

Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) 2023-24 Preliminary Survey of Enrolments

October 13, 2023

HALIFAX, N.S. – The majority of Atlantic universities continue to see steady, year-over-year enrolment growth.

Full-time enrolment growth among Atlantic universities increased by more than five percent year-over-year, increasing total enrolment among undergraduate and graduate students by 4,209 for a regional total of 85,715.

The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) released its [2023-2024 Preliminary Survey of Enrolments](#) today.

Atlantic Canada continues to be a magnet for international students with a more than 20 percent year-over-year increase of 4,404 full-time visa students (total of 26,220). Cape Breton University (CBU) continues to have exceptional success in the international student marketplace, adding nearly 3,000 more international students.

“All Atlantic universities continue to work hard at attracting students locally, from across the country and around the world to their campuses and communities,” said Dr. Rob Summerby-Murray, President, Saint Mary’s University and Chair, Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU).

Dr. Summerby-Murray commented on the modest but steady, year-over-year full-time enrolment growth among Nova Scotia’s ten universities (+6.6), noting that the provincial average was dominated by CBU’s exceptional international success. The University of Prince Edward Island (+5.2%), New Brunswick’s four universities (+5%), and Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador (+1.5%) rounded out the steady growth across the region.

He added that “continued internationalization of our campuses is important and directly connected to successful regional diversification and population growth strategies, vital to future economic prosperity and social development. Considering current geo-political tensions, it is imperative that our universities continue to reassure international students that they will be welcomed to safe, secure campuses and communities.”

A [recent study](#) conducted by Gardner Pinfold for the AAU indicates that the success of the region’s universities in attracting students from the rest of Canada and internationally has positioned universities as the fifth largest export revenue generating sector in Atlantic Canada.

“Perhaps more important,” said Dr. Summerby-Murray, “is the retention of 73% of our graduates who choose to live and work in communities across the region. These graduates become our future healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, business, and community leaders.”

Dr. Summerby-Murray concluded that “continued enrolment growth among the region’s universities, the retention of a high percentage of graduates and the overall economic impact of the sector, is further evidence that strong, high-quality public universities play a powerful role in fueling Atlantic Canada’s economic prosperity, productivity, competitiveness and social well-being.”

The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU), www.atlanticuniversities.ca, represents the interests of universities across the region, ensuring public visibility for the important role they play in preparing future leaders of our communities, in path-breaking research and innovation, and in contributing to the economic, cultural and social prosperity of life in Atlantic Canada. Follow us on X at @AAU_AUA.

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