

**REMARKS BY DIANNE TAYLOR-GEARING, CHAIR
COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS**

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Good afternoon.

I'm Dianne Taylor-Gearing, President, NSCAD University and Chair, Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents – CONSUP.

On behalf of my colleagues, I extend our sincere appreciation to the Halifax Chamber and today's luncheon sponsor Stewart McKelvey for providing me with this opportunity to talk about the role of Nova Scotia's universities as a key driver of the provincial economy.

I am also pleased to share this platform with my colleague, Dr. Kent MacDonald, President, St. Francis Xavier University.

Since its release in 2014, our universities, like many other provincial organizations and institutions, have viewed our activities through the lens of the *One Nova Scotia* report.

Universities are fully committed to making Nova Scotia a more prosperous province, now and into the future.

My intention today is to focus on three key aspects of the *One Nova Scotia* report where universities are having a big impact:

- Talent attraction, retention and, population growth
- R & D, innovation and,
- Generation of export revenue

The *One Nova Scotia* report recognized these three areas as critically important to provincial growth and success.

It is well established that Nova Scotia's universities are vital assets, key to future economic prosperity, social development and cultural sector leadership in communities across the province.

Less well known is that Nova Scotia's universities are the province's third largest export revenue sector behind tire manufacturing and, seafood preparation and packaging.

Nova Scotia's universities have historically been an education destination for students from across the country and around the world, making a significant contribution toward achievement of the first three goals of the *One Nova Scotia* report:

- Inter-provincial migration
- International immigration and,
- Retention of international students.

Since 2010, enrolment of students from outside the province has grown by more than ten percent – there are currently more than 14,000 students from across Canada who have chosen to attend university here in Nova Scotia.

In that same period, international student enrolment has grown by more than 50 percent or nearly 2,600 students.

Today, more than 8,000 students from around the globe study at Nova Scotia's universities.

In 2017, each international student is estimated to have spent more than \$36,000.00 on learning and living expenses.

The total spending of international students in Nova Scotia last year was nearly \$291 million!

That is a substantial economic impact felt in communities across the province, from Church Point – to – Sydney and especially right here in Halifax.

We know from recent research, that 65 percent of international students would like to stay here following their graduation, if given the opportunity to do so.

These highly qualified and motivated students represent an incredible opportunity for our province and reaffirms that our universities are indeed Nova Scotia's best source of new entrepreneurs, innovators, professionals and community leaders.

The *One Nova Scotia* report also calls for a doubling of post-secondary education R&D and expansion of research partnerships.

I am happy to report that Nova Scotia's universities annually attract over \$184 million in research funding from outside the province.

This does not include the nearly \$250 million in new federal R&D funding that will flow to Nova Scotia and the region from the recently announced Ocean Supercluster.

Nova Scotia MP and, Treasury Board President Scott Brison, describes the Ocean Supercluster as an *“unprecedented partnership led by the research community, universities and ocean-based businesses”*.

Dalhousie University is a key player in that consortia. It is among the top 15 research universities in Canada and, it is the most research-intensive university in the region.

What this adds up to is this:

The combined annual value of student and research exports generated by Nova Scotia’s universities is \$866 million – again, this is not counting the nearly quarter billion dollars in funding for the Ocean Supercluster.

I hope that I have not overwhelmed you with too many numbers.

My point is simply this: universities are a key driver of the provincial economy.

The lifeblood of universities are our students.

We do more than attract, develop and produce talent, and drive innovation through research.

Universities are also fully engaged in the social development of students, particularly as it relates to their health, well-being and future success.

Nova Scotia’s universities actively partner with the Government of Nova Scotia in promoting long-term student health and wellness, in areas such as:

- Promotion of healthy food choices and active lifestyles;
- Fostering positive mental health;
- Prevention of sexual violence on campus;
- Avoidance of substance abuse harms from alcohol, opioids and cannabis; and,
- Improving the accessibility of campus learning and living environments for all students