Transitioning from International Student to Immigrant: The role of institutions in supporting this transition

Timothy Owen, WES
John Wood, University at Buffalo SUNY
Janine Knight-Grofe, CBIE
Sonja Knutson, Memorial University
Overview

• **Timothy Owen**: The Canadian landscape, and policies affecting student-immigrant transitions

• **John Wood**: Transitioning from International Student to Immigrant: The Role of Institutions, A U.S. Perspective

• **Janine Knight-Grofe**: International Student Transitions at Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions: Findings from Recent Research

• **Sonja Knutson**: Working with Provinces and Municipalities to Attract and Retain International Students: The Case of Newfoundland and Labrador
Understanding and Supporting Student-Immigrant Transitions

• Federal and provincial governments are developing International Education strategies with goals to increase the number of students enrolling:
  • International students provide revenue both for institutions, and for host communities
  • International students are seen as desirable potential immigrants with the necessary attributes to support future labour market growth (e.g. young, official language ability, social networks, labour market experience)

• In pursuing these strategies, it is important to develop a shared understanding about the success indicators of transition, and what supports/services and measurement tools need to be in place to maximize and measure success
Canada

• Federal government plans to increase international student enrolment 450,000 by 2022
• In 2014, there were over 336,000 international students, 72% of which were in two provinces (ON, BC)
• International students make up over 10% of the post secondary student population
• CBIE 2015 survey of 4000 students showed:
  • 80% are in post secondary studies, 60% at a university level, more than a third in non-degree or diploma granting studies (career colleges, language schools, preparatory programs)
  • 50% are from three countries (China, India, and Korea)
  • 20% are studying Engineering, 18% Social Sciences and Humanities, 17% Business, 13% Natural Sciences
  • 61% intend to work after graduation, 51% to apply for permanent residency
  • 32% applied to a school in another country
Skilled Workers and International Students

- Canada has been pursuing a strategy of two step immigration
- The number of international students has increased by 65% from 2009-2014
- The number of international students transitioning to post graduation work has increased by 145%
- The number of principal applicants in the skilled worker class has decreased by 30%
- Since 1990, 270,000 people (19%) who had obtained a study permit have become permanent residents
Emerging issues

• A 2015 report by HEQCO found:
  • Services for international students in Ontario are concentrated in the first year of study
  • Need for more social programs to enhance interaction between domestic and international students (few international students have Canadian friends)
  • 71% of staff unaware of students’ intention to pursue permanent residence,
  • Few universities provide direct support for transition into labour market and PR status
  • Institutional and government policies regarding international students are not clearly aligned

• Requirement that only certified immigration consultants can provide immigration advice has impacted student advisors

• Pathways to permanent residence are increasing, but can be complex to navigate, and are often non-linear

• Intentions to stay evolve during the course of studies

• Express Entry process for selecting immigrants has created some uncertainty regarding student-immigrant transitions
Emerging issues

• International students who transition to permanent status have better initial labour market success, but this diminishes over time, dependent on field of study

• Work experience is a key factor in long term economic success, but many students find work (pre and post graduation) in unrelated occupations

• Early provision of settlement services leads to better long term success, but international students are not eligible for federally funded services

• Anecdotal evidence suggest high number of international students at college level have post secondary degrees (and work experience) from their home country, but don’t always get academic credit for it

• Social (and work) networks are key to finding appropriate work, but most international students say they have no Canadian friends
What are some success factors for the student-immigrant transition?

• Intention, and success of students transitioning
• Ease and speed of transition to permanent status
  • Government policies often hinder direct transition
  • Temporary worker status is step within transition
• Graduation rates and academic performance
• Employment during studies and post graduation
  • Is employment related to area of study?
  • Income level
  • Long term employment
  • Comparison to domestic graduates
  • Fields of study and employment related to anticipated labour market demand
• Effective social and cultural adaptation
Role of Institutions

• Recruitment
  • The prospect of staying on to work after graduation is increasing as a motivating factor (more so for younger applicants) in choosing where to study

• Admissions
  • Many international students have post secondary degrees, but may not apply for transfer credit, increasing the time and cost

• International Student Offices:
  • Do service needs of international students differ for those intending to stay vs. those intending to return?
  • Do needs differ from those of immigrant students?
  • Specialized services for those intending to transition

• Using alumni services/networks to follow up with graduates who are on post graduate work permits

• Building relations with community organizations
Recent Canadian Efforts to Improve Transition

• Provincially supported projects with community agencies in Canada that provide settlement support to international students who indicate intention to immigrate

• Some universities are providing workplace experience programs and practicums for international students

• Research project of WES, CBIE, and Pathways to Prosperity (university-community collaboration funded by SSHRC):
  • Identifying success indicators
  • Environmental scan of data sources
  • Development of longitudinal study to track sample group
Some Suggestions

• Increase staff capacity to identify and support students interested in transition
• Clarify options for transition pathways
• Clarify for staff if/how institutional policies/practices regarding international students align to those of government(s)
• Increase programs that facilitate workplace experience
• Build community linkages:
  • Settlement agencies and international student offices have complementary expertise and common interests in ensuring the needs of students transitioning to immigration are met
Transitioning from International Student to Immigrant: The Role of Institutions
A U.S. Perspective

John J. Wood
University at Buffalo
The State University of New York
February 23, 2016
2014: ~974,000 international students enrolled in the US (Source: IIE)
2007: ~623,000 international students enrolled in the US (Source: IIE)

$30.5 b. financial contributions of international students (Source: NAFSA)
$15.5 b. financial contributions of international students (Source: NAFSA)

85,000 H1-B work visas (source: Brookings)
85,000 H1-B work visas

Only 1/3 of international students received H1-B visa (source: Brookings)
U.S. HEIs: Magnets for Global Talent

• Attract best/brightest international students for both UG and graduate programs, particularly in STEM
• Prepare top international talent for careers in academia, research, and business
• U.S HEIs critically depend on intl. students to sustain research and drive innovation

• HOWEVER, student visas disallow immigrant intent; there’s no shortcut to immigrant status
• Provide temporary/backdoor access to labor market via OPT, and thus a shot at work visas (H-1Bs)
Foreign-born graduates whose highest degree is in S&E, by level and field of degree: 2010

SEI 2014: Immigration and the S&E Workforce, Chapter 3.
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

• Benefit of F-1 Student Visa Status (a non-immigrant visa category)—a major route to H-1B work visa
• Post-completion work experience relevant to field
• HEI remains responsible for immigration status
• 1/3 of all F-1 students participate in OPT; 45% on OPT do so in same host community as HEI
• 12 to 29 months’ duration, depending on field
• 120,287 international students on OPT in fall 2014—up from 105,997 in fall 2013, a 13.5% increase (Open Doors 2015)
OPT Issues and Concerns

• STEM student participation in OPT (largely graduate):
  • 15.2% with U.S. bachelor’s degrees
  • 62.6% with U.S. master’s degrees
  • 22.2% with U.S. doctorate degrees

• Abuse of OPT by for-profit, unaccredited schools

• No minimum wage for OPT; workers exploited

• STEM extension (2008) being challenged in federal court

• Once student on OPT gets H-1B, it can take more than 10 additional years to get permanent residency

• Huge backlog for Indian and Chinese nationals seeking green cards (data from the Brookings Institution)
Work Visas (H-1B)

• H-1B is a non-immigrant visa but allows dual-intent, and a potential pathway to immigration
• H-1B cap limits number hired in private sector
• 85,000 visas available for private sector in 2015, of which 20,000 were exclusively for international students
• 220,000 petitions were filed in 2015—hence the H1-B lottery in the private sector
• Graduates with advanced degrees hired by HEIs, non-profits, or affiliated entities are not subject to cap, though sponsorship by employer is still necessary
Figure 3-38

NOTE: Data include doctorate recipients on temporary and permanent visas.


Science and Engineering Indicators 2014
Graduates of U.S. HEIs Intend to Stay

• Large percentage of those earning S&E doctorates intend to stay in the U.S. after graduation

• This percentage has risen over time (from 50% in the 1980s to 75% now)

• However, a smaller percentage plans to immigrate to the U.S.

• Many obstacles stand in their way, including long wait times
University at Buffalo/SUNY

- 5,400 international students + 1,400 on OPT (in top 20 in Open Doors over last 13 years)
- Large number of STEM students; some engineering M.S. programs are 90+ percent international
- Many graduate students access STEM OPT opportunities in NYC, Boston, and West Coast
- Growing demand locally for highly skilled international students
- UB’s role in WNY’s economic resurgence
- Investment for start-ups involving internationals
- UB’s lead in NYS initiatives like *Start-up New York*
Top Metro Area Destinations for F-1 Students (2008-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Metro Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>F-1 Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New York-Newark-Edison, NY-NJ-PA</td>
<td>101,586</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA</td>
<td>68,271</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH</td>
<td>53,486</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA</td>
<td>37,610</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-VA-MD-WV</td>
<td>35,459</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI</td>
<td>35,204</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX</td>
<td>25,353</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD</td>
<td>24,346</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA</td>
<td>19,015</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL</td>
<td>18,617</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA</td>
<td>16,699</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX</td>
<td>14,785</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA</td>
<td>14,004</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY</td>
<td>13,660</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
<td>13,326</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Brookings Institution
U.S. Position in Jeopardy

- Declining market share of international students
- Dramatic increase in quality/competitiveness of institutions elsewhere, particularly Asia and Europe
- Overly complex and counterproductive post-9/11 immigration “system” in U.S.
- Recent disinvestment in U.S. public higher education
- Lack of coordinated national/state strategies to attract global talent
- Unwelcoming environment; anti-foreigner rhetoric
Student Perceptions of Five English Speaking Destinations

Affordability
- Australia
  - Leader: CND/NZ

Quality of education
- Canada
  - Leader: USA

Safety
- USA
  - Leader: CND/NZ

Graduate employment opportunities
- UK
  - Leader: USA/CND/AUS

Government student visa requirement/policies
- NZ
  - Leader: NZ/CND/AUS
Market Share of International Students

Chart C4.3. Trends in international education market shares (2000, 2012)
Percentage of all foreign tertiary students enrolled, by destination

OECD countries - 2000 and 2012
Non-OECD countries - 2000 and 2012

Market share (%)
25
20
15
10
5
0

United States
United Kingdom
Germany
France
Australia
Canada
Russian Federation
Japan
Spain
China
Italy
Austria
New Zealand
South Africa
Switzerland
Netherlands
Korea
Belgium
Other OECD

G20 and non-OECD
The Current Picture: Open Doors 2015

• All-time high in fall 2014 of 974,926 international students—a 10 percent increase over the previous year

• International students constitute less than 5 percent of total enrollment in U.S. higher education

• 44 percent of international students in the U.S. are in STEM fields—many of these are in graduate programs

• Although international students contributed $31 billion to the U.S. economy last year, the U.S. is much less reliant on them for revenue than is Australia or the U.K.

• Access for international students continues to be limited in many public university systems, e.g. California
In 2014/15 international students increased 10% over the prior year, the highest rate of growth since 1978/79.
U.S. Posture toward Immigrants

• U.S. has succeeded in attracting talent despite its longstanding schizophrenia about immigrants
• The immigration system seen as an obstacle and nuisance, but the opportunities beyond have outweighed the disadvantages
• “Probationary” approach to controlling access by foreign talent has more negatives than positives
• The capacity to increase flows of talented immigrants is constrained by approach to other categories of immigrants and illegal immigrants
Broken Immigration System

- Foreign talent typically part of employment-based immigration stream that is self-limiting
- Non-immigrant categories convert to immigrant status after much time and many hurdles are passed
- Up to 90% of foreigners receiving immigrant visas for employment are already in U.S., often via HEI’s
- Employers tend to sponsor employees for immigrant visas as a reward for good service
- Is this “system” a good tool for attracting talent?
Some Recommendations

• The U.S. must designate higher education as a critical national asset and export

• Immigration reform must include a rational policy to support the recruitment of global talent for areas of critical need— with simplified, quicker pathways to work visas and permanent residency

• Both OPT and H-1B programs need to be reformed

• National strategic goals should be established for international student enrollments, particularly in STEM fields
International Student Transitions at Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions: Findings from Recent Research

Janine Knight-Grofe
Research Manager
Canadian Bureau for International Education
Canadian Institutions: Changing Landscape

- Temporary students
- Returning home
- Potential long-term workers
- Preferred immigrants
Transitions at Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions

- Successful transitions are beneficial to institutions
  - Recruitment
  - Student satisfaction
Facilitating Transitions: The Institutional Response

“In order to find host country employment, international students need their higher education institutions as well as local businesses, public service providers and other local actors to facilitate the often challenging transitions from study to work.”

(Train and Retain: Career Support for International Students in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, pg. 21)
Train and Retain: Career Support for International Students in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden

- **Canada**: 57% (66 out of 116 higher education institutions)
- **Germany**: 53% (116 out of 218 higher education institutions)
- **Sweden**: 79% (30 out of 38 higher education institutions)
- **The Netherlands**: 58% (26 out of 45 higher education institutions)

Source: International survey ‘Train and Retain’ 2015
Facilitating Transitions: What Canadian Institutions are Doing

FINDINGS

• *Early career support strongest in Canada and the Netherlands*
Facilitating Transitions: What Canadian Institutions are Doing

• Job application training, networking events and other job entry support

• 58% provide additional support, including career counselling, internship placement and other support services specifically designed to meet their needs

• At 40% of university and colleges, large businesses actively hire international students

• Small businesses also actively recruit international students
Facilitating Transitions: What Canadian Institutions are Doing

Recruiting
  • Including information about immigration policies in their promotional material

Providing expertise
  • Ensuring staff are able to provide immigration advice (RCIC, RISIA)
Ryerson University

Transitions Services

Support for Employers

Support for Students
Ryerson University

Career Compass: Career Planning for International Students
Internationalization is a key strategic priority for the University of Calgary because we have an obligation to serve the needs of our community...

Our city...demands graduates, both domestic and international, who have a global orientation, are competitive in a global marketplace, and who can adapt to diverse cultural, economic, and governmental environments.

The recruitment of international students is increasingly recognized as an important element in a broader strategy for attracting highly qualified people to our country.
The University of Calgary

• Recruitment strategy: analyze student services available to international students and enhance support services

• Transition support becoming increasingly integral to student advising
The University of Calgary

Permanent Residency Support
- April to December, 2014:
  - 9 PR sessions, 91 students.
  - 150 students requested individual PR appointments.
- “Pathways to PR” seminar
Recommendations from Recent Research

• Reassess Job Entry Support for International Students
  • Address major obstacles to host country employment
  • Foster interaction with domestic students and employers
  • Strategic use of digital technologies
Working with Provinces and Municipalities to Attract and Retain International Students: The Case of Newfoundland and Labrador

Sonja Knutson
Director, Internationalization Office
Memorial University of Newfoundland
International students: Context

• Highly mobile population with high level education and English language skills.
• At graduation, IS have a Cdn degree and generally have Cdn work experience.
• Communities in smaller regions not particularly successful in retaining international students to Permanent Residency – less than 5% in Atlantic Canada (Van Huystee, 2011) – lower in NL
• Memorial University has about 2000 IS – and high expectations from gov’t to retain post-grads.
Distribution of international students

CBIE, Number and percent of international students in Canada, by region (2013)
Memorial University and its “special obligation” to the province

Does internationalization matter?

- Population Growth and immigration strategy
- Preparing domestic students for globalized careers
- Research collaborations
- Value of diverse perspectives in homogeneous communities
What the province is doing:

- Charge to new Minister (AES) to develop new immigration strategy: www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/cabinet/ministers/pdf/Minister_Byrne_Mandate.pdf
- Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism staff placement on-campus four days/week
- Provincial nominee program – International Graduate Category www.nlpnp.ca/student.html
- Provincial Health coverage for IS upon arrival
- International education/trade mission funding
What the City of St. John’s is doing:

• City pop. is 105K and Memorial student pop. is 17K.
• 30% of Memorial students from out-of-province.
• Promotion of city as an immigration destination: www.stjohns.ca/living-st-johns/newcomers/immigration
• Focus on students in Local Immigration Partnership (LIP):
  • Education and Training;
  • Health and Basic Needs;
  • Immigrant Employment and Labour Needs;
  • Welcoming Communities and Social Connections
Int’l offices: Connecting the dots

- Mentor Program designed to develop intercultural skills in domestic students
- Spouse/Family program – social events and ESL classes
- Outreach to K-12 system to meet curriculum obj. re: diversity.
- Entrepreneurship training for international graduate students
- Education & trade missions in collaboration with provincial government and local industry
- Support for new researchers
- Meetings, meetings, meetings
Thank you! Questions

Timothy Owen, towen@wes.org

John Wood, jjwood@buffalo.edu

Janine Knight-Grofe, jknight@cbie.ca

Sonja Knutson, sknutson@mun.ca