

Executive Summary:

*Export Value of
Nova Scotia Universities*

Nova Scotians already know that their universities help drive economic prosperity in the province, generating \$1.4 billion in economic activity annually while supporting almost 20,000 full-time jobs. A new report, *Export Value of Nova Scotia Universities* (www.atlanticuniversities.ca), shows that the province's 11 degree-granting institutions also make a significant contribution to export earnings.

Just as importantly, this report shows that a properly-funded university sector would attract greater numbers of talented, young immigrants who can help the province meet both its ongoing demographic challenges and its need for skilled knowledge workers. In essence, our universities can play a key role in generating sustainable prosperity in Nova Scotia, for all Nova Scotians.

Today, Nova Scotia's universities generate \$750-million annually in export earnings based on university-related direct expenditures, attributable to out-of-province enrolment and differential tuition fees for international students. This puts the university sector among Nova Scotia's big five export groups, alongside traditional industries like food production, tire manufacturing and the fishing and agricultural sectors.

Highlights from *Export Value of Nova Scotia Universities* clearly demonstrate that the export value of universities makes a vital contribution to the province's economy:

- Contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP): \$800 million
- Total Employment: 11,225 jobs
- Income: \$595 million in salaries and wages
- Tax revenue: \$150 million

Overall, the statistics represent nearly 60 percent of total economic impacts associated with Nova Scotia's university expenditures in the provincial economy. Nova Scotia's university institutions also attract a total of \$150 million yearly in research funds from outside the province.

ATTRACTING OUT-OF-PROVINCE STUDENTS – A RECORD OF SUCCESS

As this report shows, many of these economic benefits are driven by the enrolment of international or out-of-province students in Nova Scotia universities. In total, about 18,000 out-of-province students (including international students) attend the province's universities, comprising 43 percent of total enrolment.

Recruitment of these students has also proven to be an effective tool for attracting talented newcomers to the province. One study showed that more than 25 percent of Canadian students from outside the province remain here after graduation. The universities, in short, are already recruiting the kind of immigrants and other Canadians that the Province of Nova Scotia wishes to attract – young, skilled, educated workers who can offset the challenging impacts of Nova Scotia's aging population, and what is forecast to be its shrinking workforce.

To date, Nova Scotia universities have a good track record for attracting international and out-of-province students. During the 30-year period ending in 2010, for instance, enrolment of international students at Nova Scotia universities increased 206 percent. Over the same period of time, the number of Ontario students enrolling at our universities jumped even more dramatically – by 675 percent. It should be remembered that this influx of students took place as Nova Scotia’s overall population of young people was declining. In the case of 18- to 21-year olds, it has fallen 25 percent since the 1980s.

THE CHALLENGE OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

The economic value of a vibrant university sector, and the positive impacts of attracting foreign students, has not been lost on other jurisdictions. In other parts of Canada, for instance, international student enrolments have been increasing just as they have in Nova Scotia.

Many nations in addition to Canada have developed strategies to attract foreign students and talented workers. The European Union, for instance, has put a 46-nation plan in place to make the EU what one report calls “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.” China and India, meanwhile, are determined to develop their own reputations and standards of excellence in post-secondary education. Traditionally, both these nations have sent students abroad to study. Increasingly, they will enter the market as suppliers of post-secondary education, both for domestic and international students.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE IN NOVA SCOTIA

The Nova Scotia government has developed policies to attract skilled immigrants (*Welcome Home to Nova Scotia*), create sustainable employment (*jobsHere*), and meet the challenges posed by an aging population that will put increasing pressure on health care and social services. As Donald Savoie says in his report *Invest More, Innovate More, Trade More, Learn More: The Way Ahead for Nova Scotia*, our universities can play a critical role in meeting these challenges through economic development.

The Savoie report highlights the importance of attracting talented, well-educated immigrants who can help Nova Scotia thrive in the face of an aging population and a growing shortage of skilled workers. Universities can only play this role, however, if appropriate levels of public funding are provided to the institutions.

Indeed, given the increasingly competitive environment in which universities are operating, it is important to identify potential unintended consequences of sustained decreased funding to these vital educational institutions. It is vital that policies be developed that are consistent with the province’s existing policies on immigration and economic growth. With the right policies in place, the universities can help ensure that the government of Nova Scotia is successful in its efforts to attract, retain and integrate the highly skilled out-of-province students that are so crucial to our ongoing prosperity.

MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Acadia University
www.acadiau.ca

Atlantic School of Theology
www.astheology.ns.ca

Cape Breton University
www.cbu.ca

Dalhousie University
www.dal.ca

University of King's College
www.ukings.ca

Mount Saint Vincent University
www.msvu.ca

Nova Scotia Agricultural College
nsac.ca

NSCAD University
www.nscad.ca

Université Sainte-Anne
www.usainteanne.ca

St. Francis Xavier University
www.stfx.ca

Saint Mary's University
www.smu.ca