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**Remarks by**

**Peter Halpin, Executive Director  
Association of Atlantic Universities  
AAU**

**for the  
Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute  
SICI**

**Saint Mary's University  
Sobey School of Business  
Halifax, NS**

**Saturday, June 10, 2017  
8:00 – 9:30 AM (ADT)**

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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: Canada – India Education and Research Collaboration – is particularly relevant to the AAU.

A large part of our mandate is to find the ways and means to enable and promote inter-institutional collaboration, as well as partnerships with the private sector, governments and communities.

As well known to you, the importance of educational collaboration as a bridge between Canada and India was recognized with the creation of the SICI five decades ago.

In 2005, Canada also signed an agreement for scientific and technological cooperation with India.

In 2010, the prime ministers of our two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on education cooperation.

The MOU facilitates academic exchanges, partnerships and mobility between higher educational institutions in the two countries.

This panel has been asked to provide perspective on student mobility.

As you are likely aware, our region has the most rapidly aging and declining population in Canada.

That demographic challenge has resulted in a slow but steady erosion of domestic student enrolments across the region.

That situation has been somewhat offset by the historic attraction of our universities - especially those in Nova Scotia - to out-of-region students – principally from Ontario.

In Nova Scotia, there are more than 14,000 out-of-province students studying at our ten universities.

Over the past ten years, enrolment of international students in our universities has increased by more than 100%!

Today, there are more than 13,000 international students studying at Atlantic Canadian universities.

Those students represent nearly 20% of total full-time, university enrolment in the region.

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 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 institutions to international students as a welcoming education destination in the world.

With the assistance of ACOA's international business development program, 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 will equip 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.

As you would likely expect, the study identified India as both a strong existing potential leading target market and one with great growth potential for all our institutions.

Over the past ten-years, the number of Indian students has grown from 295 – to – 653.

### **A growth rate of 110% in a decade!**

To put that in a national context, India is the second largest source country of international students for Canada after China.

At the end of 2015, there were nearly 49,000 Indian students studying in Canada.

### **This represents a year-over-year increase of 28%.**

The research also revealed that for Indian students, the prospect of getting a permanent resident visa in Canada is an important factor in their decision-making process.

We know from a 2016 AAU graduate retention study that an astonishing 75% of international students would choose to stay in their province of study following graduation if given an opportunity to do so.

Canada has some internationally prestigious scholarship and programs open to Indian students, such as:

- Vanier Canada Graduate Fellowships For Doctoral Students
- Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships
- The Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Scholarship Program And,
- The previously mentioned MITACS Globalink – Undergraduate Research Internships

Although 97% of Canadian universities have international programs, they are more successful in recruiting foreign students to come to Canada than in getting Canadian students to venture abroad.

Universities Canada reports that only 3 percent of Canadian undergraduates take advantage of an international study experience.

Some Canadian students go abroad for graduate school or travel and work, but reciprocal work-study programs that offer work visas to young Canadians in 30 countries remain seriously underutilized.

The government of India funds two programs for international students of commonwealth countries to study in India.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Plan, and, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan both of which provide Canadians an opportunity to pursue graduate studies in India.

Canadian students remain hesitant about going abroad for the study or work opportunities that would give them valuable international learning and cultural experience.

In summary, there are many great examples of partnerships that exist between Canadian and Indian institutions.

Over 400 MOUs have been signed between Canadian and Indian institutions – ranging from academic collaboration and twinning agreements to articulations enabling student, faculty and researcher mobility.

This longstanding academic relationship is best exemplified by the Shastri Indo-Canadian institute.

Thank you