

February 23, 2022

Members of the House of Commons Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
[submitted via email to CIMM@parl.gc.ca]

Dear members of the Committee on Citizenship and Immigration,

Re: Processing delays and study permit refusal rates for international students

I write on behalf of the University of Regina in follow-up to Universities Canada's February 1, 2022 appearance before you to outline immigration-related challenges facing Canada's post-secondary sector. My submission in support of Universities Canada's position will be brief and to the point.

Over the past two years, the global COVID-19 pandemic has quite literally decimated (i.e., in the original etymological sense of the term, reduced by at least 10 percent) international enrolments at the University of Regina. A number of factors have contributed to this, including, of course, the inability of many students to travel from their home countries because of international COVID-19 travel restrictions. The net effect on students, their academic progress, and our institution's diversity and revenue, has been significant.

International travel restrictions have been necessary and I would not presume to challenge them. However, as we emerge from the pandemic and international travel is once again opening up to students, two other factors are compounding the problems of the past two years – processing delays and high refusal rates for international study permits. As part of the University of Regina's Winter 2022 intake, for example, more than 100 students dropped their courses because they were waiting to have their study permit applications processed. In addition, unnecessarily high study permit refusal rates exist for students from key target markets such as Nigeria – something I understand Universities Canada has conveyed to you, but which I would like to reinforce from the University of Regina's specific institutional perspective.

I cannot imagine that the University of Regina is alone in these concerns. As the world emerges from COVID-19, it will be increasingly important to attract international students to our universities and to Canada as a whole. But current process delays and study permit refusal rates will make this outcome increasingly difficult, leaving Canada and its university sector behind competitor countries and institutions who will quite happily take our place as a preferred educational destination for the world's best and brightest students.

The opportunity exists for the Committee on Citizenship and Immigration to address the challenges as described. I urge you to make every reasonable effort to do so.

Yours sincerely,



Jeff Keshen
President and Vice-Chancellor