

# Working Effectively with International Co-op Students



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# OVERVIEW

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- Context
- International Students in Canada, Maritimes
- International Student Challenges
- Case study: Chinese Culture
- Co-op student: Ya Jie Ke
- Different expectations
  - How can we prepare students?
- Employers – why should they hire internationally?



# CONTEXT

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“As Canada is fast becoming a microcosm of the world – and as it expands its international political and economic linkages – there is an imperative to weave values of deep respect and openness for other cultures, along with ideals of social justice, social responsibility and environmental sustainability, in the pedagogy of teaching, research and service.” (AUCC, 2009, p.6)

As we diversify more domestically, it is imperative that everyone has intercultural skills. What are co-op offices in Atlantic Canada doing to ensure that all students are prepared for our new workforce?



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

(CBIE 2011 [www.cbie.ca](http://www.cbie.ca))

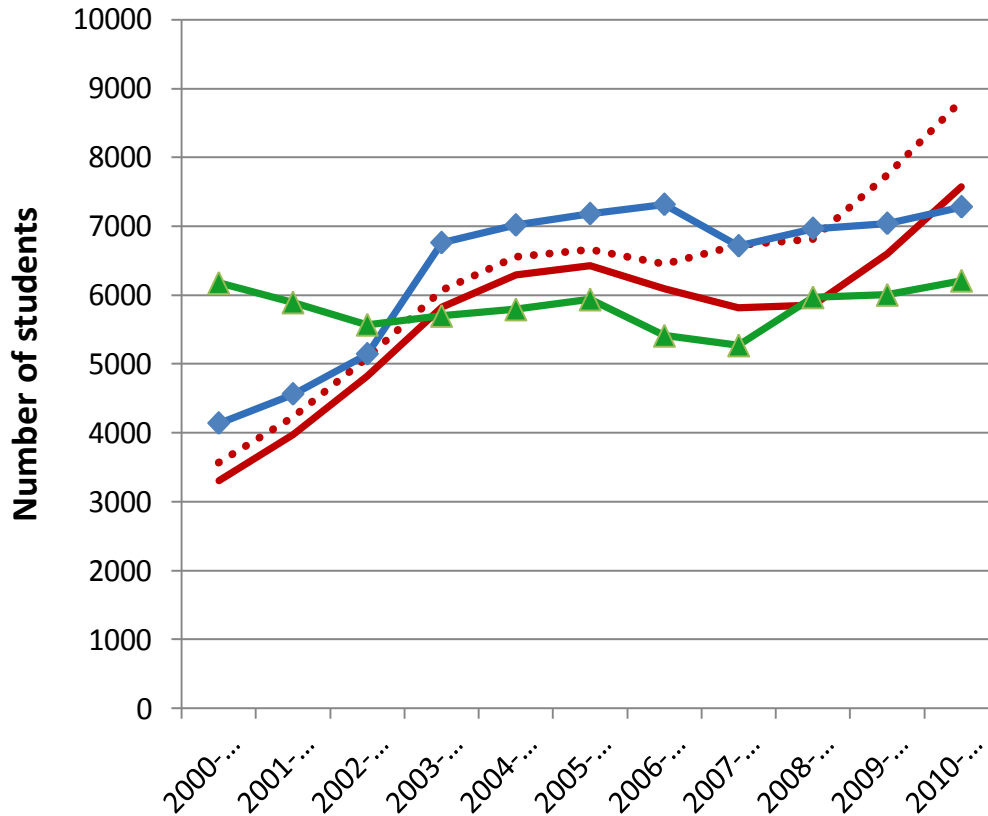
- Canada hosts 240,000 international students at all levels of study combined.
- International student enrollment grew by 100,000 from 2001 to 2011. (42%)
- International students comprise 6.5% of the student population in post-secondary education.





# International students are the fastest growing group

### Total enrolment of students from outside the Maritimes



Since 2000-2001 by student origin:

International +147%  
Ontario +76%  
Rest of Canada +1%

Since 2009-2010:

International +14%  
Ontario +3%  
Rest of Canada +3%

- Nova Scotia has the highest percentage of students from outside the region:  
36% of undergraduate enrolment  
45% of graduate enrolment
- NB and PEI: 17% and 31% at undergraduate and graduate level, respectively.



\* Including offshore students

# COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

(MPHEC 2012)

New Brunswick		Nova Scotia		Prince Edward Island	
China	375	China	1800	China	169
Saudi Arabia	247	Saudi Arabia	383	United States	113
United States	108	United States	333	Nigeria	32
India	72	Bermuda	204	Saudi Arabia	15



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CHALLENGES

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Language: written & oral fluency

Cultural norms and expectations

Employer assumptions





# CHINESE CULTURE

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Collectivist

Hierarchy

Harmony

Face

Ascribed status





# YA JIE (KIRSTY) KE

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Graduated in May 2012 with  
Bachelor of Public Relations  
Completed 3 work terms in  
Canada and China

Kirsty: Impact of co-op  
Challenges of co-op



# DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS

(Informal poll of students: 'What is strange about Canadian work culture?')

- Different resume styles: Internationally cover letters are not expected unless you apply at an international company , CV's are the expectation with a photo, date of birth, marital status, etc...
- Differentiating yourself from your competitors – Branding - as co-op students, we're always told to "promote yourself" or "you are your own brand"
- An informal work environment: first name basis, casual Fridays, exchanging small talk/pleasantries before a meeting, eating at your desk (when it's not lunch time), allowed to voice suggestions when instructed with a task by your manager/boss
- "It's not my job" mentality: Due to unionized bodies and groups of employees, it is odd to hear Canadian colleagues tell you that it's not your job to perform certain tasks
- Balancing work and your personal life: Not expected to do overtime, 9 am – 5 pm, usually it's 9 am – 6 pm with expectations of overtime.

As my father would always say to me... "Why is the white man so lazy!"



# WHAT DO WE/CAN WE DO?

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What does your office currently do to assist international students in preparing for their work term?

Any new ideas?



# MENG ZHAO



- Meng is a Public Relations graduate and works as an Advertising & Production Coordinator at Transcontinental. Meng's experiences coming abroad have left her with a skill set that allows her to keep up in the fast-paced world of Advertising.
- "I'm able to prioritize, multi-task and keep everything in place. My clients, sales representatives and designers rely on my exceptional organizational skills day-to-day to ensure the efficient flow of all projects. "
- "Why do I think employers in Nova Scotia should hire internationally? Why not? The best way to learn is to learn from others' stories and experiences. Being internationals, our cross-education and life experiences left us with great confidence, a positive attitude and most importantly, a common goal to make life better. Wouldn't you want to hire and work with people with such qualities?"



# VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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- Incredibly adaptable and great work ethic
- Motivated and committed to the success of your business
- International experiences, international connections
- Multi-lingual, assist you to serve your clients better
- Contribute a broad perspective and help to better inform your practice
- Create a more diverse and worldly work environment



# EMPLOYERS

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How do we 'sell' international students to employers?

What are the benefits of a diverse workplace?





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**COMMENTS?  
QUESTIONS?**

