



February 28, 2018

COMMUNIQUÉ

International Students Contribute Significantly to the Atlantic Economy

International students studying at Atlantic universities and community colleges contribute \$795 million per year to the Atlantic economy, according to the report, *The Economic Impact of Post-Secondary International Students in Atlantic Canada 2018*. The report was prepared by Gardner-Pinfold for the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), and is available on the CAMET website at https://www.camet-camef.ca/images/2018-02-20_EconomicImpactofInternationalStudents-WEB.PDF.

The ministers of education and early childhood development, post-secondary education, and training noted the following economic data emerging from the report:

- \$795 million in output sales;
- \$34,188 in average annual spending per international student in Atlantic Canada;
- \$495 million in gross domestic product;
- \$329 million worth of income (salaries and wages);
- 6,731 fulltime job equivalents;
- \$22 million in tax revenues for the Atlantic provinces and the federal government;
- the program of study, the Canadian reputation, and the cost of education are the major reasons why international students were attracted to Atlantic Canada to study; and
- 65% of international students hope to stay and work in Atlantic Canada upon graduation.

The report is an update and expansion of a similar study conducted in 2010 for CAMET. During this time, international students in Atlantic Canada increased significantly, from 7,388 to 13,968, which represents a 78% increase. The total economic impact also increased from \$565 million to \$795 million per year during this time, while the average annual spending of international students in Atlantic Canada rose from \$29,249 to \$34,188.

The report also contains valuable information on students' origins, field of study, attraction, retention, plans after graduation, work, and their overall student experiences. This wealth of information will assist and guide provincial governments, universities, and community colleges to design and implement support programs aimed at improving recruitment and retention of international students.

The Atlantic ministers of education and early childhood development, post-secondary education, and training view the significant contribution of international students in Atlantic Canada as an excellent opportunity to continue efforts to increase international student recruitment and retention. The study also reveals that international students have a strong desire to stay in Atlantic Canada upon graduation, which could help address the region's demographic challenges by retaining highly qualified graduates and helping build a skilled workforce that contributes to the economy. The increase in international students studying in Atlantic Canada, and their desire to stay and work in the region, will help achieve the goals outlined in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program as part of the Atlantic Growth Strategy launched by the Council of Atlantic Premiers and the federal government in July 2016.

Ministers are extremely delighted with the results of the study. The increase in international students studying in Atlantic Canada confirms that universities and community colleges are delivering high quality programs and play a leadership role in training and preparing young adults for our future labour market needs.

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) is an agency of the departments responsible for public and post-secondary education, and its purpose is to enhance cooperation in public (Entry–12) and post-secondary education in Atlantic Canada by working together to improve learning, optimize efficiencies and bring added value to provincial initiatives.

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