

Decision Note

Advice to Minister Anne Kang

Date: June 6, 2022

Cliff #: 125315

Issue: **Approval of international education framework and initial actions.**

Background / Facts:

- The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training has been reviewing post-secondary international education in British Columbia in response to the sector's growth and importance to bring it into alignment with B.C. government values, priorities and interests.
- In July 2020, AEST received Cabinet approval to develop an international education framework.
- Briefings with Minister Kang have included:
 - March 22, 2021 – International education overview
 - June 30, 2021 – International education framework and BCCIE review—reviewed and approved framework subject to last round of stakeholder engagement.
 - January 19, 2022 – approved initial actions subject to finalizing with stakeholder engagement.
- The intent of the Framework (Attachment 1) is to guide immediate steps to retain BC's share of international enrolment to manage financial impacts of COVID and longer-term policy shifts to mitigate pressure points and support outcomes that benefit British Columbia.
- The priority focus:
 - Regional distribution of enrolment and benefits;
 - Market diversification to lessen dependence on key countries;
 - International student immigration measures aligned with B.C. goals and objectives;
 - Increasing accountability for international and domestic student experiences and integration.
 - Supporting post-secondary sector commitments to reconciliation and DRIPA implementation.
- The framework should protect and enhance B.C.'s international brand for quality that attracted 184,000 international students from over 150 countries in 2021.
- Other key benefits of international education include financial support for public post-secondary institutions, economic activity across B.C., enriched social and cultural diversity on campuses and classrooms, and increased academic, research and learning opportunities.
- Key external factors to mitigate include ongoing demographic and market changes of declining domestic enrolment and declining FTE utilization, particularly in northern and rural colleges; rising reliance on international tuition revenues by PSIs (now 19%, up from 8% in 2014/15); and a growing link between post-secondary education and the immigration system.
- The framework objective is a balanced approach to international education that delivers positive education outcomes for international students and global opportunities for domestic students, underpinned by a commitment to quality education.
- The framework identifies three goals to protect and enhance the benefits of international education while working with the sector to manage the challenges identified and supporting PSIs to recover from the financial and economic impact of Covid-19.
- Within each goal, individual strategies are identified to advance B.C.'s international education priorities. Key initial actions establish the levers to help achieve the goals:
 1. **New Public PSI Guidelines on Enrolment of International Students** that provide updated, modern and relevant enrolment guidelines to public PSIs that meet the requirements and priorities of international education. Key elements include protecting against displacement of

domestic students, managing international enrolment for diversity and within capacity, and transparency standards for international tuition fees (Attachment 2).

2. **Guidelines for International Education Strategic Plans** that support public PSIs to develop strategic plans with common components that identify their objectives and strategies, consistent with the Province's framework (Attachment 3).
3. **Education Quality Assurance (EQA) Code of Practice**, to set common standards for all EQA institutions to improve student protections and support B.C.'s international reputation (Attachment 4).

Analysis

- AEST staff engaged with the public post-secondary sector through the sector associations and individual PSIs, private sector institutions, Indigenous partner groups, student groups, community and settlement groups, and other ministries (EDUC, JERI and MUNI), and sector partners.
- A rollout plan is prepared to begin formal communication with the post-secondary sector:
 - Communication with the sector in June 2022, leveraging BCCIE's International Education Week to reach key sector stakeholders.
 - Formal ministry communication to PSIs identifying the renewed guidelines, standards, and code of practice, and updated letter of direction to BCCIE.
 - Public communication opportunity timed with start of new academic year (fall 2022).

Options:

Option 1 (Recommended): Approve rollout of framework and initial actions for implementation.

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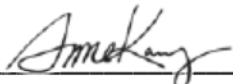
Recommendation / Next Steps:

Option 1: Approve proposed framework and initial actions.

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RECOMMENDED OPTION:

Option 1 Approved



Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Advanced Education and
Skills Training

June 24, 2022

Date

Attachment(s):

1. International Education Framework and operational plan
2. Guidelines Respecting International Students
3. International Strategic Plan Content Guidelines
4. EQA Code of Practice

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