immigration

The Ministry should, through Strategic Mandate Agreements, provide increased funding for career advising tailored towards international students. At the same time, the provincial government should develop tax credits to encourage employers to sponsor international student graduates through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program. For graduates of Ontario universities, specifically, the provincial government should delay the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program's \$1500 application fee until one year following their initial offer of employment.

Create more flexible study and work permits

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to provide international student graduates with easier access to work visas, as well as tie the length of study permits to the length of the degree program selected by students. Furthermore, in the case of an academic disruption, these Ministries should also develop a process wherein study permit extensions are offered to international students in the event of unexpected academic disruptions, and mandate that Ontario universities must refund international students if they are forced to withdraw due to delays caused by labour interruptions, which inhibit the completion of academic terms.

Provide affordable health coverage through OHIP

The provincial government should allow international students to pay a premium, equitable to that of the domestic population, to receive coverage through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan. To achieve affordable and equitable coverage, the provincial government should consult with British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba on best practices for the implementation of provincial health coverage for international students in Ontario. In the interim, international student representation should be included on the University Health Insurance Plan steering committee via mandate from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Develop best practice models for student support services

The Ministry should work with the Council of Ontario Universities to make recommendations regarding the implementation of best practice models for supporting international students. At the same time, the provincial government should provide requisite funding to post-secondary institutions that commit through their Strategic Mandate Agreement to provide a robust offering of international student support services. Similarly, the provincial government should mandate that any institution committed to internationalization through their Strategic Mandate Agreements ensure a proportion of international student tuition is used towards funding support services for international students.

Incentivize cultural integration and internationalization

The provincial government should mandate that institutions that prioritize internationalization within their Strategic Mandate Agreements provide comprehensive, yearlong programming that actively promotes integration between domestic and international students. It should also be mandated to provide cultural and religious sensitivity training for all front-line health workers on campus (such as doctors, psychiatrists, therapists) based on best practice models. The Ministry should also work with the Council of Ontario Universities to make recommendations regarding the implementation of cultural awareness, language support and anti-racism training for students, staff, and faculty members. Finally, the Council of Ontario Universities should administer and collect data on international student retention, success, and supports through a climate survey.

Enhance accessibility and mobility of study abroad opportunities

The provincial government should create an International Experiences Grant to provide needs-based funding for Ontario students participating in for-credit study-abroad experiences. Concurrently, the provincial government should task the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer to improve credit transfer pathways between international institutions and Ontario universities, which will benefit domestic students studying abroad, as well as international students seeking higher education in Ontario.

INTRODUCTION

International education has grabbed the attention of universities, researchers, politicians, policymakers, and businesses alike in recent years. In fact, Universities Canada claims, “learning across borders is part of a 21st century education”; that it develops “the cross-cultural competencies and problem-solving skills that are in high demand from today’s employers.”⁶ International Education comprises several elements: increased international student access and retention within domestic institutions, growth in numbers of domestic students pursuing opportunities to study abroad, and diversifying institutional administration, staff, faculty, and services to promote internationalization.

International students are accessing undergraduate education in Ontario’s university sector at a substantial rate. This growth is highly valued by institutions, as the Council for Ontario Universities maintains “international students contribute significantly to excellence in education and research, bringing a diversity of perspectives, experiences and languages that enhance the university experience for all students.”⁷ Furthermore, universities rely heavily on international student tuition fees to maintain revenue growth. This is particularly noticeable in recent years due to the regulation of domestic student tuition fees and the net decline in real dollars from provincial government funding to institutions per domestic student. This phenomenon is apparent across Canada, yet almost half of the country’s total international student population is housed in Ontario.⁸

The financial and cultural impact of international students on the Ontario university sector has grown over recent years. There are currently over 39,000 international students pursuing an undergraduate degree in Ontario’s universities, which accounts for about 11 percent of the total Ontario undergraduate student population.⁹ Member institutions of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), in particular, have seen a 99 percent increase in international undergraduate student enrolment in the last five years, while the Ontario university average has seen a 70 percent increase within that same time period.¹⁰ The most sizeable growth has been in particular fields of study, such as Math and Physical Sciences (133 percent), as well as Engineering and Applied Sciences (107 percent).¹¹ About one third (34 percent) of the international students that currently study in Canada are from China, followed by students from India (14 percent), South Korea (6 percent), France (6 percent) and Saudi Arabia (4 percent). However, in recent years, certain countries have had notably higher proportions of students choosing to study in Canada than in the past. The three fastest-growing countries of origin, as of 2014-15, are India, Nigeria, and China.¹²

The growth of international students has had a significant impact on the economy. It is estimated that international students contribute approximately \$11.4 billion annually to the Canadian economy through tuition and living expenses.¹³ However, not only do they contribute substantially to the Canadian economy as a whole, but their high, deregulated tuition rates are of particular significance to Ontario university budget revenues. In fact, the average undergraduate tuition rate for international students in Ontario universities is \$32,278 and while universities receive extra grants for domestic student enrolment, the combined contributions are still below international student tuition revenues.¹⁴ This reliance on international students has seen a 134 percent increase in additional revenue from their tuition rates in the last five years, while revenues from domestic tuition and government grants combined has only grown by 8 percent. In short, international students account for approximately 28 percent of the

⁶ Universities Canada, “Priorities: Our Position,” accessed February 28, 2017, <http://www.univcan.ca/priorities/study-abroad/>

⁷ Council of Ontario Universities, “International: Why is it important to attract international students to Ontario universities?” accessed February 28, 2017, <http://cou.on.ca/faq/important-to-attract-international-students/>

⁸ Canadian Bureau for International Education, “Canada’s performance and potential in international education: International students in Canada, 2016,” http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Inbound_EN.pdf

⁹ Council of Ontario Universities, “International Students: Fall full-time headcounts by funding eligibility, 2005-06 – 2014-15,” <http://cou.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/COU-MultiYearData-Table-5-International-Enrolment-by-Level-summary.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Canadian Bureau for International Education, “Canada’s performance and potential in international education: International students in Canada, 2016,” http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Inbound_EN.pdf

¹³ Roslyn Kunin and Associates Inc., “Economic impact of international education in Canada – 2016 update,” Global Affairs Canada, <http://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2016/index.aspx?lang=eng>

¹⁴ Council of Ontario Finance Officers, “Financial Reports: Table 2 – Revenue, Year 2015/2016,” accessed January 30, 2017.

total tuition revenue generated in the Ontario university sector despite only comprising 11 percent of the Ontario undergraduate student population.¹⁵

While Ontario's universities continue to be the primary destination for international students studying in Canada, the number of Ontario residents pursuing studies outside of Canada is quite low. In fact, during the 2014-15 academic year, only 2.3 percent of Canadian students studied abroad, with France (14 percent), the United Kingdom (9 percent) and the United States (8 percent) being the most often selected destinations.¹⁶ It is also noteworthy that despite the presence of various financial aid programs from the federal and provincial governments, Ontarians still cite a lack of finances as their greatest barrier to pursuing education abroad.¹⁷ As such, despite the fact that Ontario's university sector continues to lead in international student recruitment, it is far behind in terms of its outbound students.

The purpose of this policy paper is to capture students' concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability shown by the sector towards international students and international education.

This paper will offer a series of recommendations that are representative of the principles and concerns of Ontario undergraduate students. These recommendations will be aimed at the Ontario government, with a respect for evidence-based policy maintained throughout. This paper will highlight and advocate for the following overarching goals: regulating international tuition rates to ensure fairness and transparency, promoting diverse student support services to achieve intercultural collaboration, including international students into the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) to bolster their wellbeing, and enhancing the capacity for domestic students of all economic backgrounds to pursue studies abroad.

It is our hope that these evidence-based policy recommendations are seriously considered by the provincial government and that we can work together to improve the accessibility, affordability, quality, and accountability of the university sector for students across Ontario.

¹⁵ Roslyn Kunin and Associates Inc., "Economic impact of international education in Canada – 2016 update," Global Affairs Canada, <http://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2016/index.aspx?lang=eng>

¹⁶ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "Canada's performance and potential in international education: Canadian students abroad, 2016," http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Study-Abroad_EN.pdf

¹⁷ Government of Ontario, Study abroad: What you need to know if you plan to study at a college or university outside of Canada. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/study-abroad>. Canadian Bureau for International Education, "Canada's performance and potential in international education: Canadian students abroad, 2016," http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Study-Abroad_EN.pdf

TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID

TUITION REGULATION

Principle: International students should have the same predictability in their annual tuition costs as domestic students.

Principle: International students should only be paying for the true cost of their education.

Concern: International tuition is currently unregulated, and can fluctuate wildly based on market rates, creating an unstable and unpredictable environment.

Concern: International students are forced to disproportionately bear the rising cost of university operations, particularly in light of declining provincial funding.

Recommendation: The provincial government should regulate annual in-program international students' tuition rate increases at the same percentage as domestic tuition.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate that international students' tuition rates be predicated on the cost of their education—as calculated and defined by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development—throughout the length of their degree.

International students' tuition rates were deregulated in 1996,¹⁸ which has led to highly unpredictable year-to-year increases in tuition across Ontario. Despite the fact that domestic student tuition has been tightly regulated in recent years, international tuition remains unregulated. As such, while domestic tuition can only increase by 3 to 5 percent annually, there is no regulation as to how rapidly international tuition may increase year to year.¹⁹ For example, at the University of Waterloo, international tuition for an undergraduate Arts student rose from \$24,345.74 in 2015/2016 to \$26,427.84.²⁰ This is an increase of 8.5 percent over only one year, and does not guarantee that the increase in 2016-17 will be less or equal to the increases from 2015-16. One of the challenges this places on international students is that it becomes virtually impossible for them to predict what the overall cost of their undergraduate education will be in Ontario. This type of unpredictability raises serious questions about the overall transparency and accountability of the Ontario university sector.

According to OUSA's Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey (OPSSS), 49 percent of international students stated that they had difficulty meeting their annual tuition payments.²¹ Unsurprisingly, this financial commitment becomes even more difficult when annual increases are unpredictable. Ontario's international tuition rates are consistently above the Canadian average, outpacing the real cost of educating international students.²² As international students are already paying roughly 120 percent of the cost of their education, unregulated tuition means this percentage will continue to grow.²³ This means that rapidly rising fees are not based on rising costs to educate international students, but the fact that universities are increasingly using international students to subsidize other costs in light of declining provincial funding in proportion to total operating budgets. In short, international students have become

¹⁸ Andrew Boggs, Ontario's university tuition framework: A history and current policy issues, *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 39, no. 1 (2009): 85.

¹⁹ Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, "Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities. 2013-2014 to 2016-2017," (April 2013), <http://www.planningandbudget.utoronto.ca/Assets/Academic+Operations+Digital+Assets/Planning+!26+Budget/2013-14+Guidelines+for+Tuition+Fee+Framework+Implementation.pdf>

²⁰ University of Waterloo, "Tuition Fee Schedule," accessed February 2, 2017, <https://uwaterloo.ca/finance/student-financial-services/tuition-fee-schedules>

²¹ Danielle Pierre, *Affordability: Results from the 2015 Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey*, Research Report, (Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2017).

²² Alex Usher, "More on International Fees in Canadian Universities," *Higher Education Strategy Associates*, (December 14, 2016), <http://higherstrategy.com/more-on-international-fees-in-canadian-universities/>

²³ Ibid.

a new revenue source for Ontario universities as provincial funding has declined, and unregulated tuition only exacerbates this trend.

For these reasons, OUSA believes that international tuition needs to be regulated in cohorts by the provincial government in order to ensure international tuition rates remain predictable and transparent for in-program students. This would maintain a fair cost sharing principle between the government, institutions and international students. This would also mean that international tuition rates are based on the year of admission, and remain regulated for the international students currently enrolled in-program. Such a system will ensure that as each individual student progresses through their degree, their fees will not rapidly increase throughout their program. While first year fees may increase year-over-year above the regulated percentage, students will have a better idea of their tuition once they begin their undergraduate program. Many institutions have already looked into this approach, such as the University of Toronto,²⁴ and Queen's University,²⁵ recognizing the need for predictability and accountability for their students. Tuition would then become regulated for in-program students, and year-to-year increases would be tied to the same regulated percentage allowable for domestic students. Regulation by cohorts will also have no negative influence on the ability of Ontario universities to cover the costs of educating international students since Ontario's fees already surpass costs.²⁶

However, OUSA believes that international students should no longer be forced to unduly bear the rising costs of university operations above their domestic counterparts. When determining the costs of education, a commonly used formula has been to divide a university's operating budget by their full-time equivalent counts.²⁷ Should this be the formula used to identify the cost of education for international students, their tuition rates would decline and then no longer be relied upon to subsidize shortfalls in other areas of universities' operating budgets. Although this would leave many institutions with substantial international student populations at a net loss in terms of operating budgets, students feel that the provincial government could help offset these budget issues. Thus, the provincial government should mandate that international tuition rates be predicated on the cost of their education—as calculated and defined by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)—throughout the length of their degree, while also associating additional funding to ensure institutional budgets are not negatively hindered by this mandate.

NEEDS-BASED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Principle: All willing and qualified international students should be able to access and excel within the Ontario post-secondary education system.

Principle: Diverse opinions and experiences of international students create a more robust discussion for Ontario university classrooms.

Principle: Financial aid options should be available for international students hoping to study in an Ontario undergraduate degree program.

Concern: Very few financial assistance options are available to international undergraduate students in Ontario.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate that a tuition set-aside – valued at the same percentage as the domestic set-aside – be established from international student tuition in order to provide needs-based financial aid for international undergraduate students.

²⁴ University of Toronto, "Tuition Fee Schedule for Publicly-Funded Programs 2013-2014," (April 3, 2013), <http://www.planningandbudget.utoronto.ca/Assets/Academic+Operations+Digital+Assets/Planning+2013-14+Tuition+Fee+Report.pdf>

²⁵ Queen's University, "Report to the Board of Trustees, December 4-5, 2010: International Students' Tuition Fees 2011-2012," (November 2010).

²⁶ Alex Usher, "More on International Fees in Canadian Universities," *Higher Education Strategy Associates*, (December 14, 2016), <http://higherstrategy.com/more-on-international-fees-in-canadian-universities/>

²⁷ Ibid.

The value of internationalization in Ontario's universities has been stressed through the media, government reports, and institutional strategic plans.²⁸ Much of this literature stresses value of the diverse opinions and experiences that international students bring in creating more robust discussion from a variety of viewpoints. The international students that can afford to access Ontario's higher education system, however, hugely inhibit the diversity of voices and experiences that are heard. With Ontario's international tuition rate roughly \$6,000 higher than the national average, the breadth of foreign students that can afford to attend Ontario universities is limited.²⁹ In the 2009 Survey of International Students, conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), it was revealed that less than 10 percent of international students reported that they were from low-income families.³⁰ Limited financial assistance perpetuates this problem. Neither the federal or provincial governments provide any form of non-repayable or interest-free financial assistance options to international undergraduate students, which is why it is important than some other form of needs-based financial assistance is established. This would maintain consistency in financial aid for graduate education, as both the federal and provincial governments provide a variety of scholarships, grants, and bursaries that international students in Masters or PhD programs can access.³¹ Furthermore, while Ontario is akin to the rest of Canada in their lack of financial assistance to international undergraduate students, a policy change could give Ontario's universities a significant competitive advantage in terms of recruitment. This is especially timely given the anticipated rise in international student applications over the next few years.³²

Currently, in order for international students to access financial aid, they must often look to their respective institutions. For example, the University of Waterloo offers entrance scholarships to first year international students.³³ Unlike for domestic students, though, there is no minimum threshold for institutional aid set aside for international students. As such, the amount of institutional aid that universities decide to offer year-over-year can vary. According to the current tuition framework, universities must set aside 10 percent of all new tuition revenue for non-repayable needs-based student grants and bursaries.³⁴ However, this form of financial assistance is part of the province's Student Access Guarantee (SAG), which does not go back to international students, leaving many to incur substantial debt. OUSA recommends that the provincial government mandate that a similar tuition set-aside policy be established from international tuition, of the same percentage as the domestic set-aside, to provide targeted needs-based financial assistance to international students. This would require that any increases to international undergraduate tuition be matched with a proportional increase in institutional financial aid. Students believe that the establishment of an international tuition set-aside can help improve access for lower-income international students.

²⁸ Could U.S. uncertainty mean more foreign-student cash for Canada? *CBC News*, (February 2, 2017), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/canada-foreign-student-cash-us-uncertainty-1.3964602>

²⁹ Alex Usher, "More on International Fees in Canadian Universities," *Higher Education Strategy Associates*, (December 14, 2016), <http://higherstrategy.com/more-on-international-fees-in-canadian-universities/>

³⁰ Canadian Bureau for International Education, *Canada First: 2009 Survey of International Students*, <http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Canada-First-20091.pdf>

³¹ Government of Ontario, "Study in Ontario: international students," accessed February 3, 2017, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/study-ontario-international-students#section-8>

³² "Could U.S. uncertainty mean more foreign-student cash for Canada?" *CBC News*, (February 2, 2017), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/canada-foreign-student-cash-us-uncertainty-1.3964602>

³³ University of Waterloo, "Scholarships," accessed January 31, 2017, <http://uwaterloo.ca/find-out-more/financing/scholarships>

³⁴ Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, "Tuition Fee Framework Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities 2013-14 to 2016-17," (April 2013), <http://www.planningandbudget.utoronto.ca/Assets/Academic+Operations+Digital+Assets/Planning+Budget/2013-14+Guidelines+for+Tuition+Fee+Framework+Implementation.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

CAREER ADVISING

Principle: International students should benefit from targeted career advising from staff familiar with current federal and provincial work permit policies/legislations.

Concern: On-campus career advising is predominantly geared towards domestic students.

Concern: The guidance provided by career advisors is not always informed by the most up-to-date and relevant federal and provincial work permit policy/legislation.

Recommendation: The provincial government should, through Strategic Mandate Agreements, provide increased funding for career advising tailored towards international students.

Students attend university to gain the skills and academic certifications required for employment domestically and internationally. To assist their students in the transition to the labour market, post-secondary institutions offer career advising that provides students with interview tips, job banks, and skills development workshops to prepare them for their employment search. Career advising services tend to focus on domestic students and, consequently, insufficient supports exist for international students planning for their transition into full-time employment after graduation.

Certain institutions, such as Wilfrid Laurier University, are now offering limited support for international students who wish to find work within Canada following graduation.³⁵ These supports have focused on cultural differences and have attempted to account for the shortcomings that many international students have when beginning their job search. While this is a step in the right direction, it is not a solution to the larger issue. A report by Nancy Arthur and Sarah Flynn of the University of Calgary also explored issues affecting international students. In regards to employment, Flynn and Arthur found that of those surveyed, 43 percent had been unable to find employment.³⁶ Despite crafting resumes and cover letters, reviewing job banks, and actively searching for jobs, these students were unable to find employment following their graduation.³⁷ Career advising tailored towards international students would be able to help student such as those surveyed as they attempt to enter the labour force following graduation.

Career advising staff often lack the knowledge required to adequately support international students in their immigration process.³⁸ Lack of expertise with the provincial and federal policies regulating work permits creates informational barriers, which hinder the success of international students as they attempt to transition into their careers. Additionally, career advising staff often lack the knowledge and resources to aid international students in their job search should they wish to leave Canada upon graduation. In short, despite the fact that these students are paying annual fees for career advising, they are not receiving the level of expertise required to be successful. Enrique Chacon, a former international student advisor at the University of Windsor, says that more resources need to be offered to this group of students in order to provide them with a competitive chance in Ontario's job market.³⁹

The benefits that international students bring to communities within Ontario are well known. From the economic impact to the diversification of our workforce and classrooms, international students impact their communities significantly. In order to better service these students and address their issues, the provincial government should incorporate international student career advising programs into strategic mandate agreements. By doing so, universities would be incentivized to provide their international student cohorts with effective career advising opportunities that are specifically tailored to their needs.

³⁵ Interview with Peter Donahue, Associate Director, International Student Support, Wilfrid Laurier University, January 30, 2017.

³⁶ Nancy Arthur & Sarah Flynn, "International Students' Views of Transition to Employment and Immigration," *The Canadian Journal of Career Development* 12, 1 (2003): 31

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jillian Toman, "Long odds for international students to land a job," *CBC News*, April 8, 2016, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/international-students-tuition-jobs-1.3525821>

³⁹ Ibid

This would help institutions provide their international student populations with the support services they require to be successful in both the Ontario and global job markets, as they prepare to transition into life beyond university.

ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Principle: International students should encounter similar employment prospects as their domestic counterparts.

Principle: All international students should be able to access the domestic labour market post-graduation.

Concern: Employers often look globally for skilled foreign workers, rather than looking at Ontario's international student population.

Concern: The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program currently charges international students with employment offers an application fee of \$1500.

Recommendation: The provincial government should develop tax credits to encourage employers to sponsor international student graduates through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program.

Recommendation: For graduates of Ontario universities, the provincial government should delay the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program's \$1500 application fee until one year following their initial offer of employment.

In OUSA's 2015 OPSSS, international students were asked about their plans following graduation. Approximately 70 percent intended to apply for permanent residency within Canada and/or work permanently within the country, while about 30 percent intended to work in Canada prior to returning to their home country.⁴⁰ Additionally, in 2015 the CBIE reported that in addition to academic prestige, international students choose Canada based on the permanent migration and employment opportunities the country provides.⁴¹ With employment a significant factor for international students choosing to apply to Canadian and Ontario universities, and with a substantial number intending to stay and work for an extended period of time following graduation, the government should ensure that international students have similar employment opportunities as their domestic counterparts.

University staff have also identified a gap in employment opportunities for international students when compared to their domestic counterparts. Enrique Chacon, a former international student advisor at the University of Windsor, has stated that international students are not "on the same playing field as domestic students."⁴² Inequitable services and opportunities provide fewer chances for international students to enter and contribute to Ontario's workforce. International students should have an equitable opportunity to enter the job market as their domestic counterparts within Ontario.

Immigration procedures are routinely the most common barrier to international student employment. The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) is an immigration program designed to aid Ontario businesses and employers with hiring skilled workers from foreign countries, and contribute to Ontario's economic development priorities.⁴³ Essentially, the program encourages businesses and employers to nominate skilled workers for permanent residence.

⁴⁰ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, *Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey* (Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2015).

⁴¹ Canadian Bureau for International Education, *A World of Learning: Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education* (Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2015).

⁴² Toman, "Long odds for international students to land a job."

⁴³ Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, "About Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP)," accessed January 24, 2017, http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/pnp/OI_PNPABOUT.html

The OINP creates a direct stream for international students. International students with “approved permanent full-time job offers from an Ontario employer, or from a business making an approved and endorsed investment in Ontario,” would be considered separately from the global population.⁴⁴ Despite faster processing times, barriers still remain. Applications cost international students \$1500 and there is currently a lack of incentives for employers to target students over foreign skilled workers.

To address these concerns, the Ontario government should take two actions. Firstly, the province should delay the collection of the \$1500 application fee for Ontario’s international student graduates until one year following their offer of employment. When students seek full-time employment after graduation, they often carry significant levels of debt. This is especially true for international students because they are subject to substantially higher tuition fees. The OINP’s \$1500 fee adds another financial burden on these students seeking employment in Ontario. By delaying this fee until one year following their offer of employment, recent graduates will be better able to afford the application fee.

Secondly, the government must also develop tax credits to encourage employers to sponsor international students through the OINP. If employers look at their international student population prior to looking globally, Ontario will be able to retain highly skilled workers who have spent at least four years integrating and working within its communities. Employers who choose to sponsor Ontario’s international student graduates over workers from the global community should be provided tax relief due to the role they are playing in retaining talent within Ontario.

POST-GRADUATION WORK PERMIT LEGISLATION

Principle: Government policy should not complicate employment opportunities for Ontario’s international students.

Concern: Complicated government policies often make it difficult for international students to gain the credentials required to obtain employment.

Concern: Many employers opt to avoid hiring international students due to difficulties in following appropriate onboarding processes.

Recommendation: The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to provide international student graduates with easier access to work visas.

A report by the CBIE found that 80 percent of international students were pessimistic about employment prospects and 85 percent reported having some or great difficulty finding employment.⁴⁵ Confusing regulations and employers wishing to avoid complicated processes do not help these statistics, as complicated government policies often deter employers from hiring international students, and lead to international students struggling to complete the application process.⁴⁶

While there have been steps made to relax regulations allowing international students to work during their studies, policies for permanent post-graduation employment remain confusing. The CBIE reported that international students who wish to stay in Canada post-graduation find it challenging to find employment opportunities that will align with the immigration process.⁴⁷ This contrasts with a statement

⁴⁴ Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, “What is the International Student with a Job Offer Stream?” accessed January 24, 2017, http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/pnp/OI_PNPSTUDENTS_JOB.html

⁴⁵ Sheryl Bond, Shaljan Areepattamannil, Gerard Brathwaite-Sturgeon, Elaine Hayle and Majid Malekan, *Northern Lights: International Graduates of Canadian Institutions and the National Workforce*, (Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2007), 23.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁷ Sheryl Bond, Shaljan Areepattamannil, Gerard Brathwaite-Sturgeon, Elaine Hayle and Majid Malekan, *Northern Lights: International Graduates of Canadian Institutions and the National Workforce*, (Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2007), 10.

by former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Monte Solberg, who said international Students should be able to “compete for off-campus jobs on a level-playing field with their Canadian peers.”⁴⁸

In order to address this gap, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration must work with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to provide international graduates with easier access to work visas. Students believe that procedural delays and timely processing should not hinder the international student population’s access to post-graduate employment opportunities.

STUDY PERMIT LEGISLATION

Principle: International students should not have their study permits negatively impacted by academic disruptions, such as strikes.

Concern: Academic disruptions impact the ability of international students to complete their studies due to the restrictive length of student study permits.

Recommendation: The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the Canadian Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to tie the length of study permits to the length of the degree program selected by students.

Recommendation: In the case of an academic disruption, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to develop a process wherein study permit extensions are offered to international students in the event of unexpected academic disruptions.

Recommendation: In the interim, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should mandate that Ontario universities must refund international students if they are forced to withdraw due to delays caused by labour interruptions, which inhibit the completion of academic terms.

Faculty labour interruptions affect all students significantly, however, the impact on international students can be the difference between completing a university degree or having to withdraw from school. Due to the time restrictions associated with international student study permits, a significant disruption in the academic term can result in their expiration, which forces students to reapply, or even leave school if there are significant delays in processing.

When faculty at the University of Manitoba went on strike in 2016, Stefan Aganbi, the international student representative at the University of Manitoba Students’ Union, noted this concern. Aganbi stated, “if the strike goes on for a month and your study permit expires within that deadline, you have to apply for a new one. If you get turned down then you have to go home.”⁴⁹ Additionally, when York University went on strike in 2009, international students were concerned about the uncertainty of their future. Plans for post-graduation were put on hold due to potential delays in the semester.⁵⁰ In cases where international students are facing delays, it is increasingly likely that they will face significant financial burdens to continue their education. This, coupled with personal stress and anxiety, place unnecessary burdens on this student community.

The Ontario government must take action to address this issue. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the Canadian Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to tie the length of study permits to the length of the degree program selected by students. Since many programs are starting to include work-integrated learning opportunities, and the provincial government has made

⁴⁸ Sheryl Bond, Shaljan Areepattamannil, Gerard Brathwaite-Sturgeon, Elaine Hayle and Majid Malekan, *Northern Lights: International Graduates of Canadian Institutions and the National Workforce*, (Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2007), 11.

⁴⁹ “U of M Strike: international students anxious about ongoing strike,” *CBC News*, (November 10, 2016), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/u-of-m-strike-international-students-anxious-about-ongoing-strike-1.3846679>

⁵⁰ Jason Miller, “Foreign student’s fears,” *The Toronto Star*, (January 11, 2009), https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2009/01/11/foreign_students_fears.html

this a priority for the sector, it is essential that study permits be tailored to provide flexibility in program choice. Furthermore, in order for international students to not be affected by faculty strikes, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to develop a process that automatically provides study permit extensions to international students. International students should not be penalized for the inability of universities and their staff to work out agreements that satisfy both parties. By automatically extending study visas, the government will remove significant financial and personal stresses faced by international students.

In the interim, the Ontario government should legislate that universities refund international students who are forced to withdraw from their programs due to strikes. These students pay for full academic terms, yet in some cases are unable to finish due to visa expiration and unforeseen labour interruptions. By forcing students to pay and withdraw without completing their education, universities are penalizing international students for circumstances outside of their control. By refunding students for semesters that they are unable to complete, universities will be able to lift some of the stress and burdens placed on international students during these situations.

HEALTH SERVICES

AFFORDABLE COVERAGE

Principle: International students must have access to affordable health services in Ontario for the duration of their studies.

Concern: University Health Insurance Plan costs are unregulated, meaning increases are unpredictable.

Concern: High University Health Insurance Plan costs are unaffordable, and excluded service offerings may result in additional fees for international students.

Concern: Students may not choose to seek out medical care if additional costs are unknown.

Recommendation: The provincial government should allow international students to pay a premium equitable to the domestic population to receive coverage through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

Recommendation: The provincial government should consult with British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba on best practices for the implementation of provincial health coverage for international students in Ontario.

International students are automatically enrolled into the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP), which is a private health insurance policy provided by Sun Life Financial. Unless international students can prove a designated alternative form of health coverage, they are forced to pay \$612 annually for this service.⁵¹ This cost is variable year-to-year with no regulation, creating financial uncertainty for students pursuing undergraduate studies in Ontario. OUSA believes that students should be able to budget for fees without the worry of an exponential increase. Another point of contention with UHIP is that if an international student enrolls late to an institution, they need to pay a premium retroactive to the first month in which the university term begins.⁵² Below is a table outlining the current rates associated with UHIP for international students and their families.

Cost of UHIP Coverage⁵³

(2016-2017 Academic Year) Rates effective as of September 1, 2016

UHIP Coverage & Costs (based on term registration)	Single Student Rate	Addition of 1 Dependant	Addition of 2 or more Dependents
1 Term (4 months)	\$ 204	+ \$ 204	+ \$ 408
2 Terms (8 months)	\$ 408	+ \$ 408	+ \$ 816
Annual Coverage (12 months)	\$ 612	+ \$ 612	+ \$ 1224

Looking at the provincial health coverage rates for Ontario residents, individuals who have an average income between \$48,600 and \$72,000 pay approximately \$600 into the Ontario Health Insurance Plan

⁵¹ Queen's University International Centre, "UHIP Enrolment Process," accessed January 26, 2017, <http://quic.queensu.ca/international-students-and-staff/health-insurance-and-care/uhip/enroling-in-uhip/>

⁵² University Health Insurance Plan, "University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP): your basic health care solution," accessed January 27, 2017, http://uhip.ca/_uploads/en_uhip_booklet.pdf

⁵³ Queen's University International Centre, "Health Insurance and Care," accessed January 26, 2017, <http://quic.queensu.ca/international-students-and-staff/health-insurance-and-care/uhip/enroling-in-uhip/>

(OHIP) annually.⁵⁴ However, due to student visa restrictions, international students are only allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during the school year and 40 hours per week over the summer.⁵⁵ In other words, international students pay higher health premiums than Ontario residents each year, despite the fact that their tuition rates are already exponentially higher than their domestic counterparts, and their annual earnings are substantially lower.

Another concern is that UHIP does not cover all the services provided by OHIP, including psychiatric care, and international students may need to purchase supplementary health insurance to get additional coverage.⁵⁶ Mental health has been an ever-growing concern for post-secondary students with an increase in awareness and supports across all universities. However, the lack of coverage for international students poses a barrier in financial access to crucial mental health supports. OUSA believes that international students should have the same access to psychiatric support as any other student. Allowing students to enrol into OHIP will provide them with affordable insurance that encompasses a variety of necessary supports to enhance their personal and academic success. The provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are already providing their international students with provincial health coverage, and students feel that it is time for Ontario to follow suit.⁵⁷

Specifically, international students at the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta can enrol into the provincial health care plan after a 3-6 month waiting period once they enter the country. In the interim, international students must enrol into their respective school's health care plan. The provincial government can use this model as a best practice when setting up policy to allow international students to access OHIP. Currently, British Columbia's health coverage, MSP, costs \$75 per month for one adult. While this is higher than UHIP costs, OUSA believes it provides a more comprehensive coverage, including psychiatric care. Providing OHIP coverage to international students can be an effective way to compete with other jurisdictions in bolstering the recruitment of international students, while recognizing that their health and wellness are as important as that of domestic students.

STUDENT OVERSIGHT

Principle: International students should be represented on any committees/governing bodies that oversee their health plans and services.

Concern: The lack of international student representation on the University Health Insurance Plan steering committee means they do not have a say in any changes to premiums and services that affect them.

Recommendation: International student representation should be included on the University Health Insurance Plan steering committee via mandate from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

All costs and services covered under UHIP are determined by their steering committee.⁵⁸ Currently, the lack of representation of international students on the UHIP steering committee creates a divide in

⁵⁴ Government of Ontario, "Ontario Health Premium Rates," accessed February 01, 2017, <https://www.ontario.ca/data/ontario-health-premium-rates>

⁵⁵ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Work off campus," accessed February 01, 2017, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-offcampus.asp>

⁵⁶ University Health Insurance Plan, "Your Coverage: What is covered under UHIP?" accessed January 25, 2017, <http://uhip.ca/your-coverage.aspx#one>

⁵⁷ University of British Columbia, "Student Services: Health Insurance," accessed February 01, 2017, <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/health-insurance>. University of Alberta, "International Student Services," accessed February 01, 2017, <https://www.ualberta.ca/international-student-services/money-insurance-permits-guide/health-insurance>. University of Saskatchewan, "Health Plans," accessed February 01, 2017, <https://students.usask.ca/health/health-plans.php#SaskatchewanHealthCards>. University of Manitoba, "International Centre for Students: Health Insurance," accessed February 01, 2017, <http://umanitoba.ca/international/insurance/index.html>. University of British Columbia, "Medical services plan (MSP) for international students", accessed March 3rd, 2017, <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/health-insurance/health-insurance-details-international/medical-services-plan-msp-international>.

⁵⁸ University Health Insurance Plan, "University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP): your basic health care solution," accessed January 27, 2017, http://uhip.ca/_uploads/en_uhip_booklet.pdf

knowing what international students need. OUSA believes that students affected in the implementation or changes to policy should be included in all aspects of decision making, which is why there should be a representation of international students on the UHIP steering committee. Including students in the processes that govern the services they use would provide a point of view necessary for the successful implementation of UHIP policies or changes. Having student representation would also accurately address health coverage needs and concerns that international students may have. Students believe that when it comes to services that affect them in significant ways, it is only fair to include them in the decision-making processes and ensure that they can provide oversight. The provincial government should mandate that Sun Life Financial include international student representatives and alumni on the UHIP steering committee. While this recommendation is important, it should be the minimum action taken, as the priority needs to remain on the inclusion of international students into OHIP based on a fair premium.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

BEST PRACTICE TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Principle: All international students in Ontario should be adequately supported during their studies through well-resourced offices that provide access to training and support resources.

Concern: Though all Ontario institutions offer services for international students, the quality of programming varies between institutions, and some institutions do not provide critical services.

Concern: Funding models and organizational structures for international student services vary widely between institutions, creating inequities in the quality of services provided.

Concern: Rising international enrolment has not been met by increased investment in international student support services, leading to negative pressures on service delivery.

Recommendation: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development should work with the Council of Ontario Universities to make recommendations regarding the implementation of best practice models for supporting international students.

Recommendation: The provincial government should provide requisite funding to post-secondary institutions that commit through their Strategic Mandate Agreement to provide a robust offering of international student support services.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate that any institution committed to internationalization through their Strategic Mandate Agreements ensure a proportion of international student tuition is used towards funding support services for international students.

Like all students, international students require strong institutional support throughout their studies to ensure that they have the skills needed to succeed in Ontario's post-secondary education system and beyond. International students have specific needs unique from those of domestic students. Without adequate support, international students may find their education to be less satisfactory than expected and experience undue hardships integrating to the university environment, as well as the province of Ontario.⁵⁹ 96 percent of institutions in Ontario part of Universities Canada have identified internationalization as part of their strategic planning with 82 percent of members viewing it as one of their top five priorities.⁶⁰ In Ontario's Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs), one component focuses on "student population" and "this component recognizes the unique institutional missions that improve access, retention and success for underrepresented groups...that link to their institutional strength"; international students are one such group.⁶¹

In addition to regular support services, post-secondary institutions offer international student resource centers. While many of these centers have commonalities, centers are structured differently at each institution and the quality of programming provided varies. Ontario universities offer some degree of orientation, UHIP administration, and English as Second Language programs. However, the provision of services that offer immigration and visa advising differs between institutions. Only some universities offer peer networking, assistance with housing issues, programming on acclimation, and financial literacy for international students.⁶² OUSA recognizes that the diversity of these organizational structures and

⁵⁹ Regina Hechanova-Alampay, Terry A. Beehr, Neil D. Christiansen and Roger K. Van Horn, "Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student sojourners a longitudinal study," *School Psychology International* 23, no. 4 (2002), 458-474.

⁶⁰ Universities Canada, "Internationalization at Canadian Universities: quick facts, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/internationalization-at-canadian-universities-quick-facts/>

⁶¹ University of Toronto. Strategic Mandate Agreement (2014-17). Between: The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities & The University of Toronto [Internet]. Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2012□17; 2014. Available from: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/vision/TorontoAgreement.pdf>

⁶² Canadian Bureau for International Education, *Canada First: 2009 Survey of International Students*, <http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Canada-First-20091.pdf>

funding models for international student services may be justified depending on institution size, international student population, and staffing concerns.

However, OUSA believes that the provincial government should be taking a stronger leadership role in supporting the commitment of universities to internationalization. Students are asking MAESD to work with representatives from the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and other relevant stakeholders such as experts in international student education, including the CBIE. MAESD and COU should be responsible for producing best practice models in order to equalize the quality of support services across Ontario. OUSA believes that a best practice model should consider the following services as essential for international students:⁶³

- Academic counseling,
- Career counseling,
- Cultural adjustment assistance and cultural programming,
- Financial advice,
- Immigration and visa advising,
- Mental health services, and
- English (or French) language supports.

The funding structures and budget for international student services varies widely among Ontario's post-secondary institutions and are not always transparent.⁶⁴ The lack of standardization in funding raises concerns that international students at certain institutions are not receiving adequate support. OUSA advocates that the provincial government provide requisite funding to post-secondary institutions that commit through their SMAs to provide a robust offering of international student support services. Given substantial increases in tuition for international students, the quality and capacity of these services should also improve to reflect the increase in international student enrolment and revenue. Any requirement to dedicate funding to the enhancement of international student services should not be used as a reason for institutions to arbitrarily raise tuition. This method ensures that an improvement in international student services does not drastically affect international student tuition.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Principle: International students should be able to access support services that are culturally appropriate and recognize the unique barriers international students may face.

Principle: On-campus health services should be accessible and welcoming to all international students, regardless of language spoken, ethnicity or religion.

Concern: International students face unique challenges as they traverse through the diverse stages of post-secondary education and potential immigration.

Concern: International students who are also from marginalized groups (i.e. female students; LGBTQ students; racialized students, etc.) may face specific cultural barriers when studying in Canada.

Concern: International students often struggle to integrate with domestic students and faculty members due to language barriers.

⁶³ Chris R. Glass and Christina M. Westmont, "Comparative effects of belongingness on the academic success and cross-cultural interactions of domestic and international students," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 38 (2014): 106-119; Margaret Robertson, Martin Line, Susan Jones and Sharon Thomas, "International students, learning environments and perceptions: A case study using the Delphi technique," *Higher Education Research & Development* 19, no. 1 (2000): 89-102.

⁶⁴ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "A World of Learning: Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education 4th Edition," (CBIE: Ottawa, 2015); Western International, "About Western International - Western University," accessed February 8, 2017, <http://international.uwo.ca/staff/aboutWI.html>; University of Waterloo, "International Student Experience," (April 25, 2012), <https://uwaterloo.ca/international-students/home>; Queens University, "Queens University Budget Report 2016-2017," [http://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca/files/files/reports/budget/Final percent202016-17 percent20Budget percent20Report.pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca/files/files/reports/budget/Final%202016-17%20Budget%20Report.pdf); Wilfrid Laurier University, "Annual Budget Report 2016-2017," (June 23, 2016), https://legacy.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=59&p=1187; McMaster University, "2016-2017 Consolidated Budget," June 9, 2016, https://www.mcmaster.ca/bms/pdf/2016-17_budget.pdf

Concern: International students often experience racism from domestic students and faculty members.

Concern: International students may be less likely to visit on-campus health services due to cultural and religious differences.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate that institutions that prioritize internationalization within their Strategic Mandate Agreements provide comprehensive, yearlong programming that actively promotes integration between domestic and international students.

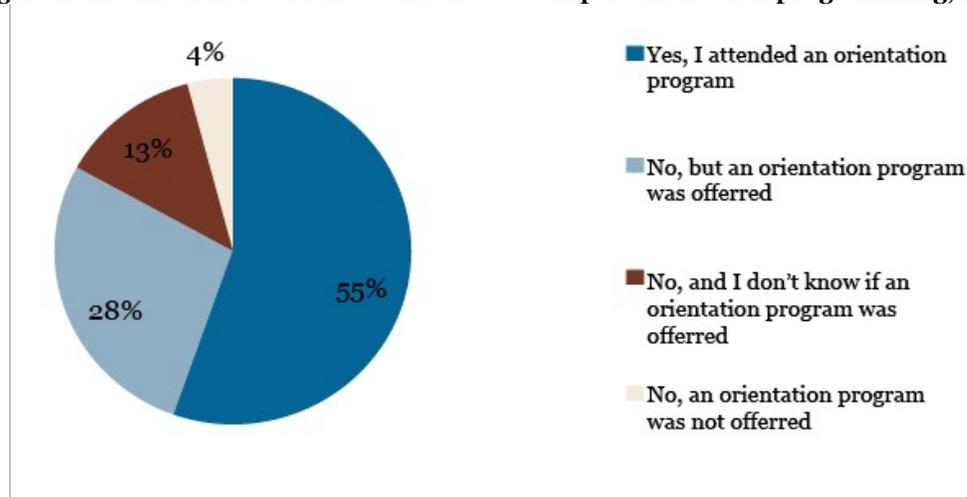
Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate cultural and religious sensitivity training for all front-line health workers on campus (including but not limited to doctors and therapists) based on the best practice model co-developed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Council of Ontario Universities.

Recommendation: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development should work with the Council of Ontario Universities to make recommendations regarding the implementation of best practice models for cultural awareness, language support and anti-racism training for students, staff, and faculty members in order to safeguard the learning experience and promote international education.

Recommendation: The Council of Ontario Universities should administer and collect data on international student retention, success, and supports through a climate survey.

International students should have access to robust, high-quality student orientation programming, as these services provide a proper welcome for international students and allow for cultural integration to take place. Orientation programming also eases the transition to Canadian culture and academic life, informing international students of the various services at their disposal. In OUSA's 2015 OPSSS almost half (45 percent) of international student respondents reported that they did not access orientation programming (either by choice or lack of offering).⁶⁵ The figure below illustrates these findings.

Figure 1: International student attendance to campus orientation programming, n = 318.



When asked about the quality of these programs, 84 percent of those who attended found the orientation either very useful or somewhat useful.⁶⁶ Since these services are proven to be effective, yet under-accessed, it is essential that the Ministry play a stewardship role in ensuring international students access high quality support services. Where gaps exist, the provincial government should ensure that institutions committed to internationalization provide comprehensive programming according to their SMAs.

⁶⁵ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, *Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey* (Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2015).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Information provided during orientation should provide students with applicable knowledge on the available academic supports, career counselling, language support and other high-quality transitional student supports offered by their institution. Orientation programming should also offer relevant information such as obtaining a cell phone plan and living arrangements. Access to such comprehensive orientation programming should be provided to all international students in addition to the type of programming provided to domestic students.

Additionally, institutions committed to internationalization should provide students with yearlong programming to support their integration with domestic students. In CBIE's 2014 survey of more than 3,000 post-secondary international students at 25 universities and colleges across Canada, 56 percent of respondents reported having no Canadian students as friends. As well, 74 percent of respondents said that they would like more opportunities to experience Canadian culture and family life.⁶⁷ International student centres should be used for such programming, in consultation with international students, to create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive environment. Students have cited meeting Canadians through extracurricular activities including interest groups, religious groups, volunteering, employment, and sporting activities. These events should focus on fostering integration by creating inclusive opportunities between both domestic and international students. As some students have found orientation programming too dense, institutions should consider providing orientation-like programming with socials and events to support international students as they adapt to Canadian culture.⁶⁸

All students should have access to services without fear of discrimination based on their background, race, religion or ethnicity. International students arrive in Ontario from diverse cultures and backgrounds. As such, it is important that culturally appropriate student services are available to support international students as they overcome these unique barriers. The most substantial issues international students face is based on adjustment and inadequate support. Culture shock and problems in acclimatization to Canadian culture can result in an additional burden these students face and potentially jeopardize their academic success. Some examples of the challenges incoming international students may face include:⁶⁹

- Unfamiliarity with cultural norms,
- Unfamiliarity with socio-economical and political systems,
- Failure to understand pedagogical differences and academic expectations,
- Insufficient language supports, and
- Fear of religious discrimination.

A survey conducted by the CBIE in 2013 found that 77 percent of international students chose to study in Canada because it offers a society that is tolerant and non-discriminatory. Nonetheless, the survey found that racial discrimination from professors was reported by 15 percent of students, from institutional staff by 17 percent, from other students by 23 percent and in the broader community by 25 percent. Similarly, cultural or religious discrimination from professors was reported by 13 percent of students, from institutional staff by 15 percent, from other students by 21 percent, and the broader community by 21 percent.⁷⁰

Ignorance of cultural norms can consist of not knowing what is common courtesy and misunderstanding body language. Peers and other institutional staff may also react negatively to the behaviours and customs of international students.⁷¹ Due to the difference in socioeconomic and political systems of other nations, international students may be unaware of their own rights and the laws by which they are governed.

⁶⁷ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, *Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey* (Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2015).

⁶⁸ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "The Integration Challenge: Connecting International Students with Their Canadian Peers," (June 2015), <http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CBIE-Research-in-Brief-2-The-Integration-Challenge-EN.pdf>

⁶⁹ Council of Ontario Universities, "COU Submission on the Development of an Internationalization Strategy for Higher Education," (April 7, 2016), <http://cou.on.ca/papers/cou-submission-on-the-development-of-an-internationalization-strategy-for-higher-education/>; Francillia Paul, "Exploring the experiences of Black international Caribbean students at a Canadian university," thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Education, (London, ON: Western University, 2012).

⁷⁰ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "A World of Learning: Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education 2nd Edition," (CBIE: Ottawa, 2013).

⁷¹ Christine J. Yeh and Mayuko Inose, "International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress," *Counseling Psychology Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (2003): 15-28.

Ignorance of the law may lead to potential interactions with the Canadian judicial system and create further barriers that may hinder their success.⁷²

Teaching and learning styles in Canada generally emphasize active participation from students, with participation often comprising a formal portion of the grading metric. Focus groups with international students at Wilfrid Laurier University and McMaster University found this to be a particular concern for students in cultures where their previous assessments had been entirely based on written work or examinations.⁷³ Students also noted that professors and teaching assistants had not been willing to provide academic accommodations (such as modifying presentation style, assessment, and teaching).⁷⁴ These types of pedagogical variances may cause an international student to feel overwhelmed and confused, potentially harming their academic success and persistence.⁷⁵

English (or French) language supports should be made widely available and advertised to international students and instructors. Providing language supports can alleviate potential disadvantages for international students and instructors. Allowing instructors to utilize the same language supports as international students can reduce costs for such programs and help alleviate barriers between domestic students and their international peers and instructors.⁷⁶ OUSA believes that language barriers could hinder international student access to on-campus services due to confusion in understanding policies and processes, such as filing health insurance claims.

OUSA believes ensuring academic success and a positive learning environment for international students requires educating all students, student groups, faculty members, health and wellness staff, and administration about the various cultures and backgrounds of international students. It is not enough to simply promote diversity within post-secondary institutions, but rather an educational culture should be fostered. This demands a greater awareness of the existence of all minority groups on campus, not just visible groups. The consideration of all ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds will ensure all members of Ontario post-secondary institutions are equipped with up-to-date comprehension that aligns with current conditions. As such, a training model should be developed by MAESD, along with the COU, regarding the implementation of best practice models for supporting international students. Students believe that, at minimum, the training should be composed of elements such as:

- Recognizing and being educated on the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of international students;
- Consideration of the intersectionality of other identities from equity groups (i.e. Female students, LGBTQ+ students, etc.);
- Understanding the barriers, especially in language, that international students face; and
- Providing appropriate accommodations for international students.

As the first point of contact, many international students will seek out information and help from their respective universities. However, in an OUSA focus group conducted in 2014, international students indicated they felt uncomfortable in a critical care setting where they were unsure whether a practitioner understood their cultural and religious practices.⁷⁷ OUSA believes that all students should feel comfortable and safe when visiting front-line health workers, which is why providing equity training would aid in the success of international students. Currently, Queen's University has an optional certificate program for staff and faculty, which aims to create a more inclusive and responsive campus, and it is offered through the human resources office and the equity and human rights office. A best practice for this is having a trained counsellor located in Western University's International & Exchange

⁷² Judith Carroll and Janette Ryan, (eds.), *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all*. (Routledge: 2007).

⁷³ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey (Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2015); OUSA Focus Group at Wilfrid Laurier University International Centre, January 16, 2014.

⁷⁴ OUSA Focus Group at Wilfrid Laurier University International Centre, January 16, 2014; McMaster Student Union Focus Group at McMaster University Student Centre, January 2015.

⁷⁵ George Zhou and Zuo Chen Zhang, "A study of the first year international students at a Canadian University: challenges and experiences with social integration," *Comparative and International Education* 43, no. 2 (2014): 7.

⁷⁶ Linda Macdonald, "Communication Support for International Students," *Work Place Review*, nos. 71–82 (October 2013), http://www.cais.ca/uploaded/Professional_Development/2016_National_Leaders_Conference/CAIS_Reading_3.pdf?1458659158867

⁷⁷ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, International Students Focus Groups, 2014.

Student Centre to provide support for international students.⁷⁸ Mandating cultural sensitivity training will allow international advisors, physical health staff and mental health staff at universities to have the same base level of knowledge and understanding to support international students in achieving health and wellbeing during their studies. OUSA believes that consistent training and support across Ontario universities' on-campus health services will enhance the level of care provided to international students. There should be a best practice model highlighting these examples, developed by MAESD and COU, and required for all staff and faculty (at all universities prioritizing international education) upon offer of employment.

There is a growing concern about the rise of mental health issues on campus for all students, but it is of particular concern for international students. Due to struggles with integration and adjustment, international students can face additional pressures, which may contribute to mental health issues. For example, social communication is important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. An interview with international student advisors at Western University revealed that mental health issues amongst international students were common, particularly due to struggles with adjustment and making friends.⁷⁹ Institutions across Ontario must provide access to high-quality mental health supports that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of international students. It is crucial that counsellors possess the ability to understand the cultural perspectives of the international students they serve.⁸⁰ For example, at Western University, counselling is offered to students within a familiar environment. The need for culturally competent professionals is high as international students face unique challenges that can potentially exacerbate mental health concerns.⁸¹

The need for comprehensive support services and programming for international students should be at the heart of any internationalization strategies. In line with the province of Ontario and post-secondary institutions' priorities for internationalization and increasing the number of international students, it is integral that the Ministry ensures that there are robust resources available for these students. As such the COU should administer a climate survey to collect data on the success, retention and support of international students. If the government wishes to retain international students completing their post-secondary education in Ontario, then it is important their policies are aimed towards eliminating the barriers these students face.

⁷⁸ Western University, "Individual Assistance," accessed February 01, 2017, http://www.iesc.uwo.ca/iesc_services/individual_assistance.html

¹⁶ Queen's University, "From Diversity To Inclusion Certificate Program", accessed March 3rd 2017, <http://Www.Queensu.Ca/Equity/Training/Diversity-Inclusion>

⁷⁹ OUSA interview with Rose Aquino and Sandra Pehil of International and Exchange Student Centre, Western University. October 23, 2013.

⁸⁰ Sakurako Chako Mori, "Addressing the mental health concerns of international students," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 78, no. 2 (2000) : 137-144.

⁸¹ Ezra Golberstein, Daniel Eisenberg and Sarah E. Gollust, "Perceived stigma and mental health care seeking," *Psychiatric Services* 59, no. 4 (2008): 392-399.

EXCHANGE AND CREDIT TRANSFERS

FINANCIAL BARRIERS

Principle: Ontario's domestic students should be able to take advantage of international exchange or study abroad opportunities without significant financial barriers.

Concern: Domestic students are declining international exchange and study abroad opportunities due to both real and perceived financial barriers.

Recommendation: The provincial government should create an International Experiences Grant to provide needs-based funding for Ontario students participating in for-credit study-abroad experiences.

The CBIE and Universities Canada have found that almost 90 percent of education-abroad alumni agreed that international experiences contributed to their career achievements, and 80 percent of Canadian hiring managers feel that cross-cultural knowledge is an asset to company competitiveness.⁸² However, despite these findings, only 2.3 percent of full-time undergraduate students had international education experience in 2016.⁸³ In order for Ontario's domestic population to remain competitive and to gain the proven benefits of international experiences, it is clear that domestic students need to access study abroad opportunities more consistently.

The foremost barrier to studying abroad, according to Universities Canada, is the cost.⁸⁴ The 2016 CBIE survey findings also reported that cost is the greatest barrier to education abroad, with 80 percent of students seeking financial assistance to participate.⁸⁵ OUSA believes that this statistic shows the need for the provincial government to provide funding for the additional costs associated with international education.

In addition to tuition, living and travel costs, there are also exchange-specific costs that can add up rapidly. For example, Queen's students must pay a \$200 exchange fee.⁸⁶ Furthermore, for courses taken outside of Queen's University, there is a \$60 fee per letter of permission for each course.⁸⁷ Administration fees vary by institution making students wary of even applying for exchange. Brock, Trent, Western and Queen's all charge between \$25 (Western) and \$200 (Trent) for the application fee, while Western also charges a placement fee of \$125 and Guelph charges a \$200 cancellation fee.⁸⁸ Other barriers to student participation in an international experience include travel costs, study visa applications, lost wages, higher tuition revenues, and a lack of scholarships. Addressing these concerns on a provincial level through an International Experiences Grant will relieve some of these financial burdens and increase participation in exchange programs. This should be a needs-based grant for the purpose of enabling lower-income students to participate in study-abroad opportunities and gain the associated personal, academic, and economic benefits.

⁸² Tim Johnston, "Why do so many Canadian students refuse to study abroad?" *University Affairs*, (May 25, 2016), <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/staying-home-study-abroad/>

⁸³ Canadian Bureau of International Education, "Facts and Figures," accessed February 01, 2017, <http://cbie.ca/media/facts-and-figures/>

⁸⁴ Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, "AUCC Internationalization Survey 2014," accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/internationalization-survey-2014.pdf>

⁸⁵ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "Canada's performance and potential in international education: Canadian students abroad, 2016," http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Study-Abroad_EN.pdf

⁸⁶ Queen's University, "International Programs Office," accessed January 26, 2017, <http://www.queensu.ca/ipo/outgoing-students/exchange/costs-and-funding>

⁸⁷ Queen's University Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, "Queen's Course Substitution Request Form," accessed January 27, 2017, <https://my.engineering.queensu.ca/Current-Students/Registration-Guide/CourseSubstitutionRequest.pdf>

⁸⁸ Wilfrid Laurier University, "Request for Non-Tuition Fee for Laurier International Student Exchange Program," accessed January 27, 2017, https://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/31383/non-tuition_fee_request.pdf

CREDIT TRANSFER

Principle: Students studying abroad through exchange agreements should receive full recognition of the course credits they have completed.

Concern: Many credits students earn on exchange do not get recognized or transfer back to their home institutions in Ontario.

Recommendation: The provincial government should task the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer to improve credit transfer pathways between international institutions and Ontario universities.

One of the most common barriers cited by students who have studied abroad, or who are considering studying abroad, is concern over transferring credits back to their home institutions in Ontario.⁸⁹ This concern is well warranted; according to the CBIE, only 60 percent of Canadian students received credit for the courses they took while studying abroad.⁹⁰ Canadian students considering studying abroad also express concerns about graduating on time.⁹¹ As a tool for either easing or complicating their credit accumulation, credit transfer is clearly an issue that must be addressed if the province is hoping to have more Ontario students receiving international experiences.

Currently, international credit transfer is dealt with on an institution-by-institution basis. For example, in the Faculty of Arts and Science at Queen's University, if a student wishes to take courses at a foreign institution, they must request an International Letter of Permission, accompanied by a \$60 fee.⁹² The credits that are permissible are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, meaning there is no guarantee all requested credits will be accepted, and there is minimal consistency between the credits that are recognized across the province.

The Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) is a provincial body that has been tasked with improving credit transfer pathways among the 45 public postsecondary institutions in Ontario.⁹³ OUSA recommends that the provincial government task ONCAT to expand their scope to include credit transfer pathways between Ontario universities and international institutions. This would also make it easier for international students who choose to transfer to an Ontario institution partway through their degree. If their credits could transfer easily to Ontario institutions, Ontario universities would become a more competitive and attractive option for these students. When students are able to receive full recognition of the credits they take while abroad, these experiences will become more financially worthwhile, and mitigate students' concerns over graduating on time.

⁸⁹ Canadian Bureau for International Education, *A World of Learning: Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education*, (CBIE: Ottawa, 2015).

⁹⁰ Canadian Bureau for International Education, "Canada's performance and potential in international education: International students in Canada, 2016," http://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Infographic-Inbound_EN.pdf

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Queen's University Faculty of Arts and Science, "Letter of Permission," accessed February 2, 2017, <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/students-at-queens/letter-of-permission>

⁹³ Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer, "About," accessed February 2, 2017, http://www.oncat.ca/index_en.php?page=about

POLICY STATEMENT

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & EDUCATION

Whereas: International students should have the same predictability in their annual tuition costs as domestic students.

Whereas: International students should only be paying for the true cost of their education.

Whereas: All willing and qualified international students should be able to access and excel within the Ontario post-secondary education system.

Whereas: Diverse opinions and experiences of international students create a more robust discussion for Ontario university classrooms.

Whereas: Financial aid options should be available for international students hoping to study in an Ontario undergraduate degree program.

Whereas: International students should benefit from targeted career advising from staff familiar with current federal and provincial work permit policies/legislations.

Whereas: International students should encounter similar employment prospects as their domestic counterparts.

Whereas: All international students should be able to access the domestic labour market post-graduation.

Whereas: Government policy should not complicate employment opportunities for Ontario's international students.

Whereas: International students should not have their study permits negatively impacted by academic disruptions, such as strikes.

Whereas: International students must have access to affordable health services in Ontario for the duration of their studies.

Whereas: International students should be represented on any committees/governing bodies that oversee their health plans and services.

Whereas: All international students in Ontario should be adequately supported during their studies through well-resourced offices that provide access to training and support resources.

Whereas: International students should be able to access support services that are culturally appropriate and recognize the unique barriers international students may face.

Whereas: On-campus health services should be accessible and welcoming to all international students, regardless of language spoken, ethnicity or religion.

Whereas: Ontario's domestic students should be able to take advantage of international exchange or study abroad opportunities without significant financial barriers.

Whereas: Students studying abroad through exchange agreements should receive full recognition of the course credits they have completed.

Be it resolved that: The provincial government should regulate annual in-program international students' tuition rate increases at the same percentage as domestic tuition.

Be it further resolved that: The provincial government should mandate that international students' tuition rates be predicated on the cost of their education—as calculated and defined by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development—throughout the length of their degree.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate that a tuition set-aside – valued at the same percentage as the domestic set-aside – be established from international student tuition in order to provide needs-based financial aid for international undergraduate students.

BIFRT: The provincial government should, through Strategic Mandate Agreements, provide increased funding for career advising tailored towards international students.

BIFRT: The provincial government should develop tax credits to encourage employers to sponsor international student graduates through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program.

BIFRT: For graduates of Ontario universities, the provincial government should offset the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program's \$1500 application fee until one year following their initial offer of employment.

BIFRT: The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should work with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to provide international student graduates with easier access to work visas.

BIFRT: In the interim, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should mandate that Ontario universities must refund international students if they are forced to withdraw due to delays caused by labour interruptions, which inhibit the completion of academic terms.

BIFRT: The provincial government should allow international students to pay a premium equitable to the domestic population to receive coverage through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

BIFRT: The provincial government should consult with British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba on best practices for the implementation of provincial health coverage for international students in Ontario.

BIFRT: International student representation should be included on the University Health Insurance Plan steering committee via mandate from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

BIFRT: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development should work with the Council of Ontario Universities to make recommendations regarding the implementation of best practice models for supporting international students.

BIFRT: The provincial government should provide requisite funding to post-secondary institutions that commit through their Strategic Mandate Agreement to provide a robust offering of international student support services.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate that any institution committed to internationalization through their Strategic Mandate Agreements ensure a proportion of international student tuition is used towards funding support services for international students.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate that institutions that prioritize internationalization within their Strategic Mandate Agreements provide comprehensive, yearlong programming that actively promotes integration between domestic and international students.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate cultural and religious sensitivity training for all front-line health workers on campus (including but not limited to doctors and therapists) based on the

best practice model co-developed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Council of Ontario Universities.

BIFRT: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development should work with the Council of Ontario Universities to make recommendations regarding the implementation of best practice models for cultural awareness, language support and anti-racism training for students, staff, and faculty members in order to safeguard the learning experience and promote international education.

BIFRT: The Council of Ontario Universities should administer and collect data on international student retention, success, and supports through a climate survey.

BIFRT: The provincial government should create an International Experiences Grant to provide needs-based funding for Ontario students participating in for-credit study-abroad experiences.

BIFRT: The provincial government should task the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer to improve credit transfer pathways between international institutions and Ontario universities.