

SERVICE NEEDS AND GAPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TRANSITIONING TO  
PERMANENT RESIDENCY IN A "TWO-STEP" IMMIGRATION PROCESS: A TORONTO-  
BASED STUDY

by

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SERVICE NEEDS AND GAPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CANADA'S  
"TWO-STEP" IMMIGRATION PROCESS: A TORONTO-BASED STUDY

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Master of Arts, 2011

Immigration and Settlement Studies

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ABSTRACT

Despite the increase in efforts to attract and retain international students in Canada, including the introduction of the Canadian Experience Class in 2008, there has been little investigation into what supports will assist international students as they transition from students to workers to migrants. This research paper is a Toronto-based investigation of the service needs and gaps that exist for international students aiming to transition to permanent residency in Canada. Data gathered from interviews with front-line workers assisting international students, an immigrant-serving organization, and government suggests that immigration policy reforms aiming to attract and retain international students have not been accompanied by the necessary changes to traditional settlement and international student services resulting in service gaps for this segment of Canada's international student population. The present study also connects these findings to neoliberal immigration policies and practices in place in Canada since the 1990s.

Key Words:

immigration; international students; services; Canada; neoliberalism

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## 1. Introduction

Until recently, international student mobility to Canada was viewed as a temporary educational sojourn with little possibility for permanent residency. Recent policy shifts indicate this previous distance between international student status and immigration processes is narrowing. The federal government has relaxed work permit restrictions and introduced new avenues to permanent residency for international students, including the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) in 2008, an expedited immigration pathway for international students and temporary foreign workers with Canadian labour market experience. Even before the Canadian Experience Class was introduced, the number of former international students transitioning to permanent residency doubled within Canada, from 5,486 in 2003 to more than 10,000 in 2008 (CIC, 2010). Further, according to the 2009 Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) survey of international students, over half had intentions to migrate permanently to Canada upon completing their degrees (CBIE, 2009).

Yet, despite the rapid growth rate of international students living and working in Canada after completing their studies and the implementation of policies aimed at encouraging them to do so, there has been little discussion about what supports will ensure their successful transition to Canadian residency, labour market, or society. Further, in Ontario, home to 178,000 international students, there has been no empirical investigation into this issue (CIC, 2010). In this paper, I investigate service provisions for international students aiming to transition to permanent residency. The hypothesis guiding this investigation is that immigration policy reforms aiming to attract and retain international students have not been accompanied by the necessary changes to traditional settlement and international student services resulting in service gaps for international students intending to remain in Canada.

The empirical research in this paper is based in Toronto and examines data gathered in interviews with staff members of international student offices and career centres at four post-secondary institutions in Toronto, an immigrant-serving agency, as well as a government official. Of central concern is identifying the service needs of international students intending to transition to permanent residency, and gaps in current service provision for this population. The empirical research also documents possible ways forward for service delivery for these potential immigrants.

An online search was also conducted to survey the existing settlement and employment supports available in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), and to identify international student eligibility for the various programs being offered in the community. The data collected using this method complements the interview findings which focused primarily on supports available at post-secondary institutions, presenting a more complete snapshot of the supports currently available to international students throughout the community. This component of the research has practical applications as well. The findings are summarized in Appendix A and may be useful as a reference tool for international students looking for additional off-campus supports, for front-line workers who assist international students, or for further research on this issue.

Framing this investigation is literature discussing the neoliberal paradigm in the context of immigration policy and the related devolution of settlement services. Increased efforts to attract and retain international students are argued to be a continuation of the neoliberal agenda that Canadian immigration policy has followed since the 1990s. Further, inadequacies in service provisions for international students are connected to the devolution of service delivery that has accompanied the undermining of the welfare state.

## 2. Literature Review

Over the past two decades there has been a steady increase in the amount of Canadian literature published on the subject of international student migration or the related immigration reforms. While there were relatively few publications on the topic before the year 2000, the number has been increasing steadily and this rapid increase in attention to international student mobility is even more noticeable in the past year, which was the overall most productive year in terms of publications on the subject. This review includes literature that provides the national context for the emerging trends in Canadian policy relating to international students, literature discussing the emergence of the international student as an attractive migrant focusing on the Canadian context, and finally, a recent body of literature which has begun to investigate the various Canadian immigration reforms which encourage international students to switch to permanent residence and issues surrounding these reforms.

### 2.1 Contextualizing Canada's International Student Strategy

The emerging trend towards attracting international students and relaxing immigration policy to encourage them to remain in Canada is best understood in the context of neoliberalism, ongoing shifts in the Canadian labour market, and declining outcomes of other skilled immigrants in Canada. First, literature investigating the neoliberal paradigm that has been shaping Canadian immigration policy since at least the 1990s will be introduced. Secondly, scholarship pointing to ongoing Canadian labour market shifts is discussed, and connected to the neoliberal practices already evident in Canada's immigration policies. Finally, literature that documents declining economic outcomes of recent immigrant cohorts, including those who have entered through the Federal Skilled Worker Program, also helps to contextualize the immigration policies favouring international students.

### 2.1.2 The Neoliberal Paradigm and Service Devolution in Canada

Since the 1980s a neoliberal paradigm has influenced Canadian social politics, including immigration policies and practices. The neoliberal agenda is associated with the marginalization of the regulatory and supportive function of government in favour of a regime prioritizing market ideology and a smaller government role, and embracing the competitive principles of economic globalization (Bauder, 2008). It is well-documented that immigration policy in Canada is being linked with economic policy (Ley, 2003; Bauder, 2008). The introduction of the Points system in 1967 is early evidence of this shift in Canadian immigration policy towards aligning the country's immigration policies with its economic policies (Arat-Koc, 1998; Shachar, 2006). The Points system in Canada is a selection system granting admission to Canada based on human capital endowments, such as education, skills, and training. Under this skill-based selection system immigrants are granted admission based on their ability to become economically established in Canada (Shachar, 2006) and to do so with little assistance from the federal government. Further, using immigration for economic growth is evident in the creation of the business immigration program in 1978 and the investor migrant stream in 1986, whereby citizenship was exchanged to immigrants bringing substantial amounts of economic capital to Canada.

In the early 1990s, the shift towards a neoliberal agenda became particularly evident in Canadian immigration policy (Arat-Koc, 1998; Bauder, 2008). During this period, the Progressive Conservative government amended the 1976 Immigration act to encourage increased entries of business and professional immigrants with substantial amounts of human and monetary capital, and increased the intake of temporary foreign workers to fill the short term labour market

demands (Arat-Koc, 1998). Immigration policy at this time was shaped by the perception that these capital- rich and market- friendly immigrants would not only benefit Canada economically, but also bolster Canada's global competitive advantage. Thus, the competitive principle of neoliberalism had already been accommodated in Canadian immigration policy by the mid-1990s.

The framework of economic rationality for immigration was reiterated in the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. Moving away from a system granting points based on occupation, the new act introduced assessments based on labour market flexibility. Bauder (2008) has related these policy shifts favouring flexibility to the competitive principle of neoliberalism, arguing that "a prevailing expectation in Canadian immigration policy discourse is that skilled, flexible, and/or capital-rich immigrants will make the Canadian economy globally competitive" (p. 134).

The trend that emerged as a result of the neoliberal restructuring the Canadian state during this period, according to Arat-Koc (1998) has been greater emphasis in immigration selection on maximizing immigrants' economic contributions to Canada, while minimizing their costs in settlement and welfare (p. 49). This emphasis is stated explicitly in the Canadian government's long-term strategy for immigration released in 1994, which presented a new goal of "ensuring that newcomers to Canada can integrate and contribute to Canada as quick as possible, without adding burden on social programs" (CIC, Cited in Arat-Koc, 1998, p. 43). This neoliberal narrative has impacted settlement services in Canada. While the government and non-profit sector formerly worked cooperatively on sustaining the welfare state (Evans and Shields, 2005), Arat-Koc (1994) argues that the principles of the welfare state, including society's responsibility for "the well-being of its individual members" have been eroded and

replaced by an emphasis on limited state provisions and increased self-reliance (p. 34). Evans and Shields (2005) point to the increasingly prominent role taken on by the non-profit sector in this context, but also raise issues relating to this trend. Government service delivery tends to be uniform and standard across providers, while non-profits deliver relatively more individualistic services on a “first-come, first-serve basis”, but lack the resources needed for sufficient and stable provisions (Evans and Shields, 2000). Also, Evans and Shields (2000) have described the new type partnerships that emerged during the restructuring of service delivery as being more about devolving the work of service delivery to the non-profit sector than devolving decision making authority. As a consequence, the knowledge of front-line service providers is marginalized from policy development. This limits the advocacy role of the non-profit sector and “has profound implications for the capacity of the state to learn from and engage the citizens it governs” (Evans and Shields, 2000).

### 2.1.3 Highly-Skilled Migrants in Canada’s Changing Economy

Scholarship relating to ongoing changes in Canada’s labour market has also informed the discourse surrounding international students and immigration policy reforms. Scholars have pointed to the new challenges Canada, a country with a “historically low fertility rate”, will face as the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age and a relatively large cohort of Canada’s working population leaves the labour market over the course of the next decade (Sweetman and Warman, 2008, p. 27). Estimations by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (2008) suggest the amount of seniors retired from the labour market will surpass the number of Canada’s working aged population, and leave a labour shortage of nearly one million people by 2020. According to Suter and Jandl (2008), this labour shortage will affect both skilled and lower-skilled segments of the labour market, which others see as potentially having serious implications on productivity

within the country (Hawthorne, 2010). These demographic shifts help frame immigration policy debates, in that immigration is seen as a potential solution to these gaps in the labour market.

Furthermore, the development of these demographic shifts is in the context of a shift towards a knowledge-based economy<sup>1</sup>. Evidence of Canada's shift towards an economy based on knowledge and information includes substantial investments in Research and Development (R&D), which totalled nearly \$15 billion dollars over the past decade (Dufour, 2010). Further, Canada now spends the most on university R&D compared to other G8 countries (Dufour, 2010, p. 987). Also scholars have pointed out that in Canada and other knowledge-based economies, there is an increasing view that it is important to attract and retain skilled migrants in order to remain competitive in the global economy, and as a result, the international market for highly-skilled migrants has become particularly competitive (Suter and Jandl, 2008; Gera, et.al., 2004; Harris, 2004). The neoliberal principle of competitiveness surfaces frequently in the discourse surrounding knowledge-based economies, and highly-skilled knowledge workers are framed as giving a competitive edge.

#### 2.1.4 The Declining Economic Outcomes of Recent Immigrant Cohorts

Further contextualizing the recent immigration policy reforms is scholarship which points to a decline in the labour market outcomes of recent cohorts of immigrants in Canada over the past few decades (Green and Worswick, 2002; Frenette and Morissette, 2003; Picot, 2004; Warman and Worswick, 2004; Picot and Sweetman, 2005). Also, it has been observed that this decline occurred despite a larger focus in the past decade on admitting applicants with high levels of human capital. Frenette and Morissette (2003) use Census data from 1980 to 2000 to

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<sup>1</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1996) defines Knowledge-Based Economies as "economies which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information. Trends in countries with such economies include growth in high-technology investments, high-technology industries, more highly-skilled labour and associated productivity gains. (p. 7)

compare the economic outcomes of recently-arrived immigrants with the Canadian-born population. They found that despite more immigrants entering through the Economic class, earnings of “recent” immigrant men were 13 percent lower than those of their Canadian-born counterparts, with similar gaps in earnings reported for female immigrants during this same time period. Also, while low-income rates were decreasing for the Canadian-born during the 1990s, they were found by Picot (2004) to be increasing for new immigrants to Canada regardless of age group or level of educational attainment. Looking at earlier cohorts of immigrants, Warman and Worswick (2004) find the earnings of cohorts of immigrant males in the early 1970s tended to converge with Canadian-born males within 10 years after arriving, and these rates of convergence increased for the most recent cohorts. Despite this, the substantially wider initial gaps in the earnings of newer cohorts have made it extremely difficult for recent immigrants to “catch up” despite increased growth rates in earnings.

Sweetman and Warman (2008) propose three possible sources of relatively poor outcomes of recent immigrants. First, compositional shifts of immigrants relating to changes to the French and English language abilities of newer cohorts of immigrants, as well as their source countries—although the connection here and elsewhere (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2005) is unclear—and race-based discrimination in the labour market (p. 22). Second, Sweetman and Warman (2008) suggest that the poor economic rates of return to non-Canadian labour market experience have negatively affected labour market outcomes of recent cohorts of immigrants. For example, Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) found that one-third of the overall decline in the entry earnings of immigrants in Canada are associated with the declining wage returns to foreign labour market experience, mostly for immigrants originating from non-traditional source countries (p. 17). And finally, Sweetman and Warman (2008) argue that the conditions of the

labour market affect newly-arrived immigrant's incomes, and those arriving during recessions had low labour market outcomes that were enduring (p. 23).

Other scholars have looked at the role of foreign educational credentials in relation to the deteriorating earning outcomes of immigrants. Ferrer and Riddell (2008) used Census data to investigate returns to the human capital of immigrants in Canada. Pre-arrival education of immigrants in terms of years of schooling was found to be much less valued than the equivalent amount of education by the Canadian-born; however, completing a degree did show higher returns for immigrants in terms of wages. Thus, while possessing educational credentials from outside of Canada has been shown by Ferrer and Riddell (2008) to lower the rate of return to education, these findings are not evidence that non-Canadian credentials have contributed to the deteriorating labour market outcomes of immigrants in Canada. Schooling gained in Canada, however, has been correlated with higher rates of return to post-secondary education for immigrants than when it is gained elsewhere (McBride and Sweetman, 2003).

## 2.2 The Emergence of the “Ideal” Immigrant

In the context of labour market shortages, the preoccupation with attracting and competing for highly skilled workers in the knowledge-based economy, and studies showing declining outcomes of recent cohorts of skilled immigrants, the international student is increasingly portrayed as an “ideal” type of immigrant. There is increasing scholarship arguing that immigration policies should be reformed to favour attracting foreign students (Peykov, 2004). Demonstrating a neoliberal perspective, Peykov (2004) argues that to resolve Canada's labour market issues immigration rates need to increase, but only of target populations “who are likely to adapt to the Canadian lifestyle, contribute economically, abide by the laws in the country, and become self-supporting” (p. 2). Also, international students are depicted as

promising potential immigrants since they have lived in Canada, which is presumed to mean they have been acclimatized to the society, culture, and values. Further, since they have Canadian qualifications, another common presumption is that they are less likely to encounter the main challenges that lead to earning gaps between the immigrant and Canadian-born populations, including “challenges in obtaining professional credentials and adapting to a new language and culture” (Peykov, 2004, p. 9). These arguments demonstrate that at least within the neoliberal paradigm, international students are a very fitting candidate for immigration since they benefit the economic market and are presumed to require little to no support from the state apparatus. According to Gates-Gasse (2010), this perspective is increasingly widespread, and the period international students spend studying and working in Canada is assumed to give them the time to acculturate to Canadian society, develop English-language proficiency, and gain Canadian work experience, as well as the Canadian credentials coveted by many employers.

The economic motivation for attracting international students as immigrants is also circulating. Scholars have pointed to the economic benefits international students bring to their local economy and the national economy, even as temporary migrants, by paying exponentially higher tuition fees relative to domestic students and making substantial economic investments during their study period (Lowe, 2011; Alboim 2011).

Fama (2011) provides a government perspective on why attracting international students is currently a priority on the Canadian federal government’s agenda. Mirroring some of the arguments made above, the federal government believes international students bring new perspectives and research to academic environments, as well as enhancing the intercultural capabilities of domestic students (p.11). Economically, their tuition fees and other expenses contribute substantially to the Canadian economy and they also contribute to the labour market

as highly skilled workers. Finally, their Canadian credentials and official language abilities make them “ideal” immigrants. The government’s interest in international students again fits into the neoliberal narrative by emphasizing the competitive advantage international student contributions bring and their positive contributions to the Canadian labour market.

## 2.3 International Student Strategies and Policy Shifts in Canada

### 2.3.1 Efforts to Attract and Retain International Students

The conceptualization of international students as “ideal” migrants has recently materialized in immigration policy shifts in Canada and other immigrant-receiving countries. Over the past decade, and increasingly in recent years, academics and policy makers have acknowledged and documented these shifts (Tremblay, 2005; Suter and Jandl, 2008; Hawthorne, 2010; Fama, 2011). Tremblay (2005) points out that immigration regulations are relaxing to encourage foreign university and college students to transition to permanent residency in their host countries. While for a long time foreign graduates at tertiary institutions had to leave their host country to apply for permanent residency, in the context of skills shortages and demographic shifts Tremblay (2005) argues immigration authorities in Canada and elsewhere have adapted their policies to allow foreign graduates to transition to permanent residency from inside the host country. In 2005, when Tremblay made those observations, these adaptations were limited to increased points for foreign graduates applying through the Federal Skilled Worker Program, and a one year work-permit opportunity for new graduates. In less than a decade, there have been numerous other reforms demonstrating a targeted policy direction relating to international students.

Some of these policies include efforts to make Canadian education attractive, such as a marketing brand which promotes Canadian education overseas, called “Imagine Canada” and the

introduction in 2008 of the Vanier Scholarships, which awards \$50,000 to qualifying PhD students, including international graduate students. Further work permit programs, such as the Off-Campus Work Permit Program (OCWP) and the expansion of the Post-Graduate Work Permit Program in 2008 provide full-time students the opportunity to gain Canadian work experience off their campuses, and graduating students with (up to) a three year open work permit, respectively.

Gaining relatively more attention by scholars though, is the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). Introduced in 2008, the CEC has increased access to the Economic immigration class for foreign students and Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs). The new entry class allows TFWs and international students with Canadian experience to transfer their temporary resident status to permanent resident status from within the country. Like Tremblay (2005), Sweetman and Warman (2009) see this as a movement away from previous regulations, which required TFWs and international students to apply for permanent residency using the same channels as other immigrants and reportedly resulted in only a small number of temporary foreign workers or international students being admitted as permanent residents. Currently, using the CEC allows international students expedited permanent residency after completing a minimum of two years of full-time study at an eligible publicly-funded Canadian post-secondary institution. Other requirements include having completed one year of skilled work experience in a managerial, professional, or technical and skilled trade occupation (NOC O, A, or B, respectively) that does not have to be related to the field of study (Sweetman and Warman, 2010). Further, unlike the Skilled Worker Program, the linguistic capabilities of CEC applicants are evaluated based on the skill-levels of their occupation, and higher standards are set for those working in higher skilled positions (Sweetman and Warman, 2010).

Alboim (2011) has found no indication that the federal government intends to expand the Economic Class, therefore as the CEC expands, she argues, the trade-off will be fewer entries under the Skilled Worker Program and other elements of the Economic Class. Currently, nearly three years after introducing the Canadian Experience Class, only 3,000 people have taken advantage of this new avenue for immigration. There is no cap on the numbers admitted through this program and the approval rate is up to 86% for the student stream (Alboim, 2011). There have been no explanations given for why so few people have entered through this stream.

### 2.3.2 The New Immigration Reforms

Sweetman and Warman (2010) offer one of the first investigations into the new stream of applicants entering Canada under the CEC, looking at the pros and cons of this new immigration avenue. The CEC devolves some of the responsibilities of immigrant selection from the federal government to stakeholders such as employers and post-secondary institutions. Sweetman and Warman (2010) note that devolving selection results in further responsibilities for the federal government in terms of verification and enforcement to ensure proper standards in selecting future Canadians. However, in their opinion there is a lack of clarity surrounding how the federal government will adapt to this role (p. 59). Sweetman and Warman (2010) also point to public concerns regarding the effect that allowing permanent entry of highly skilled immigrants will have on the wages of the Canadian-born and previous cohorts of immigrants in the domestic labour market, as well as competition for employment (p. 60). While the authors state that some segments of the existing Canadian population may be negatively affected in the short run, they also argue that there is little existing evidence supporting these concerns. On a positive note, they find the language requirements of the CEC to show recognition of the

important relation that has been demonstrated frequently between English or French language abilities and labour market success (p. 60).

While the assumption that migrants who have gained human capital inside of Canada will have better economic outcomes underpins the new immigration reforms to encourage the immigration of temporary workers and international students already inside the country is, there is a lack of evidence supporting this hypothesis as of yet. Also, as Sweetman and Warman (2010) have pointed out, immigrants entering under the CEC have not been in the labour market long enough to evaluate their success. However, there are a small number of studies looking at the economic outcomes of TFWs and/or international students that pre-date the CEC, but that might provide some insight into how these populations tend to fare in the Canadian labour market in relation to other immigrants (Warman, 2007; Sweetman and Warman, 2009). Warman (2007) compares the earnings of TFWs to those of immigrants from all immigration classes and found that current male TFWs had much higher earnings than recently-landed immigrants, and in 2 out of 3 surveys, the earnings of female TFWs also surpassed those of their immigrant counterparts.

Sweetman and Warman (2009) provide a preliminary attempt to look specifically at international students' employment and earnings outcomes in the context of the new immigration reforms targeting this population. Albeit their research followed too closely the creation of the CEC to be a real assessment the economic outcomes of applicants admitted through this stream, they use two groups of immigrants resembling those targeted by the CEC (former TFWs and former international students) to function as proxies for immigrants entering under the new stream, in order to gain a better understanding of what we might expect. They draw on data from the Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) to compare the economic outcomes of

former TFWs and former international students, two groups who have gained human capital within Canada, to immigrants with no pre-arrival Canadian human capital. After controlling for all the variables accounted for under the current Canadian point systems, they found that four years after landing, former TFWs and international students showed significantly higher employment and earnings outcomes compared to the skilled worker immigrants who had gained their human capital outside of Canada. However, the evidence for better labour market outcomes of international students compared to other immigrants was not as strong as the evidence for TFWs. Overall, Sweetman and Warman's (2009) findings are promising, but it is difficult to say with any certainty that they are generalizable to CEC-stream immigrants.

## 2.4 Policy Responses

### 2.4.1 “Two-step” Immigration

Traditionally, the Canadian immigration system has been structured in a way that immigrants entered Canada using a “one-step” process. Immigrants enter Canada as permanent residents, with citizenship as the ultimate goal. More recently, Canadian immigration policies have shifted the focus of the immigration system to temporary migrants, and the boundaries between temporary and permanent immigration are becoming blurred. Several recent policy reforms demonstrate this shift. Under the Canadian Experience Class and the Provincial Nominee Programs international students gain permanent residency through two distinct steps—first, by entering the country as a temporary resident, then by transitioning into permanent residency without ever having to leave the country. This type of immigration has been referred to as “two-step” immigration (Hawthorne, 2010; Gates-Gasse, 2010). Relative to the FSWP, the expected intakes through both these avenues combined is expected to total one-third or more of Economic immigrants accepted as permanent residents (Gates-Gasse, 2010). Further, since the high aims

set by the federal government for CEC-stream intakes will come out of the FSWP, Gates-Gasse (2010) predicts that other FSWP applicants will face even longer wait times than they currently do. Meanwhile, restrictions are being tightened on the FSWP, and as of November 2008 new applications will only be eligible for processing if the applicant has experience in an eligible occupation, and has arranged employment or one year of Canadian work experience (CIC, 2011). In 2010, annual limits were placed on the number of new applications processed through the FSWP, and just recently a cap of 10,000 FSW applications without an offer of employment for each year was introduced (CIC, 2011). The progressive restricting of the FSWP and the concurrent expansion of avenues to permanent residency suggests that Canada is moving away from the human capital model of immigration and towards a system that is more responsive to labour market demands (Lowe, 2011).

Another unique aspect of “two-step” immigration that has been pointed out in recent literature is the necessity for international students to prove their abilities to integrate into the Canadian labour market within their limited time as temporary migrants. Their success during this temporary phase is what determines their eligibility for permanent residence through the CEC or the PNPs. This process differs from the previous norm of permanent residency being earned by Economic class immigrants before they entered Canada to work and live. Gates-Gasse (2010) describes this requirement to contradict the official government position on integration as a “two-way street”, whereby integration is the responsibility of both the migrant and the Canadian population and society. In the case of the CEC and PNPs, whereby labour market integration is a prerequisite for admission, Gates-Gasse (2010) argues that the onus of integration is placed almost entirely on the immigrant. While the official government position declares integration to be a “two-way street”, the 1997 report “Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework

for the Future of Immigration” released by the Liberal Government to shape the new immigration act, emphasized selection based on the ability to integrate in Canada among its numerous recommendations (CIC, 1997). The neoliberal approach to integration is evident in both the 1997 report and in the more recent policy shifts that do not hold the Canadian society and the State equally responsible for the integration of its newcomers.

#### 2.4.2 Service Gaps and Barriers

While work permits have bought international students some time to search for qualifying employment and the new pathways provide an expedited path to immigration after the allotted time in that job, recent scholarship points out that international students do not have adequate supports to help them successfully make the transition to the labour market or permanent residency. Alboim (2009) suggests that international students hoping to take advantage of these new avenues to migration and settle in Canada have unique service needs compared to those on temporary sojourn. Despite these unique needs, scholars have pointed to gaps in specialized service provisions for these students during both phases of their ‘two-step’ immigration process—a process which can last from 3 to 10 or more years “as they transition from student to worker to immigrant” (Lowe, 2011, p. 22). During this time, like TFWs, international students are not eligible for federally-funded language training and settlement supports (Lowe, 2011).

These services, available to other new immigrants, permanent residents, and convention refugees, include settlement information, one-on-one settlement counselling, translation of documents, English language training, among many other services. As a result, Gates-Gasse (2010) argues, “the burden and cost of settlement is downloaded onto these individuals, onto the many institutions and organizations that will support them, and to provincial and municipal governments who fund services regardless of an individual’s status”. This observation can easily

be connected to the trend towards devolving federal responsibilities associated with the neoliberal paradigm.

Lowe (2011) has pointed out that international students may access provincially-funded settlement services, which have broader eligibility; however, of all the settlement services offered in Ontario, for example, only 20% of settlement services are funded by the province, compared to 80% which are funded by the federal government (p. 22). Lowe (2011) also suggests that the funding dilemma for international student settlement services is further compounded in Toronto, the host city of over 15,000 international students, where the federal government recently cut nearly \$53-million from settlement agencies (p. 23). In this context, it will be increasingly difficult for some immigrant serving agencies to provide international students, and immigrants more generally, with the services to help them get established in Canada.

The primary source of social support for international students is the International Student Office (ISO) at their host institution (Lowe, 2011). Providing settlement supports, however, is beyond the mandate of most ISOs at Canadian tertiary institutions, which generally are limited to addressing pragmatic and every day issues dealt with by international students (Chira, 2011). Not only is offering specialized services for this population beyond the ISOs' mandates, these offices lack the capacity to go beyond these mandates and to delve into addressing the needs of international students with immigration issues related to permanent residency (Gates-Gasse, 2010; Chira, 2009, 2011). Alboim (2011) also points out that the different government funding models for international students mean that there is no responsibility on the part of the institution to have special provisions for their international population; despite the differential fees they pay (Alboim, 2011). Alboim (2011) warns-

Without common standards, a clarification of roles and responsibilities for supporting this group, and adequate funding, Canada may end up with a patchwork of settlement services for international students across the country, depending on the institution at which they are studying. (p. 17)

Alboim's (2011) argument here reflects Evans and Shields' (2000) discussion of inconsistencies in non-profit sector service delivery as a result of the sector's inability to generate sufficient resources in the post-welfare state. Considering the lack of responsibility institutions have to address the needs of their international student population, similar issues to those affecting immigrant-serving agencies in the non-profit sector are likely to affect the capacity of colleges and universities to provide adequate service provision to international students.

#### 2.4.3 Potential for Abuses

The rapid expansion of increasing avenues to permanent residency for international students has also been linked to potential abuses of these avenues (Hawthorne, 2010; Alboim, 2011; Fama, 2011). Alboim (2011) has cautioned that the new avenues to permanent residency may lead to abuses of the program by students who are looking for quick immigration pathways, or by educational institutions that operate at substandard levels and offer the minimum required for their students to qualify for the CEC or PNPs. Fama (2011) also expresses concerns about the potential for perverse practices among Canadian education institutions. While other countries have comprehensive strategies in place to ensure the integrity of their international student programs, Fama (2011) points out that Canada's current framework lacks a formalized strategy for selecting and monitoring education institutions. As a consequence international students have ended up at unregulated educational institutions, some of which "engage in questionable activities" and some with substandard programs (p. 13).

Several themes arise from the emerging Canadian literature on policy shifts relating to international students. First, the literature focusing on the recent immigration policy shifts targeting international students demonstrates and takes part in the reproduction neoliberal ideology, whereby international students are “ideal” migrants based on their high levels of human capital and economic contributions that help make Canada more competitive in the global economy. Also, scholars have acknowledged the devolution of immigrant selection to provinces, employers, and post-secondary institutions, and a lack of federal services for international students; however, there is a dearth in literature that links the devolving responsibility for services that assist international students transitioning to permanent residency to neoliberal practices relating to social service provision generally. Furthermore, recent scholarship suggests that there are service gaps for international students who intend to immigrate to Canada, but there is little empirical evidence backing these claims. The present study fills some of these gaps by providing an empirical analysis of service gaps that exist for international students aiming to immigrate to Canada, and connects these findings to neoliberalism in Canadian immigration policies and practice.

### 3. Research Hypothesis

Immigration policy reforms aiming to attract and retain international students have not been accompanied by necessary changes to traditional service provisions for international students.

#### Research Questions:

1. What are the service needs of international students intending to immigration to Canada?
2. What are the current gaps in settlement service provisions for this population?
3. How can service delivery be improved for international students transitioning to permanent residency?

## 4. Research Methods

Two research methods were employed during this study. Key informant interviews provided insight into the needs of international students and services gaps for this population from the perspective of front-line service providers assisting international students. Secondly, web searches were conducted to survey the existing services in the community, what they offer, and to determine international students' eligibility. This component of the research complemented the information gathered during the interviewing stage, and also provided a practical component to this paper. The findings of this survey can be found in Appendix A, and can be used as a reference tool for international student service providers, international students, or future researchers investigating this topic. The two methods employed for this study are described in more detail in the following two sub-sections.

### 4.1 Key Informant Interviews

Between June and August 2011, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants at four post-secondary institutions in the GTA, one immigrant-serving agency, and one government official. The post-secondary institutions chosen for this study included two colleges and two universities to get a sense of service provisions for international students at both types of institutions. The original assumption was that colleges, which are more focused on professional programs, would show more promising practices relating to assisting international students transition into the Canadian labour market or the society-at-large. However, there was little evidence of this in the research findings.

The sample of university, college, and settlement agency staff members was restricted to those with front-line experience serving international students. As one of the main objectives of

the study is to gain a better understanding of the needs of international students, this selection criterion was based on the assumption that those who work with this population individually would be more aware of their needs and concerns. The government sample was restricted to those with portfolios involving immigration policy, in line with the purpose of getting a broader policy perspective on the issues relating to international student immigration within Canada.

The recruitment process consisted of identifying potential participants by web searches of university, college, government, and settlement agency websites. Potential participants were invited to participate by means of email contact soliciting participation (see Appendix B). Interviews were scheduled with interested participants at their own offices in all but one case, and tape recorded. Each participant signed a consent agreement before participating, emphasizing the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation (see Appendix C). The interviews explored respondents' experiences and suggestions concerning the settlement needs of, as well as services for, international students who wish to transition to permanent resident status after completing their studies. The interview questions were open-ended, and while pre-planned, there was no rigid structure enforced, allowing the interviewees to raise issues that were not in the interview guide. The interview process was also iterative with interview often providing interesting information that would be incorporated into the interview guide for the next interview. At the end of the process, the interviews were transcribed using transcription software and coded manually according to key themes in order to ease analysis.

#### 4.2 Online Research

To complement the data gathered in the interviewing stage, online research of the settlement and employment services in the GTA was subsequently conducted. The purpose of

this component of the research was two-fold. First, it was meant to present a clear picture of the many settlement and employment services that could assist international students transitioning to permanent residency, which they cannot presently access due to eligibility restrictions.

Secondly, it also functions as a reference tool demonstrating where international students can go in the community to access services that may make their transition to permanent residency smoother. To achieve this, online research was conducted, beginning with web portals, such as settlement.org, and the City of Toronto web portal, to identify the main settlement and employment service providers and services available in the GTA. Service providers included settlement agencies, community organizations, employment service agencies, local school boards, and libraries. The websites of service providers were surveyed for settlement or employment programs, as well as program eligibility. The collected data was entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. Program eligibility was sometimes difficult to discern and when this information was not clear or present on the website, the information was gathered by email inquiry to providers of the programs in question. Still, some conflicting information regarding eligibility remained and the most frequently stated eligibility criterion was entered into the table.

## 5. Research Findings

This section incorporates the findings from both the interview and online search components of this research. The research findings are broken down into key themes that arose from the data collected for this study. When the theme represents a service need of international students, the sub-section is further divided into findings describing the need, services that address the need or lack thereof, and challenges that front-line workers identified as barriers to meeting the need. Sub-section 5.4 is divided by themes relating to ways to improve service delivery for international students.

### 5.1 *Extended Immigration Services*

#### 5.1.1 Needs

The staff of the international student offices (ISOs) participating in this study emphasized the importance of immigration services for international students. Two types of immigration services were discussed in the interviews. The first type were services relating to their temporary stay in Canada as students, and included assistance with applying for or extending study permits, obtaining off-campus work permits, understanding Canadian immigration policy in respect to studying in Canada or engaging employment, having spouses or family visit, having parents attend convocation, or visa regulations for visiting the U.S. Service provisions for these types of needs were in place at all institutions in the sample. The second type of immigration service needs identified through the interviews, require a reimagining of international students from temporary sojourners, to potential immigrants. Indeed, with over 10,000 international students transitioning to permanent residency in Canada each year (CIC, 2008), international students are moving away from their previous status as temporary visitors. The research findings indicate a

heightened need for this second type of extended immigration services due to the increased efforts to encourage international students to stay. One international student advisor (ISA) put forward that the new efforts encouraging international students to become permanent residents, “make it more important or critical—more critical for International student office to offer extended immigration advice and services for international students”. The ISA suggests that international students remaining in Canada require unique immigration services beyond the traditional services provided to international students that focus on short-term needs.

While the new avenues are portrayed as expedited immigration avenues to permanent residency, the complexity of navigating these new avenues is also highlighted in the data, along with the need students have for assistance during this process. One ISA points out that international students already have many other priorities and demands related to their studies, making the necessity for extended immigration services more pertinent:

We say we welcome international students to become permanent residents, they think international students just automatically know what to do—they don't ... How could you assume they understand all the procedure, the law. And they're student[s], they're young, they're immature, they're kids and going through—that's a long, complicated legal process depending on these students. It's almost impossible. They need help.

Here, the ISA points to the need for immigration advice from someone with a thorough knowledge of the immigration pathways and legal aspects of the process. Her portrayal of the permanent residency process as a complicated legal process also challenges the idea that the CEC and other immigration avenues provide an easy route to immigration for international students.

The desire international students have expressed for detailed information about the permanent residency pathways and procedures is also demonstrated by another participant.

Drawing on information gathered from research conducted at her post-secondary institution, one international office staff member relays the students' demands regarding permanent residency information:

We do provide information, like here's the websites to go to get the information, and we do offer to bring in speakers so that they are getting information from reputable and experienced sources. In the survey that we did we found that students want even more information and they want it earlier in their process of being here ... So they are clearly thinking about the future much earlier—almost upon arrival—and want us to engage with them on that.

According to this participant, students have indicated that they require information beyond what they find on government websites describing the various immigration pathways, or the general information sessions at their institutions, demonstrating a lack of satisfaction with current service provision.

The finding that students want information earlier on indicates that for some international students, studying abroad is not considered a temporary sojourn. This is counter to the typical understanding of international students that they are here to study then leave the country at the end of their studies. The importance of this observation is how it relates to the present conceptualization of service provision for international students. If international students are viewed as temporary, then extended service provision connecting them to the Canadian labour market, and citizenship is not necessary. However, this view is not supported by the present findings, pointing to the importance of redefining who an international student is and what kinds of service needs they have as potential immigrants.

Understanding the employment pre-requisites for Canadian immigration streams is also important for international students hoping to gain permanent residency. The CEC, for example, requires one year full-time Canadian work experience in an occupation classified at the O

(managerial), A (professional), or B (technical and skilled trade) skill levels according to the National Occupational Classification Matrix. Not meeting one of these requirements could result in the students having to leave Canada, or at least make the permanent residency process more complicated and costly for the applicant. One ISA finds that many international students are not clear on what employment will qualify them for particular immigration streams:

Even if you have a job offer or you have part time work, it may not [count] for into the consideration of permanent residency because that's specific job/work employment. Then, you know, students ask, "I have this job does it count, or doesn't it?" So without proper understanding of government requirements and policies it's not working even if they have job.

This finding suggest that international students intending to immigrate to Canada using an immigration pathway with employment requirements need to have clear, detailed information delivered to them about what type of employment qualifies them for the CEC or PNP. This information would be more useful if delivered to students before they enter the labour market after graduating, so they have time to align their employment decisions with the requirements of their preferred immigration class.

#### 5.1.2 Services and Gaps

All of the ISOs at the participants' institutions had full-time international student advisors. These advisors give students advice on a broad range of issues relating to their studies, academics, immigration (relating to visas and work permits), and other personal issues. One ISA explains their role in the office:

When we talk about student advisor, their job is not only about telling students how to apply for study permit[s], it covers a wide range of subjects such as immigration, academic issues, personal issues, transition issues, relationship issues, sometime[s] hous[ing] issues, or career—so anything students need a person to talk to, need to be

connected to additional resources, need a person who can advise them how to live their lives.

This advisor captures the dynamic role of the advisor, as a one-stop source of information relating to many facets of the international student experience. However, only one of the participating advisors indicated that the ISAs in their office assisted students with understanding the various categories available to them for permanent residency. At this same office, the international student advisors helped bridge the gaps in their own services for international students transitioning to permanent residency, by connecting them with other service providers in the community for extended support or settlement services. This was clearly an exception in terms of service provision and the other staff members indicated their offices did not offer similar advice.

The differential service provisions found between ISOs in this study supports the idea that settlement services for international students are inconsistent across institutions, an issue that Alboim (2011) linked to the lack of common standards and clarification relating to providing services to international students. This finding also relates to both Arat-Koc (1998) and Evans and Shields (2005) arguments relating to inconsistencies in service provision for immigrants resulting from the federal downloading of social programming.

Among the services that are currently offered to international students, colleges and universities offer workshops or seminars on the topic of permanent residency. For these presentations, the institutions invited representatives from CIC to explain the pathways and procedures for becoming permanent residents. One ISA describes the permanent residency workshops offered at her institution:

ISA: We also work with CIC and we have immigration officers come to campus to talk to international students—that's first-hand information.

E: Do they do one-on-one advising with students at all?

ISA: No. We usually do group advising. So it's like workshops and we have speakers and talk to them about the policy procedures, but there are opportunities, more like one-on-one, which is the question and answer session—which is the most popular part, and the longest part. And students can bring their individual issues to the workshop and talk to the immigration officer and getting the immediate answers, which is very unique.

It is important to note that international students do not receive one-on-one, case-specific advice from CIC at these workshops, and the question and answer period provides the one and only time that international students at most institutions can receive any case-specific advice at their institution. This is a major gap, considering the need for detailed information about their permanent residency options that international students have identified.

In lieu of providing extended immigration services at their own offices, one alternative used by ISOs was referring students to resources such as government websites for this information. In fact, referring students to the right destination for support is part of the mandate of at least one ISO. Similarly, another ISO's staff member stated that for her office, providing immigration advice "is beyond the mandate and it's beyond our expertise. But we do provide information like, here's the websites to go to get the information". Again, considering the complexity of the process and the students' demands for information beyond what can be found on government websites, these referral services do not adequately address the needs of international students transitioning to permanent residency.

One international student office staff member indicated that the staff members at their office do offer bridging services to connect international students to community organizations for supports. As opposed to referral services, bridging services are not part of the ISO's mandate—

so these services are additional services without allocated resources and staff. According to one advisor, her office organizes meetings for students and settlement agencies right in their office:

Bridging is additional resources—for example, settlement agencies. Right? We don't have to refer [international students to] them, but we do. We connect them. We want them to meet at [our institution]. We organize a venue for them to talk to each other and it's all free of charges.

This type of bridging service was unique to this ISO. The types of organizations that the ISO bridged students to were immigrant-serving organizations that have established services in settlement issues and they are screened by the international student office prior to connecting students to their resources. While currently these non-mandated services are offered, these provisions are not sustainable.

In terms of the immigration or settlement related services available at immigrant-serving organizations in Toronto, the online search component of this research found that international students are able to access information about settlement either online via settlement information portals run by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, or at local libraries delivering the Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP), since there are no eligibility restrictions on these programs. However, for one-on-one settlement counselling to discuss case-specific matters, international students can only meet with LSP settlement workers, due to eligibility requirements of the federally-funded Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and the provincially-funded Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP). However, the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy of some organizations offering the NSP means international students may be able to access NSP services. However, the settlement worker who participated in this study stated that this option is conditional depending on available funding and that often international students were referred back to their institutions.

### 5.1.3 Challenges

Several barriers to providing extended immigration services to international students were identified by the participants. First, ISAs are overburdened. One ISA describes the overwhelming number of responsibilities their advisors have, compromising their ability to provide international students aiming for permanent residency the unique assistance they require:

E: Do you find that the, with 1400 students and 2 full advisors, is there pretty limited time for...

ISA: Absolutely, if you divide it by per person ratio, it's—one advisor is responsible for 700 international students. Yeah, and it's one to be responsible to advise 700 students. And the 700 students, each student will have a study permit—that's 700 study permits, one visitor visa—that's entry visa—that's 700 visitor visas. And if they go to the United States they need a US visa—that's another 700 visas, and if they want to apply for off-campus work permit ... plus, the house insurance, the permanent residence insurance, their spouse and dependents and if you add onto that there are thousands of issues just around immigration or plus personal, academic, financial aid, you name it, transition issues. So to make it even worse, the two advisors also have other jobs, such as community events, projects. So the availability, the capacity for them to really support these students—it's almost at minimum to the level of the needs of the students.

As indicated in this narrative, the number of responsibilities already held by ISAs is a barrier to expanding the services they provide to international students. Even with just their current responsibilities, international student advisors seem to be beyond their capacity to provide all the necessary supports of the growing international student population. The challenges facing ISAs described above resemble those faced by the non-profit sector. Evans and Shields (2000) argue that “the drive to download responsibilities for social welfare by government to the third sector has strained the capacity of the sector to handle new demands to its outer limits” (p. 18). Similarly, the present findings suggest that ISOs and their staff members lack the capacity to handle increasing numbers of international students, or to expand their services to meet the increasing immigration-related demands brought about by the new policies targeting

international students. This is not to equate the case of previously public services being downloaded to non-profit organizations, since service provision for international students was never considered a government responsibility. However, considering immigrant selection is a federal responsibility and reforms made by the federal government are targeting international students for immigration, they are downloading their responsibilities for the immigrants they have indirectly selected to ISOs and the non-profit agencies—and present findings indicate neither actor currently has the capacity to take on additional responsibilities.

Beyond the challenge of capacity, there is the question of qualifications. All of the ISO staff who participated in this study indicated that the ISAs at their office are not qualified to provide permanent residency information to international students. One advisor argues that they have to train themselves on these issues if they choose to do so, but indicates there is risk involved:

Our advisors are not trained to be legal representatives for international students to apply for permanent residency to Canada ... So they're not trained [or] equipped to have that knowledge and they have to learn on their own, and they are not ... protected—legal, like to say they have the right and the power and the certification to provide any [permanent residency]-related advice to these students. And these are very serious legal matters and if anything goes wrong ... they can be, and the university can be liable ... if students fail to become a permanent resident. And so we're saying, no, that's not enough to have two full-time advisors. No, it's definitely not right to have the full-time advisors be responsible to help the students understand the new immigration policies, especially in regards to permanent residency.

International students require accurate, up-to-date information to successfully navigate the permanent residency process. However, this staff member points out that ISAs have no formal training on permanent residency policies and procedures, which makes them unqualified to provide advice on these matters. When information is provided by advisors not trained on the

policies and procedures, there is a risk that inaccurate information or information that is out-of-date could be given to the student, compromising their permanent residency.

Other participants say their ISAs don't give advice regarding permanent residency applications at all, because they are not qualified. As one international office staff member states:

We have to be careful not to be seen to be experts in this area, because we're not—obviously. Nor can we assist people with completing their immigration application or any of this stuff ... it's beyond the mandate and it's beyond our expertise ... Our folks are very knowledgeable about where to go to get information, but don't provide any information themselves.

The restrictions international student advisors face due to being overburdened and not formally qualified to deal with extended immigration matters create a gap in services relating to a critical service for those students who wish to remain in Canada permanently.

Another oft cited barrier to improving service provision to this segment of the international student population is the lack of resources available to ISOs. Providing international students with services the ISO is not funded for is deemed unsustainable by one ISA who argues that they have “no additional funding whatsoever. We [provide extra services] out of our own staff[’s] extra energy, extra time, and passion for helping international students, and that is not sustainable.” In another case, a lack of resources is again described as a barrier for ISOs to provide sufficient supports to the segment of the international student population with immigration intentions:

We need to help the students to have that kind of support, but we don't have any support. So the government keeps having new policies and they keep saying they want to help international students, but helping international students involves resources to allow us to

help them. Without giving us resources, you cannot help them ... not even a message to say we're taking [it] into consideration, we're in the process.

Resources are suggested here to be necessary, though lacking, for providing adequate supports for international students.

One ISA indicated that some international students are using immigration lawyers to understand the legal aspects of immigrating to Canada. While immigration lawyers are portrayed as potential providers of the expanded immigration assistance required by international students remaining in Canada, ISAs identify cost issues as barriers to seeking the assistance of immigration lawyers. One ISA describes how a lack of funds may prevent international students from accessing these potentially beneficial services:

Understanding the legal process is always a challenge ... and you need money to hire an immigration lawyer and how many students can afford that? And if they don't have that kind of money to hire a lawyer, do you think most of them are confident—as a 20 year old—to apply for this legal process alone? ... And if they don't do well they're more work for immigration because they have ... cases that are not presented well, documents are not complete.

The fact that international students are seeking the assistance of immigration lawyers or the idea that it would benefit them to do so brings the private sector into the mix of actors with a role in service provision for international students. This is problematic in that some students cannot afford this process, as was just pointed out, and creates differential access to services depending students' financial situation. A related possible consequence is the marginalization of international students who lack financial capital during the immigration and settlement process.

## *5.2 Credential Recognition and Advance Standing*

### *5.2.1 Needs*

The research findings also indicate that there are an increasing number of international students coming with previous university credentials and work experience. These students require assessment of their previous qualifications and advanced standing to grant credits for previous education with a similar content, in order to avoid repeating coursework they have already completed. One international office staff member presents statistics from her own institution showing the extent to which these services are required:

The traditional view of an international student is that they're young, coming out of high school and that this is their first post-secondary education. We've always had students that didn't fit that mould, but there certainly was the perspective that that was the profile of an international student—which would suggest that their needs were quite different than immigrants. In fact, what we found was that probably half had a credential of some sort from a post-secondary institution or at the very least some post-secondary education. And that was a surprise. And again, more than half—more like two-thirds—had previous work experience of some type, which makes them more similar to immigrants than we had expected . . . So, that data, I guess, suggested to us that we need to pay more attention to their- to credential recognition, to advanced standing, to recognizing in some way this previous post-secondary education and previous work experience.

With half of the international student population holding previous higher education credentials and a majority with previous work experience, there is a need to address ways to mobilize these previous qualifications. A career services staff member acknowledges this issue as well:

[International students] are overqualified. They're coming in with degrees from their country and they've got so many years of experience and when I work with them you almost have to cut back that information because they're applying ... I said, ok, if you put that in you're overqualified.

Having a system in place to recognize international student credentials and grant advanced standing would benefit international students by saving them time and money.

### 5.2.2 Services and Gaps

Despite findings suggesting that a large proportion of the international student population already possess previous credentials, at that same college the credential recognition process for international students with previous academic credentials earned outside of Canada is said to be lacking by one ISO staff member:

We are similar to most other colleges—in fact; I don't know another college that does this differently ... We don't have a robust credential recognition process in place to grant advanced standing for international students. We, if we're taking them into a post-graduate program ... their diploma or degree has to be validated. But in terms of looking at someone and saying this person has two degrees, if they're an international student, we haven't actually established a process for evaluating that experience and education they have and giving them any kind of advanced standing or credit exemptions or any of that stuff.

The lack of credential recognition process for international students with previous academic credentials means that international students who wish to remain in Canada are not being given the opportunity to utilize the human capital they are arriving with, which could make their transition to the labour market quicker and less costly for this population. The challenges that colleges and universities face in recognizing previous credentials did not arise in the interviews, but should be incorporated into future investigations into improving service provisions for international students.

### *5.3 Employment Services*

#### *5.3.1 Needs*

Due to the specific employment requirements applicants must meet to qualify for immigration avenues such as the CEC and PNP, it is also crucial that supports are in place to help connect students to meaningful employment. At universities and colleges, the training,

advice, and knowledge assisting students with their career paths and employment is provided at the institution's career centre.

All the career service staff interviewed for this study indicated that in terms of the most basic employment services, international students need job search assistance, as well help with the work visa to ensure they will be working legally. These needs are quite obvious, but important none-the-less, due to the employment requirements of the CEC and the PNP.

The employment service need identified as most crucial by the career service and ISO staff was assistance with the interviewing process. One career advisor explained that international students need guidance in order to understand the cultural particularities of the interview process in Canada:

I think probably what has been identified to us, from [the International Student Office] is ... that students struggle the most with ... preparing for interviews because interviewing in North America is quite distinct from a lot of other countries, so students need to learn ... how to behave in interviews, how to anticipate questions, what the employer is looking for, little things like body language, intonation, all those things that for them might be quite different and that they might not have acquired just by living and being here.

As Canadian post-secondary institutions become host to students from a multitude of source countries, with diverse cultural backgrounds, some of these students will need advice on conducting themselves in the style of interviews used predominantly by Canadian employers. This is a critical skill for those hoping to enter the Canadian labour market, and while this skill is one that requires development by Canadian-born students as well, the need is greater for those students who are not yet familiar with some of the cultural conventions associated with professional interviews.

One careers advisor points to the importance of internship and volunteer options to prepare them with the Canadian experience that many employers value.

That's another thing employers discriminate against. They won't even look at a person's resume if they don't have the Canadian experience. So that's some of the things they need to improve on. So I guess just look for internships and volunteer positions and just to improve on their resume and to show employers that they have the Canadian experience.

That employers continue to discriminate against international students' lack of Canadian work experience is a common theme in all of the interviews. Compounding the issue is that international students are often competing against domestic students who have work experience from within Canada. Internships and volunteer work could help even the playing field when international students are trying to enter the Canadian labour market for the first time.

Highlighted by all career centre staff members was the need students have for workplace culture training. One career advisor describes workplace culture training to be a key barrier facing international students entering the Canadian labour market:

In terms of how to write a resume or how to prepare for interview questions or how to do your job search online or other methods ... from the technical perspective it's not difficult at all for international students. I think the barrier, it's mostly about lots of concern around language and not being aware of the unwritten rules in terms of the Canadian workplace culture—employers' expectation, and in the workplace, what is the employer's expectation of them as an employee ... Personally I think workplace communication it is vital for international students.

### 5.3.2 Services and Gaps

All the career centers offered services which assisted students to prepare for the job search process, including CV and cover letter assistance or help preparing for interviews. Many of these services were described as very general services for all students, with no specialized

services for international students. One career services centre focused on job search preparation, the interview process, and career events, but they were general for all students:

We help students with resume writing, interview coaching, job search, and also we organize different career events to just connect students, including international students, ESL students, and also throughout the year we have some career educational workshops to just teach students how to polish their job search skills and move forward. We don't really have very specific services tailored to international students.

The online search component of this research also found that municipal and provincial employment centres that job search assistance. Further, Job Connect is another employment service that temporary residents are eligible for, and offers in-depth employment service needs assessment, job search help and resources, as well as ongoing follow-up and support. However, these generalized services offered both at institutions and in the community may not address some of the particular issues that international students may face during the job search process. All the career services staff said that they tried to fill this gap by providing international students with the extra information they required, but on an ad hoc basis through individual appointments.

Other information that was described as being offered on an ad hoc basis by career counsellors was information relating to the visa student hiring process. While the process was described as straightforward, most participants acknowledged that employers may be hesitant about the process, which leads to missed job opportunities. One career counsellor explained that the career center where she works does not offer formal workshops or information sessions to educate students about this process, but the provision of this information may take during individual counselling:

I tell the international students, the visa students, "when you're going out there that's how you have to present yourselves ... don't let the employer know you are international. You have to make sure you get the job first, because it's so easy for them to afterwards.

The only employment service that was specifically for international students was an annual career services during study week at one university, which included information on job search training and Canadian workplace culture:

It's just an annual thing we do ... a large part of it was teaching them how to familiarize with the Canadian work environment, learning how to assess their own skills and competencies, how to write a tailored resume and cover letter and how to go about looking for work in the Canadian labour market, so to speak, because for a lot of them it would be a lot different. And then also how to make themselves be attractive to employers considering all the hurdles they had to jump through—they have the work permit, they're only going to stay for a year. So that was where the whole thing got started ... that's been that one major collaboration [between the international student office and career services] at that point during study week.

This is an innovative service as it provides international students awareness of various issues they may face entering the Canadian labour market, and the knowledge to assist students to make the transition to work successfully.

Only one career advisor reported that her career centre offered workplace culture training. The centre offered this training during the annual career event for international students just mentioned, and will begin offering a workplace culture workshop fall 2011. Despite acknowledging the importance of workplace culture training, the other institutions did not provide this service. Results from the online search component of this research looking at services offered in the community showed that workplace culture training is available through workplace culture workshops at Ontario Employment Resource Centres and online through COSTI's Employment Strategies online courses. Both of these programs are available to international students. However, without referral to these programs by career centre staff members, many students will likely be unaware of these training opportunities.

None of the career service staff members reported outreach services aimed at improving career service usage by international students. One career counsellor indicated that outreach to international students is only ever employer-driven:

Some of them are directed to our workshops by [the international student office] or through the folks at the front desk, or possibly professors, etc. But again, a lot of the other stuff again has literally, honestly been totally ad hoc. It's whatever student has the initiative or finds out about who we are, what we do, will come in. We don't really—I mean, other than the regular outreach we do with other students ... I can't say that there is any special outreach done for international students unless an employers has indicated that they are specifically looking to hire students that are nationals of a particular country.

Job opportunities or work experience programs, such as internships or mentoring programs which would provide the Canadian experience that participants suggested employers value, were not found to be offered at post-secondary institution career centres. Further, the online search resulted in scant selection of these opportunities within the community for which international students would qualify (see Appendix A). They are not eligible for job mentoring, work placements or internship programs offered by the federal government, or for the various summer employment programs offered by Employment Ontario that would help them to gain experience in the Canadian labour market while many will be not be busy with their studies.

### 5.3.3 Challenges

Several barriers were highlighted by career services staff that impeded their office's ability to offer formalized services to international students. First, staffing and resources were indicated to be lacking. Also, one participant pointed out that there is still a lack of knowledge of what challenges international students face. To gain a better understanding of these challenges, she suggested that a focus group or survey given to international students could be of use. Further, while the international student centre at one institution is located down the hall

from its career centre, the career advisor from that institution noted that the various centres rarely consult each other due to prioritizing their own annual programming.

## 5.4 Ways forward

### 5.4.1 Building partnerships

Apart from documenting service gaps that exist for international students transitioning to permanent residency, the purpose of this research is also to document ways forward for service delivery to this population. Participants indicated that they would like to see collaborative efforts between stakeholders such as CIC, post-secondary institutions, ISOs, career service centres, and immigrant-serving organizations and employment service centres in the community. Speaking on developing an improved service model involving collaboration between the institution and the government, one ISA suggests that,

it has to be a joint venture between the institution and the government because this is a government immigration policy, but these are our international students, at our institution. Separating these two parties are not going to work because if the government really wants to outreach international students they have to go through institution.

Indicated here is that there needs to be collaboration to bridge the disconnect between information relating to permanent residency policies and procedures, and the front-line service providers who are assisting potential permanent residents. International student advisors called for support from actors who are knowledgeable about the immigration policies and laws that related to their students' needs and again suggest partnerships as the way forward:

International students' office need to work again in the partnership with different community members. As I said, our advisors are not lawyers. We need legal representatives who specialize in the process of assisting people for permanent residency. We definitely need support from CIC—their immigration officers—to bridge their

services and support to international students through our international student office. I think that's the best model.

The need for the various stakeholders to engage in discussion on the issues surrounding transitioning international students to permanent residency was highlighted as well. For this, one career advisor suggested that a strategic committee would be beneficial:

It depends on what we want to tackle. If we are more looking at getting international students to connect them with a relevant employment opportunity to support their immigration, then Career Services is a very important stakeholder. However, if we want to tackle international students how to support their transition, eventually they not only gain the valuable work experience and also later on can [settle] then it has to be, as I said, holistic. So it can not only be Career Centre and the International Centre. Maybe International Centre can take the lead on it. Maybe within the college there can be another new services—like for post-graduation for international students and—or I don't know if there are any community services who would like to be on board as well. But I think step one is to form understanding, to have more discussion or brainstorm, then we can gradually move on to a model. Right not it is so hard to say what model we can come up with. Right now it really depends on which angle we want to tackle the issue or situation.

This participant points out that discussion among the stakeholders needs to be the first step towards a comprehensive service model for international students.

#### 5.4.2 Co-locating of services with need

That the international student office is the place where information and assistance related to transitioning to permanent residency should be provided was agreed upon among participants. When asked who is best positioned to deliver permanent residency-related services to international students, one ISA responded:

I think that answer is very straightforward. I think that the answer could be referred to the question to students, "where do you usually go often when you need help?" So the answer is straightforward and could count on most of the students would say [the

international student office]. That's where they go when they need help. That's the best service provider because that's where they go when they need help.

Raised here is the issue of co-locating services with places that the users already frequent to increase access, and in the case of international students this is beyond a doubt their university or college.

#### 5.4.3 Providing labour market information

One international centre staff member highlighted that more efforts need to be in place to connect international student to information about the Canadian labour market, both locally and in other parts of Canada, and the important role of the federal government in making these connections:

I do think that more provision of labour market information about the whole Ontario, or the whole Canadian labour market would be helpful ... [Colleges] don't know that information, so that's where a more government, and maybe [the Association of Canadian Colleges], where those folks could play a more significant role ... We found in our research that students have a very narrow perspective on what job opportunities might be. They all want to work for big enterprises. So if they understood more about the value of small or medium- sized organizations and entrepreneurial opportunities, you know there's an opportunity to educate them about not only how to enter the labour market but reach into these pockets they're not traditionally oriented towards

One suggestion being made is that information about the labour market should come from some kind of central body, whether it's the government or the Association of Canadian Colleges, in order to increase the employment options of international students. The benefit she indicates this would have for federal or provincial governments would be to support their regionalization strategies by informing students about employment opportunities throughout Canada. Further, she points to the role colleges could have referring students to central websites with labour market information:

Colleges can play a role by referring students to those websites and if websites are effectively organized and with searching capability then students can find out info about the particular sector they're interested in or the particular other part of the country they would want to move to, or would consider moving to ... but there needs to be a whole system established that needs to be federally-funded and maintained.

This is a cost-efficient strategy for the universities and one that benefits the various levels of government, but the need for federal-funding is highlighted since building the Canadian labour market is not the responsibility of colleges.

#### 5.4.4 Increasing access to immigration information

One participant suggested expanding the information already being used to market Canada as a destination of study or as an immigration destination to include information targeting international students:

We now have a brand, one Canadian brand and we could be providing more information for international students on websites, in print, at fairs ... There's a federal portal, "Go to Canada", that is targeted at immigrants, but there could be modifications to that to expand the information that's available to international students.

Pointing to the increased investments in marketing Canada, she suggests expanding the information about immigrating to or studying in Canada to include specialized information for international students using the resources that are already there. A central body of immigration or settlement information targeting international students is also described as useful for smaller post-secondary institutions where the numbers might be smaller and their international students' needs very specific.

## 6. Discussion

The present research findings support the hypothesis that despite increased avenues to permanent residency for international students, service gaps exist for this population in Toronto hoping to use these avenues to immigrate to Canada. In particular, there is a lack of information relating to the policies and procedures for transitioning to permanent residency, or extended supports beyond those focusing on short-term stays in Canada. While international student offices at universities and colleges have been identified as best positioned to deliver these services, staff members at these offices indicate that they are encountering barriers to expanding their service delivery to include expanded immigration and other settlement-related services. Among these barriers, international student offices face a lack of funding and overburdened international student advisors who are not trained to deliver services related to permanent residency.

The present study has also demonstrated the ways in which policy shifts underway in Canada to attract international students to Canada and encourage them to immigrate permanently are a continuation of the neoliberal immigration policies in place since the 1990s. Furthermore, while federal immigration authorities are making efforts to attract and retain international students, they have stopped short of ensuring services are in place to support this population during their transition from student to worker to immigrant. This is an issue of responsibility arising in Canada's post-welfare state. Neoliberal restructuring involved the federal government receding from its supportive function in civil society and other actors have had to change their functions as a consequence. Present research findings suggest that the role of post-secondary institutions and international student offices in particular, are now also being altered by the effects of neoliberal immigration policies and practices. ISOs however are not yet mandated to

provide these services, nor are there qualified staff to make these functions feasible. In the international student streams of the CEC and PNP, the federal government have devolved much of its role in selecting future citizens to post-secondary institutions, however supporting the integration of future citizens is arguably still a federal responsibility. Considering the targeted efforts to entice international students to live and work in Canada and the blurring of the lines between their temporary and permanent status, international students with immigration intentions should be provided for as future citizens; however, few services support them during their transitional phase. This results in a further downloading of supportive functions to the private sector, as was evident in the increased use of immigration lawyers by international students. The differential access to service provisions depending on one's financial situation is highly problematic. The lack of funding from the federal government for service provisions during the "two-step" immigration process has also been argued by Alboim (2009) to lead to the potential for less successful settlement of those international students who are admitted as permanent residents.

Participants also highlighted the importance of employment services during the permanent residency process. While many job search services were available to international students, career services at universities and colleges offered few formalized services specializing in the unique needs of international students. Competing priorities and lacking resources were indicated as primary barriers. While the online search component of this study found that services such as workplace culture training existed within the community, career services did not bridge students to these resources. A comprehensive service delivery strategy for international students could help overcome the lack of communication between tertiary institutions and

community services and connect students to resources that will help them succeed in the labour market.

Overall, the expanded immigration, settlement, and career services that do exist are currently delivered on an ad hoc basis, with no formal mandate or resources. These personal efforts being made by front-line workers are steps in the right direction. It was pointed out by one of the participants that settlement services for immigrants began in a similar way, not by the federal government, but by community groups, ethnic organizations, and many other non-governmental organizations who began delivering these services, but proved that the services they were delivering were essential. From this point on, pressure should be put on the federal government to take responsibility for ensuring international students have adequate provisions to support their transition to permanent residency.

Relating to this point, participants showed enthusiasm about the possibility for developing partnerships between the various stakeholders in this issue, including ISOs, career services centres, CIC, community organizations, and immigration lawyers. Creating a strategic committee to enter into dialogues was a promising suggestion that would open a dialogue between the various stakeholders and help all parties to gain a better understanding of the issues relating to supporting international students who wish to transition to permanent residency. Clear roles would be necessary to prevent inconsistencies and duplication of services reportedly an issue in the non-profit sector. And crucially, partnerships should be collaborative and involve joint decision-making and power sharing.

## 7. Conclusion

The traditional model of service provision for international students based on view that they are temporary sojourners is no longer relevant in the current policy environment where the boundaries between the temporary and permanent status of international students is increasingly blurred. However, service provision remains largely unchanged for this population minus the personal but unsustainable efforts of front-line workers. First, the “ideal immigrant” label that obscures the reality of the service needs of this segment of the Canadian population needs to be discarded. Then, a comprehensive and horizontal service model for international students to support their extended and potentially permanent stay in Canada can be developed. International students themselves must have a seat at this table and I hope that further research will incorporate their voices into this important discussion.

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## Appendix A. Settlement and Employment Service Descriptions and Eligibility

<b>SETTLEMENT SERVICES</b>			
<b>Types of Services Offered</b>	<b>Services/Programs</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>
<b>Cultural Orientation</b>  Helping newcomers adapt to life in Canada by pairing them with an individual who is already established in Canada.	<b>Buddy Programs</b>	Pairing up of international students with students already established at the same college/university are offered at most post-secondary institutions.	✓ Current students are eligible for "Buddy Programs" at their institutions.
<b>Settlement Information</b>  Information on topics including Community & Recreation, Daily Life, Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Immigration & Citizenship, and Legal Services.	<b>Online Settlement Information Portals</b>	The federal, provincial, and municipal governments offer self-directed online settlement information portals.	✓ No eligibility requirements for websites providing settlement information.
	<b>Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP)</b>	A newcomer information service available at public libraries in 11 communities throughout Ontario.	✓ All library members are eligible for LSP services.
	<b>Newcomer Information Centres (NIC)</b>	Federally funded centres providing information and referral for specific settlement concerns. NICs also offer information sessions/guest speaker series related to settlement issues. These centres are located in the GTA exclusively.	✗ Newcomer Information Centre clients must be permanent residents of Canada or convention refugees. Special permission may be granted to access information sessions if spaces are available.
	<b>Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS)</b>	Provides newcomers with school-aged children general settlement information through information sessions held at their child's primary or secondary school.	✗ Only permanent residents of Canada and convention refugees can participate in S.W.I.S. Also only those with children will benefit from this program.
	<b>Information Sessions for International Students</b>	General information sessions on settlement-related themes and immigration or visa processes offered to current students at Ontario post-secondary institutions.	✓ All enrolled students are eligible to attend these sessions; however, few post-secondary institutions presently offer these information sessions.

<b>Settlement Assistance</b>  One-on-one settlement advice from a settlement counselor. Includes settlement and vocational needs assessments, referrals to resources in the community, including health care, housing, legal, education, employment and language and skills training, and help with immigration processes and documents.	<b>Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP)</b>	Settlement workers assess newly arrived immigrants' needs and provide personalized information and referrals. ISAP is federally funded and offered at various Service Provider Organizations.	<b>X</b> Only permanent residents, convention refugees, live-in caregivers, Ontario provincial nominees and permanent residents in Canada who are approved in principal are eligible for ISAP services.
	<b>Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)</b>	One-on-one settlement and orientation assistance, including information about community and government services, and service referrals. NSP offered at various Service Provider Organizations.	<b>X</b> Only permanent residents, convention refugees, live-in caregivers, Ontario provincial nominees and permanent residents in Canada who are approved in principal are eligible for provincially-funded NSP. Due to the "don't ask, don't tell" policy of some organizations offering NSP international students may be able to access some of these services. However, the "don't ask, don't tell" policy is constrained by the amount of NSP funding.
	<b>Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP)</b>	Settlement counselling is available under the <b>Library Settlement Partnerships</b> program at local libraries in 11 communities throughout Ontario.	<b>✓</b> All library members are eligible for LSP services.
<b>Interpretation &amp; Translation of Documents</b>  Oral interpretation or written translation related to essential or immediate settlement needs for newcomers.	<b>Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP)</b>	Offers translation and interpretation services to recent newcomers.	<b>X</b> International Students are ineligible for ISAP.

<b>Housing Help</b>  Information about crisis lines, home visits, referrals to subsidized and supportive housing, documentation help, opportunities for home sharing, education programs about tenant rights.	<b>Housing Help Services</b>	<b>Housing help workers</b> help people find and keep permanent housing and work out of shelters, drop-in centres, a number of community agencies and Housing Help Centres in the GTA. <b>Housing Help Centres</b> are non-profit agencies that help people find and keep affordable housing as well as provide vacancy listings and Toronto Rent Bank services.	<b>✓</b> Available to anyone living in the municipality.
<b>EMPLOYMENT SERVICES</b>			
<b>Job Search Information, Resources, Training</b>  Developing skills and providing the tools necessary to find employment, including interview skills, CV preparation.	<b>Post-Secondary Institution Career Centres</b>	Job search training, workshops, and resources, resume building, interview skills training, and one-on-one career counselling available at college/university of enrolment.	<b>✓</b> Career centre resources available to all current students and alumni. Career counselling is available for all current students and alumni within 1 or 2 years.
	<b>City of Toronto Employment Centres</b>	Help with job search preparation, resources, and career planning.	<b>✓</b> Anyone living in the Greater Toronto Area is eligible.
	<b>Job Search Workshops</b>	Short-term, pre-employment workshops assisting newcomers in developing the skills needed to find employment; provide job leads, ongoing follow-up and support, access to equipment necessary for job searching; develop resume and cover letter; complete job applications and prepare for job search and interviews.	<b>X</b> Participants must be new immigrants, permanent residents, refugees, or foreign or domestic Live-in Caregivers, and fulfill English language skill requirements (level 4 minimum).

Job Connect	Offers in-depth employment service needs assessment, service planning, and supported job search. Resource centres, information sessions and workshops provide employment/training information for job seekers. Job Connect available at various community colleges and not for profit community based organizations.	✓ Information and resources available to everyone. To access the Employment Planning and Preparation service, or get Job Development and Placement Support participants must be at least 16 years old, <b>be out of school and out of work</b> , and not receiving Employment Insurance benefits
Ontario Employment Resource Centres	Provide job skills assistance through seminars, workshops, and one-on-one employment counselling. Also provides tools and resources to assist in finding employment. Located throughout the province.	✓ EO's Employment Resource Centres are open to Ontario residents who are eligible to work in Canada.
Employment Assessment Services (EAS)	Provides personal employment direction and advice for all levels of employment, including a Return-to-Work Action Plan.	✗ Must be unemployed (under 19 hours/week) and have a SIN number beginning with 5 (ie. immigrants, permanent residents or convention refugees).
Job Opportunities/Work Experience Programs	The Mentoring Partnership  A TRIEC initiative matching new immigrants with experienced professionals for 24 hours over a four-month period for occupation-specific mentoring relationships focusing primarily on non-regulated professions.	Strict requirements for the Mentoring Partnership eligibility. International students who have a degree from outside Canada and who have 3 years professional experience outside of Canada may be eligible to be a Mentee in their professional field. They must have the English skills required to perform effectively in the workplace, be un/underemployed, and be actively seeking work in their field.

<b>Enhanced Language Training (ELT)</b>	ELT includes a job mentoring and work placement component. Available at community and settlement organizations, school boards, public libraries, colleges, universities, and professional/trade organizations.	<b>X</b> Eligible clients for ELT training must be persons of legal school leaving age within their province of residence who are permanent residents, or convention refugees.
<b>Federal Public Service Youth Internship Program (FPSYIP)</b>	Internship at host federal government organizations aimed at helping youth 15-30 to acquire the experience and skills they need to enter and fully participate in the labour market	<b>X</b> Participants must be legally entitled to work in Canada, unemployed or under-employed, and no longer attending an academic institution on a full-time basis. Persons awaiting permanent resident status and persons holding only temporary work permits are not eligible.
<b>Ontario Internship Program</b>	Program offering two years of work experience in the Ontario Public Service to recent university and college graduates.	<b>✓</b> Applicants must have graduated from a college or university with a degree, post-diploma certificate or a diploma within the last two years and be legally entitled to work in Canada to participate in the program.
<b>National Research Centre Coop Program</b>	Offers practical career-related experience to college or university students in science, engineering, and technology.	<b>✓</b> Foreign national students who meet the academic eligibility requirements, are studying in recognized and eligible Canadian educational institution and possess a valid Co-op Work Permit may apply.
<b>National Research Council Student Employment Program</b>	Work placement program funded by the National Research Council to provide post-secondary students with practical work experience in research and development, library sciences, communications and marketing.	<b>X</b> Only Canadian citizens, permanent residents or convention refugees who attend a recognized educational institution are eligible. Other academic criteria apply.

<b>Career Focus</b>	Increases recent graduates' job opportunities by providing a wage subsidy to employers who hire them.	<b>X</b> To be eligible, must be 15-30 years old, post-secondary graduates, Canadian citizens, permanent residents or convention refugees, out of school, legally able to work in Canada, and not receiving EI benefits.
<b>Employment Ontario's Summer Jobs Service, Summer Experience Program, and Summer Company</b>	These EO programs offer job placements, summer employment opportunities in the Ontario Public Service, and help starting up a summer business, respectively.	<b>X</b> You must be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or convention refugee and legally entitled to work to access Employment Ontario programs. For Summer Jobs Service you must also be between the ages 15-30 and planning to return to school in the fall.
<b>Career Edge</b>	Paid internship program for recent graduates offers 6, 9 or 12-month paid internships within Canadian organizations in order to help recent graduates launch careers in their chosen field.	<b>✓</b> To be eligible must be a recent Canadian college or university graduate, have little or no relevant work experience, be eligible to work in Canada, and have not previously accepted a Career Edge internship
<b>Skillsinternational.ca</b>	Online portal funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation. Connects internationally-educated job seekers to employers.	<b>✓</b> To be eligible for skillsinternational.ca I.E.Ps must already be in Canada and have status to work in Canada.
<b>Workplace Culture Training</b>	Exploring issues related to Canadian workplace values and culture, and developing socializing and networking skills for the Canadian workforce.	
	<b>Ontario Employment Resource Centres</b>	Employer Resource Centres offer Canadian Workplace Culture Workshops and are located throughout the province.  <b>✓</b> EO's Employment Resource Centres are open to Ontario residents who are eligible to work in Canada.

	<b>Employment Strategies Online Courses</b>	4 week online courses funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation covering topics such as workplace terminology and communication; workplace culture training; information and resources; and job search preparation. Available through COSTI Online Services.	✓ Anyone living in the Greater Toronto Area is eligible.
<b>Language Training</b>			
<b>Basic Language Training</b>	<b>Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)</b>	Free, federally-funded language training classes offered at various Service Provider Organizations.	✗ Only permanent residents, convention refugees or permanent residents approved in principle who are of legal school-leaving age are eligible for LINC classes.
	<b>English as a Second Language (ESL)</b>	Free, provincially-funded language training classes offered through ESL programs at local school boards.	(\$) ✓ To be eligible must be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, convention refugee, approved Provincial Nominee, or a foreign domestic worker admitted under the Live-in Caregiver program. Temporary residents may attend classes for a fee.
<b>Advanced/Occupational Language Training</b>	Higher levels of language training to help participants understand and function in Ontario workplaces. Assists learners to develop the language skills needed for networking, career building, and communicating in the workplace.		
	<b>Occupation-Specific Language Program (OSLP)</b>	Federally-funded program providing newcomers with free job-specific language training and workplace culture training. Available at select community colleges.	✗ Potential trainees must have training or experience in one of the specific occupations or sectors, Canadian Language Benchmark English levels between 6 and 8, and be a permanent resident or protected person.

<b>Enhanced Language Training (ELT)</b>	Provides newcomers with labour market language training and job-specific language training at the CLB 7-10 level. Offered through school boards and at select community organizations.	<b>X</b> Eligible to persons of legal school leaving age within their province of residence who are permanent residents or convention refugees, have an intermediate level of English.
<b>Specialized Language Training</b>	Pilot project offering specialized language training to help newcomers achieve the level of English language skills necessary to acquire employment commensurate with their qualifications or to improve their ability to function in their current employment. Offered through select school boards in Ontario.	To be eligible must be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, convention refugee, approved Provincial Nominee, or a foreign domestic worker admitted under the Live-in Caregiver program and must have CLB level 5 or above. Temporary residents may attend classes for a fee.
<b>ESL for Visitors and Work Permit Holders</b>	Designed to improve English conversation skills with special attention to employment and travel interests. Offered through COSTI Immigrant Services in Toronto.	<b>V</b> Individuals over 15 years of age in Canada on a Visitors or Work Permit that allows them to participate in ESL courses up to six months or the duration of their permit are eligible. \$150 fee required.

## Appendix B. Sample Recruitment Email

### **Participant Recruitment for Settlement Needs of International Students project**

DATE

CONTACT INFORMATION OF RECIPIENT

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am conducting an innovative research project looking at the settlement needs of international students in Toronto who wish to remain permanently in Canada. This research will describe existing services, discover what best practices might be in this area, identify areas of concern and make recommendations for improvements to services. This project has been approved by the Ryerson research ethics board. As a staff member who has experience assisting international students [as a government official whose position is related to this issue] , I would like to conduct an interview with you, lasting up to 60 minutes, to learn from your experiences. The interview would be scheduled at a mutually convenient time and place and would be conducted by myself. The interview would be tape recorded to facilitate analysis, although you could request that the tape be turned off at any time. Please email me at [erin.roach@ryerson.ca](mailto:erin.roach@ryerson.ca) if you are willing and available to participate or if you have any questions about the study.

Thank you,

Erin Roach

Masters of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies Candidate

Ryerson University

## Appendix C. Sample Consent Agreement

Ryerson University

Consent Agreement

### **Settlement Needs of International Students in Toronto**

**Overview:** You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure that you understand what you will be asked to do.

**Investigator:** The Principal Investigator on this study is Erin Roach, a Masters of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies candidate at Ryerson University.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to identify the settlement and employment needs and services that exist for international students in Toronto. I want to speak to staff that are assisting international students and government stakeholders. I hope that this project will provide a basis for developing best practices for responding to the needs of international students, in particular as they make the transition to permanent residency.

**Description:** I am asking you to participate in an interview that will last up to 60 minutes. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate transcription, although if you prefer to have the tape turned off at any point we will do so. In that case, the interviewer will directly transcribe what you have to say. Tapes will be retained for 12 months or until transcription is complete and verified, whichever comes first. Transcriptions will be securely retained by the principal investigator for a period of 24 months and then destroyed. Beyond indicating that you are a university, college, or settlement organization staff member, or government official, no other personally identifying information about you will be included in the transcription.

**Experimental Procedures:** There are no questions or procedures used in this study that are experimental in nature. The only “experimental” aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

**Risk:** There is minimal risk or discomfort associated with this study. If you are not accustomed to being interviewed the process might make you a bit nervous, but my purpose is to learn from what you have to say about this issue so I will make every attempt to reduce any sources of anxiety. Another potential risk is that the insights you provide and the suggestions that you make might not be embraced or accepted by your institution or other policy makers. I recognize that it would be possible to take this personally, but I am simply unable to guarantee that your suggestions will be implemented.

**Benefits:** The areas of potential benefit of the study are in:

- helping service providers, post-secondary institutions, and policy makers discover the extent to which settlement services are being provided for international students, and
- developing a set of suggestions based on the experience of front line practitioners and government officials for best practices in responding to this issue

**Confidentiality:** As noted above, you will not be personally identified. Any identifying information on the tape will be removed when transcription occurs. The tapes themselves will be destroyed no later than the end of May 2012 after transcriptions have been completed and verified. Transcripts will be securely retained by the Principal Investigator for up to 24 months to allow analysis and review. Transcription of the tapes will be done by the Principal Investigator. No one else will have access to the audiotapes without your permission.

**Compensation:** You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University or World Education Services. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits. At any point in the study you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

**Consent for audio taping of the interview:** As noted above, the interview will be audio taped to facilitate transcription. Consent for audio taping may be considered as separate from consent to take part in the interview. If your consent includes audio taping, please indicate by signing your initials here \_\_\_\_\_.

As noted previously, you may also request that audio taping be stopped at any point during the interview, either for the balance of the interview or occasionally during the interview.

**Use of results:** The findings of this study may be used for publication and/or conference presentations.

**Your access to results:** A copy of the report of the results will be made available to you at the end of the study. You may either contact the Principal Investigator or add your email address to the end of this consent form.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research you may contact the Principal Investigator, Erin Roach, by email at [erin.roach@ryerson.ca](mailto:erin.roach@ryerson.ca).

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study you may contact the Ryerson Research Ethics Board c/o the Office of Research Services at Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2K3.

**Agreement:** Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and that you have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

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Name of Participant (Please Print)

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Email (optional) for copy of report

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Signature of Participant

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Date

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Signature of Investigator or Interviewer

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Date