The Benefits of International Education in Smaller Cities and Communities: Three Case Studies

Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)
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Your Panel Today

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Okanagan College

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Vancouver Island University
Presentation Format

International Education in BC: An Overview

Case Study 1: University of Northern British Columbia

Case Study 2: Okanagan College

Case Study 3: Vancouver Island University

Discussion
BC Council for International Education (BCCIE)

Who Are We?

Non-Government Society funded by province of British Columbia under the Society Act

Senior Level Board including 3 Deputy Ministers, university and college presidents, public school superintendents, representatives from private sector

Take provincial lead on market support, research, and internationalization initiatives
BC Council for International Education (BCCIE)

Strategic Goals

Coordinated leadership for BC’s IE sector
Market BC as destination of choice
Training and service to stakeholders
Cultivate Excellence in internationalization
Our Stakeholders

- Public K-12 school districts
- Independent K-12 schools
- EQA-designated language schools
- Public post-secondary institutions
- EQA-designated private post-secondary institutions
- EQA-designated private career colleges
International education is a $2.2 trillion industry worldwide (Merrill Lynch), larger than any resource industry.

Canada’s market share decreasing as overall flows increase.

Key competitors include Australia, UK, USA.

Competition is increasing: China, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and others becoming destination hubs.

Canada still lacks a coordinated national strategy and is relatively underfunded.
International Education in BC

94,000 international students in BC (2010)

39,000 post-secondary
12,000 K-12
43,000 language

Top 10 countries: China, Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Mexico, Taiwan, USA, Germany, Switzerland (2010)
Economic Impact to BC

Contributes $1.8 billion to BC annually (2010)

Creates over 21,450 direct jobs in province (2010)

More than $66 million in direct government revenue generated annually (2010)

Fifth largest economic sector for British Columbia
International Students by Region

Mainland/Southwest  78 100
Vancouver Island/Coast  8 300
Southern Interior  6 700
Northern BC  900
# Economic Impact to BC's Regions

*All figures include direct and indirect impact*

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>GDP</th>
<th>Tax</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mainland/ Southwest</td>
<td>$1.2 billion</td>
<td>$65 million</td>
<td>21 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island</td>
<td>$156 million</td>
<td>$8 million</td>
<td>2 450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Interior</td>
<td>$168 million</td>
<td>$8.5 million</td>
<td>2 530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern BC</td>
<td>$20.5 million</td>
<td>$1.1 million</td>
<td>310</td>
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Recent Developments

- International education key strategic plank of *BC Jobs Plan*
- Province committed to 50% increase in student numbers by 2015
- International Education Project Council
- BC international education strategy to be released in 2012
- Major focus on building and supporting regional capacity
International Education in Smaller Cities and Communities: Three Case Studies

1. University of Northern British Columbia: Prince George
University of Northern British Columbia

- 4200 students
- 12% of population is international (approx. 500 students)
- 60 Undergraduate Programs & 22 Graduate Programs
- Research focuses on the social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues of the North
- National and international reputation
UNBC History

- The Origins – 1987
- The Campaign - 1988
- Announcement - 1990
- Opened - 1994
UNBC Region/Campuses

Main Campus
- Prince George

Regional Campuses
- Quesnel
- Terrace
- Fort St John
Northern BC Region

- 500,000 square kilometers, covers half of the province.
- Larger than California and Japan and twice the size of the United Kingdom.
- Mecca for vast wilderness, abundant wildlife and rich First Nations culture.
- Population approximately 400,000.
Northern BC Region Cont…

• Growth in population is driven by migration.
• Resource-based and knowledge-based economy.
• Manufacturing, Construction, Forestry, and Mining are key players in regional economy.
Prince George Education Economy

- 2005 Study on Impact of CNC/UNBC in Prince George.
- 721.4 million of total economic impact.
- 73.4 million in student spending.
Regional Collaborations/Partnerships

Initiatives Prince George

• Formal economic partnerships with UNBC:
  ➢ Northern Bioenergy Partnership
  ➢ Minerals North
• Promotes UNBC/Northern BC internationally. Collaborative visit activities.
• Organizes “Team Northern BC” Mission activities.
Northern Mayors

• International Student Welcome events.
• Sister City partnerships – 12+ international twinning arrangements.
• Collaborative international agreements that support both city activities and UNBC.
Northern School Districts – 57 & 91

- Offshore Affiliate Schools
- Academic Achievers
- UNBC Scholars
Northern Colleges

• College of New Caledonia and Northern Lights College
• Joint offers of admission/recruitment.
• Collaborative activities to welcome/transition new students.
Impacts/Benefits

- Importance of Collaboration
- Increased access
- Improved contacts/partners that have a deeper/wider breadth
- Connection to location communities – welcoming environments
International Education in Smaller Cities and Communities: Three Case Studies

2. Okanagan College: Kelowna
Okanagan College

• **College Snapshot:**
  – 5,300 FTEs, 450 international FTEs (8.5%)
  – International Head Count = 1,200/yr
  – Typically 40 – 45 source countries
  – Majority of international students at Kelowna Campus, with remainder in Vernon
• **Community Snapshot:**
  - Kelowna pop’n = 121,000 (2009)¹
  - B.C. has lowest fertility rate in Canada, and Kelowna the lowest in the Province²
  - While 20% of the Canadian population will be over age 65 by 2030, the Okanagan Valley is already there (the Central Okanagan has more seniors than children)³
  - The net population growth projection from 2009 to 2036 indicates that *all growth* in the region will result from positive net migration⁴
• Community Snapshot (continued):
  – The Provincial and Regional governments all speak to the importance of attracting and retaining international students as a way of meeting future workforce requirements through immigration⁵
  – The Central Okanagan has a much lower proportion of visible minorities (5%) than B.C. overall (25%)⁶
Case Study: Inter-Provincial (IP) Refresher Program

• “Operation 120” – intended to recruit and train 120 foreign works to help fill projected skilled labour shortages in B.C.
• Job areas targeted included:
  • Cooks
  • Carpenters
  • Commercial drivers
  • Auto mechanics, auto body technicians, auto painters
Case Study: Inter-Provincial (IP) Refresher Program

• Partnered with ITA (Industrial Training Authority), CIC (Citizenship & Immigration), and JML (Jamaican Ministry of Labour)

• Plan was to recruit students with minimum 5 years professional experience, then provide training (theory and work experience) and then write B.C. Red Seal Certification exam
Case Study: Inter-Provincial (IP) Refresher Program

• Program Results:
  – mixed success, wide range of results
  – “timing is everything”
  – significant learning curve for all
  – employer satisfaction generally high
  – student expectations and needs very high
  – student satisfaction covered the spectrum
  – community support also quite varied
Strategies for Regional Collaboration

- Employers facing prospects of skilled labour shortages
- Regional Economic Development Offices
- Connections to Employers – local, regional, provincial
- Government at all levels: municipal, regional, provincial, national, and international
Identifying Local Champions

• Who has a vested interest in supporting you?
• Who has the most to gain, and how can you engage their support?
• Who might feel threatened, and how can you mitigate their fears?
Community Engagement

• Local immigrant serving organizations (ISOs)
• Community support groups: churches, service clubs and organizations
• Homestay hosts
• Internal community (other departments, faculty, interested individuals)
Creating Welcoming Environments

• Good Practices:
  – Preparing the community (external & internal)
  – Cultural liaison support
  – Extended orientation
Key Lessons Learned

• Always remember and consider the human factor – “aspirations, hopes, and dreams”
• Do not under-estimate the importance of managing expectations
• Prepare for the inevitable “reality check”, and have a plan for coaching and supporting students through the process
• Keep a balanced perspective – not all good, not all bad!
International Education in Smaller Cities and Communities: Three Case Studies

3. Vancouver Island University: Nanaimo
Vancouver Island University: overview

- Total FTEs: 8544; International FTEs: 1148 (13.4%)
- Headcount: 18,806 (total); 1686 (international)
- 75 source countries
- Virtually all international students at the Nanaimo campus
- Faculty of International Education co-ordinates all international programs and support services
Nanaimo: overview

- Regional District of Nanaimo population: 138,631 (2006 census)
- Projected growth rate 2010-2020: 17%
- Over 65s – fastest growing sector 1986-2006
- Visible minorities: 6% (25% BC average)
- 258 new immigrants in 2010
Focus Group Themes
1. Nanaimo as a place to live
Students’ responses

- Attracted to the natural environment
- Small city, but ‘big enough’
- Poor public transportation
- Food is expensive
- Few activities in the winter
Focus Group Themes
1. Nanaimo as a place to live
Professionals’ responses

• Recognize transportation and lack of entertainment challenges
• Stress benefits of hosting international students:
  – Economic
  – Employment
  – Cultural awareness for community
  – Preparation for domestic students
• Recognize need to educate local population
Focus Group Themes
2. Supports and Services
Students’ responses

- Limited English is a barrier
- Friendships are so important
- Community organizations can be helpful
- Most seek support from the VIU Centre for International Education
Focus Group Themes
2. Supports and Services
Professionals’ responses

- Need for broader range of support services
- Need for cultural awareness/sensitivity training for service-oriented businesses
- Need to provide clear information, in many languages, about services
- Involve New Canadians in providing supports for international students
- Need to recognize differing cultural needs
Focus Group Themes
3. Campus-Community Connections
Students’ responses

• Need more knowledge about local community and services available
• Need more opportunities to engage with local community, especially with Canadians
• Differing needs – some students seek local community support, others rely on friends
Focus Group Themes
3. Campus-Community Connections
Professionals’ responses

- Need to bring campus and community closer together
- Provide a forum for international students to exchange ideas
- Match labour market needs with graduates’ skills
- Encourage collaboration between diverse groups which interact with international students
Case Study #3
Vancouver Island University/Nanaimo
Take-away ideas

• The little things are really important
• International students are all individuals
• International students like smaller cities for similar reasons
• We’re missing out on the potential for creating ‘global communities’
For Discussion

How have you worked in collaboration to build capacity in your own community?

What supports have you developed? What supports are still needed? What challenges have you faced?

How can we better ‘tell the story’ of international education within our communities?
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