2017 International Graduate Study
The Graduate Experience ~ One Year Later

July 2017
Atlantic Canada has more than 14,000 international students attending post-secondary institutions each year

With declining population and youth outmigration facing the region, these students could present one solution for the region
Background

2016 Graduate Survey

- In March 2016, email invitations were distributed by institutions to all students scheduled to graduate
- A total of 4,643 surveys were received (21 of 22 institutions involved)
- Of those, 468 (10%) were international students

- What was their experience following graduation?
- Were they interested in staying in Atlantic Canada? What were their initial plans following graduation and how did they change?
- What influenced international graduates’ ability to stay within the region and what might help them stay?
- Were they aware of any programs to assist international graduates?
Research Methodology

2017 International Graduate Study

- Email invitations distributed to 448 international students
- 145 (32%) responded, of which only 102 actually graduated in 2016
- **102 graduates** completed the 2017 online study
- Field dates: June 1-17, 2017
Respondent Profile
43% Male vs. 57% Female

University grads 83%
- 52% Undergraduate Degree
- 23% Master’s Degree
- 7% Doctoral Degree
- 2% Other University Program

College grads 17%
- 59% Diploma
- 35% Certificate
- 3% Other College Program

Province of Study
- 19% China
- 10% USA
- 7% Nigeria
- 6% India
- 3% Saudi Arabia
- 3% Iran
- 3% Egypt

Age
- 18-24: 36%
- 25+: 64%
Perceptions of Atlantic Canada
Experience as a Student

International graduates describe an overwhelmingly positive experience during their studies in Atlantic Canada.
Compared to other parts of Canada, is Atlantic Canada...?

- Better
- About the same
- Worse
How Does Atlantic Canada Compare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Worse</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>NET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place to raise a family</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of living</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptance</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social lifestyles</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate/Weather</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political environment</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and cultural activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
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<td>Compensation levels</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and recreational opportunities</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>-22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation levels</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business environment</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>-28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The vast majority of international graduates wanted the opportunity to stay in Atlantic Canada and become a permanent Canadian citizen.
Initial Plans Post-Graduation
A clear majority of international graduates initially planned to remain in Atlantic Canada.
Post-Graduation Plans

Top 3 Reasons

65% Wanted to stay in Atlantic Canada
• Cost of living
• Great place to raise a family
• Quality of life

26% Wanted to leave Atlantic Canada
• Lack of job opportunities
• Too small/Want larger city
• To be near friends/family
83% planned to enter the *workforce*

**Plans**

- 74% Work in field of study
- 7% Look for any type of employment
- 2% Start own business
- 17% Pursue further education
Where are they now?
83% Stayed in Canada

- United States: 6%
- Canada (outside AC): 19%
- Other Country: 12%
- Atlantic Canada: 64%
- PE: 29%
- NS: 8%
- NL: 6%
- NB: 21%
- 83% Stayed in Canada
Post-Graduation Plans vs. Reality

International graduates’ intentions are generally aligned with their final choice of where to live.
Post-Graduation Plans vs. Reality

**Plans Hoped to Be**
- **In Canada (outside AC)**: 16%
- **In Atlantic Canada**: 65%

**Reality Currently Reside**
- **In Atlantic Canada**: 64%
- **Outside Canada**: 10%

19% Didn’t know or were unsure of plans
A Change in Plans ...

23% Changed their plans following graduation

Why?

35% No jobs in my field
25% Couldn’t find a job
13% Pursued further education
13% Returned home
9% Moved to a different location/province
4% Other
Post-Graduation Plans vs. Reality

83% planned to enter the *workforce*

- 74% Work in field of study
- 7% Look for any type of employment
- 2% Start own business
- 17% Pursue further education

73% currently employed

- 50% Employed FT in field of study
- 20% Employed FT - not in field of study
- 3% Started own business
- 16% Went back to school

vs.

Not currently employed/ Looking for work

11%
... and the vast majority of those who stayed in the region are employed.
Remain in Atlantic Canada

78% of those living outside the region would have stayed in Atlantic Canada if they had an attractive job offer in their field.

Top 3 Would Have Encouraged Staying

- 22% Good employment/Promising career
- 14% Higher salary/compensation
- 8% Easier immigration process

36% currently live outside of Atlantic Canada.
Barriers to Staying in Atlantic Canada

Single Greatest Barrier in Convincing International Students to Stay and Live in Atlantic Canada After Graduation

Unaided Mentions

- Lack of employment opportunities: 59%
- Lack of diversity: 4%
- Climate/Weather: 4%
- Money/Finances: 3%
- Size of cities/Smaller cities: 3%
- Language barriers: 2%
- Different lifestyle/Quality of life: 2%
- Other: 8%
- Nothing: 2%

Don’t know/Uncertain: 14%
Assistance Programs

There is limited awareness of the various support programs to assist international graduates.
Assistance Programs for Starting Own Business

24% Are **aware** of programs that assist new graduates in starting their own businesses

66% Are **not** aware

11% Are **unsure**
Continued efforts are needed to build awareness of the AIPP, given the clear interest in the program.
Assistance Programs for Obtaining Residency

- **36%**
  - Are *aware* of programs that assist international students in obtaining residency in Canada following graduation

- **43%**
  - Provincial Nominee Program

- **16%**
  - Atlantic Pilot Program

- **24%**
  - Didn’t know or could not recall
43% Are *aware* of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project

Only 1% Applied for permanent residency through the pilot project

59% Would be interested in the pilot program

...but
Despite interest in the AIPP, grads are not familiar with its application requirements.
Atlantic International Graduate Program

Grads are likely to apply to the pilot project.

Likelihood of Applying to the Pilot Project Through the Atlantic International Graduate Program
Among Those Interested in the Program

- **Definitely/Probably**: 65%
- **80/20 Rule**: 31%
- **Not Likely**
  - **Probably not**: 22%
  - **Definitely not**: 8%
  - **Don't know/Uncertain**: 5%
Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project

74% AGREE

The AIPP will *positively* impact international students’ ability to stay in Atlantic Canada following graduation

9% Did *not* agree

18% Didn’t know
Final Thoughts...

• International graduates describe an **overwhelmingly positive experience** in Atlantic Canada.

• International graduates are **keenly interested in remaining in Atlantic Canada following graduation** – most want the opportunity to **become a permanent Canadian citizen**.

• International graduates **want to enter the workforce immediately** following their graduation.

• There is **limited awareness of various support programs** for new international new graduates.

• The Atlantic Immigration Pilot is deemed a Program that will **positively impact international graduates’ ability to remain** in Atlantic Canada following graduation.

• **Interest is high, but awareness is low.** Continued efforts are needed to build awareness of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project.
**Methodology:** 102 online surveys with international 2016 post-secondary graduates of Atlantic Canadian institutions: June 1 to 17, 2017

### Respondent Profile
- **University grads:** 83%
- **College grads:** 17%
- **Province of Study:**
  - PE: 12%
  - NS: 29%
  - NL: 9%
  - Other Country: 18%
- **Gender:**
  - Male: 43%
  - Female: 57%

### Experience as a Student in Atl Cda
- Felt welcomed (94%)
- Enjoyed time (92%)
- Made close friends (84%)
- People of same culture (79%)
- Would like to live/work in Atl Cda (77%)

### Where are they now?
**83% stayed in Canada**

#### Plans vs. Reality
- **Planned to enter the workforce upon graduation:**
  - All Grads: 83%
  - Grads in Atl Cda: 89%
- **Are currently employed:**
  - All Grads: 73%
  - Grads in Atl Cda: 79%

#### Plans
- **In field of study:**
  - All Grads: 50%
  - Grads in Atl Cda: 20%
  - Entrepreneurs: 3%
  - Underemployed: 25%

#### Reality
- **In field of study:**
  - All Grads: 52%
  - Grads in Atl Cda: 20%
  - Entrepreneurs: 2%
  - Underemployed: 25%

### Programming Support
- **Of international graduates are aware of any programs aimed at helping them obtain permanent residency in Canada following graduation (unaided):**
  - 36%
- **Of international graduates express interest in the AIPP:**
  - 59%
- **Believe AIPP will positively impact international graduates’ ability to stay in Atl Cda:**
  - 74%

### Reasons to stay
- **Top 3**
  - Cost of living 52%
  - Great place to raise family 48%
  - Quality of life 47%

### Reasons to leave
- **Top 3**
  - Lack of job opportunities 58%
  - Too small/Want larger city 54%
  - To be near friends/family 50%

### Other Country
- **All Grads:**
  - Currently unemployed/ Looking: 11%
  - Currently employed: 89%

### Atlantic Canada
- **All Grads:**
  - Currently unemployed/ Looking: 9%
  - Currently employed: 91%

### Canada (outside AC)
- **All Grads:**
  - Currently unemployed/ Looking: 19%
  - Currently employed: 81%

### Other Country
- **All Grads:**
  - Currently unemployed/ Looking: 18%
  - Currently employed: 82%