



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 24:45

Date: November 25, 2024

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **Update on the Federal Cap on International Student Visas**

In September, the federal government [announced an additional cap](#) on international student visas – a further 10% decrease beyond the initial 35% decrease announced in January, applicable for 2025 and 2026. The new cap will also apply to graduate students, with 12% of total visas issued allotted to master's and PhD students. The announcement included changes to the Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP), including a new language requirement, a reduction in the number of eligible programs, and further restrictions on spousal visa eligibility.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller made this announcement as part of the government's broader goal of decreasing the number of permanent residents from 6.5% to 5% of the population.

Impact Analysis

While there is not yet a full picture of the impact of the international student cap on university and college finances, [IRCC data](#) for September showed an overall decrease in student visa applications of 36%, including a decline of 54% for college applications. The [Association of Atlantic Universities estimates](#) there has been a 11.4% decline in international student enrolment across the Atlantic provinces. [Ontario colleges](#) saw a roughly 50% decrease in international student enrollment. In August, the federal government announced a [francophone student immigration pilot](#) program aimed to increase the number of French-speaking international students studying in francophone minority communities. More recently, [Québec has introduced](#) its own proposed cap on international students.

Given their disproportionate reliance on international student enrolment, the impacts are anticipated to be greatest for colleges in Ontario, followed by those in British Columbia.

Provincial Underfunding

A blue-ribbon panel on Ontario's post-secondary education sustainability recommended in 2023 (prior to the announcement of the cap) a \$2.5 billion investment from the province to address

years of chronic under-funding. Ontario's recent 2024 Fall Economic Statement repackaged a previous commitment of \$1.3 billion to help "stabilize" the post-secondary sector. The recently re-elected BC NDP has promised one-time funding to "high-demand career programs" at select institutions, but no ongoing increases to overall post-secondary operating grants.

Recommendations

CAUT has long expressed concerns about fraud, abuse, and exploitation of international students, as well as the overreliance on exorbitant international student fees to finance Canada's public post-secondary education system. What is lacking to ensure stronger support for international students and quality, affordable post-secondary education is public investment, particularly on the part of provinces. For decades, governments have failed to invest in public post-secondary education, social supports, and housing. CAUT will soon be launching a major campaign ahead of the next federal election to secure commitments to address the public funding gap that is all the more urgent given the drop in international student enrolments.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Justine De Jaegher, Director of Political Action and Communications, at dejaegher@caut.ca.