

January 26, 2024

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Jill Dunlop  
Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 438 University Avenue  
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

## **Re: Recently Announced Cap on International Student Enrollment**

Dear Ministers,

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of 60,000 businesses of all sizes across Ontario and over 150 local chambers and boards of trade. Post-secondary institutions are pillars in Ontario communities, playing pivotal roles as centres of research and development and preparing students for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the recent federal government decision to impose a two-year cap on the number of new international students it will accept into the country, as well as changes to the eligibility criteria for post-graduate work permits. This policy change puts Ontario's reputation as a world class destination to study and work at risk, and stands to adversely impact the province's labour market, post-secondary education system, and regional economies.

Ontario, having experienced substantial growth in international student enrollment, stands to be disproportionately impacted by this change and see the number of international study permits fall by approximately 50 percent. This reduction poses a threat to Ontario's labour market, as international students play a crucial role in fulfilling various employment needs and contribute significantly to regional economies.

While we acknowledge the importance of tackling problems in the student visa system that have allowed some bad actors to take advantage of high international student tuition(s), the policy fails to differentiate between responsible institutions and those exploiting international students.

More broadly concerning is the precarious financial state of Ontario's post-secondary education sector, as highlighted by the province's [Blue-Ribbon Panel report](#). This has led many public institutions to increase international student enrollments to address increasing costs and, in turn, become overly reliant on international student tuition revenue.

We [reiterate our call to the provincial government](#) to promptly implement the recommendations of the panel, including lifting the tuition freeze and increasing multi-year base operating funding to enable a financially sustainable and robust post-secondary education system.

The OCC strongly encourages constructive dialogue between the federal government, province, and Ontario's educational institutions to establish clear guidelines and timelines for the implementation of the cap on international student study permits and how this cap aligns with previous commitments to develop a trusted institution framework. We also call for the federal government to delay the implementation of the requirement for a letter of attestation until such a time as the province can put in place, to allow students who had already been accepted into programs and paid their fees to proceed with their enrollments.

We remain committed to working alongside governments and educational institutions to maintain a strong and well-trained talent pipeline that addresses Ontario's labour market needs, ensures student access, and supports the quality of the province's post-secondary education sector.

Sincerely,



Daniel Tisch  
*President and CEO*  
*Ontario Chamber of Commerce*