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ADDRESS TO THE CONSULAR CORPS ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO

**Harnessing the Power of Global Partnerships:
International Education as a Strategic Priority for
Canada and Canadian Universities**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

I am delighted to be here for this opportunity to speak to you about global partnerships and Canada's national strategy for international education.

The focus of my remarks is two-fold: As a former international student myself, an extension of my thinking on internationalization and what it means for universities today; and my perspectives on global partnerships in higher education as President of York University.

Since I am speaking to you about international education and the internationalization of universities, I would be remiss if I didn't mention my own journey to Canada...from an international student to a proud Canadian citizen.

Over 40 years ago, my wife Susan and I arrived in Canada with a dream. We left our homeland of Egypt, and everything that we had come to know and love, to pursue graduate education in Canada. I was excited and nervous about experiencing a new life away from family and friends and my normal support network. Like many international students, I remember when I arrived that there were many new things to discover. I knew nothing about hockey or baseball, as in Egypt we play soccer and squash.

But early on, Susan and I recognized that if we were going to succeed, we couldn't just focus on our academic studies. It was also important for us to engage in society. In learning about my new country, what I found of particular interest was Canada's history and its evolution.

When one looks at Canada's evolution, it becomes obvious that this country has maintained a high level of prosperity through the hard work of earlier generations and the abundance of natural resources with which Canada is blessed. However, for the last few decades, the world has changed, as has Canada's ability to compete.

The global economy is being driven primarily by knowledge, by the opportunity to transform knowledge into services and products, and the capacity to build bridges with the rest of the world. For any country, the ability to build a prosperous society is closely linked to that nation's capacity to build a leading knowledge-based economy.

New World Emerging: The Global Competition for Knowledge

This incredible transformation of the world economy, which I believe will continue in the years to come, is having a significant impact on the education system in two ways:

First, the new economy is driven by knowledge and by knowledge workers. This in turn, is creating a world competition for knowledge workers, as well as an unprecedented demand from young people wanting to pursue a post-secondary education. As a result, this trend is creating pressures and opportunities for the PSE system world-wide.

The second way has to do with the fact that global economies and markets have become interconnected, and indeed integrated, resulting in international partnerships

and networks becoming central to future prosperity. This has necessitated the need for future knowledge workers to be educated in a global context, thus driving the internationalization of universities.

Internationalization of our education is critical to Canada's prosperity and success in a highly competitive, knowledge-based economy.

As you know, on January 15, 2014 the federal government announced an International Education Strategy for Canada, or IES. This new Strategy makes important recommendations. For example, the IES supports recommendations to:

- Double the number of international students in Canada, from 239,131 in 2011 to more than 450,000 by 2022.
- Increase the number of Canadians students studying abroad by introducing an International Mobility Program for Canadian Students, to serve 50,000 students per year by 2022.

In this context, let's discuss the challenges and opportunities for Canadian universities.

Let me start with the challenge. We have to re-examine our offerings to ensure that our education system is capable of preparing future knowledge workers so that academically, they have the necessary technical knowledge, while being socially and culturally able to function in such an interconnected world.

In fact, for a number of years, Canadian universities have recognized the need to prepare students for a world that is undergoing a continuing process of integration and globalization.

As a university president, I can tell you that education must prepare future citizens to think in both a global and a differential context, while being culturally able to work within the complexity of global context.

This has been reflected in growing activities in:

- Internationalization of curricula
- Student mobility
- Language instruction
- International collaborative agreements involving student exchanges
- Joint research and teaching
- And joint degree offerings with other universities world-wide.

Internationalization is being driven by an obvious demand from students, as well as the recognition of the needs of society.

Of course, as I mentioned, with challenges also comes opportunity. International education represents a great opportunity for Canada and Canadian institutions.

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed an incredible growth in the demand for post-secondary education worldwide as a result of the economic growth in the new economies. Emerging economies, particularly China, India, Southeast Asia and Latin America, continue to grow at an incredible rate and this is creating a demand for knowledge workers. Add to this their demographics, with younger population fueling an ever-growing need for post-secondary education opportunities.

In spite of their best efforts to build new universities in these emerging countries, enrolment demands continue to outstrip available places by a significant margin. Moreover, for young people studying in institutions in the developed economies, this continues to represent an unmatched opportunity for both learning and for personal growth in a global context.

The 2012 OECD Education at a Glance Report shows that since 2000 and up to 2010, the number of foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide has increased by 99%, for an average annual growth rate of 7.1%.

What does this mean for Canada?

The 2012 CBIE report ranks Canada as the world's seventh most popular destination for international students. International student enrollment grew from 136,000 in 2001 to over 265,000 in 2012 – a 94% increase. If the growth continues at the same rate, Canada will host over 350,000 international students by 2015, well on the way to the government's target of 450,000 by 2022.

In the longer term, the trend will continue to be driven by the mismatch between local supply and ambitious demand, and the desire by young international students to gain global experience in highly reputed institutions.

In fact, by 2025, it is estimated that the number of international students studying outside their country of citizenship will reach 8 million. The potential represents an incredible opportunity for Canada and its academic institutions.

International Education: Opportunities for Canada

Of course, in the short term, international education represents a significant economic advantage for the host country.

The 2012 CBIE report states that Canada derives \$8 billion annually from international student expenditures, including tuition and living expenses. And the presence of international students has created over 83,000 jobs and generated over than \$291 million in government revenue since 2009.

Additional economic impact is also achieved from the direct export of Canadian education services abroad. This is made possible by the growing presence of Canadian schools, colleges and universities overseas. These institutions are offering Canadian programs, spreading Canadian values and generating incredible good will towards Canada, as well as millions of dollars in revenue.

In the longer term, international education is playing, and will continue to play, a critical role in Canada's future. As I mentioned earlier, international exchanges, research partnerships and international students' participation in our institutions prepare our young Canadians with a tremendous opportunity to excel as future knowledge workers.

And it provides them with the necessary world perspective essential to succeed in a globally interconnected environment. More broadly, internationalization of postsecondary education all over the world helps in creating a better connected and prosperous world where young people are exposed to other cultures.

From a Canadian perspective, international students trained in Canada represent an excellent pool of highly qualified workers capable of meeting future labour market needs for an innovative knowledge-based economy.

International students choosing to stay in Canada will be able to address this talent shortage and integrate in the Canadian society—and some may even end up staying to become university presidents.

Those choosing to return to their home countries will likely be great ambassadors for Canada, which in turn will support our efforts as a trading nation, and build bridges and goodwill in other parts of the world.

Internationalization Strategies for Canadian Universities

At this point, I'd like to turn to a few specific points with regard to Canadian universities, and York University in particular, and the need to develop strong internationalization strategies.

Until recently, Canadian universities recognized the value of international education in certain fields. As such, for decades we have always been interested in attracting international talent in areas of research and graduate education; particularly as it relates to science and technology.

However, for the reasons discussed, the interest in international education has been growing for the last two decades across all university activities. It's a win-win-win situation: enrich the lives of students coming, as well as the ones already here, while building a talent pool in Canada and global partnerships in the interest of prosperity.

The recognition of the importance of internationalization for universities has been reflected in strategic plans and policies of most Canadian universities in recent years. And perhaps more importantly, has been recently reflected in public policy.

New initiatives by both levels of governments also resulted in the establishment of prestigious scholarships for foreign students and postdoctoral fellowships, like the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, the Banting PDF fellowships, and the Ontario Trillium Scholarships.

Within the Canadian context, I sincerely believe that York is the leader among Canadian universities in internationalization. Internationalization is a core value at York and is identified in our strategic plan for 2010-2020 as a major priority.

Our strategic commitment to internationalization reflects our belief that an international perspective will help us maintain academic excellence, prepare future citizens for a more complex and interconnected world and ensure continuing prominence for Canada in the world.

We know that if students are to succeed globally, they should not only become experts in their field of study but also experience the world firsthand and develop a sense of shared citizenship.

York offers the ideal environment for internationalization. We are one of Canada's largest and most multi-cultural universities, with more than 65,000 students, faculty and staff who can trace their roots to more than 170 countries. As such, we represent a welcoming environment for students coming from all parts of the world.

An advantage to being so diverse is that York is able to offer an international curriculum that brings world perspectives into the classroom. Statistics to support this include:

- Our international student population is about 10%, with 4,500 undergraduate and 600 graduate students from 165 countries.
- York has more than 250 exchange programs with some of the major universities in the world for student and faculty exchange and for joint research.
- Our students are provided with opportunities:
 - to study abroad long term or short term,
 - participate in funded international internships through the York international internship program,
 - study one of the 20 languages taught at York,
 - pursue innovative international degrees that combine regular majors with language study and courses with international content,
 - and enroll in these international degree programs, in which all students spend one semester attending an overseas university, in

diverse fields of study, like business, history, political science and science, to name a few.

York offers international opportunities for students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Thanks to these, students will enjoy experiences outside of their own institutions while building the global competence they need to success in a globalized world

Let me share with you a few examples of innovative programs with an international dimension:

- Our Faculty of Health's new bachelor degree in Global Health is positioning York as a leader in Canada and internationally in the rapidly evolving global health field. A key component of this program involves a connection with international partners for co-delivery of course material.
- The trilingual iBA that York students can pursue at Glendon College, the only bilingual campus in southern Ontario, which offers programs in both English and French, and even Spanish.

Our commitment to internationalization allied to our commitment to social justice has resulted in very successful bridging programs. These programs are designed to help internationally trained professionals to update their knowledge and be ready for the Canadian work environment. We continue to receive funding to provide various bridge training programs in different fields, including for health care, business and information technology.

York is already building a presence in the priority markets identified in the International Education Strategy. For instance, our Schulich School of Business, ranked one of the world's top MBA schools, now has one of the best executive education programs for executives from around the world, including the U.S., China, Russia and Latin America.

We are building strong ties with India. In 2012, York was in India alongside Prime Minister Stephen Harper to sign an MOU with India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and members of India's research council. This agreement will stimulate research exchanges between York and several top Indian universities, including the very top Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Science.

A York delegation visited India again in November 2013 to participate in the FICCI conference and meet with many officials of Indian universities. We have a Visiting Chair in Indian Studies made possible through funding from the Indian Council on Cultural Relations.

In Brazil, our Schulich School of Business has been engaged in executive training and we have many exchange agreements with the leading Brazilian universities. I visited Brazil in April 2012 with a group of Canadian University Presidents, where we were able

to build new relationships and secure Canada's participation in Brazil's national program, "Science without Borders."

As for Europe, let me mention that York has a Chair in Hellenic Studies thanks to the support of the Hellenic Heritage Foundation and the Greek community in Toronto. And thanks to a donation from the Niarchos Foundation, we will be able to create more opportunities for Greek students from partner institutions to study at York.

York is a member of the Ontario University International consortium.

York is also participating in Japan-Canada Academic Consortium, which is a bi-national group of universities formed to promote student exchange.

In 2013, York hosted the first Beihang and York summer school that brought together 10 Beihang students and 10 York students together for two weeks of academic and cultural activities.

This is just a small part of our extensive internationalization activities. We are reaching out to the world, creating opportunities for collaboration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that the internationalization of university education and the development of the workforce of tomorrow will be *the defining factor* in whether organizations succeed or fail. Future citizens of any country will need not only to be well educated but will also need to have a world perspective.

The ability to successfully conduct business in Canada and internationally relies on a global world view that is enabled through the internationalization of universities.

I believe that Canada and universities like York are well poised to offer the kind of education that is needed to develop what I call citizens of the world who can work, succeed and indeed drive our global economy.

Thank you.