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ADDRESS TO THE EMPIRE CLUB

**Is education Canada's next great export?
Our role in lifting global competitiveness**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Introductory Remarks:

Thank you and hello everyone. I am thrilled to be here at the Empire Club today.

Since I am expected to speak about international education and the internationalization of universities, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about my own journey to Canada...from international student to proud Canadian citizen.

40 some odd 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, in order to further pursue graduate education.

Speaking for myself, I was anxious, excited, and nervous about experiencing a new life...away from family and friends – my normal support network. Like many international students, I remember when I arrived, there were many new things to discover. I knew nothing about hockey or baseball...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. We were so enamoured by this new way of life...the democracy, the multiculturalism, the country...that we decided to stay.

In learning about the country, what I found of particular interest was Canada's history and its evolution into the country that it is today. 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 couple of decades, the world has changed, as has Canada's ability to compete. The global economy is being driven primarily by knowledge and the opportunity to transform knowledge into services and products. Canada's ability to maintain current prosperity and competitiveness is closely linked to the nation's capacity to build a leading knowledge-based economy.

That's not to say that we are no longer a resource rich country, and that we should disregard our strengths in resources...but if we are to continue to compete...then we need to make a transition and become a leader in the world of knowledge.

A New World is Emerging:

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 item 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 necessitated the need for future knowledge workers to be educated in a global context, thus driving the internationalization of universities.

Impact on Canadian Universities:

For the Canadian education system, particularly Canadian universities, these developments have created both challenges and opportunities.

Let me start with the challenge.

We have to re-examine our offerings to ensure that our education system is capable of preparing the 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 President of York University, 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 instructions, international collaborative agreements involving student exchanges, joint research and even joint degree offerings with other universities world-wide. I believe the internationalization of Canadian universities is continuing in all aspects of university life. More importantly, it is being driven by an obvious demand from students, as well as the recognition of the needs of society.

This trend was recognized in a statement on Internationalization that was recently issued by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada or AUCC...and for which I helped to write. Of course, as I mentioned, with challenges also comes opportunity.

The Opportunity is that international education represents a great opportunity for Canada and Canadian institutions. In the last couple of decades, we have witnessed an incredible growth in the demand for post-secondary education world-wide 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 creating 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 in these emerging economies, studying in institutions in the developed economies continue to represent an unmatched opportunity for learning and for personal growth in a global context.

A 2010 OECD report (Education At A Glance) shows that the number of international students enrolled in universities outside their country of citizenship has risen from 1.7 Million in 1995 to 3.5 Million in 2008...a pretty big leap.

According to a newly released CBIE report (World of Learning: Canada's performance and potential in International Education), between 2008 and 2011 the number of international students in Canada has increased approx. 11.5% a year. If the growth continues at the same rate, Canada will host over 350,000 international students by 2015.

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 worldly 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 a great opportunity for Canada and its academic institutions.

Opportunities in International Education:

In the short term, international education represents a significant economic advantage for the host country.

In a 2009 report entitled "Economic Impact of International Education in Canada", by Roslyn Kunin and Associates for DFAIT (the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade), it was estimated that in 2008, international students in Canada spent in excess of \$6.5 Billion on tuition, accommodation and discretionary spending; and created more than 83,000 jobs and more than \$291

Million in government revenue. I should add that expenditure by international students in Canada increased from \$6.5 Billion in 2008 to over \$8 Billion in 2010.

Let me try and put these figures in perspective.

Can you believe that the total amount that students spend in Canada is greater than our export of coniferous lumber which is \$5.1 billion, greater than our export of coal which is \$6.07 billion or even helicopters and airplanes which is \$6.9 Billion to all other countries?

If we look at the value of educational services provided in Canada to international students, in 2008, and compare it with the value of the more traditional goods that Canada exports to a given country, the impact for some countries is even more striking. In South Korea, for example, 22.1% of the value of the goods they import from Canada is spent on educational services. The ratio is 14.3% for Saudi Arabia, 12.4% for China and 9.3% for India. The 2010 figures show that this relative significance of the trade impact increased significantly as of late for countries like India and Saudi Arabia.

Additional economic impact is also achieved from the direct export of Canadian education services abroad. This is achieved through 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 competitiveness and prosperity. As I mentioned earlier, international exchanges, research partnerships and international students' participation in our institutions prepares our young Canadians with a tremendous opportunity to excel as future knowledge workers, and provides them with the necessary world perspective essential to succeed in a globally interconnected environment.

But moreover, training of international students greatly helps Canada in dealing with the world-wide competition for talent. Many studies have shown that the domestic talent pool in key areas of specialization like science, technology, engineering, health and math (the STEM subjects) is not sufficient. In addition, the demographic pressures from an aging population compound this problem. Currently, seventy five percent of Canada's growth in the workforce already comes from immigration.

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, 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. In this regard, it is easy to acknowledge the total alignment between the public policy objectives on immigration and labour market needs, and the possible objectives of a well-articulated national policy on international education.

With that in mind, it is clear that international education is both a future economic growth sector and a critical sector for securing Canada's needs of future knowledge workers.

How well are we doing in Attracting International Students?

At the outset, let me say that Canada is blessed with outstanding academic institutions. Academic excellence is uniformly acknowledged across the entire post-secondary education system in Canada. Canada is a peaceful and welcoming nation with almost no historic baggage in any part of the world. The multicultural nature of Canada is also a great asset in attracting foreign students.

Having experienced all these things myself many years ago, I don't think much has changed. I truly believe Canada is an ideal destination for young, aspiring, globally driven university applicants.

Unfortunately, our performance as a destination for international students does not reflect our true potential.

When one looks at the top five countries receiving international students, it is not surprising to see among them countries like USA, UK and France, for obvious reasons of size and history. Interestingly enough, the other two are Germany and even Australia!

Australia has been quite successful in attracting international students, having developed a national strategy on international education and a highly focused and integrated recruitment effort. In 2008, foreign students represented 21% of the total enrolment in Australian universities.

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 is also important to note that, more recently, other stakeholders, particularly governments, started to recognize the critical importance of international education and the recruitment of international talent. This is certainly reflected in a number of important studies and reports initiated by both the federal and provincial governments.

Let me refer to two recent reports:

The first was a 2011 report by our esteemed Dezsö Horváth, Dean of York's prestigious Schulich School of Business, which advised the Government of Ontario on ways to fulfill its strategic objective of increasing the enrolment of international students by 50% while maintaining space for Ontario students. The report acknowledges the critical importance of international recruitment to Ontario and the fierce global competition for talent. It also identifies current barriers for achieving the stated goal of the government and strategies for success.

The other report was produced by my good friend Amit Chakma, President and Vice-Chancellor of Western University, who was asked by DFAIT to Chair an advisory panel on Canada's international education strategy. Their report, released this past August, made some important revelations and recommendations. The report confirmed what many of us in the PSE sector already know...that Canada has the opportunity and the capacity for strong growth in attracting international students.

In their analysis, they claim that it is feasible to double the number of international students by 2022, while maintaining high-quality standards. They further recommended to actively seek co-operative arrangements to encourage Canadian students to spend time abroad either in a study, internship or service learning experience.

It is in this context that I would argue that Ontario is poised to be at the forefront to lead that growth. It's a win-win-win...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. Let me give you a few examples:

In 2007, the government of Canada established an international education promotion initiative, EDU-CANADA, using DFAIT's network of embassies and offices abroad to promote education in Canada and support recruitment efforts by interested Canadian universities.

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.

Perhaps the most important federal policy change in support of the objectives of international education is the fact that foreign students now have the right to work while studying in Canada, and for as long as three years afterwards...and for the first time...can apply for permanent residency from within Canada. I believe this is a great step in aligning immigration policies with future needs of Canada.

Now, before I talk about York University and what we are doing in relation to internationalization, I feel obliged to make a brief comment on some of the potential risks associated with massive recruitment of international students in order to ensure that we achieve the stated objectives.

Firstly, it is important to insist on the highest quality of international students recruited to Canada in terms of academic standards, communication skills and genuine intentions.

Secondly, it is also equally important that our universities develop the infrastructure needed to give them the best potential for success in terms of counseling and opportunities for integration into the Canadian life.

I can tell you, I was very fortunate to be associated with some fantastic people who took the time to mentor me in the early years.

Internationalization at YORK UNIVERSITY

Now, I cannot finish my talk today without sharing with you York's active agenda for internationalization. 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 York's 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. We have: excellent student mobility programs, funded international internships, and we provide innovative international degrees that combine regular majors with language study and courses with international content.

We offer 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.

We have more than 250 exchange programs with some of the major universities in the world for student and faculty exchange and for joint research. For example, York recently joined with universities in Berlin, New York and Toronto offering students the opportunity to be part of a new international PhD program in a number of fields of study. The Program provides students with an invaluable opportunity to gain experience outside of their own institutions.

Our very successful bridging programs are designed to help internationally trained professionals to update their knowledge and be ready for the Canadian work environment. They are part of our commitment to helping newcomers succeed. We continue to receive funding to provide various bridge training programs in different fields, including for health care, business and information technology.

Our Faculty of health is offering a new bachelor degree in Global Health, positioning our university 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.

We are also home to the only bilingual campus in southern Ontario, Glendon College, which offers programs in both English and French, and even Spanish. In fact, students can get a trilingual iBA. Glendon has been a great magnet for international students, and received an internationalization award from AUCC/Scotiabank for its annual student-run international symposium.

York's 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.

In addition, India remains a priority country for us, since they bring a rich diversity to our campus and our classrooms. We are expanding in India; our Schulich School of Business, which already offers its programs in Mumbai, is set to open a Hyderabad campus in fall 2013. We also have a Visiting Chair in Indian Studies made possible through funding from the Indian Council on Cultural Relations. The Chair is currently held by Professor Roma Chatterji, a sociologist from the University of Delhi. And 27 faculty members at York hold at least one degree from India.

Our Asian Business and Management Program provides training for Chinese and Vietnamese government officials. In fact, we're one of only six Canadian universities with a license to do this training. We've had a coordinating office in Beijing since 2003 and in Shanghai since 2006.

In Southeast Asia, York was involved in the creation of a graduate management school that was a joint venture between Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, Kellogg Graduate School of Management and the Wharton School in the U.S., and Schulich.

We have increased our international enrolment from 2,983 in 08/09 to more than 4,000 in 2012-13. While we are experiencing such an increase, we are mindful of ensuring that we offer them early opportunities for success by enhancing their language skills through our outstanding York University English Language Institute (YUELI).

YUELI is central to our international recruitment efforts. Its success in preparing international students for studying in Canadian universities has made it the destination of a significant number of international students who are attending other Canadian universities, as well as York.

York is participating in the activities of the Japan-Canada Academic Consortium, which is a bi-national group of universities formed to promote student exchange. A key activity is an annual Japan-Canada Forum (JACAC) that brings students from the 22 member institutions together for a week of activities focusing on a theme of interest to both countries. Our institution is looking forward to hosting the Forum this coming February when students will consider “Current economic dynamics and challenges between Japan and Canada and the implications for the youth of today.”

We are reaching out to the world, creating opportunities for collaboration.

I should add that York was an early signatory to the Magna Charta Observatory for Fundamental University Values and Rights, a non-profit organization founded by the University of Bologna and the European University Association.

We are reaching out to Brazil, where our Schulich School of Business has been engaged in executive training and we have many exchange agreements with the leading Brazilian universities.

Last April, I visited Brazil 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.” Under this program, Brazil intends to send some 100,000 students to study abroad in science, technology, engineering and maths by 2015. Twelve thousand students are expected to come to Canada, of which we welcomed the first group this fall.

And, I am pleased to announce that yesterday our Vice-President Research and Innovation from York University, Robert Haché, was in India, alongside Prime Minister Stephen Harper, signing 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.

This is just a small part of our extensive internationalization activities. At York, we are also committed to the success of our international students and their integration into the Canadian system. We offer services and programs, such as: funding for work/study positions; buddy programs to match international with domestic students; “Living in Canada” talks on subjects such as banking, health care, dealing with social situations; career advice on such things as resume-writing tailored to the needs of international students; as well as academic advising by counsellors with cross-cultural expertise.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the imperative for Canada to compete in a global economy has gained momentum across all sectors over the last decade with significant intensification in new world economies. The ability to successfully conduct business in Canada and internationally relies on a global world view that is enabled through what I call The Endless Campus.

It is clear that the internationalization of Canadian education and the workforce of tomorrow will be the defining factor in whether organizations succeed or fail. I submit to you that it will also be a key contributor to our economy and Canada's ability to compete.

I call on my esteemed colleagues in the post-secondary education sector, government leaders and private sector partners to adopt a common vision and collaborate to the fullest extent so that we capitalize on our collective momentum.

Canada and future generations will be better off for it.

As President of York University and as a former international student, I am proud that our institution is totally committed to internationalization, creating and developing the citizen of the world.

Thank you.