



To: CETAC Colleges, Board of Directors, Commissioners, Advisory Committee,
Private Career Colleges

From: Deborah Burns, Executive Director

Re: CETAC and International Students

Date: January 26, 2011

The Canadian Education and Training Accreditation Commission (CETAC) was invited to participate in the consultations on CIC's International Student Program and international marketing of education, held in Ottawa November 30, 2010. In addition, CETAC was invited to the National Education Marketing Roundtable (NEMR), December 1. CETAC has participated in NEMR discussions since 2008. I was pleased to participate in these meetings and consultations on behalf of CETAC. During the meetings, and particularly during breaks, I had very good discussions with officials from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Federal Provincial Consultative Committee on Education Related International Activities (FPCCERIA), which is a committee of the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) as well as with officials from some provincial governments who were in attendance.

CETAC's invitation to the immigration consultations came from Jorge Aceytuno, Deputy Director at Citizenship and Immigration headquarters and a member of the CETAC Advisory Committee. Our invitation to the international education marketing consultation came from Darcy Rollins, provincial co- chair of the FPCCERIA. It is to this committee that CETAC has officially requested access to the Imagine Education in / au Canada Brand for CETAC colleges.

As you may know, Citizenship and Immigration Canada has identified some weaknesses in its regulations and policies around student visas, which enable international students to study in Canada. More specifically, international students are not currently required to study after arrival in Canada, and immigration regulations allow any institution to host an international student, with no requirement for institutions to meet eligibility criteria for the purposes of hosting an international student.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada and provinces/territories are at the early stages of discussing possible changes to the International Student Program. At the consultation meeting they proposed changes in the following broad areas: introducing requirements for international

students to study after arrival; requiring provinces/territories to identify the educational institutions that would be eligible to host international students; and requiring authorized institutions to monitor and report on students' compliance with the study condition. At the same time, CIC and provinces/territories are also discussing eligibility requirements for work permit programs, and the possibility of extending some work permit programs to all institutions that meet eligibility requirements, which will likely include sectors/schools that are currently not able to take advantage of these programs. Currently, private career colleges cannot participate in these programs related to work for international students.

During 2011, CIC will consult widely with provincial and territorial government departments responsible for education and immigration, as well as with stakeholders, including CETAC. Bilateral arrangements between CIC and provinces/territories will be negotiated, which will outline federal and provincial/territorial roles and responsibilities in the management of the International Student Program, and identify the institutions eligible to host international students. It is expected that in early 2012, these arrangements, as well as changes to policies and regulations relative to the issuance of student visas and international student work permits will be implemented.

At the consultations in late November, we were told that CIC is looking for a way to extend international student work permits to other education sectors, in addition to those currently covered. However, officials said that there will be a need for institutions to meet some criteria. We were told to "think of the highest common denominator, not the lowest".

Changes anticipated in student visas will include some requirements with respect to institutions where international students can study. Institutions with international students will be required to provide CIC with student information related to student visas and work permits, similar to current reporting requirements under the Off-Campus Work Permit Program.

Immigration is a shared federal-provincial/territorial jurisdiction. Education, however, is totally within the jurisdiction of provinces and territories. Thus, any discussions that combine immigration and education issues are complex.

The discussions held around international marketing of education were also interesting and informative. As you know, private career colleges do not currently have access to the Imagine Education in / au Canada Brand. Access to this Brand, developed by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada and administered through the FPCCERIA, enables educational institutions to use the Brand, and to participate in international events in various parts of the world, promoting Canada and Brand- using institutions as study destinations for international students.

During the consultation, I raised the point that the international marketing of Canada to foreign students would be enhanced by expanding the options the students have for study in Canada. By granting CETAC accredited private career colleges access to the Brand, and thus to international marketing events, the number of educational opportunities to meet international student needs will increase, potentially increasing the number of students who choose to study in Canada.

Discussions with FPCERIA officials updated us on the status of CETAC's request for access to the Brand for CETAC accredited colleges. The Committee is examining CETAC standards and processes. I will have further discussions with them in the near future, regarding the requirements for CETAC accreditation, and how we ensure that CETAC colleges meet our high standards of quality.

I was encouraged by all my discussions in Ottawa, both during the formal sessions, and informally with officials and other colleagues. My discussions also indicate that when CETAC colleges are given access to the Imagine Education in / au Canada Brand, and to work permits for international students, it will be colleges which have completed the full CETAC accreditation process which will be eligible. This means colleges will need to have completed the CETAC process for all nine elements in the CETAC standard. This can take two to three years, so it is important for colleges to begin the process as soon as possible, if they are to be among the first group of CETAC colleges attaining these privileges.

CETAC has already had discussions with officials from several provinces, regarding our request for access to these programs related to international students. Because of the jurisdictional issues around immigration and education, it is essential that provincial departments responsible for immigration and those responsible for education both are aware of CETAC, and the high level of quality CETAC accreditation demonstrates in private career colleges. To this end, our discussion with Provinces will continue this year.

If you have any questions, or suggestions for us as we pursue these privileges for CETAC accredited colleges, please let me know. You can reach me by e-mail at executivedirector@cetac.ca.