

OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

HIGHER
EDGE

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LET'S GO CANADA

Assessing The Speech From The Throne

A new Prime Minister, a new Cabinet and a new Speech from the Throne but no news on the role of international students to Canada's future (although the Speech did make open gestures to better integrate new immigrants). While countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and France have bold centrally planned strategies for international student recruitment, the Canadian mosaic remains fraught with cross-current interests and tensions. Amongst the issues the Federal Government needs to resolve in short order are the following:

To what extent is recruiting international students seen as a positive (for fulfilling immigration objectives, or for intellectual diversity) and to what extent a negative (the possibility of limiting spaces to deserving taxpayers)?

To what extent should international students be favoured as part of Canada's overall immigration scheme? Should there be prioritised emphasis according to whether students are bound for degree programs, diploma programs, or programs outside of provincially-funded institutions? Should immigration priority be conferred to students accepted to certain academic programs?

Presently, certain provinces have been conferred with recruitment advantages over others: off-campus employment, longer post-graduation employment, or faster overseas processing service. Will the future see increasingly disparate regulations governing international students according to the province they are bound for? Will this enhance or detract from Canada's ability to propound a coherent and focussed message, should it seek to aggressively pursue international students along the lines of its aforementioned competitor countries?

Should the Canadian Education Centre, representing universities, language schools and private institutions, continue to form the centrepiece of Canada's approach to international student recruitment? Or should there be an initiative led by the federal government or the appropriate provincial ministries that focusses on universities or provincially-funded colleges, or on both?

Finally, should Canadian students be provided with more in the way of financial incentives and other forms of support - along the lines of programs offered in Norway or the United States - to better enable overseas study in order that the outlook of cohorts of graduating students be more broadened, experienced and enlightened?

We encourage commentary from our readership that can form the basis for future coverage in this publication.

OVER THE COUNTER

Interpreting Indian Grades

Indian students applying to overseas universities may submit documentation that is misleading. With the final grades for Indian board exams released towards the end of May, Class X board results or Class XI grades are submitted. According to Higher-Edge's Luciana Rodrigues, "Class XI results are usually very low," although this does not imply a less qualified student. Student performance in Class XI often drops, as Class XII is considered more important (graduation of high school is dependant on passing final Board exams). Teachers have also been known to award lower grades in an effort to scare students into studying harder.

Institutions should be aware however, that in the near future the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will be modifying not only its syllabus, but the examinations structure as well. Higher-Edge will be monitoring the changes and will report on them in a future issue.

The upcoming issue of Insight, On-sight: India will feature a look at the various Board systems in the country.

GLOBE TIPPING

Avian Flu Reference Links

China, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan and Indonesia have all reported outbreaks of avian flu. While these outbreaks have not reached the magnitude of last year's SARS scare, travellers are advised to take precautions recommended by Health Canada, which includes ensuring all poultry products (including eggs) are properly cooked before eating them.

Health Canada Warning:
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/flu/avian.html>

World Health Organisation:
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/

Hong Kong Government:
<http://www.info.gov.hk/info/flu/eng/>

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Will Return Next Week