

Universities Canada Presentation

Speaking Notes

- Good afternoon, and thank you for the invitation to appear before your committee.
- Je suis Norah Lynn Paddock, directrice adjointe des relations avec les gouvernements d'Universités Canada, l'association porte-parole de quatre-vingt-dix-sept (97) universités qui travaillent ensemble à faire progresser l'enseignement supérieur, la recherche et l'innovation au Canada.
- The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is enormously important to our economy and has serious implications for Canadian businesses and the livelihoods of both Canadians and foreign nationals.

- The use of this program by Canadian universities is unique and I appreciate this opportunity to share our perspective on the strategic value of highly skilled temporary foreign workers to Canada's economic growth agenda.

Canada's prosperity and the role of universities

- Our long-term economic prospects are tied to strengthening our research and innovation performance, and universities are crucial players in advancing these objectives.
- A necessary condition for fulfilling this role is the ability to position Canada as a global hub for talent.

- Efforts to attract top students, researchers and faculty take place in an extremely competitive playing field.
Canada is often only one of many destinations under consideration by leading academics.
- The federal government recognizes the importance of policies and programs that support a strong global role in higher education and research collaboration.
- Le Fonds d'excellence en recherche Apogée Canada est un exemple d'un programme fédéral qui appuie l'excellence à l'échelle mondiale dans des domaines de recherche où le Canada dispose d'un leadership.
- Il y a d'autres programmes semblables – tels que le Programme des chaires de recherche du Canada, et le Programme des chaires d'excellence en recherche du Canada.

- Nous devons attirer les meilleurs talents pour effectuer la recherche, quel que soit leur pays d'origine, pour avancer ces objectifs.
- Canada's universities are committed to developing and attracting talent – and sometimes that talent comes from abroad. Sometimes by chance – through a faculty hiring process that selects the best candidate, who happens to be a foreign national – or sometimes by design, when we host a visiting researcher to advance work on a research project that involves international collaborators.
- In both these instances, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is used by universities to welcome highly sought after talent from around the world.

TFWP

- Canada's universities participate in both streams of the TFWP – one that requires Labour Market Impact Assessments and is managed by Employment and Skills Development Canada, and the International Mobility Program, which is LMIA-exempt and managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

TFWP (LMIAs required)

- Employees who require LMIAs include foreign faculty members, who have been hired through rigorous, merit-based competitions. In the majority of cases, the positive experiences they have on Canadian campuses lead them to apply for permanent residence.

- When a foreign academic is identified as the best candidate for a position, our institutions complete the LMIA application process. This outlines the rigorous hiring processes that universities undertake, including efforts to fill positions with Canadian citizens or permanent residents, thereby showing how the best possible candidates are selected.
- We have worked closely with departmental officials to modify this program stream to reflect the unique nature of academic hiring. However, there is room for further refinement.

IMP (LMIA-exempt)

- Post-graduation work permit holders make up a significant number of those in the LMIA-exempt stream, known as the International Mobility Program.
- These are our former students – we are proud to have offered them a world-class university education and to have contributed to the creation of a large pool of potential permanent residents who are highly qualified, with Canadian credentials and work experience.

- We have welcomed the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's recent comments in response to concerns about the impact of the Express Entry system on the ability of international student graduates to access permanent residence. We look forward to the results of the Express Entry review launched by the Minister and agree that clear pathways to permanent residences are an important complement to globally competitive temporary immigration programs.

- We also use the IMP to host a wide range of academic talent on Canadian campuses for teaching and research purposes, including visiting scholars and research chair-holders. These individuals are exempt from LMIA's given their particular contributions to Canadian interests.

Recommendation

- The IMP, which offers a simplified process for the hiring of certain foreign nationals, aims to provide competitive advantages to Canada.
- Given that a large portion of foreign academics are already LMIA-exempt under the IMP, including faculty who hold American citizenship and all research chair holders, we believe it is worth considering extending this exemption to all forms of foreign academic hiring, including faculty members. This would help to ensure that Canada continues to attract the best talent, regardless of country of origin, to strengthen our higher education, research and innovation agendas.

Innovation Agenda

- Facilitating the flow of this type of high quality talent is integral to the government's plan to develop an Innovation Agenda that contributes to Canada's long-term economic growth.
- Universités Canada participera activement aux examens fédéraux de la science, de l'innovation et de la croissance économique afin de faire progresser sa vision d'un Canada novateur et inclusif, et discuter de la manière dont les universités peuvent apporter des solutions.
- We know the government is committed as part of the Innovation Agenda to being a magnet for global talent.

- Coherent immigration and labour market policies are a part of this equation. This includes mechanisms that address current labour market needs and anticipate future challenges.