

**REMARKS BY PETER HALPIN, AAU
FOR THE
CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA**

**LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE ON IMMIGRATION
Friday, November 24, 2017, 8:45 AM – 10:00 AM**

- **GOOD MORNING, IT'S A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MORNING'S PANEL DISCUSSION**
- **I HOPE MY PERSPECTIVE ADDS SOME VALUE TO THE CONVERSATION**
- **I'M PETER HALPIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES – THE AAU**
- **THE AAU IS AN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION, WORKING ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENTS AND STUDENTS OF ATLANTIC CANADA'S 16 UNIVERSITIES**
- **THE CONFERENCE THEME, AND THE SUBJECT THIS PANEL HAS BEEN ASKED TO ADDRESS, IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO THE AAU AND ITS MEMBER UNIVERSITIES**
- **A LARGE PART OF THE AAU'S MANDATE IS TO ENABLE AND PROMOTE INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION, AS WELL AS CREATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES**
- **AS YOU ARE LIKELY AWARE, OUR REGION HAS THE MOST RAPIDLY AGING AND DECLINING POPULATION IN CANADA AND,**
- **THE LOWEST ATTRACTION AND RETENTION RATES OF NEW CANADIANS OF ANY REGION IN CANADA**
- **THAT DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE HAS RESULTED IN A SLOW BUT STEADY EROSION OF DOMESTIC STUDENT ENROLMENTS ACROSS THE REGION**
- **THAT SITUATION HAS BEEN HISTORICALLY OFFSET BY THE HISTORIC ATTRACTION OF OUR UNIVERSITIES - ESPECIALLY THOSE IN NOVA SCOTIA - TO OUT-OF-REGION STUDENTS – PRINCIPALLY FROM ONTARIO**
- **OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS, ENROLMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN OUR UNIVERSITIES HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN 100%!**

- **TODAY, THERE ARE CLOSE TO 14,000 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE REGION – A MORE THAN FOUR PERCENT INCREASE YEAR-OVER-YEAR**
- **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS REPRESENT NEARLY 20% OF TOTAL FULL-TIME, UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT**
- **AS THE REGION’S DOMESTIC POPULATION CONTINUES ITS STEADY DECLINE, THE VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO FUTURE, INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY GROWS IN IMPORTANCE**
- **IT’S BEEN WELL ESTABLISHED THAT ATLANTIC CANADA’S UNIVERSITIES ARE TALENT MAGNETS AND THE BEST SOURCE OF NEW IMMIGRANTS TO THE REGION**
- **WE’RE WORKING HARDER THAN EVER ON MARKETING THE REGION AND ITS UNIVERSITIES AS A HIGH QUALITY, WELCOMING EDUCATION DESTINATION IN THE WORLD**
- **THIS MORNING I PLAN TO SHARE SOME STRATEGIC INITIATIVES THE AAU HAS UNDERTAKEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY – ACOA – GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA AND OUR FOUR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS**
- **THESE INITIATIVES ARE ALL DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE ATLANTIC GROWTH STRATEGY’S KEY PILLAR OF IMMIGRATION AND RETENTION**
- **SO, WHAT ARE WE DOING?**
- **IN 2016, WITH ACOA’S ASSISTANCE, THE AAU LED AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DIGITAL MARKETING RESEARCH STUDY ON BEHALF OF THE REGION’S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR**
- **THE RESULTS OF THAT STUDY EQUIPPED OUR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES WITH:**
 - **ACTIONABLE INFORMATION ABOUT KEY INTERNATIONAL TARGET MARKETS AND THEIR CULTURAL NUANCES**
 - **WHO TO TARGET WITHIN THOSE MARKETS; AND,**
 - **WHEN, WHERE AND HOW TO ENGAGE STUDENT PROSPECTS**
- **WE KNOW FROM A 2017 AAU GRADUATE RETENTION STUDY – ALSO FUNDED BY ACOA - THAT A LARGE MAJORITY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN THE REGION IF THEY CAN FIND SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT:**

- **77% AGREED ATLANTIC CANADA “IS A PLACE I WOULD LIKE TO WORK AND LIVE AFTER GRADUATION.**
- **94% AGREED THEY FELT WELCOMED IN ATLANTIC CANADA AS NEW ARRIVALS.**
- **84% SAID THEY MADE CLOSE FRIENDS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES; AND,**
- **79% AGREED THERE WERE “PEOPLE OF MY CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY.”**
- **DESPITE THE AFFINITY FOR THE REGION AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, A MAJORITY ALSO BELIEVE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE BETTER OUTSIDE ATLANTIC CANADA.**
- **INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES ALSO FELT THE REGION HAS RELATIVELY HIGH TAXES AND A LESS THAN ROBUST BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.**
- **THE AAU PRESENTED THESE INSIGHTS AT ITS ATLANTIC LEADERS SUMMIT THIS PAST JULY**
- **AT THE SUMMIT, THE FEDERAL IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP MINISTER AHMED HUSSEN, DELIVERED A CALL FOR ACTION**
- **HE CALLED ON BUSINESS, ACADEMIC AND POLITICAL LEADERS TO WELCOME INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND, HELP THEM BECOME CONTRIBUTORS INSIDE A REGION THEY WOULD LIKE TO CALL HOME.**
- **THE MINISTER SAID THAT “INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MUST PLAY A KEY ROLE” IN THE SUCCESS OF THE ATLANTIC GROWTH STRATEGY, A FEDERAL POLICY DESIGNED TO TURBO-BOOST THE REGIONAL ECONOMY.**
- **HE ADDED THAT “AT STAKE IS THE CONTINUED GROWTH AND VIBRANCY OF THIS REGION,”**
- **AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE ATLANTIC GROWTH STRATEGY IS THE ATLANTIC IMMIGRATION PILOT**
- **UNDER THIS PROGRAM AN ADDITIONAL 2,000 IMMIGRANTS PER YEAR COULD BE WELCOMED TO THE ATLANTIC REGION**
- **IT IS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO STAYING IN THE REGION IDENTIFIED BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**
- **THE PILOT IS THE FIRST EMPLOYER-DRIVEN IMMIGRATION STREAM IN CANADA.**

- **SO FAR,**
 - **MORE THAN 600 EMPLOYERS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE NEW PROGRAM;**
 - **400 COMPANIES HAVE RECEIVED PROVINCIAL DESIGNATION ALLOWING THEM TO ATTRACT SKILLED IMMIGRANTS;**
 - **AND, 250 SKILLED WORKERS HAVE BEEN RECRUITED TO THE REGION UNDER THE PROGRAM**
- **EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION TABLED THEIR REPORT - *IMMIGRATION TO ATLANTIC CANADA: MOVING TO THE FUTURE***
- **THE REPORT MADE TWO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS RELEVANT TO THE RETENTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE REGION**
 - ***ALLOW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE ATLANTIC IMMIGRATION PILOT PROJECT TO ACCESS SETTLEMENT SERVICES ONCE THEY HAVE STARTED THE PERMANENT RESIDENCY APPLICATION PROCESS AND,***
 - ***ISSUE WORK PERMITS TO STUDENTS THAT ARE VALID THROUGHOUT THEIR STUDY PROGRAM IN ATLANTIC CANADA, INCLUDING CO-OP TERMS, AND ISSUE POST GRADUATE WORK PERMITS VALID FOR FIVE YEARS IN ATLANTIC CANADA.***
- **ADOPTION OF THESE TWO RECOMMENDATIONS, AMONG OTHERS, WILL HELP CREATE A MORE WELCOMING AND ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENT FOR THOSE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WISHING TO STAY IN THE REGION FOLLOWING THEIR GRADUATION**
- **THE AAU IS NOW ENGAGED WITH GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA, ACOA AND OUR FOUR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS IN A PILOT SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO ATTRACT SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH – STEM - STUDENTS FROM SELECT U.S. MARKETS TO THE REGION’S UNIVERSITIES**
- **THE CAMPAIGN IS ALSO DESIGNED TO CONNECT THOSE STUDENTS TO FUTURE STEM CAREERS IN THE REGION**
- **THE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN STRATEGY WILL BUILD ON THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2016 DIGITAL MEDIA RESEARCH STUDY**

- **LAST WEEK, A NEW PROJECT WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE POND-DESHPANDE CENTRE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK.**
- **IT HOPES TO TACKLE THE COMPLICATED QUESTION OF HOW TO KEEP MORE ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS FROM LEAVING THE PROVINCE**
- **THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS ARE FUNDING *NouLAB*, A JOINT VENTURE OF THE POND-DESHPANDE CENTRE AND THE NEW BRUNSWICK SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH NETWORK**
- **IT IS A SOCIAL INNOVATION LAB THAT BRINGS TOGETHER STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR OFFICIALS, ACADEMICS AND IMMIGRANTS, TO BRAINSTORM IDEAS TO INCREASE IMMIGRANT RETENTION**
- **THAT IS THE TYPE OF COLLABORATION THE REGION MUST PROMOTE TO CREATE THE WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT AND ROBUST ECONOMY IMPORTANT TO THE RETENTION OF NEW CANADIANS IN ATLANTIC CANADA**
- **THE GROWING NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STUDYING AT OUR UNIVERSITIES IS HAVING PROFOUND IMPACT ON ATLANTIC CANADA**
- **IN EARLY 2018, THE COUNCIL OF ATLANTIC MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING – CAMET - WILL RELEASE AN UPDATE ON THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON THE REGION’S ECONOMY AND,**
- **NOVA SCOTIA’S UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS ARE NOW UPDATING A 2012 REPORT ON THE EXPORT REVENUE GENERATED BY BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND OUT-OF-PROVINCE STUDENTS IN THE NOVA SCOTIA ECONOMY**
- **IN 2012, THOSE STUDENTS GENERATED NEARLY \$875 MILLION IN EXPORT REVENUE FOR THE PROVINCE, SECOND ONLY TO INDUSTRY SECTOR LEADING EXPORTER, MICHELIN TIRES**
- **MY CONCLUDING MESSAGE IS BEST SUMMARIZED IN A SINGLE WORD: COLLABORATION**
- **COLLABORATION AMONG UNIVERSITIES, EMPLOYERS, ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES IS KEY TO SUCCESSFUL RETENTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS; AND,**
- **I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THERE IS AN EQUAL COMMITMENT AMONG ALL REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.**
- **THANK YOU**