



Rural-Urban
Immigration
PILOT PROJECT
FOR CAPE BRETON

NEXT STEPS: IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT TO CAPE BRETON ISLAND

May 4th, 2015

Final Report: Phase I
Immigration Partnerships
Department of International & Aboriginal Affairs
Cape Breton University

Contents

Executive Summary3

Overview: Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot for Cape Breton.....4

Results: Surveys and Task Force meetings5

Recommendations: Next Steps7

Conclusion11

Appendix: Complete Results of Survey12

Executive Summary

In 2014, Ray Ivany and the One Nova Scotia Commission released their report outlining the various steps and actions Nova Scotians must undertake in order to move the province towards growth and sustainability. This report was aptly named *“Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Nova Scotians to Take Action”*. Within the call to action, the *Now or Never* report outlines the importance that immigration plays in revitalization of Nova Scotia’s economy.

In support of the One Nova Scotia report the Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot for Cape Breton was supported by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration. Phase I of the Pilot has provided research which indicates views of international students as it pertains to immigrating to Cape Breton Island and enhancements which need to occur to make the community more attractive to potential new Canadians. All municipal units and post-secondary institutions were represented on the Task Force with private sector input.

This very unique approach to addressing the issues surrounding immigration on Cape Breton Island has resulted in a list of recommendations that will be implemented as an action plan for the coming year including, how to become a more welcoming Island, increasing connections between the local business sectors and international students on Cape Breton, how services and supports need to be enhanced and expanded for newcomers and how we must increase awareness of the potential of immigration and its positive impacts on the economy of the Island.

Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot for Cape Breton Island

Overview

The Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot for Cape Breton was, in part, proposed as a response to the “Now or Never” report produced by Ray Ivany and the One Nova Scotia Commission. The report clearly states that Nova Scotia cannot sustain economic growth over time unless renewed population growth provides more workers, more entrepreneurs and more consumers. With the realization that Cape Breton Island is home to more than 1,200 international students and has a long history of immigrants settling on the Island, it was a natural fit for Cape Breton University to launch an Island wide initiative with the goal of increasing the possibility of immigration and settlement throughout Cape Breton Island. The University has built strong connections with Island communities, private sector and municipal partners and has been successful in assessing the current needs and issues surrounding immigration to Cape Breton Island.

As part of the Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot for Cape Breton Island, Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia Community College, Université Sainte-Anne and the International Centre for English Academic Preparations international students were surveyed to determine the specific needs and satisfaction levels of Cape Breton’s current international student body. This data, along with varied community based research, has provided the project with the necessary information to determine and recommend next steps and best practices for increasing immigration in regions such as Cape Breton Island.

The first Phase of the Pilot was guided by three main questions:

- 1.) Further to the goals of the Ivany Report, can Cape Breton Island achieve an immigration rate of 1000 immigrants per year?
- 2.) What proportion of these 1000 immigrants could be international students attending post-secondary institutions on Cape Breton Island and their families?
- 3.) What changes are required in governance, regional coordination, programming and support services to reach these aggressive immigration targets for Cape Breton?

Immigration Task Force

The Task Force on Immigration Pilot (Task Force) is comprised of members of the private sector, community leaders and municipal representatives. The Task Force set out to discuss and analyze the effectiveness of how immigrants are presently recruited to the area, and to discuss current immigration supports and settlement services available on Cape Breton Island. It is the goal of the group to make recommendations to enhance these services in all municipalities throughout the Island. Task Force members, representing various communities, have provided valuable insight into each region, the particular labour

market trends, and available opportunities for growth and initiatives which have already been undertaken to support immigration.

The Immigration Task Force represents the following regions and organizations;

- Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- Town of Port Hawkesbury
- Richmond County
- Victoria County
- Inverness County
- Membertou First Nation
- Eskasoni First Nation
- Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce
- Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
- Northeast Highlands Chamber of Commerce
- Cape Breton Partnership
- Cape Breton University
- Nova Scotia Community College
- Université Sainte- Anne
- International Centre for English Academic Preparation (ICEAP)
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration

Survey of International Students

A sample survey was conducted with international students attending post-secondary institutions and language training facilities, across the Island. Response rates were substantial and the process had the added benefit of creating very real interest on the part of the student sample around the notion of immigration to Cape Breton Island. Questions included in the survey focused on their interest to immigrate, how they view Cape Breton as a welcoming and supportive community and what changes they recommend to make immigration more appealing. A summary of the results illustrates where, in their opinion, Cape Breton, lacks supports and services for immigrants, but also outlines the deep connections and feelings of security respondents have while living on the Island.

The majority of respondents in the survey are entrepreneurial, well-educated and want to work. 88.4% of respondents are planning on applying for a post-graduate working visa and 35% would like to start their own business. When one considers that 67% of respondents are between the ages of 20-25, it would seem that the group of interested students may offer a glimmer of hope to reverse some of the demographic challenges facing Cape Breton if they could stay and start their working life in Cape Breton.

Survey Results:

- Students feel welcome on the Island:
 - 91% responding positively to that question;
 - further in-person consultations confirm these sentiments but also added;
 - that while people in Cape Breton were very polite and would often greet them on the street or in a shop the friendliness did not extend to making friendships easily;
 - 68.1% of respondents felt it was easy to connect with people.
- 85.8% of respondents indicated that they feel safe living in Cape Breton;
- 77.4% of respondents do not know where to go for assistance in finding employment on Cape Breton Island;
- They seem to lack the knowledge on how to stay in Cape Breton for work after their post-graduate visa expires;
- Less than half of respondents were familiar with the current immigration streams and programs being offered;
- Respondents were generally unhappy with the lack of face-to-face support for immigration services in Cape Breton and would rather move to a region in Canada that had in-person services available;
- Respondents felt that reliable public transportation, recreation, entertainment and opportunity to work in their field of study was severely lacking;
- 60% of respondents stated that they received no orientation upon arriving Cape Breton;
- Of the 40% who did receive orientation, Cape Breton University and homestay families were the only providers of this service.

Recommendations: Next Steps in Cape Breton Immigration

Connecting the Island

From the survey of international students and Immigration Task Force members the common theme arose that Cape Breton Island needs to reconnect its people, communities, businesses and potential immigrants. By working as an Island rather than separate regions, Cape Breton will have a stronger opportunity to increase immigration numbers and provide the best possible supports and networks needed by newcomers to the Island.

Changing the narrative

Many people on Cape Breton Island feel hesitant to embrace the idea of increasing immigration to the area. There needs to be more awareness and education in communities on how immigration will benefit the entire province and more specifically how it can strengthen the social diversity, the labour market and economy on Cape Breton Island. Part of this is focusing on the successes of people who have immigrated to Cape Breton Island in the past, live happy productive lives on the Island and have created jobs and are adding to income in Cape Breton. Immigrants do not take jobs from areas, they add to them.

Embracing the Resources

Potential immigrants from around the world and international students attending post-secondary educational institutions on the Island see Cape Breton Island as a place where ideas can flourish and opportunity is waiting. There is a clear need to focus on potential immigrants and particularly international students already on island as the key to diversifying and expanding business opportunities throughout the Island.

Encouraging change for the future

A fair distribution of funding for settlement services and programs for all communities in Nova Scotia is an essential piece to rebuilding the economy. The partnership between the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration and the Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot for Cape Breton has the potential to encourage change at the Federal level that would allow for more permanent residents to settle in Nova Scotia, with an emphasis on the need to provide support to the rural of Nova Scotia which represents over 45% of the total provincial population. Settlement services are currently centralized in Halifax with extremely little services available on Cape Breton. If we are to achieve the goal of 1000 new immigrants a year, current resources must be redistributed in the province or augmented.

Next Steps: Plan of Action

The second Phase of the Rural-Urban Immigration Strategy for Cape Breton Island will consist of activities that embrace the recommendations that came out of Phase of the Pilot. The plan is structured into four sets of activities that will promote and foster awareness of immigration issues and supports throughout Cape Breton Island. These activities serve to build strong community connections between established immigrants, potential immigrants and the communities that will become their new homes.

Activity 1: Community Workshops

Community workshops will be hosted in communities throughout Cape Breton and will encourage open and honest dialogue about the need to increase immigration and how we can better support the integration of newcomers with the people, communities and businesses on Cape Breton Island.

There will be a strong emphasis on sharing the stories and experiences of people who have immigrated to Cape Breton Island in the past and established themselves as permanent residents. Another important aspect of these workshops will be speakers from sectors such as the health care system, political representatives, members of the business community, international students, and tourism related groups/businesses. Sessions in community workshops may include Healthy Families, Discovering Cape Breton Island, recreation and events for all seasons, Understanding the Politics and Legal systems, and Doing Business on Cape Breton Island.

These activities will be essential in making connections that will encourage local residents to be more aware of the importance of immigration to Cape Breton Island, create a more welcoming and supportive environment for newcomers, and also how to ensure there are sufficient supports and services available to new members of the community. By including international students attending post-secondary institutions on Cape Breton Island in these community workshops, the hope is to help these students form new relationships and connections to Cape Breton Island. The resultant greater success in retention could increase overall numbers of immigration to the entire region.

Following the completion of all workshop sessions, the group will participate in a facilitated conversation that will aim to answer the following questions;

- What does our community have to offer? (What are the primary industries, what supports and services are available, what makes the community unique and interesting, etc.)
- What more can we do? (What is lacking in terms of supporting immigration and facilitating integration)
- What contributions do immigrants to Cape Breton Island have on the community, people and economy?

To conclude this activity, a conference will be convened to provide an overview of the recommendations from each of the individual community workshops. By showcasing this information, communities can work together to create networks of sharing and support.

Activity 2: Business Outreach

Business luncheons and workshops will be hosted in communities throughout Cape Breton Island. These events will focus on encouraging local business to change the narrative on international business development in Cape Breton, expanding to global markets and hiring international students. Themes may include “Doing Business in the Middle East”, “Catering to Chinese Tourism”, “Inward Investment: The parents, family and networks of immigrants”, “Expanding to International Export”, “Information from the Office of Immigration” and so forth.

The aim would be to hold eight sessions throughout Cape Breton Island which would be facilitated by members of the established Cape Breton Task Force.

Activity 3: Cape Breton Island Welcomes the World

There is a need to facilitate public information sessions on immigration with the Office of Immigration on a regular basis so international students and other potential newcomers are up-to-date on all information pertaining to provincial immigrations services and programs. These sessions will work in cooperation with established immigrant groups and communities throughout Cape Breton Island to ensure the maximum amount of awareness and education is provided.

The second part to this activity section will involve working with all municipalities to develop an orientation program and accompanying materials to assist with settling on the Island. This program and information package will help newcomers to the Island understand where particular resources can be found and serve as a thorough guide to navigating the Island when it comes to everyday life.

Activity 4: Accessible Information

We plan to continue profiling success stories of people who have immigrated to Cape Breton Island on the website. This will illustrate the diverse projects and skills being brought to the Island by immigrants and their positive effects on rebuilding the local economy. Profiles will be posted on the CBU Immigration Partnerships web portal developed in the pilot phase of the project. There is a need to also continue updating the CBU Immigration Partnerships web portal and social media streams on a regular basis with information pertaining to the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration programs and services, opportunities for international students on Cape Breton Island, and also develop a calendar of events to ensure community workshop dates are clearly listed.

Conclusion

Oftentimes, when one speaks of immigration to Cape Breton, thoughts turn back to the eighteenth century and the arrival of the Scottish and Irish settlers. We must remind Cape Bretoners of those who came at the turn of the twentieth century in the tens of thousands to build what was to become the largest industrial complex east of Montreal. Thousands worked side by side each other in coal and steel and many hundreds more invested in retail and service industries making one of the most culturally diverse communities in Atlantic Canada.

We have to remind Cape Bretoners how their forefathers were welcomed and how they and their children built this economy. While the days of coal and steel are behind us, scores of international students arrive from more than 40 countries every year, many with a desire to learn and live in Cape Breton. Many have families with strong business networks in their home countries, eager to invest in Canada. When we combine this interest with the steady trickle of immigrants who are settling throughout the Island to build new lives and new economies there is the very real opportunity to “jump start” immigration.

The next phase of the project will focus on increasing awareness of the benefits and opportunities for immigration and educating the communities about the possibilities.

Services to immigrants must be enhanced to reach these goals and the Task Force will work with all communities on Cape Breton and with the provincial and federal governments to expand these services.

Works Cited

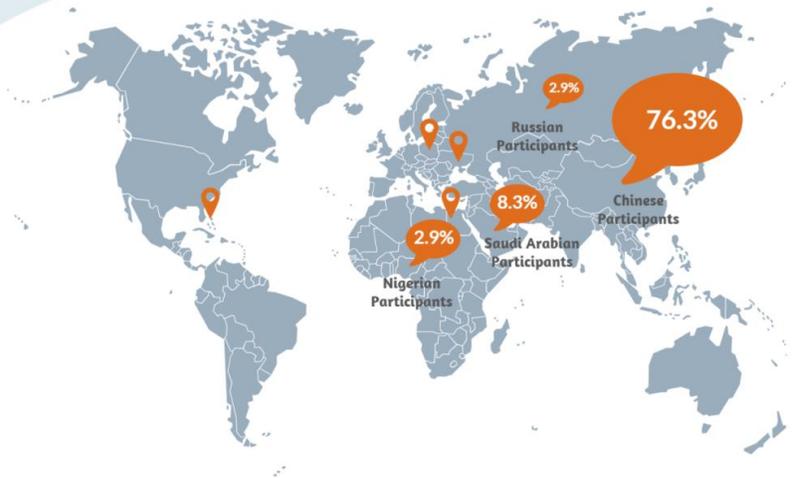
Canada, G. o. (2011, February 4). *Statistics Canada* . Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo62d-eng.htm>

Economy, T. N. (2014). *Now or Never: An Urgent Call To Actions for Nova Scotians*. Nova Scotia.

NS Office of Immigration . (2013, August 26). *Nova Scotia Immigration Trends* . Retrieved from Nova Scotia Office of Immigration :
http://immigration.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Immigration_Facts_Immigration_Trends_Aug26.pdf

Rural-Urban IMMIGRATION

Strategy for Cape Breton Island



243

Number of participants



Some Important Points

- 67% of respondents were between age 20-25
- 76% were either business or hospitality students
- 80% had some form of training prior to coming to Canada
- 81% of participants have been in Cape Breton for only 1-2 years
- 79% felt there are no opportunities for political participation
- 88% plan to apply for a Post-Graduate Work Permit
- Less than half of all respondents were familiar with immigration programs
- 66.8% feel Cape Breton does not provide opportunity to work in field of study



90

% live off campus



20

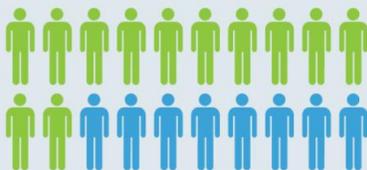
% live with homestay



Feel Cape Breton is welcoming



Employment was the number one reason respondents would stay in Cape Breton.



12 Months Work Experience in Canada

4%

Gender		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	63.0%	148
Male	37.0%	87
<i>answered question</i>		235
<i>skipped question</i>		8
Age		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
17-19	7.6%	18
20-25	66.7%	158
26-29	18.1%	43
30-45	6.8%	16
45+	0.8%	2
<i>answered question</i>		237
<i>skipped question</i>		6

Nationality		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Chinese	76.3%	183
Nigeria	2.9%	7
Saudi Arabian	8.3%	20
Russian	2.9%	7
Indian	2.5%	6
Other	7.1%	17
<i>answered question</i>		240
<i>skipped question</i>		3

What program are you enrolled in at CBU?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Science & Technology	13.4%	32
Business	45.0%	107
Liberal Arts	0.8%	2
Hospitality & Tourism	31.1%	74
Other	9.7%	23
<i>answered question</i>		238
<i>skipped question</i>		5

What year of study are you currently in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	34.9%	73
2	24.4%	51
3	19.1%	40
4	13.4%	28
Other	8.1%	17
<i>answered question</i>		209
<i>skipped question</i>		34

Did you take any other post-secondary education/training prior to coming to Canada?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bachelors Degree	56.8%	133
Masters Degree	4.7%	11
Technical Training	1.3%	3
College	12.8%	30
No Prior Training	19.2%	45
Other	5.1%	12
<i>answered question</i>		234
<i>skipped question</i>		11

If yes, was your previous education recognized upon coming to Canada?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	81.3%	152
No	18.7%	35
<i>answered question</i>		187
<i>skipped question</i>		56

What best describes your current housing situation in Cape Breton?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Living on campus	9.7%	23
Living off campus with a homestay family	20.3%	48
Living off campus by myself	11.8%	28
Living off campus with roommates	51.5%	122
Living off campus with relatives or spouse	6.8%	16
<i>answered question</i>		237

<i>skipped question</i>	6
-------------------------	----------

How Long have you been in Cape Breton?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 year	36.6%	85
2 years	44.8%	104
3-4 years	15.1%	35
More than 4 years	3.4%	8
<i>answered question</i>		232
<i>skipped question</i>		11

What made you decide to enroll at Cape Breton University?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Programs offered	43.9%	101
Location	7.0%	16
Partnership with another university	5.2%	12
Potential to immigrant permanently	39.1%	90
Other	4.8%	11
<i>answered question</i>		230
<i>skipped question</i>		13

How would you describe your experience in obtaining a Canadian study permit?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Easy	29.7%	68
Complicated	34.5%	79
Hard	9.6%	22
Time Consuming	26.2%	60
<i>answered question</i>		229
<i>skipped question</i>		14

Did you receive any type of orientation to Cape Breton upon your arrival?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.4%	93
No	59.6%	137
<i>answered question</i>		230

<i>skipped question</i>	13
-------------------------	-----------

If yes, who was it provided by?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Cape Breton University	75.5%	77
Provincial Government	2.0%	2
Tourism organization	0.0%	0
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	2.0%	2
Other	20.6%	21
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		144

What programs and supports were available to you in help you adjust to life in Cape Breton?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Language Training	50.2%	111
Introduction to community programs and services (i.e day cares, support groups, etc.)	19.9%	44
Employment Counselling	22.6%	50
Cultural orientation	41.6%	92
Other	2.3%	5
<i>answered question</i>		221
<i>skipped question</i>		23

Do you consider Cape Breton to be a welcoming place for international students?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91.8%	212
No	8.2%	19
<i>answered question</i>		231
<i>skipped question</i>		12

In your opinion, does Cape Breton offer the following opportunities and supports to international students?					
Answer Options	Yes	%	No	%	Response Count
Reliable public transportation	83	36.89%	142	63.11%	225
A safe place to live and work	205	85.77%	34	14.23%	239
Accessible health care	156	69.33%	69	30.67%	225

Political participation	45	20.55%	174	79.45%	219
Recreation & entertainment	92	40.71%	134	59.29%	226
Affordable/sustainable housing	155	68.28%	72	31.72%	227
<i>answered question</i>					232
<i>skipped question</i>					11

Do you find it easy to connect with build relationships with Cape Bretoners?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	68.1%	156
No	31.9%	73
<i>answered question</i>		229
<i>skipped question</i>		14

After graduation, are you considering applying for a 'Post-Graduate Work Permit'?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	88.4%	198
No	11.6%	26
<i>answered question</i>		224
<i>skipped question</i>		17

Are you familiar with the following immigration programs?					
Answer Options	Yes		No		Response Count
Provincial Nominee	112	51.14%	107	48.86%	219
Start-up Visa	31	15.05%	175	84.95%	206
Federal Skilled Worker	69	32.86%	141	67.14%	210
Canadian Experience Class	96	44.86%	118	55.14%	214
Express Entry	52	24.64%	159	75.36%	211

Would having your family in Cape Breton make you consider immigrating?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66.8%	149
No	33.2%	74
<i>answered question</i>		223
<i>skipped question</i>		20
<i>answered question</i>		225
<i>skipped question</i>		18

Do you feel like Cape Breton has the support services to help you through the immigration process?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57.1%	124
No	42.9%	93
<i>answered question</i>		217
<i>skipped question</i>		26

Do you have 12 months of work experience in Canada?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	4.0%	9
No	96.0%	218
<i>answered question</i>		227
<i>skipped question</i>		16

Do you feel that Cape Breton offers you the opportunity to work in your field of study?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	33.2%	73
No	66.8%	147
<i>answered question</i>		220
<i>skipped question</i>		23

Would any of the following make you consider staying in Cape Breton after graduation?					
Answer Options	Yes		No		Response Count
Better housing	118	63.10%	69	36.90%	187
More community inclusion for newcomers	137	70.26%	58	29.74%	195
Employment in my field of study	177	78.67%	48	21.33%	225
More social and recreational activities	132	68.04%	62	31.96%	194
Better ethnic supports	132	70.21%	56	29.79%	188
More friends and family in the area	153	76.50%	47	23.50%	200
<i>answered question</i>					226
<i>skipped question</i>					17

If you are planning on staying in Cape Breton, do you plan to work in any of the following sectors?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Property rental	10.0%	21
Tourism	45.2%	95
IT and technology innovation	11.4%	24
Healthcare	10.0%	21
Agriculture	4.8%	10
Opening your own business	35.2%	74
Financial sector	31.0%	65
International Trade	43.8%	92
Other	10.0%	21
<i>answered question</i>		210
<i>skipped question</i>		33

Do you have any additional comments or concerns you would like to add? (Please use space below)

Answer Options	Response Count
	25
<i>answered question</i>	25
<i>skipped question</i>	218

- Hold regular meeting updating students on changing immigration policy.
- The population is low. The Sports are undeveloped and the choice is limited. There is no entertainment here. Cape Breton is not a welcoming place.
- I really like Cape Breton; it is a friendly place. However, I find that it is difficult for an international student to find a job. I really want to remain in Cape Breton and make it my home. It would be perfect if there was an accessible immigration guide and services for international students like me.
- I am an international student in the Hospitality and Tourism management program at Cape Breton University. After graduation, I would like to spend a few years working in my field of study as a cashier at a restaurant or a housekeeper in a hotel. This means I have almost no chance of immigrating to Cape Breton or Canada. If I am only focusing on the work opportunities, I will move to a big city. I want to stay in Cape Breton but the immigration policy is not as good here as other provinces.
- I think that if a residency program in an enterprise or organization were to be included as part of my MBA program, it would improve my job prospects and my belief in the potential for immigration.
- I love the natural beauty off Cape Breton Island, so I have decided to stay here if the immigration department will allow me to. I will follow through in the process of immigrating here.
- I would like to see a better plan put in place to support CBU graduates wanting to immigrate here.

- The jobs that qualify me for the immigration process do not match the jobs that I can actually get here in Cape Breton.
- The island needs businesses for sure, but opening my own business does not in terms of getting me immigrate here.
- Toronto is better; this island is not very developed.
- Cape Breton should have an Immigration Office where people can walk in or call in and ask questions.”
- The Cape Breton Regional Municipality should have a Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) recognized medical office in Sydney. This will eliminate the difficult process of traveling to Halifax for a 15 minute medical health check-up required for getting permits for study. For example, I had to spend 3 days traveling to and from Halifax for a 15 minute check-up for my son. This makes us feel like the CBRM is very remote and inconvenient.
- There should be a permanent office in Sydney that can answer questions for international students regarding their immigration process.
- Better employment support is needed for international students. If post-graduation employment is assured it might attract significantly more international students
- I would like to see lectures that talk about Canadian culture.
- Personally I think Nova Scotia Immigration policy is too strict, I hope the government provides more opportunities to open small private businesses.
- I would like to make friends with local students and join more communities.
- I hope the CBRM can enhance the transportation services available to residences by adding more frequent bus times, currently, we have to wait an hour for a bus.
- There is a lack of job opportunities. After graduation students cannot find jobs, especially those who have a business major. Maybe CBU can offer job fairs for the MBA students.
- Cape Breton is a good place to live, but it is very difficult to find a job. Therefore, I would like to move to another city.
- Kids from high school treat international students badly. Create full time jobs (for international students) that we could use to immigrate instead of part time jobs.