



This report was researched and prepared by Global Business Reports (gbreports.com) for World Student Magazine. Editorial researched and written by Harriet Bailey and Ty Jeevaratnam. For more details, please contact info@gbreports.com.

ON THE ROAD IN ONTARIO

I didn't choose to study overseas for my undergraduate degree. I had just spent two years travelling around Europe and Australia after leaving school, and decided I should return home to the UK to continue my education. However, when I heard about the Erasmus programme, I jumped at the chance and was fortunate enough to be able to spend the third year of my degree in Berlin. After university the travel bug stayed with me and I got a job as a writer with an international company, flying to different countries at a moment's notice as an on-the-ground reporter. With my own study abroad experience a fond memory, and being a complete newbie to Canada, I must have seemed like the perfect candidate to write for World Student magazine. I have been on assignment for the past two months with my colleague Ty Jeevaratnam, looking into the opportunities for post-secondary education in Ontario. A native French-Canadian from the neighbouring province of Québec, she has been able to introduce me to Tim Horton's and maple syrup, among other Canadian staples. Here are our findings...

First impressions

Home to Canada's largest city Toronto, its capital city Ottawa,

and even Justin Bieber's hometown of Stratford, Ontario has a lot to offer. One third of all international students coming to Canada choose to study in Ontario, which equates to almost 50,000 young people from all over the world. Toronto is the fourth-largest city in North America after Mexico City, New York and Los Angeles, and Ontarians are proud of the fact that more than 50% of the people living in Toronto were not born here, making it a truly multicultural place.

Scott O'Neill, Director of International at the University of Waterloo, explained this view in more detail: "One in five Canadian citizens was born elsewhere and we are a very welcoming country. Rather than the melting pot of cultures promoted by the United States, Canada views our diversity as a cultural mosaic; everybody can retain their cultural, historical and individual heritage rather than assimilate with their neighbour."

Feeling welcomed by the community is one of the most important things to consider when choosing where in the world to study. Ontario offers both local colleges with strong links to their communities, and world-renowned universities central to the identity of their areas.

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Toronto

Although many of the institutions we met with offer free airport pick-ups for their new international students, I was no longer eligible. However, it is easy to get into downtown Toronto via the Union-Pearson Express train service. Once there, you will find the University of Toronto (referred to as UofT); Ryerson University, named after the founder of Ontario's modern school system; and Ontario College of Art and Design University (known as OCAD U).

UofT is a collegiate university modelled on the same lines as Oxford University in the UK, with students attending one of seven colleges. Some colleges, such as Trinity, offer students the opportunity to wear gowns for specific functions and to say grace in Latin! As the largest university in the province, it has a total enrolment of almost 86,000 students, nearly 16,000 of whom are international. Despite its large size, the college structure provides a more intimate setting for learning and socialising.

Trinity College is the smallest of all UofT's colleges, with fewer than 2,000 students. Provost and Vice-Chancellor Mayo Moran told us the admissions requirements are extremely demanding, with more than 75% of students graduating with distinction or high distinction. Provost Moran was especially proud of the fact that, of Canada's 11 Rhodes Scholars for 2016 (a prestigious scholarship for post-graduate study at Oxford), two were Trinity graduates.

However, the university also recognises the importance of looking after its students, particularly those from abroad, and has introduced a new \$1.75 million mental health initiative – one of the first of its kind in the country: “We appreciate the fact that it can be challenging for international students to integrate in a new environment, as most of the applicants are young and may not have a support system or know many people in Canada,” said Provost Moran. “Through our new initiative, we offer students enhanced on-site counselling and other supports by trained professionals. Because being separated from family and close friends can bring about additional challenges, many of our international students are involved in this initiative. We know the healthy development of the whole person is crucial if we are to enable our students to fulfill their enormous potential.”

The University of St Michael's College (St Mike's) is around double the size of Trinity, but retains the small, friendly atmosphere with fewer than 4,000 students. It was originally founded in the 19th Century as an academic refuge for Catholics, in the traditionally Protestant province of Ontario, and retains this basis in faith today. Vice Chancellor David Mulrone, who aims to meet all his international students personally, said St Mike's offers students a unique opportunity: “We have had a large

number of students drawn to the combination of academia and religious education that we provide. The fact that we have this background attracts others who are seeking a slightly different pace of life, with the chance to be more contemplative and reflective through the course of their education.”

The second largest university in the city is Ryerson, situated right next to Toronto's version of Times Square: the Yonge-Dundas Square. Despite the less-than-catchy name, it hosts good shopping, bright lights and even open-air movie nights in summer – perfect for balmy evenings! President Mohamed Lachemi was himself an international student, arriving in Canada for post-graduate study after completing an undergraduate degree in Algeria. “I came to Canada as an international student 30 years ago, but did not get the chance to interact with students from a variety of backgrounds; these types of interactions add to the success of our institution,” he explained. “Bringing international students to our campus is a priority for us, as we believe enhancing multicultural student interactions adds value to the educational component of Ryerson University.”

OCAD U is Canada's oldest and largest university dedicated to art and design, and the third largest art and design institution in North America. Although it already has a wide range of fully-equipped facilities for budding artists and designers, the university is in the midst of some pretty impressive expansion work. President Sara Diamond explained to us where the brand-new buildings would be located across the city from the panoramic windows of her 14th floor office in downtown Toronto: “We will upgrade our studio facilities and build an additional 55,000 square feet of architectural space, as well as a library three times its current size as part of our Creative Cities Campus. Within two years, we will open the Campus for the Connected World on the waterfront, including an expanded incubator, growing our space there from 14,000 square feet to 53,000 square feet. We have a gallery system and will open an 8,000 square foot gallery onsite that will show work by media artists and designers from around the world.”

Heading west

The south-west tip of Ontario, bordered by two of North America's Great Lakes (Lake Huron to the north and Lake Erie to the south), holds several university towns. Driving 3.5 hours west out of Toronto on Highway 401 ultimately leads to the city of Windsor and the Detroit River, dividing Canada from the United States.

As well as a fantastic view of Detroit's skyline, Windsor also hosts its own university. Of its 16,000 students, 18% are international; the Windsor-Detroit region also hosts the largest Arabic-speaking population outside of the Middle East. Dr Alan Wildeman has been the university's President for eight years, and has seen international enrolment double in the past half-decade since Windsor started to promote the region's



Are you interested in studying in Ontario, Canada?

Deb Matthews

*Deputy Premier, Chair of Cabinet,
Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development,
Minister Responsible for Digital Government*



Well as Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, I would like to encourage you to do just that. I'm happy to say that our province has much to offer international students. You might think I am biased, but Ontario's 44 publicly assisted colleges and universities have a global reputation for quality programs and a positive student experience. Our province is a destination of choice for international students at the postsecondary level.

I'm proud to say that Ontario has a wealth of higher education choices, from large universities supporting world-class research in the heart of urban centers, to small, undergraduate institutions in picturesque areas of the province. As well, colleges across the province offer career-focused programs blended with practical experience.

In fact, in 2015, more than 87,000 full-time international students chose to study at Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities? These students know what I know: Ontario has some of the best postsecondary institutions in the world. Ontario's colleges and universities meet rigorous international standards for curriculum, teacher qualifications, faculties and student services.

Ontario also shares research, knowledge and student exchanges with other educational institutions around the world. In fact, my government recognizes that international activities are core elements of a successful public postsecondary education system. International students – from kindergarten to postsecondary – add to the diversity of Ontario's communities and enhance intercultural learning in Ontario's classrooms, increasing the quality of the education experience for all students.

Our government understands that in the 21st century global economy it is critical for Ontario's postsecondary institutions to continue to attract top talent from around the world. That's why we've taken a number of significant steps to ensure it remains an education destination of choice. In partnership with the postsecondary, education and training sectors, my mandate is to help people choose their path; ensure an accessible, high-quality and sustainable postsecondary education system; and build an integrated employment and training system.

To find out more about studying in Ontario visit:

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diversity on a global scale. "Windsor's location is attractive for students as there are fascinating things to see in our neighbouring U.S. city of Detroit. Many of our students are involved in co-op programs there and Windsor has a long history of connections with the other side of the border," he elaborated.

Around halfway between Windsor and Toronto is the city of London, which even has its own Thames River running through it. Although Western University – formerly known as the University of Western Ontario – has one of the most picturesque campuses in Canada, it is strongly focused on what goes on inside the classroom. "We are making conscientious decisions to increase our research profile and attract the best teaching talent worldwide. There seems to be constant tension in the sector about whether a university can have great researchers or great teachers; at Western we are fighting the idea that this is mutually exclusive, as we want to have the best researchers on the front line of teaching," explained Carolyn Ford, Director of International Undergraduate Recruitment.

Western is a similar size to Ryerson with around 38000 students, which is roughly 10% of the city's total population. It also boasts one of the largest program offerings in Ontario, with more than 400 undergraduate programs and 120 Masters and PhD programs in 11 faculties.

Halfway again between London and Toronto is the urban conurbation of Kitchener-Waterloo, which has not just one, but two universities: Wilfrid-Laurier and the University of Waterloo itself (marking the last two in the line-up starting with 'W'). The area is known as the Silicon Valley of the North as it is home to the most technology start-ups in North America after Menlo Park; BlackBerry is headquartered in the city as founder Mike Lazaridis, who came to Canada from Greece, studied electrical engineering at Waterloo and subsequently became the university's

chancellor.

Universities and colleges across Canada are becoming increasingly reliant on international students not only to keep their classrooms filled, but also to become the new generation of skilled Canadian workers. Scott O'Neill studied psychology at Waterloo before coming back to work at the university twenty years later: "All universities in Canada are facing a demographic decline due to reduced birth rates; international students are key to maintaining and growing the size of our institutions in the absence of home-grown students. We can also benefit from holding on to the international students we have trained here and having them remain in the area, which is a hub for technology with a diverse international population." While Waterloo's campus can be found on one side of University Avenue, Wilfrid Laurier's is on the other. The university is named after the seventh Prime Minister of Canada, who was in office for 15 years in a row and is now on the Canadian \$5 bill. With more than 19,000 students it has a full range of programs and courses, but also works with its neighbour to provide even more opportunities for students. "Laurier has several options for students to pursue double degrees in the areas of mathematics, business and computer science. Some of those double degree programs involve a partnership with the University of Waterloo and all of these programs are extremely popular," explained Julie Hummel, associate registrar of recruitment and admissions. Driving back towards Toronto we reached the University of Guelph. Greeted by a huge gryphon statue at the entrance to the campus, we felt that we had finally found Hogwarts. Although a gryphon is a fictional animal, the university is known for its focus on the life sciences, and is ranked fourth in the world for veterinary medicine. Guelph currently has around 1,200 international students out of a total of 28,000; Associate Vice President (Academic) Serge Desmarais said having more international students

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on campus was a focus. "Being a highly ranked institution when it comes to fields such as agriculture and veterinary schools, we have been able to attract international students; however, we have not maintained the same level of interest in recent years, and so we are revisiting our strategy for international engagement. This is also a very clear priority for Guelph's President."

Just like Guelph, Brock University is only an hour out of Toronto. It is the only university in Canada to have a campus in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and is based on the edge of the Niagara Escarpment, with stunning views over the town of St. Catharines and the wider Niagara region. James Mandigo, the new Vice Provost of International, researches the impact of education in Central American communities and is keen to bring the idea of 'act locally, think globally' to the entire campus.

As well as focusing on the similarities, rather than the differences, between cultures, Brock's students have access to a range of up-to-date facilities. "We built the International Center in June 2010 and it now houses our recruitment and international student services centers, as well as our English programs and our Confucius Center. In terms of facilities on campus, we have spent \$120 million on the Cairns Family Health and Biosciences Research Complex, an innovative center around the life sciences, biosciences and natural sciences. It functions as an incubator for students to conduct research. We have also recently opened the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts in downtown St. Catharines, which has links to local artists and those working in the industry, as well as world-class learning facilities."

The Triangle

Having travelled west, we now needed to travel north and east of Toronto; east won out as we could reach the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) in an hour by taking our favourite route, Highway 401. Founded in 2002, UOIT

is one of Canada's newest universities. Although it has a significant focus on technology, business, engineering and the sciences, it also offers social sciences and humanities programs to its 10,000 students.

Susan McGovern, the vice president of external relations and advancement, liaises with local and national companies to find out exactly what they expect from graduates: "We have received industry feedback demanding students with a well-rounded education, and who are able to understand the public policy effect of building an airport, rather than simply the engineering aspects of the job. Students need to be equipped with the soft skills to enable them to excel in the workplace from the moment they begin, rather than several months down the line. UOIT is innovative in the sense that we develop joint courses between faculties; for example, we are currently partnering an infrastructure engineering program with the humanities and social sciences faculties. Keeping this in mind, our programs are designed to offer a holistic education, rather than being narrow in focus."

From UOIT's hometown of Oshawa, we headed east to the second point on the triangle: Ottawa, the border town between Ontario and Québec. Although Toronto is the capital of Ontario, Ottawa is the capital city of Canada and home to the country's government buildings and Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. The University of Ottawa is the largest English-French bilingual university in the world, offering completely bilingual faculty and staff and the option to study all programs in either language. International students who choose to study in French will pay the same government-subsidised tuition as a domestic student, rather than international fees.

Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Gary Slater, has been a science professor at uOttawa for 20 years and explained to us the importance of international students to the university's

vibrant, multicultural landscape. "In the coming years, we want to focus on four types of diversity: the first is cultural diversity, whereby we want to increase our student population from across the world to contribute to truly cosmopolitan classrooms. The second is linguistic diversity, focusing in particular on French-speaking international students; at present, about 40% of students speak French on campus. We also want degree diversity in the form of more PhD and Masters students and, finally, we want diversity in disciplines; our business and engineering schools are essentially at capacity and we want to encourage more students to attend uOttawa and to study in the Humanities and Social Sciences."

The final point on the triangle is Laurentian University. Located in the mining town of Sudbury, it is five hours west of Ottawa and four hours north of Toronto. It is also the second English-French bilingual university in Ontario, but hosts only 8,000 students, compared to the more than 40,000 studying at uOttawa. Chris Mercer, Executive Director of Student Life and Enrolment Management, told us about the various new facilities at Laurentian, such as the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, and how the university's location provides students with opportunities they would not have access to elsewhere. "Our post-graduate employment rate has been in the highest amongst all universities in Ontario five years in a row, with the most recent being 97%. To support this level of labour market integration, we are constantly thinking about how we can place our students into meaningful opportunities within the various communities. Experiential learning plays a huge role in our medical program, for example, and because of our more remote location, medical students are able to engage in services to which their counterparts in more cosmopolitan areas may not have access. This provides students hands-on, context-based learning in unique scenarios and explains our 100% resident placement

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COLLEGES

Traditionally, while universities were seen as academic, colleges offered vocational training. Universities attracted students from far and wide, while colleges served their local communities. At least in Canada, those lines seem to be blurring. Universities are offering more experiential learning opportunities and colleges are adding full, four-year degree programs to the usual mix of diplomas and certificates. Sean Coote has been Director of International at Niagara College for eight years: “All our students are welcome to engage in the full range of programs at Niagara, but the provincial government has ruled that domestic Ontario students have priority for programs, followed by Canadian citizens; only after that will international students be accepted onto courses. This means we have international students participating in around 90% of our courses.”

Niagara College is, like Brock University, based in the Niagara region of Ontario, which is famous for two things: waterfalls, and wine. Together, they attract more than 15 million tourists to the region each year, creating a high number of jobs in the hospitality industry. Sean confirmed the college’s most popular programs are in tourism, food and hospitality, and viticulture.

Institutions have the ability to “level up” and become colleges; art and design university OCAD U, originally just OCAD, was designated a university in 2002. Sheridan College, in the harbour town of Oakville an hour west of Toronto, is another art and design college in the process of becoming a university. “We have named the process the “Sheridan Journey” – it’s our primary focus. As it stands right now, we function as an exceptional undergraduate teaching university. By formally becoming a

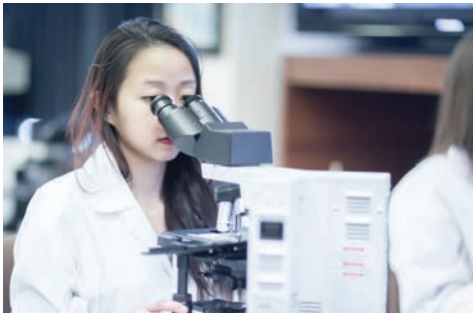
university, we will receive affirmation about what we know to be true already. It will not present a radical change for students, although there are some fundamental operational changes happening around governance and expanding the number of degrees we have to offer. Ultimately, we recognize that it is not mutually exclusive to offer a career-focused education, ongoing connections to industry and applied research, and function as a university,” explained Acting Vice-President, Student Affairs & Enrolment Management, Andrew F. Ness.

Humber College, located in western Toronto, is the largest polytechnic institute in Canada, offering a distinct third option between university and college. Of its 29,000 full-time students and 23,000 part-time students, around 15% are international. It also offers degree programs, which Alister Mathieson, Vice President of Advancement and External Affairs, claims are among the fastest-growing qualifications sought by Humber students. “Humber is a designated institute of technology and advanced learning which means we are able to offer degree programs. We have 24 four-year degree programs out of 180 full-time programs in eight academic schools, as well as a host of apprenticeships, one-year certificates, two-year diplomas, three-year advanced diplomas and post-graduate certificates,” he said.

While universities can choose to work together to offer their students even greater choice – as in the case of Wilfrid-Laurier and Waterloo - there is also the potential for colleges to work

together with universities. Durham College shares a site with UOIT in Oshawa (though Durham actually got there first, as it was founded in 1967), providing students with access to even more educational opportunities. Don Lovisa became President of the College in 2008, when only 25 international students were enrolled; Durham now has more than 20x that number. “The pathway between university and college is evolving. Over the past few years, the province of Ontario has invested approximately \$75 million through the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer to help facilitate partnerships between colleges and universities including Durham and UOIT. This has enabled Durham to provide conditional admission to Canadian or international students starting with us and wanting to complete their degree at UOIT. This allows us to provide the best of both worlds – the opportunity to receive an applied education at college as well as develop the academic framework required to succeed at university,” said President Lovisa.

Durham College will launch its first degree program in autumn 2016, although he commented the focus at the moment is on students returning to college after graduating, as they figure out the skills they really need to improve to get their dream job. “In recent years, we have seen a change in the demographic of our students at Durham, which has led to changes in our program mix; we now have many more post-graduate programs, which also incorporate a semester of work placement,” he continued.



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The Michener Institute of Education, located in downtown Toronto, is another college taking advantage of the opportunities through partnership. At the start of 2016, Michener joined the University Health Network (UHN), which is the first example of a school joining with a hospital system in Canada. UHN is a network of five hospitals, providing direct access to students who will be able to put medical theory into practice far earlier in their program. Dr. Brian Hodges, the Executive Vice President of Education at UHN, said this will ensure students benefit from an up-to-date curriculum and a connection between what they are learning and what they are doing: "We are incorporating the concept of learning as constant and continuous, and moving away from the idea that there is a clear divide between being a student and being an employee. The major shift that we are making through the integration of the Michener Institute for Education is to fully integrate schooling with practical clinical, lifelong

learning." Algonquin College, led by President Cheryl Jensen, is an English-speaking college in Ottawa offering one-, two- and three-year diplomas and certificates, and four-year degree programs. It attracts native French speakers as English learning can be integrated with a student's program, cutting down on the amount of time required to complete their studies. Like Michener, Algonquin also offers healthcare programs and supplies two-thirds of the healthcare staff required by the local workforce. "Whenever we develop a new program, we ensure that there is a demonstrated need for the program in the workplace. We have a program advisory committee (PAC) made up of experts in their various fields from the local area, and new programs require their approval. We have built into our strategic plan, effective in 2017, a much more purposeful intent for cooperative education, experiential learning and work-integrated learning," explained President Jensen.

All colleges are expected to have a PAC involving industry leaders, and Seneca College is no exception. This ensures programs are as relevant to current practices as possible and guarantees the future marketability of students. "Our professors have a direct connection to the industry and are aware of current trends, which allows students to learn from real-life examples. In fact," explained Seneca Dean Jos Nolle, "we encourage our professors to get back in the industry every now and then, for example during sabbatical periods, so their knowledge remains relevant. We also invite guest speakers to present new developments, theories and trends to our students. This allows us to ensure that our students have access to the most accurate and relevant information." As well as encouraging its faculty members to gain experience abroad, higher education institutions provide opportunities for international as well as domestic students to take advantage of their partnership and exchange opportunities around the world. Centennial College, located close to Seneca in eastern Toronto, is the province's oldest college and celebrates its 50th anniversary this autumn. President Ann Buller told us about the impact of these experiences on her students: "I give a final assignment to every student who leaves Centennial College: to make a mark on the world and to make a difference. Toward that end, we offer opportunities to our domestic and international students to allow them to experience a different part of the world while learning and giving back to communities. Our global experience teams do research around these international assignments to understand the impact they have on individual students when they come back. The most important thing we hear is that their experiences have been life-changing, and they are more likely to volunteer again." Mohawk College, based in Hamilton, has been voted number one in the Greater Toronto Area for four years in a row.

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Its international student population has doubled in the last three years and now hosts around 2,000 international students from 70 different countries. Mohawk has embraced the digital world and has recently launched its Go Mohawk app, guiding students through the college decision-making process and beyond. Keith Monroe is Dean of International and suggested Canada in general is becoming increasingly attractive to overseas students: "Canada has increased in its attractiveness to international students mainly due to economic, political, and international security reasons. This has also changed the dynamic of how Canada is perceived in the world, even in comparison to the United States. Politically, the climate in Canada has changed and education is being viewed as a priority and is being recognized as a tool for the democratization of the world."

Money, money, money

As well as measuring interest in an institution based on its location, programs and entry requirements, the availability of financial assistance can often be the ultimate decision maker. Not only do universities and colleges charge different tuition fees in the first place, they also offer a range of options to ensure that they can have the brightest and best students on their campus, regardless of socio-economic background. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) is the group representing all 20 of the province's universities, and is led by President and CEO David Lindsay. He told us about the Ontario Trillium Scholarship for international post-graduate students and how the COU has reduced the cost of applying to university in the first place. "Ontario has implemented a centralised university application portal - the Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC) - where a student pays one fee per institution and creates a more efficient process for both university and student."

Although education in Canada is run by the provinces themselves, the federal government helps to promote Canadian opportunities abroad through the International Education Division (IED) of Global Affairs Canada. This also covers the availability of nationwide scholarships: "The IED tracks awards and scholarships from the Canadian government and those offered by foreign governments for Canadians to study abroad and international students to study in Canada," explained director Andreas Weichert. "The Emerging Leaders in the Americas program is the biggest of 12 different programs managed by the International Education Division, which supported more than 760 international students through financial assistance in 2015."

To get an idea of the financial awards on offer at the schools themselves, this typically means looking at each college or university website on an individual basis. However, the company yconic has

attempted to make this process slightly easier. Founded in 1998, the website is aimed at 16-22 year-olds both across Canada and worldwide. We paid a visit to the company's office in downtown Toronto to find out more from managing director Jon Kamin: "We are a scholarship aggregation and matching tool helping students pay for college and university. We focus our efforts on collecting information on financial assistance for students from foundations, universities, charities, and other organizations. Based on the information students provide us, we then narrow down the options to the awards for which they are eligible. We have also expanded into other tools and utilities that improve students' lives, such as a peer-to-peer support platform." yconic is also working in partnership with Scotiabank, one of Canada's international banks. As a "Student Champion", 2016 marks the fourth year of its National Scholarships, which are open to all those eligible to study in

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Canada; 30 students will receive \$2,500 each. The partnership is also aiming to encourage users to learn more about how to manage their money and build financial literacy skills. Scotiabank was originally the Bank of Nova Scotia, a province in eastern Canada, but has been based in Toronto for more than a century and is now the third largest bank in the country. It is also the only bank in Canada to have opened a dedicated multicultural banking department and director Puneet Mann said around 45% of all international students in Canada hold their money in a Scotiabank account.

Banking services are available before students even arrive in Canada, in one of two ways. The first is pre-arrival online account opening, allowing students to transfer money from their own bank accounts to their Scotiabank account. This provides the proof of funds necessary to enter Canada. The second is specifically for students from China, India and Pakistan, who may not have access to banking. "Therefore, they are unable to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to cover one year's living expenses in Canada. As a result, we have built this into our offering," explained Puneet. "We invest the lump sum of money for students, which they are able to earn interest on. We then allocate a monthly amount to the students so they don't accidentally spend all their money at once. This allays the fears of the parents and solves the government's problem of ensuring each student has sufficient funds for living expenses. This program also sped up the visa process, as students now only require a certificate from Scotiabank to support their visa application."

All of the schools we spoke to offer some form of financial assistance for international students, usually in the form of merit-based entrance scholarships. Many have received donations from generous international alumni who want to ensure students from their home countries are also able to benefit from a Canadian education. Nevertheless, schools are also implementing novel ways of ensuring a wide range of young people from around the world can come to Canada. For example, as well as scholarships to help those studying for the International Baccalaureate, or for students applying for certain programs, Brock University is going further. "We have partnered with organizations to help support international student refugees who are in financial need. One of the particular programs supported by Brock is the Daughters for Life Foundation, a Canadian charity providing full scholarships to young women who have been affected by the conflicts in the Middle East," explained James.

Sheridan's pot of money for international student scholarships currently stands at \$250,000 per year, but the college also aims to empower young people who come into financial difficulty during their time at the school, creating a situation which sounds very much like being paid to study! Andrew told us how "a portion of this funding is devoted to our work/study program; if an international student comes to us in financial need, we



will come up with an opportunity for the student to work within the college to solve that problem while also enhancing the student's academic experience. For example, an international student artist was financially challenged in her final year. The International Student Centre engaged her to create unique artisanal gifts for our global partners, which was beneficial for us and enabled the student to build her portfolio, which helped her increase her chances of success after university."

Ottawa takes a different approach entirely to the tuition fee situation, as Gary explained: "We aim to keep our tuition fees fairly low, rather than charging high prices and then offering large scholarships to offset this. Therefore, our scholarship offering is fairly limited, at between 50 to 100 students per year. Furthermore, any international students coming to uOttawa and choosing to study mostly in French will see their fees reduced to the same as we charge domestic Canadian students."

Most programs now qualify an international student for a Canadian study permit that also allows for up to 20 hours of work per week during term time, and full-time work during the holidays. As well as this, almost all college programs and a large majority of university programs have a co-op or other work placement option, after Waterloo's founders, who were active in business and entrepreneurship, set the trend: "A co-operative education combines academic studies with work experience; Waterloo co-op students alternate between one semester of academic studies and one semester in a full-time, paid job. We have more than 6,300 employers hiring our students every year; our students can earn \$45,000-\$85,000 in the professional world while completing their degree," said Scott at Waterloo.

Final thoughts

University rankings are a useful tool for students to help make their decision on higher education, but are by no means perfect. With a population one-tenth the size of the United States, Canada necessarily has far fewer universities and

colleges. However, the general quality of that education is far higher than its neighbour. Gary at uOttawa explained what is going on: "These rankings look at perhaps 15,000 to 20,000 universities and publish a list of the top 400-500, which is 3% of all universities. In Ontario, at least seven of our 20 universities are in the top 500, which is around 30% of the universities in this province alone. We are up against the perception that because roughly half of the top 500 universities are located in the United States, this points to a high quality of education across the board. But about 20% of Canadian universities are in the top 500, compared to only 3% of U.S. institutions. We can therefore truly claim that Canada's education system is of fantastic quality; indeed, uOttawa is ranked higher than about 97% of the education providers in the United States."

We asked every college and university we met with why international students should choose to continue their education in Canada and we kept receiving the same responses: safe environment, choice of programs, quality education, reasonable fees, welcoming society, multiculturalism, natural beauty, cosmopolitan cities... the list is endless. This was summed up by Carolyn at Western: "Canada is the winner of the decathlon. We don't necessarily win each event, but we are the overall winner when taking the average of all the categories. We have a high quality of life, good healthcare and a safe environment. We offer many students the opportunity to work here after graduation. We are relatively affordable and our society is both diverse and cosmopolitan."

With that and thousands of kilometres on the clock, our road trip is complete.



Harriet Bailey

University of Manchester (UK) alumnus



Ty Jeevaratnam

McGill University (CA) alumnus