

**Integration of International Students at Lakehead University- “The Path of  
Sahanubhooti”**

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## Table of Contents

1. Chapter 1.....	6-15
• Introduction	
• Background	
• Personal Narrative	
• Rationale for study	
• Definition of terms	
• My journey at Lakehead University	
• Summary	
2. Chapter 2.....	16- 31
• Literature Review	
➤ Introduction	
➤ Themes	
➤ Conclusion	
➤ Summary	
3. Chapter 3.....	32- 47
• Introduction	
◆ Issue 1: High Tuition fees in Lakehead University	
◆ Issue 2: Language Barrier (ESL and short-term academic writing courses for international students at Lakehead University).	
◆ Issue 3: Finding part- time jobs	
◆ Issue 4: International Graduate (B.Ed students) should be provided placement experience in Ontario Schools.	
◆ Issue 5: Graduate Assistantship opportunities for international students in Faculty of Education.	

- Final Recommendations..... 45
- Summary..... 47
- References..... 48-51

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### **Abstract**

The portfolio will focus on the increasing internationalization of programs and student populations in Canadian Universities. It will largely focus on the roles, support systems and responsiveness by Lakehead University in assisting and integrating international students. This study will also focus on international students' academic, social-emotional, cultural, linguistic, and financial challenges, and how University faculty and staff need to recognize students' needs in order to effectively offer supportive campus resources and services. The study will also examine how Canadian (or North American) Universities have made policy commitments to service international students in order to expand their university's market and revenue generating potential.

The study will critically examine a range of literature (academic, policy reports, university statements, etc.) in order to gauge the changing landscape of higher education through internationalization. I put forward some of the recommendations that may prove helpful for the Lakehead University to better assist international students. If these recommendations followed in a meaningful way, it might better integrate the practice of sahanubhooti in the daily lives of international students.

**Keywords:** Internationalization, empathy, globalization, issues, policy making, international students.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The portfolio is arranged in the following manner:

- Chapter 1 will provide the concept of Sahanubhooti as it relates to the internationalization of higher education at Lakehead University, consistent with my personal narrative.
- Chapter 2 will provide the literature review on Internationalization of Canadian Higher Education system.
- Chapter 3 of the portfolio will highlight the major challenges that I faced at Lakehead University and how the Universities policies and practices impact those challenges. According to my experiences and reflections, I put forward some of the recommendations that may be beneficial for the new international students.

### **Background**

In this chapter of the portfolio, I am going to discuss the following sections:

1. Introduction and background.
2. Introduction to Personal Narrative.
3. The rationale for the study.
4. Definition of terms
5. Personal Narrative (My journey at Lakehead University)

In this section of the portfolio, I will focus on the background of internationalization of higher education in Canada. Internationalization of higher education has become a significant feature of the Canadian educational landscape. It is regarded as one of the major powerful sources of change in contemporary higher education (Taylor, 2004). Knight (2004) argues that

internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization. One result of globalization is an increase in the number of international students in Canada. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2017) asserts that Canada is a top-ten study destination worldwide, in terms of hosting international students. Between 2008 and 2016, the number of study permits that became effective each year more than doubled. In 2008, a total of 128,411 study permits became effective – in 2016, this figure was 267,780. Thus, it shows that international students make a huge contribution to the Canadian economy by paying high tuition fees, approximately double that of domestic students.

International students have a critical role to play in the internationalization of higher education. The mobility of international students between countries is a core mandate of international education (Knight, 2012). Trends in student enrolment patterns are linked to large institutional goals to internationalize higher education. The essence of internationalization of Canadian higher education is defined as “a process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching /learning, research and service functions of university or college (Gibson, 2016).

The concept of internationalization of higher education in Canada has been much more broadened. Now, it conveys that internationalization is an ongoing and continuing effort. Knight (2012) claims that the term “internationalization” is generic enough to put in many different contexts as it covers all aspects of education.

### **Personal Narrative**

I, as an international student, found Canada one of the best countries for pursuing a Master of Education degree. I chose Lakehead University because it offers an M.Ed. with a specialization in Social Justice. This attracts my attention as Social Justice is always one of my

great interests. Pursuing higher education from abroad was one of my goals in life. Coming from India was a long arduous journey and that could not have been completed without the help of my family. Now, it has been several months here, and I am struggling as an international student because of numerous challenges such as financial problems, the language barrier, the feeling of alienation, and academic challenges.

As an international student, I want to share my experiences and my own journey at Lakehead University. This portfolio will hopefully help new international students in handling such challenges in the university.

### **Rationale for Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the following:-

1. The challenges faced by international students at Lakehead University as seen through my personal narrative and,
2. How well Lakehead University assists and integrates international students into an unfamiliar environment?
3. In particular, the emphasis will explore whether or not Lakehead University does the integration of international students through the concept of Sahanubhooti.

The primary focus of this portfolio is organized around the assertion that Canada is making profit from international students but in return not providing necessary resources. This study will also examine the roles, support systems, and responsiveness of Lakehead University in assisting and integrating international students. This study will also reflect on international students' academic, social-emotional, cultural, linguistic, and financial challenges, and how university faculty and staff need to recognize students' needs in order to effectively offer supportive campus resources and services. It will also examine how Lakehead University has



made policy commitments to service international students in order to expand their university's market and revenue generating potential through the path of sahanubhooti.

In the portfolio, I will use the Hindi term "sahanubhooti" instead of the term "empathy". The concept of sahanubhooti means empathy, sympathy, love, and understanding for the people who are suffering and facing challenges/constraints. In the portfolio, I would like to present the concept of sahanubhooti on the behalf of international students who may be struggling in a new environment and working so hard to achieve their goals in life. I hope that domestic students and professors of the Lakehead University may be better able to show sahanubhooti to international students in order to provide them the support they require to complete their studies in an empathic manner.

### **Definition of terms**

#### **Internationalization**

The following definition of internationalization is the summary of various famous authors such as Knight (2004), Seth (2013) and Gibson (2016).

Internationalization is an ongoing, strategic and coordinated process whose objective is to align and integrate an international and intercultural dimension into the purpose and delivery of post-secondary education in order to enhance quality education, global knowledge economy and to develop an internationally connected and egalitarian society.

#### **Globalization**

According to Seth (2013), globalization refers to the global economic integration of many formerly national economies into one global economy, mainly by free trade and free capital mobility, but also by easy or uncontrolled migration. It is the effective erasure of national boundaries for economic purposes (Seth, 2013). He asserts that globalization is

more of a strategy that provides a strong foundation on which a university or institution can build long-term, sustainable partnerships. There is a desire to create a win-win opportunity for other countries. It also shows a true commitment to wanting to provide quality education to students outside of one's own country (Seth, 2013).

### **Sahanubhooti (Empathy)**

Sahanubhooti involves connecting, building relationships, listening, and caring for others. Colesante (2003) defines empathy as "the intrapersonal realization of another's plight that illuminates the potential consequences of one's own actions on the lives of others" (as cited in Hollingsworth, 2003, p. 146) making it possible for us to learn how to act and react responsibly, or even compassionately, towards others. Sahanubhooti /Empathy enables us to reach out and connect with others in our human condition, and it is a crucial need for our species, having an intrinsic evolutionary and neurological basis for development (Hollingsworth, 2003).

### **Personal Narrative (my own journey at Lakehead University)**

I, as an international student, found Canada one of the best countries for pursuing a Master of Education degree. I chose Lakehead University because it offers an M.Ed. with a specialization in Social Justice. This attracts my attention as Social Justice is always one of my great interests. Pursuing higher education from abroad was one of my goals in life. Coming from India was a long arduous journey and that could not have been completed without the help of my family. Now, it has been several months here, and I am struggling as an international student because of numerous challenges such as financial problems, the language barrier, the feeling of alienation, and academic challenges.

### **Finance and daily survival in Thunder Bay**

Financial pressure is one of the big problems international student have to face, especially those who do not obtain financial aid and have to pay tuitions and living expenses

all by themselves. Moreover, as many international students coming from developing countries, the exchange rate between Canadian dollars and their domestic currencies could be high. Also, international students are not eligible for loans unless they have a Canadian citizen or legal permanent resident willing to co-sign for the loan or they (international students) have received citizenship themselves.

When I arrived Thunder Bay I was excited but worried too. It is because I need to earn for my livelihood and earn so much that I can pay for my tuition fees. I was frustrated sometimes due to unemployment. Financial issues were creeping upon me all the time. I used to go around distributing my resume to different stores as well as in the University. After a long wait, finally I got the on-campus job in Aramark at Lakehead University. Slowly and steadily I settled into the new environment. I followed a systematic life to overcome from the financial problems. And, it includes the reframing of my lifestyle, making bi-weekly budgets. I started determining my priorities and adjusting my expectations and learn to live with what I have rather than what others are having. Due to financial issues in my journey at Lakehead University, my learning was affected in my courses. There were moments when I was not able to submit my assignments on the due date because of all these issues which were running at that time.

### **Feeling of alienation**

In my initial days in Canada, I felt lonely and disheartened. I never lived alone without my parents or family. Feeling of alienation was the problem which makes me helpless and depressed. My family is always a big support for me, sometimes I thought of going back to India but then the hopes and aspirations of my family came to my mind and motivated me to face the challenges. I suffered badly due to the feeling of homesickness in my initial days in Canada. That was the most difficult time for me to survive in Thunder Bay but slowly and

steadily I started keeping myself busy in my jobs and studies. I started discussing my problems with my professors and they motivated me and guided me. To overcome from this problem, I started moving out from my friends and started exploring the campus. Simply being around other people who are probably experiencing the same thing can make a world of difference. This really helps me in making my situations better. During this phase of my life, I kept motivating myself and tried to be happy as much as I could. I always thought of the feeling of never giving up because I chose to be in Canada to have a better quality global education.

According to a 2014 survey of 3,000 international students conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), 56% of students do not count Canadians among their friends in Canada. In another recent study conducted by the University of Windsor in Canada revealed “weak English language proficiency, the ability to make friends with Canadian-born students, to have their opinions respected by others during group work or classroom interactions and participation, to adjust and adapt to working in groups” as the major challenges faced by international students” (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2014).

### **Academic challenges**

The education system is typically different when it comes to Canada from India. When a student comes over from East to West there are a lot of differences in every aspect of life. Education is one of them. Here, the education culture is totally different. Language issues are immediately apparent. Because of the language limitations, it is not easy for an international student to fully understand what the professors say or what the professors want in the beginning, not to mention participating in class discussions. And professors may not be able to understand the needs of international students if the student does not speak for themselves.

The language problem could also indirectly increase the workload burden of international students. Palmer (2015) reflects the experiences of an international graduate student. She discusses the impact of everyday struggles that she faced within Canada. According to her, climate change and language is the major problem for an international student (Palmer, 2015)

Usually, international students are academic stars in their home country. And it becomes a challenge when they are no longer the superior student in a foreign university. In fact, it is easy for international students to get depressed when they are no longer keeping the grades they are used to achieving. In addition, the culture of education differs from country to country.

As an international student, I too faced academic challenges in terms of writing academic papers as per professors expectations. It's difficult for me to understand what some of the instructors expected from me. Talking about the education system in India and Canada, there is a huge gap in the education system of both the countries. Indian education focuses more on theory rather than practical knowledge. Indian education system doesn't allow creativity in academic writing style. Whereas in Canada; they focus more on practical based learning. And they allow creativity in education. They followed APA writing guidelines for academic writing whereas Indian education is concerned about good academic writing but not too much in depth. In my initial term at Faculty of Education, I suffered a lot when it comes to write an academic paper. But gradually with the cooperation and support of some other faculty members, I managed and overcame it.

### **Social barrier**

International students who are new to a different environment may feel helpless to establish the social networks as similar to ones in their home countries. Actually, international

students often have more limited social networks. Most newcomers feel it difficult to make new friends here. Some international students only hang out with people from their home countries.

According to my experiences, being an international student, the struggle with language and insufficient adjustments have led to few international students actively participating in student societies at the universities. Except for the language and culture barriers, shyness is another factor that hinders international students to be more actively involved in Canadian social life.

Scholars such as Forbes-Mewett & Nyland (2008) and Kingston & Forland (2008) argue that the purpose of studying abroad is to gain experience in the host country rather than to abandon cultural heritage and adopt the culture in which international students live for a relatively short period. Language is an important part of this process. However, in addition to being required to learn in the medium of a foreign language, international students are sometimes challenged at the level of deeply ingrained cultural and religious taboos, such as in relation to lifestyles, social rules, social behaviors (e.g., the consumption of alcohol), gender relations and sexual mores.

### **Culture shock**

In my initial days in Canada, I experienced the symptoms of culture shock. I have low self-confidence while talking to domestic students. It's common to experience culture shock when you're transplanted into a foreign setting. This is a normal reaction to a new environment where you are no longer in control as you have been at home. I experienced a range of emotions when adapting to a foreign culture, from excitement and interest to frustration, depression, and fear of the unknown. When I started working at Little Lions Daycare Centre and Kindergarten as an ECE, I experienced a huge difference in cultures between India and Canada. I heard

stories of single mothers who are having kids at the age of 18. This stories shocked me. In India, we are allowed to have babies only after marriage. If any women conceive a baby before marriage in India, it seems to be shameful for their family and friends. When I encountered these culture differences, it made me distraught and this also affected my learning.

Kim (2005) argues that culture shock should be reviewed in a broader context of transition shock, a phenomenon that leads to profound learning, growth, and self-awareness. Sometimes being confronted by a new culture can be a positive and enlightening experience, which leads to a deepened awareness of self and the appreciation of different cultures. On the other hand, this confrontation can also be experienced as ‘culture shock’ (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008), whereby individuals find themselves faced with challenges to their deeply held beliefs and understandings which in turn pose potential threats to their sense of identity and sense of well-being (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008). Culture shock always grows out of the difficulties in adapting to a new culture. When international students are trying to merge into the culture of Canada or any other nation, most of them are shocked for the first time. But, over the period of time and with the great support of my friends and professors, I endure this problem.

### **Summary**

The above chapter highlights the outline of the portfolio in addition with my personal journey at Lakehead University. It includes the major challenges which I faced during my studies at Lakehead University. I also put forward some of the definitions related to the concept of Sahanubhooti and internationalization.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

Ensuring internationalization is an integral part of an institution's teaching, research and outreach missions are imperative for the relevance of higher education in our interconnected world. The Canadian Bureau for International Education 2017 (CBIE) argues that robust internationalization strategies which focus on a global perspective in the classroom, international research collaboration, mobility, and other types of engagement results in measurable quantitative and qualitative benefits. And when underpinned by robust international partnerships, both institutions' internationalization goals and objectives are served (CBIE, 2017).

The purpose of the literature review was to focus on the increasing internationalization of programs and student populations in Canadian universities. It will largely focus on the following:

1. The roles, support systems, and responsiveness by Canadian universities in assisting and integrating international students.
2. The international students' academic, social-emotional, cultural, linguistic, and financial challenges, and how university faculty and staff need to recognize students' needs to effectively offer supportive campus resources and services.
3. The study will demonstrate how Canadian (or North American) universities have made policy commitments to service international students in order to expand their university's market and revenue generating potential.
4. The study will critically examine a range of literature (academic, policy reports, university statements, etc.) to gauge the changing landscape of higher education through internationalization.



A literature review on any educational topic is bound to be wide but in the case of a debatable topic like Internationalization of Canadian higher education, the literature is even more voluminous. The following literature review is presented to highlight the major challenges of international students seeking higher education in post-secondary institutions in Canada and how universities and colleges assist international students in their adaptation and integration into an unfamiliar environment.

From my selected literature, I came up with four major themes namely internationalization and globalization, socio-cultural problems, economic problems and political problems. The articles were essential in providing me an insight into the problems of international students in Canada. I also reviewed studies to provide some suggestions that Canadian universities could consider in order to contend with the serious problems that international students face and to make education more accessible and responsive to international students.

### **Themes**

Fueled by globalization, the internationalization of higher education in Canada is happening at a rapid pace. It has been promoted as a strategy for doubling the presence of international students in Canada. Robust presence of international students in campuses gives rise to economic and cultural benefits to the host country. It is evident from the fact that Internationalization is changing the world of higher education and globalization is changing the world of internationalization. The prevalent understanding of internationalization widely used by Canadian universities and colleges is that it is a process of integrating an inter-cultural and inter-dimension into all areas of the university. Internationalization in Canadian higher education, as it applies to student mobility, is a dynamic process that includes both out-bound student mobility (i.e. Canadian students spending time abroad in exchange programs) and in-

bound student mobility (i.e. international students coming to study in Canada). Internationalization has become an important theme in national higher education policy in many jurisdictions.

Considered to be the product of globalization, internationalization of higher education has been accelerated in Canada. One major reason for internationalization is the increasing enrollment of international students from all over the world in Canadian universities. According to the Canadian Bureau for International Education (2015), international student enrollment reached 336,497, in 2014, placing Canada as the world's seventh most popular destination for international students.

Anderson (2015) argues that, as of today, Canada is one of the most popular destinations for international students because of its welcoming nature and peace-loving country in the world. However, the challenges faced by international students has not been a popular topic among Canadians (Anderson, 2015). Indeed, the challenges that international students are facing are those areas that should be analyzed and improved so that Canada would become more cognizant in supporting and assisting international students.

International students in Canada faced numerous challenges and barriers in integrating and adapting to an unfamiliar environment like culture shock, communication gap, financial issues, homesickness, academic issues, feeling of alienation, racism, accessing the labor market and so on. Universities and institutions need to be cognizant in providing an equitable resource to international students to support and assist them with their adaptation and integration.

### **Theme 1: Internationalization and globalization**

Higher education plays a pivotal role in developing any country as well as the world in which we live. This reality is not confined to one country or area but is rather global. Thus, it

is becoming increasingly important for higher education institutions to find ways to broaden their reach outside of their own countries.

Internationalization is a term that is being used more and more to discuss the international dimension of higher education in Canada and, more widely post-secondary education. Knight (2004) argues that there is a deep relationship between globalization and internationalization. She asserts that internationalization has changed the world of higher education and vice-versa. She believed that both levels such as institutional and national level plays a pivotal role because of its dynamic relationship in making universities and institutions internationalized.

Many researchers such as Knight (2004), Nerad (2010) defined internationalization as the process of integrating an international and intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education. These terms are used as triad which provides the sense of the relationship between nations and cultures. The term global provides the sense of worldwide scope. All these terms are having a deep relationship with each other and complement each other. It gives a feeling of togetherness, a strong bond between internationalization and globalization.

Internationalization is considered to be the output of globalization which is increasing rapidly due to the robust presence of international students in Canada. Internationalization is seen as a significant feature of the Canadian educational landscape. Globalization has been defined as the movement of ideas, goods, technology, information, people, and cultural practices across borders. Knight (2004) argues that globalization is much more powerful than industrialization and urbanization.

Nerad (2010) argues that globalization is the central phenomenon for education especially graduate education. She asserts that there should be an equitable distribution of

intellectual capital across the globe. Similarly, Beck (2012) suggests that “eduscape” is a way to articulate internationalization and its relationship to globalization, noting that we cannot understand one scape without others since they all intersect with each other. According to my perspective, “eduscape” could be used as a tool to better integrate the positive outcomes of internationalization and globalization. I believe that internationalization and globalization are the two sides of the same coin because they both affect each other. Globalization acts as a strategy whereas internationalization is a task that has to be completed to accomplish the goal to obtain the end results.

Internationalization provides global and quality education to international students and provides more holistic development. On the other hand, it brings more serious challenges for international students. However, it is evident from the fact that international students are facing numerous challenges in Canada like culture shock, language barrier, homesickness, and financial issues and accessing the labor market. Here, the important role of the government of Canada and universities comes up. If they want to make their campuses more internationalized. Then, it is essential to provide adequate resources to international students in their transition into new life. Guo and Chase (2011) argue that globalization has a deep impact on the internationalization of higher education in Canada. They also discuss the problems with making internationalized Canadian higher education that includes a neoliberal approach driven by economic motives that treat internationalization and global citizenship as business opportunities and marketing strategies.

Patel and Lynch (2013) defined “glocalization as an empowering paradigm because it enables learning communities to act through dialogue in situations that are perceived to be socially irresponsible and unjust” (pp228-229). Unlike internationalization, glocalization is powerful, inspiring, and socially responsible. Patel and Lynch (2013) explained “glocalization

as the best alternative to internationalization that offers an educational development, consultant and student perspective that is absent as a collective voice. It is the tool to remove ethnocentrism from current curriculum” (pp 228-229). According to my perspective, glocalization is best defined as the blended form of globalization with localization. It includes social, cultural, political and economic aspects of the world with local societies. It is characterized by both global and societal (local) contemplations.

## **Theme 2: Socio-Cultural adjustment and process of assimilation**

There are numerous social and cultural problems faced by international students as they work to integrate into Canadian academic and social environments. Canada attracts students from all over the world. At last count, there were 266,620 international students enrolled across the country, according to Statistics Canada (2016). Tarry (2011) argues that “the practice of traveling overseas for higher education could have the effect of transforming cultures. There are various discussions as to what international students gain by studying abroad”.

Scholars such as Forbes-Mewett & Nyland (2008); Kingston & Forland (2008) argue that the purpose of studying abroad is to gain experience in the host country rather than to abandon cultural heritage and adopt the culture in which international students live for a relatively short period. Language is an important part of this process. However, in addition to being required to learn in the medium of a foreign language, international students are sometimes challenged at the level of deeply ingrained cultural and religious taboos, such as in relation to lifestyles, social rules, social behaviors (e.g., the consumption of alcohol), gender relations and sexual mores.

Trilokekar (2016) asserts that, according to the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' paper International Education, Labor Market and Future Citizens: Prospects

and Challenges for Ontario (2016), here are the top three challenges faced by international students in Canada:

1. Feeling of alienation
2. Accessing the labor market
3. Language barrier.

### **Feeling of alienation**

Adjusting to living and studying in a new country can be difficult logistically, but the social aspect of not having a nearby support system can add to feelings of alienation. Culture shock is often associated with feelings of isolation, frustration, homesickness, and depression that are also encountered by international students in Canada.

Sometimes being confronted by a new culture can be a positive and enlightening experience, which leads to a deepened awareness of self and the appreciation of different cultures. On the other hand, this confrontation can also be experienced as ‘culture shock’ (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008), whereby individuals find themselves faced with challenges to their deeply held beliefs and understandings which in turn pose potential threats to their sense of identity and sense of well-being (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008). Culture shock may be the first step in a long and sometimes positive process of development of beliefs and understandings, which may, on the one hand, strengthen individuals’ commitment to their cultural heritage, and, at the same time, provide them with a perspective which enables the harmonious assimilation of new cultural experiences with their existing culture through stages of crisis, recovery and adjustment (Devito, 2004).

Palmer (2015) reflects the experiences of an international graduate student. She discusses the impact of everyday struggles that she faced within Canada. The article portrays values and dedication as the key components of being successful in any phase of life.

### **Accessing the labor market**

According to the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' paper International Education, Labor Market and Future Citizens: Prospects and Challenges for Ontario (2016), in general, some international students especially those studying general arts and sciences, do not feel well prepared for the labor market. They speak of a “shocking revelation ...that, once you graduate, you feel like you are not prepared for what’s out there (Trilokekar, 2016). You tend to excel in your education...But, after your graduation, then what?” International students in professional programs such as business feel more prepared to face the job market; however regardless of discipline clearly international students are suggesting that universities do need to do a lot more to better prepare their students for the job market. In particular, they recommend mandatory credit-based co-op programs for all majors as they believe that “it’s mainly the co-op students who are getting positions and after their 3rd term, they would get their final offers and they can continue with that company from after their graduation period.” Given the lack of work experience and networks among international student in comparison to domestic students, co-op placements/courses are considered even more imperative for international students ( Trilokekar, 2016).

According to Canadian Bureau of International Education's (2015) study, 51 percent of international students plan to apply for permanent residence in Canada after graduation, but many international students also feel the labor market is difficult to access. CBIE stated two suggestions that may help. First: strive to obtain a co-op placement through school to gain Canadian work experience. Second: network with friends and members of various communities, such as by joining clubs and attending events to widen exposure. International students face unique barriers when obtaining an education in Canada. Taking the first step and

participating in programs already in place would help in feeling integrated, settled, and ultimately achieving success.

### **Language barrier**

Language ability both perceived and real is perhaps the most important factor highlighted by the literature influencing international student experience both within the university and the job market. Grey (2002) argues that the English language is the also the disadvantage for international students. English language learners are students whose first language is not English. The research indicates that Chinese students are the largest group of international students in Canada. Language is the biggest problem for Chinese students as well. According to Gu (2006), teacher-centered methods are dominant in China, while in Canada, it is student-centered. So again, it is a major problem for Chinese students. Not only for Chinese students, the language a big constraint in front of another international student as well.

### **Theme 3: Economic problems**

International students contribute significantly to excellence in education and research, bringing a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and languages that enhance the learning environment on our campuses. Ontario benefits from talented international students who become Canadian citizens and contribute their talent to our economy domestically. International students who return to their home countries help to create stronger ties between Ontario and other global jurisdictions. There is much research on international students in Canada, but not many focus on economic problems faced by international students in Canada. Calder (2016) argues that not only international students face challenges, but administrators also face challenges to help international students in their adaptation and integration in the competitive market in Canada.



The significant growth in the number of international students is evidently presented in the below statistics. It is predicted that the demand for international higher education would grow from 4.1 million students in 2010 to 7.2 million students in 2025 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2012). Moreover, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2015) indicates that Chinese students ranked the first in the number of students, and there were 118,784 Chinese students who came to Canada in 2015 specifically. The rapid increase of international students coming to Canada has resulted in an economic benefit for the country. International students spent more than \$7.7 billion on tuition fees and living expenses and created over 81,000 jobs (Kunin, 2009). The huge population of international students requires Canada to internationalize its education system. To be more specific, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (2010) indicates that internationalization has become an essential part of many educational institutions' strategies. There are 87% of institutions that have international students and 65% have international programs for faculty and staff including exchange programs, joint research, and teaching overseas (Association of Canadian Community College, 2010).

Due to the rapid increase in the number of international students, the Canadian government has come up with a Canadian international education brand called Imagine Education in Canada that helps maintain consistency in marketing information for Canadian institutions. Humphries et al. (2012) emphasize that the establishment of Imagine Education in Canada to promote Canadian education in September 2008 was a remarkable milestone which shows the government's effort to engage in international education. The Imagine Education in Canada brand is not only a recruitment tool but also showcase the consistency in information and quality that are conveyed by over 182 authorized educational institutions and organizations. Those institutions and organizations are eligible to utilize the brand and take

part in branded international education events organized by the Global Affairs Canada and its Embassies and Consulates.

Canada is making a profit and used international students as resources but in return, the Canadian government and universities are not providing adequate resources to international students. It is important to portray the fact that international students are paying fees two to three times more than that of the domestic student's still international students are not eligible for bursaries and scholarships. It does not matter for universities if we are competing with Canadians in terms of qualifications for getting the scholarship. The bottom line is as an international student we are not eligible for scholarships, bursaries, Teaching Assistant and Graduate Assistant. High tuition fees and other financial issues are one of the major concern for international students. It is also very difficult for international students to meet their day to day finances. International students in Canada work as a part-time worker in wall mart, Dollarama, superstore, Safeway, Mc Donald and so on the minimum wage of \$15 per hour. Such a burden on international students acts as hurdles in the process of achieving their goals.

#### **Theme 4: Political issues**

The government of Canada plays a pivotal role in fostering international co-operation in higher education. In consultation with the federal ministers of international trade and finance, the Canadian federal government established an advisory panel to develop a comprehensive international education strategy- *Canada's International Education strategy: Harnessing Our Knowledge Advantage to Drive Innovation and Prosperity*, 2014. The advisory panel represented senior administration from both higher education institutions and private industry. As a result, the Global Markets Action Plan I announced in November 2013 rightly includes international education as one of the 22 priority sectors where Canada enjoys a strong competitive advantage. Although higher education remains the jurisdiction of the provincial government, several federal government department and national non- governmental

organizations have recently produced policies related to internationalization. The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development is one such example. They launched its international education strategy in early 2014.

According to Canada's International Education Strategy report (2015), International students in Canada provide immediate and significant economic benefits to Canadians in every region of the country. Data for 2012 show that 265,400 international students spent a total of some \$8.4 billion in communities across Canada, helping sustain 86,570 Canadian jobs. Additionally, the activities of international students helped generate more than \$455 million in federal and provincial tax revenues. Under the Strategy, the Government of Canada will work with the provinces and territories, Canadian educational institutions, and other stakeholders to double the size of our international student base from 239,131 in 2011 to more than 450,000 by 2022 (without displacing Canadian students). Increasing the number of international students to more than 450,000 will create new sources of jobs, economic growth, and prosperity in every region of the country.

Although international students are used as a resource for Canada in developing their economy, still international students are facing problems getting settled in Canada. CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) argues that international student must have a valid job offer to get permanent residency through Express Entry in Canada. After spending so much money on Education, still, International students have to wait for at least 4 to 5 years for getting permanent residency in Canada.

After graduating from Canadian Universities, international students struggling with getting a full-time job offer in Canada. Over the past two decades, the Canadian federal government has acknowledged a skilled labor shortage. Given the national demographic trends of an increasingly aging population and decreasing birthrates, Canada has attempted to address this shortage by attracting skilled immigrants and international students to ensure the country's

continued economic well-being (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC] 2008). Yet despite an articulated need for skilled labor and an immigration system that grants entry to skilled immigrants on the basis of a positive evaluation of their potential to contribute to the Canadian economy (Reitz 2005), current skilled immigrants to Canada experience high rates of underemployment and unemployment and earn less than their Canadian-born counterparts (Picot & Hou 2003; Statistics Canada 2005). This is truer now than for previous immigration cohorts (Picot 2008). Major reasons for this disconnect include lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience; language and communication barriers; discrimination; and employers' requirement for "Canadian experience" (Weiner 2008).

The impact of the growing number of international students not only contributes to economic benefits, but also improves many other aspects of Canadian society such as global education, diversities, cultures, and labor market. With the increasing number of international students, universities should be aware of the factors that contribute to the successful adjustment and academic progress of these international students and offer them as much assistance as possible during their studies. Besides, internationalization has become a focus in education nowadays to establish a global reputation. However, internationalization is not a quick process and it requires detailed planning and long-term commitment. Moreover, internationalization should focus on many aspects including curriculum, student services, teacher, staff training, healthy and discrimination-free environment.

Palmer (2014) argues that international students are used as a resource to increase revenue generation and profit making. Internationalization is not a quick process and it requires detailed planning and long-term commitment. International students prove that they face many challenges that Canadian government and educational institutions have not recognized. Based on this research, international students report that their most difficulty is to overcome the language barrier in both academic and social life. In addition, the counseling service is not as

helpful to them as it is supposed to be. They also highlight the very important aspect of engaging international students as cultural resources are creating an environment where domestic and international students have abundant opportunities for interactions and feel comfortable in sharing information about their respective backgrounds. Campus-wide cultural events are valuable; however, it is important to make such opportunities meaningful to all potential participants, not only those who might already have an interest in—or a connection to—multiple cultures. Reciprocal cultural learning is undoubtedly beneficial for both international and domestic students, but for such learning to take place, meaningful cross-cultural interactions need to be encouraged and supported by higher education institutions.

There are also other cultural issues that schools should consider. The Canadian government has not taken many efforts in researching about international students and their needs to make proper improvements and increase their satisfaction. As studying abroad is becoming more popular, many developed countries such as United States, Australia, and New Zealand have internationalized their education, services and come up with many marketing techniques to attract international students from all over the world. Taylor (2004) argues that to compete with those countries, Canada should invest more time and money in researching and improving services to satisfy the demands of international students. Collective efforts are required to put in to build international inclusive environment.

Beck (2012) argues that positive changes can affect international students' perceptions of Canada's higher education and increase their professional and personal outcomes. Ultimately, meaningful engagement of international students as equal partners in the internationalization of Canadian campuses can contribute to the recruitment and retention of international talent, to positively impact institutional internationalization efforts.

According to Garson (2016), there is a great need for ethical, inclusive and an equitable approach for a successful reframing of internationalization of higher education in Canada. It

also highlighted the importance to make a proper balance between economic, social and academic outcomes which is necessary for all international students to develop valuable skills for effective participation as professionals in increasingly multicultural and global contexts.

### **Summary**

The above chapter reflects the challenges faced by international students in Canadian Universities and how universities assist the international student in adapting and integrating into an unfamiliar environment. It also highlighted the deep relationship between internationalization and globalization. It was also advocated by Patel and Lynch (2013) that glocalization is the best alternative to internationalization and an important tool to remove ethnocentrism from current curriculum.

According to some popular researchers like Beck (2012), Palmer (2014), Shibao Guo (2011), Tim Anderson (2015), Garson (2016), there are some suggestions also based on my experience being an international student that could prove beneficial for Canadian universities and colleges in integrating international students more accurately. These suggestions are the summary of the references mentioned above that could prove beneficial for making universities and colleges more internationalized:

1. Universities should integrate more global issues into the curriculum to make their institutions more internationalized
2. Providing job opportunities on campus for international students in order to meet their day to day expenses.
3. Providing adequate scholarships and bursaries only to international students.
4. Providing diversity training to international students to increase their cultural awareness, knowledge, and communication.
5. Reshaping universities regional and writing centers to provide adequate support and genre knowledge to international students

6. There should be an immigration officer on campus so that international students can seek help regarding their work permit and their status in Canada during their study.
7. Development of faculty or peer support network to serve both social and academic outcomes of student's experiences.
8. Universities and colleges should develop a strong counseling team and try to gain more awareness among international students about their service. Also, international students may look to develop empathy between them and the advisors so that their feelings towards counseling would be more positive.
9. Valuable workshops should be conducted on campus that would aim at the concept of egalitarianism on campus.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter of the portfolio, I will highlight some of the major challenges of international students at Lakehead University and how the University's policies and practices impact the challenges. In addition to this, I will also reflect on the major practices and policies formulated by Lakehead University in order to assist only international students. I will also discuss the effects of these policies on international students. Lastly, I will put forward some recommendations and solutions to the problems/challenges faced by international students at Lakehead University. If followed, these recommendations might better integrate the practice of Sahanubhooti in the daily lives of international students.

In the following section of the chapter three, I will examine some of the major issues that includes high tuition fees at Lakehead University, Language barrier, finding part- time jobs, placements for international students, and graduate assistantship opportunities.

#### **Issue 1: High Tuition fees in Lakehead University.**

In Canada, international students are temporary residents with study permits or refugee status (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2011, section 1.7). International students choose to study in another country in order to obtain a high-quality education and international experience (Skinkle & Embleton, 2014). Applicants choose Canadian universities for many reasons, including specific programs, affordability, and the perception of Canada as a safe and peaceful country (Chen, 2007). With the hope of receiving world-class quality education, students face various challenges that include pressure to succeed, language difficulties, cultural differences, financial issues, and coping with change.

I enrolled in the Master of Education at Lakehead University in August 2017. Being an international student, I needed to pay CAD \$ 21,768 in a year whereas domestic students were



paying only CAD \$9500 (2017-18) (Lakehead University, <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/tuition-fees/fees/graduate> ). Thus, as an international student, we are paying CAD \$ 12,268 per year more than domestic student in order to obtain the degree. I felt disheartened when I saw such a big difference in the fees.

In regard to the academic year of 2018-2019, there will be a hike of \$212 in tuition fees for international students from \$7256 to CAD \$7468.98 each term(Lakehead University, <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/tuition-fees/fees/graduate>) whereas there is only an \$88.21 hike in fees for domestic students from \$3125.68 to \$3213.89(Lakehead university <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/tuition-fees/fees/graduate>). Having discussions in general with my international friends in the Master of Education department on the increase of fees, they felt disheartened because in return they are not getting similar opportunities such as the position of Graduate Assistant in the Faculty of Education. It becomes difficult for international students to pay high tuition fees due to low job opportunities in Thunder Bay and on-campus jobs for international students. Fees from international students seem to be becoming increasingly crucial to the bottom line at universities across Ontario.

Encouraged by the Ontario provincial government, universities have increased their international recruitment in the past few years, resulting in rapid growth in the amount of money that foreign students are pushing into the system. The number of foreign students attending university in Ontario increased 88.5 percent over six years, starting in 2010, according to figures provided by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (2016). During the same period, enrolment of domestic students grew just seven percent. Total revenue from international students' tuition fees more than doubled in a four-year stretch, shooting upward from \$620 million in 2011-12 to \$1.28 billion in 2015-16, the most recent year for which statistics are available. "They are using international students as cash cows,

unfortunately," said Nour Alideeb, chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/international-students-universities-ontario-tuition-1.4199489>).

Lakehead's Director of international enrolment stated that every year nearly 500 international students are enrolled in Lakehead University. In a conversation with CBC news on September 2, 2016 (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/lakehead-university-welcomes-record-number-of-international-students-1.3744900>). He stated that in 2016-17, there were 400 international students who enrolled at Lakehead University. "The most important thing that we do with our new international students is, of course, welcome them to Canada, and prepare them for the transition to Canadian culture and society," the director said. "That's setting up the most fundamental basics of where they are going to be living, how they are going to sustain themselves, groceries, food access, meal plans, even getting their cell phones working." After that, the university works on helping the students' transition socially into the Lakehead community and the city at large, according to the Director. He said Lakehead works all-year round to recruit new international students. "It's a pretty complicated process," the Director said. "We have partnered with different organizations and schools around that world that we work with, and students will sometimes transition out of programs in those partner institutions and find their way to Canada."

In addition, The Director stated that Lakehead University has representatives embedded in target countries who continually recruit, visiting schools, universities and colleges. Overall, he expected that there would be more than 900 international students attending class at Lakehead University in the year 2017.

From my perspective, despite having significant growth in enrolment of international students, still, Lakehead University is not providing enough opportunities to the international students to make them financially supportive. Thus, not only does it cause financial problems for the international students, it may also contribute to depression for the students. As a result, international students may not cope well with their studies.

### **Recommendations**

Thus, from my perspective, the following recommendations would work fruitfully for the benefit of international students:

1. Lakehead University should decrease the fees for international students or should provide part-time job opportunities in order to handle their finances in a better manner.
2. Lakehead University should conduct seminars and workshops for financial counseling, especially for international students.
3. There should be a financial advisor in the University to help international students with budgeting.

### **Issue 2: Language Barrier (ESL Courses for international students).**

Living in a country far from home, where everyone speaks a different language you didn't grow up with, can be a big challenge. For some international students, the English language can be a barrier that makes them feel lonely and excluded. Language barrier is regarded as one of the most serious challenges for international students in term of getting

integrated into a new set of environments. Language proficiency may have a deep effect on an individual's capacity to learn and develop, due to its key role in the transmission of information and regulation of cognitive processes (Binder & Smith, 2013). When focusing on language proficiency, the communicative purpose of language is of primary importance (Baker, 2001). This is because the skill to communicate effectively is vital in the measurement of a person's competence to perform socially and academically (Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb, & Schartner, 2013). As a result, language fluency is a major element of successful integration and lessened trauma in a new culture (Andrade, 2006). Language proficiency is a key factor in the process of acculturation (Garza, 2015). International students process a lot of new information upon their arrival in a new country. The acculturation process demands that they interpret new experiences through their own subjective and pre-existing knowledge and perceptions (Garza, 2015). Because of the subjectivity of these interpretations, language difficulties affect students in different ways as they continue to build their own personal meanings and make sense of the acculturation process (Sawir, 2005). Although a review of current literature conducted by Smith and Khawanja (2011) revealed language as the biggest obstacle to acculturation for international students, little research on their lived experience has been conducted (Yoon & Portman, 2004).

Academically, international students experience problems with writing, comprehension, and reading due to limited language skills (Poyrazli, 2003). International students may also experience more anxiety related to understanding the academic and grammatical jargon and the overall process of adjustment to the Canadian classrooms. A study conducted by Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, and Pisecco (2002), also showed that the challenges of adjusting to a different educational system can result in students receiving lower grades than they have previously achieved. This then leads to a loss of academic self-efficacy, which in turn lowers their general adjustment. As a result, student's inability to communicate

effectively in the host culture complicates their ability to socialize and integrate with local students (Wright & Schartner, 2013).

When I began my study to pursue Master of Education, I was very enthusiastic, but the language barrier hit me as the first and foremost challenge, even though I could speak and write English well, but I could not achieve the expectations of my professors. My first weeks of the study were filled with anxiety, somatic pain and minor depressive symptoms such as insomnia, lack of appetite, and loss of interest in doing the things I loved. The problem of language barrier results in a low confidence level. I had difficulties in day to day affairs in my initial days. Learning bus routes, timings, roads names, and street names were not easy to remember and then traveling on public transport with the new rules and regulations. Opening a new local bank account, learning and operating them and their credit and debit cards, so many issues I came across. Whom to trust and whom not to be was also difficult. Catching and understanding the language accent of local people was tough for me. When we do not know much about something or about someplace then naturally we feel low on our confidence levels.

But with dedication and hard work, I have improved with time because of a lot of help and patience from faculty members and fellow students and exposure to frequent communication in English. However, some moments were very embarrassing and dreadful for me that I cannot forget ever. I would suggest that International students should be offered ESL courses at the University.

### **Benefits of ESL Course**

The benefits of ESL often start in the classroom. A well-designed ESL program fosters English language acquisition but not at the expense of a student's mother language. The

Intercultural Development Research Association (2000) encourages the maintenance and retention of mother languages or several reasons, including personal identity, family and community connections, academic achievement and future employment opportunities. As an International student, I would like to suggest my international friends opt for ESL courses because of the following reasons.

1. An ESL programme provides intensive instruction in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending English.
2. An ESL programme uses the academic and cultural experience of the student as a platform to provide the appropriate instruction in English
3. An ESL programme develops competence in English.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations would prove beneficial to Lakehead University in terms of attracting more international students from all over the world to campus which will improve the economic status as well as cultural diversity of the University.

1. International students should be provided adequate ESL, short-term academic writing courses and academic writing workshops in terms of providing academic support to the students.
2. No fees for ESL and short -term academic writing courses should be charged to international students.
3. Writing support should be provided one to one to international students.

### **Issue 3: Finding Part-time jobs**

Anderson (2015) argues that, as of today, Canada is one of the most popular destinations for international students because of its welcoming nature and peace-loving country in the world. But when it comes to international students in terms of getting part-time jobs during their studies, it becomes challenging for them. It is usually because international students are new to the country and it is difficult to get the jobs for their day to day survival. They face difficulties paying their bills and tuition fees and since they don't get jobs immediately, it is difficult for them to manage their finances. Like in United Kingdom, the University of Sheffield in its report (2013) argues that, in total, international students are estimated to directly contribute £120.0 million to sub-regional GDP and £147.5 million in total (inclusive of indirect and induced effects). The equivalent figures at the regional level are £131.5 million and £176.6 million respectively. However, Canada is also making a profit and used international students as resources but in return, the Canadian government and universities may not be providing adequate resources to international students (Calder, 2016).

Being an international student in Canada, my biggest constraint was funding my education. I hardly managed my tuition fees to secure my admission to the university because every term as an international student, I need to pay \$7468.98 whereas a domestic student in Lakehead University is paying \$3213 per term (Lakehead University, Faculty of Education, 2018). I needed to earn my daily living on my own. I was stressed out about not getting a part-time job for more than a month and a half and my reserve funds were being consumed in my daily needs, rent, and utilities. Therefore, I was ready for any job even those for which I had no prior experience. I explored for many jobs on campus as well as off campus. But I was more interested in an on-campus job because there is no restriction of working hours for an international student whereas there is a restriction for international students for working only 20 hours per week according to the government of Canada (2017).

After a struggle, I got a job off campus as an Early Childhood Educator in Thunder Bay itself. I was working only two shifts per week because it was a twenty hours restriction by the Government of Canada. The child care school had its various locations in the city, so I was supposed to visit the locations wherever I was required. The money I was getting out of this job was not enough, but I managed my groceries expenses with it. Still, I was searching for some on-campus job so that I could make more hours, easy commute by bus and money and of course to support my daily living in a better way.

After a long wait, I got an on-campus job at Aramark. Here, I need to wash dishes and make sandwiches. I worked nearly 40-45 hours per week. It was really very difficult for me to work and study simultaneously. But with my hard work and dedication, I didn't give up. I worked hard and earned good grades in my studies too. My professors were very supportive and cooperative. They helped me out in many possible ways. As an international student, my professors never treated me as an outsider.

Even though the International Department is available on-campus at Lakehead University, I did not get any assistance in finding part time jobs on and off campus from the department. I was frustrated and felt alienated because I was all alone in Canada. The International Department used to tell me about the job postings, but I did not get anyone to provide direct ongoing assistance to secure any of the postings.

### **Recommendations**

I would like to propose some recommendations for the university in terms of providing part-time assistance to the international students: -

1. Lakehead University should provide one to one assistance to international students in finding part-time jobs on campus and off campus.



2. The International Department at Lakehead University should provide part-time jobs to those students who are finding difficulty in getting jobs instead of providing jobs to those students who already have secured off-campus jobs.

**Issue 4: International Graduate (B.Ed.) students should be provided placement experience in Ontario Schools.**

Canada is one of the developed countries that attracts the talented immigrants from all over the world to Canada. International students from all over the globe come to Canada with their dreams in their mind to obtain a good lifestyle and high earning job after graduation from colleges and universities. On June 8, 2018, the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC, 2018) introduced a Student Direct Stream (SDS) for students applying for a study permit from China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines. While similar programs have already been in place for these four countries, the Student Direct Stream merges these programs to ensure consistency and faster processing times. To qualify for the Student Direct Stream, applicants from these four countries need to meet additional requirements, including more advanced language skills than required under the regular study permit application. Applicants who do not qualify can still apply through the regular study permit application. With this new change in the rules shows that most of the international students are coming from South-Asian countries. IRCC has also announced that they are working on expanding the Student Direct Stream to countries in Africa, including Kenya and Senegal.

Whenever I look to these kinds of changes, the question always arises in my mind that the Government of Canada is making so much effort in developing their economy but on the other side of the coin is what Canadian universities are providing to students in their adaptation and integration into the new system?

I am a native of India, one of the developing countries in the world. When I first came to Canada I had a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Education. In addition, I had three years of teaching experience from Grade 6 to Grade 10. But I came to know that these qualifications have no recognition in Canada until and unless I have a Teaching certification from Canada which can allow me to teach in Canada. I researched a lot in order to acquire the Ontario College of Teachers(OCT) certification. No one from Lakehead University actually assisted me in applying for the certification. I did everything on my own. No one even told me about this kind of certification. I know very well what I have gone through the last so many months.

Thus, I can say being an international student is difficult because I had no guidance and assistance. This results in the feeling of alienation, stress, and homesickness. I had never lived alone and away from home earlier in my life. Therefore, I felt helpless and depressed each day. I was having a problem with my study, sleep schedules, and daily routines. I woke up in the nights and slept during the day because of homesickness anxiety. So, I used to sit alone and absent-minded. I missed my parents, my spouse, my friends, and all my loved ones in India. Sometimes I thought to return home, but my family strengthened me by talking to me every day in the morning and evenings. I also called them frequently and whenever I felt alone. My family boosted my morale by telling me that what I am enduring is not an easy task. That was a difficult time I was being in but still, I was doing better than others in the same situations. Then with time people became my friends and my capabilities returned to me.

### **Recommendations**

From my own experiences at Bora Laskin, Lakehead University, I would like to suggest some key points to the Faculty of Education in terms of providing placement experiences to the students who already have B.Ed degrees from their home countries.

1. The Faculty of Education of Lakehead University should assist international students who possessed a B.Ed degree in obtaining Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) certification which is a mandatory asset to teach in Ontario schools.
2. There should be an international educational counselor at Bora Laskin who will assist international students in a meaningful way.
3. The graduate students who have B.Ed. degrees from their home countries should get equal opportunities to get placements in Ontario Schools during their graduate degree experience.

All these recommendations might prove beneficial to the University in terms of attracting more international students from all over the globe.

#### **Issue 5: Graduate Assistantship Opportunities (GA)**

One of the prevailing concerns for international students in Canada in the graduate program is funding. This is because of high tuition fees which are difficult for international students to pay. In Canada, Lakehead University does provide financial assistance to domestic graduate students in many faculties but in the faculty of education, international students are not getting graduate assistantships.

According to Lakehead University, “Graduate Assistant appointments may be offered to some full-time graduate students (including Visa students) at a rate of \$9,727 (2015-16) at the master’s level; and \$10,608 (2015-16) at the Doctoral level. A regular appointment constitutes a maximum of 270 hours of work over the fall and winter terms averaging not more than 10 hours of work per week. A graduate student is eligible to hold a maximum of two full-time appointments at the Master’s level or four full-time appointments at the Doctoral level” (Lakehead University).

Focusing on the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, the Graduate assistantships are available but mostly for domestic students. During the session 2017-18 year, there was only one position for a Graduate assistantship for International students. I came to know about this interpretation when I went to apply for the position and was told that the seat was filled. I was heartbroken because I was going through a financial crisis and still, despite fulfilling all the requirements for GA, I was not able to get the position because there is only one position for an international student. I suggested that the number of seats and funding for international students in the Department of Education should be increased. Now there are only two positions available for international students for Graduate Assistantship for the year 2018-19 year(Faculty of Education). Being an international student, I would like to suggest the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University to provide equal opportunities to international students. Such opportunities will not only enhance the personality of international students in the field of education but this small step will also attract other international students to the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University.

### **Recommendations**

1. International students who are accepted into the Master of Education program should qualify for Graduate Assistantships in order to get rid from financial crisis.
2. From my perspective, Graduate Assistantship would be the best opportunity to gain valuable experience in the educational process. As far as funding is concerned, if less amount of funding is provided to international students, then also it will be beneficial for them.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on my personal experiences at Lakehead University. I would like to request Lakehead University to adopt the path of sahanubhooti to make changes in the university's policies. I hope the following recommendations together may prove beneficial for Lakehead University to integrate international students in more meaningful manner in order to bring more cultural diversity to the campus as well as it will also help in boosting economic status of the university. The recommendations are listed below:

1. Lakehead University should decrease the fees for international students or should provide part-time job opportunities in order to handle their finances in a better manner.
2. Lakehead University should conduct seminars and workshops for financial counseling, especially for international students.
3. There should be a financial advisor in the University to help international students with budgeting.
4. International students should be provided adequate ESL, short- term academic writing courses and workshops in terms of providing academic support to the students.
5. No fees for ESL and writing courses should be charged to international students. Writing support should be provided personally to international students.
6. Lakehead University should provide one to one assistance to international students in finding part-time jobs on campus and off campus.

7. The International Department at Lakehead University should provide part-time jobs to those students who are finding difficulty in getting jobs instead of providing jobs to those students who already have secured off-campus jobs.
8. The Faculty of Education of Lakehead University should assist international students who possessed a B.Ed degree in obtaining Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) certification which is a mandatory asset to teach in Ontario schools.
9. There should be an international educational counselor at Bora Laskin who will assist international students in a meaningful way.
10. The graduate students who have B.Ed. degrees from their home countries should get equal opportunities to get placements in Ontario Schools during their graduate degree experience.
11. International students who are accepted into the Master of Education program should qualify for Graduate Assistantships in order to get rid from financial crisis.

## Summary

Being an international student in Canadian University, I admire the system of education but on the other side, I want to reflect upon some of the major changes that need to be done by the educational systems and universities of Canada. This is the reason behind my purpose of doing this portfolio. I hope my small policy research and recommendations prove beneficial for the Lakehead University. I would like to request Lakehead University to adopt the path of *sahanubhooti* to better integrate international students with utmost love, care, and security for their future. Instead of using international students as resources, Lakehead University should provide adequate services and opportunities for their better future in Canada.

International students in Canada play a pivotal role not only in bringing rich cultural and social diversity in the country but also enhance the economic impact on the country. According to Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc (2017), in 2015 and 2016 respectively, international students in Canada spent around \$12.8 billion and \$15.5 billion on tuition, accommodation and discretionary spending. The economic impacts presented in this report focus on the combined *direct and indirect* impacts associated with such spending. A 10% increase or decrease in spending by international students results in an approximately 10-11% change in economic impacts (Global Affairs Canada, 2017) cited in Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc (2017).

As an immigrant in Canada, it is my privilege to call this land- a place of opportunities where students come from all over the globe to obtain a higher quality education. Thus, it is essential for the universities and educational institutions to provide adequate resources for their adaptation and integration into a new set of environments.

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