

# **Report 1**

## **International, First-year, Enrolment Management.**

**Submitted to: Janice Deakin  
Submitted by: Julie McMullin**

**February 28, 2011**

**Revised: March 4, 2011  
Revised: March 10, 2011  
Revised: March 31, 2011**

*The University of Western Ontario*

## **Introduction**

The strategic importance of internationalization for Western was articulated in The University of Western Ontario's Strategic Plan, *Engaging the Future* (2006) and in the President's most recent update to that plan (September 2010). In the President's update, and in the Senate approved Strategic Plan, for Internationalization, 2009-2012, the importance of undergraduate international student enrolment growth, one component of the larger internationalization project, was highlighted. The purpose of this report is not to debate the merits of this strategic direction but rather to assess current practices and provide recommendations for a responsible and comprehensive, enrolment management strategy. Enrolment management strategies take into account recruitment, admissions, and retention<sup>1</sup> (Sinclair, 2010). The recommendations in this report are meant to help us reach our international student recruitment goals while upholding Western's standards for quality.

## **Consultation and Research**

The information contained in this report comes from various sources. Weekly meetings were held with the Vice-Provost Academic and Registrar, John Doerksen and with the Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Lori Gribbon. Bi-monthly meetings were held with the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Janice Deakin. Other meetings were held with Glen Tiegert (Associate Registrar), Rubin Challaduri (Associate VP), Marty England (IPB), Fred Longstaffe (Past-Provost), Kevin Goldthorpe (VP, External) Marilyn Nash, (Recruitment Team Leader), Betty Chan and Stephanie Livingstone (international recruiters), Shari Nemirovski and Sue Gorski (admissions), Rose Aquino (International and Exchange Student Centre), and Gail Hutchinson (Director, Student Development Centre).

The author attended two conferences on international recruitment: The Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA) conference, "Being Global 2011: Strategies and Models for Internationalizing Canadian Higher Education and the Academic Impressions conference, "Getting Started in International Student Recruitment". Internet searches were conducted to get a sense of the National and University context and also to access research on international recruitment and best practices in that regard.

## **National Context**

Canada typically attracts 4 to 5 percent of the global tertiary education market each year (Humpries, 2010; Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007) and this global market is expected to continue to grow. In 2008, Ontario's share of international students studying in Canada was 34% (McMullen and Elias, 2011). Between 2001 and 2009,

---

<sup>1</sup> This report focuses on first-year student recruitment. A subsequent report will consider upper-year recruitment.

there was a 72% increase in “foreign students”<sup>2</sup> present in Canada (CIC, 2009). In 2010, Canada welcomed 96,147 new foreign students, an increase of 25% over the 2006 numbers. And, it is estimated that foreign students contribute 6.5 billion dollars annually to the Canadian economy (CIC, 2011).

Table 1 shows the top 10 countries of origin of international students in 2009, the number of students from each country present in Canada on Dec. 1, 2009, and the trend of incoming students from each country since 2001. These data include students studying at all levels, but there is a very strong correlation between these countries of origin and the top 10 source countries of students who were engaged in Canadian tertiary education between 1997 and 2006 (Verbick and Lasanowski, 2007). Indeed, all of the countries listed in Table 1 also appear in top 10 list of source countries of students who were studying at the post-secondary level in Canada between 1997 and 2006. However, Germany and Brazil also appeared on the latter list.

As Table 1 shows, between 2001 and 2009 the number of Chinese students studying in Canada increased by 352%; the number from India increased by 448%; and the number from Saudi Arabia increased by 1,522%. The huge increase in students from Saudi Arabia is due to the introduction of scholarships that the Saudi government offers to students who study abroad. The number of students studying in Canada from South Korea increased by 48% until 2007 and then decreased by 14% between 2007 and 2009.

Table 1: Top 10 countries of Origin and trends since 2001

Top 10 Countries of Origin: International Students in Canada in 2009 (n) <sup>1</sup>	Trend since 2001
1. China (49,905)	↑ 352%
2. South Korea (25,871)	↑ 48% until 2007 ↓ 14% after 2007
3. United States (11,275)	No change
4. India (9,570)	↑ 448%
5. France (9,286)	↑ 48%
6. Saudi Arabia (8,745)	↑ 1552%
7. Japan (6,106)	↓ 41%
8. Hong Kong (4,092)	↓ 36%
9. Mexico (4,067)	No change
10. Taiwan (3,698)	↓ 38%

<sup>2</sup> Citizen and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures, 2009—Immigration overview: Canada: Foreign students present on December 1<sup>st</sup> by source country. Includes students at all levels of study.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2009/temporary/14.asp> accessed January 20, 2010.

**University Context:**

In 2009-10, 3.1 percent of the full-time undergraduate students enrolled at Western did not list Canada as their country of citizenship on their applications. This percentage is the lower than it is at any of the other G13 Universities in Ontario. As Figure 1 shows, the Ontario average is 6 percent, with U of T having the highest percentage at 10.7 percent

Figure 1: 2009-10 Full-Time Undergraduate Enrolments Percentage International Students

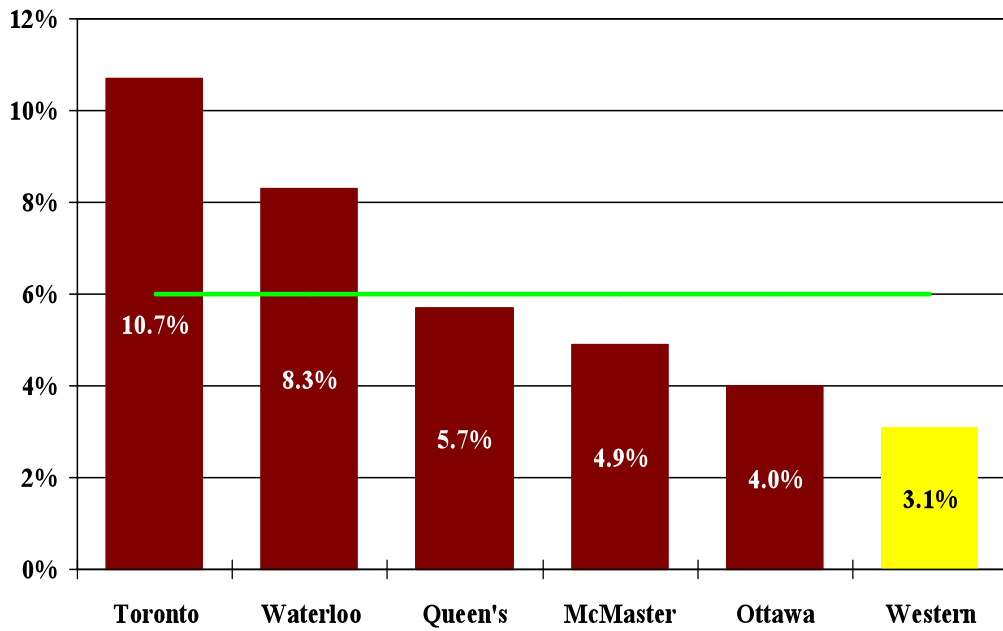


Table 2 outlines the target international undergraduate enrolments and organization of international activities at these G13 Universities.

Table 2: Strategic directions and organizational structures of G-13 Ontario Universities

Ontario G-13 Universities (Western Excluded)	Strategic Priority/Direction	Organizational Structure
Toronto	No public target in their academic plan but there is an acknowledgement that all research-intensive universities in Canada are attempting to 'internationalize' their student body.	Assistant Vice-President International Relations under Vice-President University Relations; Vice-Provost (Students) international students and exchange;
Queen's	Recognition of internationalization as a focus but no targets set; planning under way.	Vice-Provost International
McMaster	No publicized targets. This is, however, on the radar. An associate registrar attended the Academic Impressions conference (noted above) in February, 2011.	Office of international affairs under VP-Research. Associate Vice-President (International). This office includes international student recruitment. This may be under review.
Ottawa	Aim is to be among the top five G13 universities in proportion of international students (both undergrad and grad) Recognition that to do so requires a pro-active recruitment strategy for undergraduate students.	Advertising for an Associate Vice-President International (University Affairs, February, 2011)
Waterloo	20% undergraduate enrolment by 2017	Associate Vice-President Academic (International)

### Case Study: The University of Alberta

In 2006, the University of Alberta identified internationalization as one of their key priorities. As part of their academic plan, “Dare to Discover”, the university developed a comprehensive internationalization strategy in which they articulated a goal of having 15% of their undergraduate student body comprised of international students by 2015. To reach that goal they established an International Office with a Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (International). Regarding international enrolment, they have a director, and an assistant director, and six recruiters. In 2006, 6% (n=489) of the first-year class were international students. By 2009 that percentage had risen to 9.6 (n=722).

### Western’s Recruitment Targets

Table 3 shows the first-year international recruitment targets that were agreed upon in 2010 for the four-year planning period spanning from 2011 to 2014.

Table 3: Planned international recruitment target model

<i>Base line-2010</i>	147			
	Sept-11	Sept-12	Sept-13	Sept-14
Recruitment target	250	300	350	400
Incremental over 2010	104	153	203	253
Annual % increase	70%	20%	17%	14%

The international recruitment and admissions officers at Western are working very hard to attain the targets outlined above and numerous changes have been made to recruitment and admissions processes to meet these targets. In particular, a lot of emphasis has been placed on the pilot project that Western has undertaken with CultureWorks and Fanshawe’s ESL programs. This project involves a pre-admission process whereby Western pre-admitted 206 international students from CultureWorks and Fanshawe’s ESL programs for September 2011. The initial expectation was that ½ of the 206 would come to Western in September 2011. In January 2011, this expectation was revised with the thinking that approximately 75 of these students would register at Western in September 2011. This pilot project will take Western a long way toward its goal of bringing in an additional 104 international students in the first year of the four-year plan.

Although at this point it is too early to tell whether these efforts will lead to us meeting our targets, the experiences of other universities suggests that our first year target may be too ambitious.

University recruiters at Western and elsewhere (HESA, January 2010; Academic Impressions, February 2010) suggest that relationship building is key to international recruiting. The guideline for off-shore recruitment seems to be that an institution needs to be in a region of a country for 3 years and return 2-3 times per year in order for relationships to be built and maintained. Similarly, we can expect that relationships with international high schools in Ontario will take several years to develop as well.

Table 4 shows a revised target recruitment model that predicts a 55% increase in the first year (largely because of the CutureWorks/Fanshawe partnership but also because of changes that were implemented in the 2010-11 recruitment and admissions processes) followed by 15% incremental growth in year 2, 20% growth in year 3, and 30% growth in year 4. The assumptions made to derive this model are that process changes in recruitment and admissions may continue to affect a 15% increase in the second year as these processes are perfected, that those processes combined with some early benefits from recruitment activities will lead to a 20% increase in year three, but that most rewards from recruitment efforts will come in year 4 (30% increase) because these activities take more time to become established.

Table 4: Revised international student target model

2010-11 base line=147

	Sept-11	Sept-12	Sept-13	Sept-14
Recruitment target	228	262	314	408
Incr. annual increase	81	34	52	94
Percentage increase	55%	15%	20%	30%

In this model, the target level of recruitment at the end of the plan remains unchanged but the yearly progress toward reaching that target is different. By 2014, it is estimated based on these projections that approximately 6% of our undergraduate enrolment will be comprised of international students. This is what the Ontario average was in 2009-10. And, it is important to remember that the competition for international students will increase as other Universities across the globe work to increase the number of international students on their campuses.

Western's longer-term goal is to have 10 percent of its undergraduate population comprised of international students, which has been suggested as a reasonable target in the literature (Knight, 1994). Hence, at this stage, *it is essential to develop a long-term comprehensive enrolment management plan that recognizes the*

*importance of diversity and that will ensure that international students' are provided with the services that they need to succeed.*

To attain recruitment targets for 2011 and beyond, Western's recruitment and admissions office made the strategic decision to focus on increasing **both** the number of applicants and the confirmation rates for **both** the on-shore and the off-shore markets. In 2010-11, the on-shore applicant pool (the 101s) numbered 1,214 with an offer rate of 22.5% (n=273) and a confirmation rate of 17.2% (n=47). Of the 47 confirmations, 43 registered. The off-shore applicant pool (the 105s) numbered 971 with an offer rate of 33.4% (n=324) and a confirmation rate of 32.7% (n=106). Of the 106 confirmations in this category, 101 registered. There are no available data regarding how these figures compare with other institutions. Notably, our domestic confirmation rate is typically around 20%.

We do, however, have data that will allow us to compare the application to confirmation ratios between Western and other Universities in Ontario. In 2010-11 this ratio for 101s at Western was about 22:1 and for 105s it was about 10:1. At McMaster, for the 101s it was 10:1 and for the 105s it was 7:1. The ratio for 101s at Waterloo was 8:1 and for the 105s it was 5:1. At Queens, the ratio of applicants to confirmations for 101s was 19:1 and for the 105s it was 13:1. At Ottawa the ratio of applicants to confirmations for 101s was 6:1 and for the 105s it was 7:1. Finally, at Toronto, the ratio was 5:1 for the 101s and 5:1 for the 105s.

In 2009-10 the approximate cost of international recruitment was **\$203,000** which included the 75% of the salary of one recruitment officer, ½ the salary of the recruitment team leader, 10% of the director of recruitment and admissions' salary, and parts of the salaries of communications and web design staff (\$11,000). Travel expenditures were \$90,000 and the cost of advertising and publications was approximately \$15,000.

In 2010-11, an **additional \$188,500** was allocated to the budget for international recruitment, which brought the budget up to **\$391,500**. To cover some of these additional costs, the Provost made a one-time commitment of **\$195,000**. These one-time funds were also needed to hire an additional admissions officer (~50,000). To cover the difference between the \$188,500 and the 145,000 (from the Provost less the admissions officer), funds were also diverted from other budget lines (e.g. domestic advertising publications).

The 2010-11 budget (\$391,500) breaks down as follows: \$160,000 covers 75% of the salaries of two recruitment officers, ½ the salary of the recruitment team leader, about 16% of the director of recruitment and admissions' salary, and parts of the salaries of communications and web design staff salaries (\$22,000). The remaining \$231,500 covers the costs of travel (\$136,500), advertising (\$25,000), publications (\$10,000), and research (\$60,000). Notably, and in addition, classrooms were built for the CultureWorks program with a capital investment of \$500,000 (which may be reasonably amortized over 10 years).



Table 5 shows the strategies and associated goals that were implemented in the area of recruitment in 2010-11.

**Table 5: Strategies and Goals for Recruitment, 2010-11**

STRATEGY	Goal
<b>CultureWorks/Fanshawe Partnerships</b>	↑ registrants
<b>Off-shore recruitment</b>	
Participation in off-shore high school visits and fairs	↑ applicants
New off-shore market development (visits to fairs and schools)	↑ applicants
Conversion events	↑ registrants
<b>On-shore recruitment</b>	
Developing partnerships with international high schools in Ontario and British Columbia.	↑ applicants
Providing on-campus special-visit opportunities for Ontario-based international students and schools	↑ registrants
<b>Both Off-shore and On-shore</b>	
Recruitment brochures, welcome brochures, websites, were revised and enhanced based on feedback from recruitment events, market research, and Western's communications office	↑ applicants ↑ registrants
Translation of select recruitment materials	↑ applicants
Enhanced follow-up with prospects (tracking with software), applicants and admits (communicating with applicants individually and using CHAT sessions and off-shore conversion events)	↑ registrants
Professional Development	↑ applicants ↑ registrants

The following recruitment initiatives are still in the development stages:

Initiative	Goal
international student video testimonials	↑ applicants ↑ registrants
international student ambassador programs (through student clubs)	↑ applicants ↑ registrants
working with alumni relations and development to engage alumni in developing closer relationships and agreements with off-shore international high schools	↑ applicants

In 2010-11 Western's international recruiters travelled to 6 regions (Caribbean, Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America) covering 20 countries. Conversion events were held in the Caribbean, China, and India.

#### Case Study: The University of Denver

The University of Denver has approximately 12,000 students (5,455 undergraduate; 6,387 graduate) with about 9.5% of their undergraduate enrolment comprised of international students (n=518). UD has an office of International Student Admission that handles all recruitment and admission for undergraduate students. The office has five full-time staff, two of which are recruiters who have "heavy admission responsibilities"; one half-time staff; and five student assistants. UD has been recruiting internationally for 23 years and recruiters visit two to four regions per year. Their travel budget is \$74,000.

## Observations, Recommendations, Considerations

### A. General

1. Debates regarding centralized versus decentralized approaches to various issues arise frequently at universities of Western's size and scope. One view that was raised during the consultation process was that recruitment might be better handled at the Faculty level. *This is not recommended for first year entry programs.* Problems with consistent messaging and quality control would be very difficult to manage using a decentralized approach and the costs of recruitment would be too high. Other universities, both inside and outside of Canada, have centralized undergraduate international student recruitment initiatives and for first year entry programs this coordinated approach makes sense. It is therefore recommended that Western *continue with centralized recruitment and admissions for first-year entry programs.*
2. Having said that, it is very important *to develop a web presence in the faculties that are specially designed for international students. And, after an applicant is admitted, one-on-one attention from the counselling offices in the Faculties would help with conversion rates. Similarly, follow-ups with prospective and admitted students in their native language can help with conversion rates. Consideration should be given to hiring international graduate students to call prospective and admitted students.* Consideration must be given to the fact that the workload associated with this will vary across Faculties (e.g. in 2010-11, approximately 2/3 of first year international students were enrolled in the Faculty of Social Science). At the central level, a lot of work

has gone into enhancing promotional materials but *more work is needed on the international web page* keeping in mind that this page should be linked to faculties and programs as well (see also, Academia Group, 2011).

3. *Continue investing in the development of promotional materials.* Someone from communications needs to be working on this file with the recruiters for a set time each year (at least for the first few years). The person from communications who is assigned to this file needs to understand cross-cultural differences in messaging and do some research on or already be well-versed in international marketing. Research suggests that different messaging is needed for international recruitment and for different countries. For instance, Chinese parents are very influential in the lives of their children and safety is a key concern. Marketing materials for China need to be targeted to parents (so investing in social-media approaches may not work well with this market). A one-page down-loadable pdf might be appropriate here. And, notably, a different approach will be required in different markets.

#### Case Study: Saint Michael's University, Vermont

The domestic recruitment materials at Saint Mike's reads something like this: "Saint Michael's is a top Catholic, residential, liberal arts college, located on a beautiful 400 acre campus in the Burlington area of Vermont."

International students get confused by what it means to be a Catholic college—does one have to be Catholic to go there? They have little understanding of "liberal-arts"; they don't think that colleges are universities; and they have never heard of Vermont.

Saint Michael's recently hired Kevin Spensley to work on international recruitment. For the international audience he transformed the message from what is written above to: "Saint Mike's is an academically strong institution with small classes. It is a socially minded school in a beautiful and safe state."

It is important to create appropriate messaging regarding Western's reputation and to draw on the University's niches and strengths to promote the whole. University rankings are important in international markets *so we need to focus on the areas in which we rank highly in the world rankings* (e.g. Ivey; HEEACT ranks Social Science at Western 82<sup>nd</sup> in the world; QS corporation ranks Social Science 96<sup>th</sup> in the World in 2010). International students likely do not know what the Globe and Mail rankings are so we need to *focus on specific items in the rankings* in which we are best in Canada.

*Student testimonials are very effective and should be continued. Consideration might also be given to parent testimonials.*

4. *Continue to invest in translation for targeted markets.* Research suggests that institutions that have translation available on web sites have more click-through response than those that do not. Only 1 in 4 schools in the US translate their promotional materials. Continuing with and expanding upon translation could lead to a competitive advantage for Western.
5. Tuition and housing costs and the value associated with these costs are among the top considerations for international students as they select a university. *Western should promote the notion that relative to many institutions of similar quality in the US, we are a bargain.*
6. Recruiters argue that if the cost of education at a particular institution is reasonable by international standards (which Western's is), then scholarships are really a matter of prestige and they don't need to be huge. *Western's practice of opening up scholarships to international students should be maintained.* If international student scholarships are developed, they do not need to be large unless we are trying to promote Western in a particular region.

## **B. Off-shore recruitment**

7. An approach that has been considered and previously rejected at Western is the use of third party contracting company to provide entrance year training for international students that the company recruits and brings to the University. Companies that offer this service set up shop at a University and provide English training and some transfer credits to students who are admitted to the University after one year. The company trains and hires its own teachers. This model has been quite successful at Simon Fraser University but has been rejected at other Universities (e.g. Dalhousie). *There are significant difficulties and risks (company acquisition, failure etc.) associated with bringing this kind of model into a unionized environment and it is unclear whether the rewards would be worth it.*
8. The Cultureworks/Fanshawe model is, in some ways, similar to the approach described above. CultureWorks and Fanshawe offer ESL programs to students who have been offered pre-admittance to Western. They do not offer University level courses and hence there are no transfer credits involved.

Western piloted a program with the CultureWorks/Fanshawe's ESL programs in 2010-11 whereby 206 students were offered pre-admission to Western. It is too early to know how many of these students will register in the fall but it is expected that between 75 and 100 will do so. *A return on investment (ROI) analysis needs to be done on this pilot project. There are*

*administrative costs associated with running this program because all applications are handled manually.*

However, conditional upon the number of registrants and the ROI, this seems like a good model and one that could be expanded upon. If students are interested in taking a credit course during their ESL training, perhaps Western could offer something in this regard (although caution is warranted here as many students find the combination of ESL programming and course work too strenuous). ESL programs are a big draw for international students and many of these students are quite willing to enrol in ESL programs before they are admitted to the University. In 2010-11, 606 of the 1,214 101 applicants were rejected because they did not have adequate language skills. It seems that *Western could also offer conditional admittance to international students who are recruited by Western but do not have satisfactory language qualifications. Students could be conditionally admitted based on their academic standing. The condition of their admission would be that they finish the appropriate training in ESL through CultureWorks or Fanshawe.*

**Notably, the idea of Western developing its own EAP/ESL program through either the Faculty of Education or Continuing studies is also being considered.**

9. *A ROI analysis is required of the offshore recruiting plan.* At first glance, it seems that we are trying to have an immediate impact in too many locales. Criteria by which focus countries and regions are chosen need to be established and then those criteria should be used to determine a multiple year strategy whereby relationships are a) maintained; b) enhanced; and c) built. Difficult decisions need to be made regarding which relationships should be maintained and enhanced. Does it make sense to send someone to a region twice a year when we only have 6 registrants from that country? Perhaps the answer is yes, but a detailed ROI analysis is required to make that call. Decisions also need to be made about what relationships should be built based on market factors and whether to use agents for the purpose of recruitment in this regard. Decisions also need to be made about whether we should make the decision to travel with CultureWorks for recruitment purposes. *Because this is a time sensitive matter, a priority recommendation is to hold a retreat with those involved with international recruitment as soon as possible to establish a strategic recruitment plan.*
10. In relation to the last point, consideration must also be given to whether Western wants to continue to actively recruit Canadians and permanent residents who have attended off-shore high schools. In 2010-11, Western admitted 110 of these students into first-year programs.

#### Case Study: Hong Kong

Western has a large alumni base in Hong Kong and Ivey is well established there. Western has been actively recruiting in Hong Kong for a number of years. Although Hong Kong is among the top 10 source countries of international students who study in Canada, the number of international students coming from Hong Kong has declined steadily over the last decade (see Table 1). In 2010-11, Western received 91 applications from students who listed Hong Kong their country of citizenship. Seventy-six of these students were studying at Ontario high schools and 15 were studying in Hong Kong. *None* of these students registered. Six students from a high school in Hong Kong who were Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada registered in first-year programs in 2010-11.

11. The use of agents is controversial but the relationship between an agent and an institution can be mutually beneficial. The agent must operate in an ethical manner and otherwise uphold the values of Western. *Although it may not make sense to use agents in countries where we already have a reputation, using an agent in a country like India may be worthwhile. In this case, policies and procedures for working with agents need to be established.*

#### Case Study: The University of Cincinnati

In 2007, the University of Cincinnati's undergraduate international enrolment was 251 and by 2009 it had almost doubled (n=491). Cincinnati made the decision to focus almost exclusively on agents. They signed with 36 agencies in 26 countries and leaders at U-Cincinnati founded the American International Recruitment Council (AIRC) to establish standards and certification for recruitment agencies.

12. *More use of alumni, students, and faculty in our recruiting efforts is required* but it is important that the appropriate training be provided to anyone who is engaged in recruiting. Recruiters caution that alumni, students, and faculty may do more harm than good if they are not appropriately trained. Furthermore, it is absolutely essential that such efforts be aligned with the strategic recruitment plan.
13. *To facilitate the use of alumni, students, and faculty in recruiting, Western needs a better database that is well maintained and that is accessible to the international enrolment management team.* There is a shareware system that is being developed by innovators from the University of Cincinnati that should be considered in this regard.

In some cases, Universities pay for the travel costs of a Faculty member to visit his/her country of origin provided that at least 50% of the time that

he/she is visiting is dedicated to recruitment. International recruitment officers work with the Faculty to develop a recruitment plan and provide training before he/she engages prospective students (University Leadership Council, 2009).

#### Case Study: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

When the director of international recruitment at Stevens Point travels to a region, he invites one or two recent graduates and sometimes their parents to join him. For the cost of an airfare or two from a city close by, this personal touch is invaluable and helps with recruitment efforts.

14. *Once the appropriate markets are identified, embassy and consulate visits are absolutely essential.* International recruiters, because of the necessity to build relationships, should conduct these visits. Currently, recruiters at Western do not visit embassies or consulates.

#### C. On-shore recruitment

15. In 2010-11, 56% (n=1,068) of Western's international applications came from Ontario Secondary Schools (OSS). At the University of Waterloo, 72% of their international applications were from OSS and they accounted for 33% (n=129) of their registrants in the same year. At Western, international applicants from OSS accounted for 27% (n=40) of our first-year international registrants.
16. Western is currently in the process of approving a partnership agreement with Columbia International College in Hamilton, the largest and oldest international high school in Canada. The agreement essentially outlines a partnership between the institutions that allows each of them to promote the other internationally. It also will allow UWO to grant conditional admissions to students at Columbia and will offer three admission scholarships per year. *This is a cost-effective strategy for international recruitment that should be evaluated annually and if no insurmountable problems arise, should be continued.* This kind of approach should also be selectively expanded to other international schools.
17. Besides developing formal partnership agreements, on-shore international high school visits are another cost-effective way in which we can potentially attract international students. *An assessment needs to be done of the high schools that produce the best students and our efforts should centre on those schools.*

## D. Admissions

18. At Western, admission processes are organized according to whether an application is from an Ontario Secondary School (101s) or from elsewhere (105s). The challenges that have been identified with respect to international admissions are that decisions need to be made quickly and evaluation of transcripts and language requirements for international applicants requires a great deal of time. An additional admissions officer was hired in 2010-11 to deal with the expected increase in the volume of international applications and the related research that is required to assess transcripts. *Many institutions rely on graduate research assistants to help with the research that is required in this regard. Graduate students from particular countries should be identified to work part-time on these matters.*

With international applicants from Ontario Secondary Schools (101s) the key challenge lies with evaluating English proficiency. *Western should move toward admitting students on the basis of their academic merit and work with ESL providers (see CultureWorks and Fanshawe above) to provide ESL training to students who do not fulfill necessary language requirements.* This is done at many institutions in the US (University Leadership Council, 2009) and several in Canada including the Universities of Waterloo and Toronto. This would also help to alleviate some of the workload associated with assessing language proficiency.

19. Many of the Universities in the US that are highly engaged in international student recruitment have established offices of International Student Admissions (Academic Impressions Conference, University Leadership Council, 2009). This is thought to be more effective and efficient because all matters having to do with recruitment and admissions, and the relationship building that is required, are streamlined and coordinated in one office. Recruiters often also read the applications and make admission decisions. *This organizational structure should be seriously considered at Western along with the possibility of streamlining international applications (regardless of whether they are 101s or 105s). Notably, streamlining may not work with the Ontario application system and efficiencies must not be lost in the processing of applications. At the very least, however, there must be a sufficient number of staff dedicated to international admissions in place and who work closely with recruitment officers.*

20. There is a need for admission decisions to be made expediently and some Universities in the US have committed to making decisions (once files are



complete) within 24 to 48 hours. *Although efforts have been made in this regard at Western, more work is needed in this area.*

## **E. Retention and degree completion**

For the 2008 cohort, Western's first to second year retention rate for domestic students was 92.8% and for international students it was 87.3%. For the 2005 cohort, 60% of our domestic students graduated in four years compared with 51% of our international students. A reasonable goal would be to provide the services needed for international students to have similar retention and completion rates as domestic students. However, more information is needed regarding why there are differences in this regard.

21. *Are the needs of international students the same as domestic students? Which services need to be enhanced in support of international student success? Why do international students have a higher attrition rate than domestic students? Research is required to address these questions before decisions are made about where resources should be allocated. All of the services that are available for domestic students are available for international students at Western. However, it is unclear whether international and domestic students utilize various services at similar rates.*

Having said that, The International and Exchange Student Centre (IESC) is very well utilized by undergraduate, graduate, exchange, and affiliate students and the number of incidents of utilization increased by 463% from 3462 in 1999-2000 to 19,506 in 2008-09. Since, 2006-07, graduate student usage has increased and has surpassed undergraduate student usage.

The staff members in the IESC report being worked to their capacity. As a result, some programs that would help with retention and that the staff would like to expand have been stalled (e.g. porch light community program). Data provided by IESS suggest that, compared to our competitors, the group is significantly understaffed relative to the number of international and exchange students we have at Western. Furthermore, if future targets for international recruitment are met and if more programs are introduced for students to gain international experience, additional resources will be required in the International Student and Exchange Centre and other offices on campus that provide services to international students.

22. *Careful consideration must be given to the staffing levels of the IESC in relation to other Canadian Universities and with regard to the other student service areas that are offered on campus. It is likely that more staff will be needed to support our international students.*

## Overall Assessments and Conclusions

Western's commitment to international student recruitment and retention must be long-term and Western must provide the resources required to meet its goals for international student growth. Responsible growth also means that Western needs to provide international students with the services that they need for success.

- It is very strongly recommended that Western establish an International Recruitment and Admissions team with staff dedicated entirely (or almost entirely) to working on the international file. At present, those working on the international file also work on domestic recruitment and admissions. Furthermore, *a director/team leader of this group is needed who will strategize, plan, and manage this file.* This will require some reorganization of the way files are handled and the way work is organized. Of course, the director/team leader should have some influence regarding how this team transpires. NOTE: MORE CONSIDERATION IS NEEDED WITH RESPECT TO THE ADMISSIONS PART OF THIS TO ENSURE THAT WORK EFFICIENCIES ARE MAINTAINED.

Implementing the recommendations outlined above will require a significant investment but will also deliver the following by 2014-15:

- ✓ A 100% increase in the number of international applications from 2573 in 2010-11 to 5146 in 2014-15.
- ✓ A reduction in the application to registrant rate for 101s from 22:1 to 10:1 (increase in yield)
- ✓ A reduction in the application to registrant rate for 105s from 10:1 to 7:1 (increase in yield).
- ✓ An increase in first-year international enrolment of 172% from 147 400. If recruitment Model 2 (see Table 4 above) is used for calculations in September 2011, incremental revenue increases based on 2010 tuition levels will be \$1,242,400; in 2012 an additional \$528,020; in 2013 \$807,560; and in 2014 \$1,459,820, for a total incremental increase of \$4,037,800 in first year tuition alone.
- ✓ An increase in first to second year retention rates from 87% to 90%
- ✓ An increase in four-year completion rates from 51% to 55%.

## References

Academica Group (2011). "Student Recruitment Research: Executive Summary Report, The University of Western Ontario". London: Academica Group.

CIC-Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2009). "Facts and Figures 2009-Immigration overview: Permanent and temporary residents".  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2009/index.asp>

CIC-Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2011). "Preliminary Tables: Permanent and temporary residents, 2010."  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2010-preliminary/05.asp>

Humphries, Jennifer (2010). "Trends in International Student Mobility: Canada". Paper presented at the Conference of the Americas on International Education. Calgary, Canada. Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE).

Knight, Jane (1994). "Internationalization: Elements and Checkpoints." CBIE Research No. 7. Ottawa: Canada.

McMullen, Kathryn and Angelo Elias (2011). "A Changing Portrait of International Students in Canadian Universities". Ottawa: Statistics Canada 81-004-X.

Sinclair, Julie (2010) "International Enrollment Management: Framing the Conversation". NAFSA Association of international Educators.  
[www.nafsa.org/IEMwhitepaper](http://www.nafsa.org/IEMwhitepaper).

University Leadership Council, (2009). "Increasing International Enrollment: Effective Approaches to Recruiting International Students". Washington, D.C.: The Advisory Board Company.

Verbik, Line and Veronica Lasanowski (2007). "International Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends". Report published by The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. [www.obhe.ac.uk](http://www.obhe.ac.uk).