



For Immediate Release

COVID-19: International Students

April 23, 2020 – Due to COVID-19, Northern Ontario's post-secondary institutions may see fewer international students in the 2020-2021 academic year compared to previous years. This briefing note seeks to calculate the economic impacts if the forecasted international student enrolment for 2020-2021 was down by 20 per cent as well as down by 50 per cent.

“Economic impact assessments are a tool used to measure how many dollars an industry, institution, or group of people contribute to the economy,” said author Hilary Hagar, research analyst at Northern Policy Institute. “For example, an Ontario-wide study of universities found foreign students spend \$794 million annually just on living expenses alone.”

When it comes to international tuition fees across the various Northern post-secondary institutions, the author found there would be significant losses based on the forecasted enrolment for 2020-2021.

*The briefing note shows that in terms of revenue from international tuition fees to Northern post-secondary institutions in 2020-2021, **a 50 per cent decrease in international student enrolment would mean a drop of over \$58,000,000. At 20 per cent less international students, it would mean a drop of over \$23,000,000.***

Foreign students also contribute economically to the communities they live in by purchasing items like rent, residence housing, groceries, meal plans, transportation, communications, textbooks and supplies, clothing, and discretionary expenses.

*In terms of the revenue coming from international student living and visitor expenditures in communities who have post-secondary institutions in 2020-2021, **a 50 per cent decrease in international student enrolment would result in a loss of almost \$50,000,000 in Northern Ontario's local economies.***

All in all, if fewer than projected international students come to Northern Ontario in fall 2020, there will be economic impacts. Indeed, based on Hagar's calculations, Thunder Bay would see the largest projected total economic loss in 2020-2021 if half as many international students come to the community (\$80,000,000). As such, now is the time for administrators of post-secondary institutions and community leaders to strategize and plan a way forward.

To read more about *Where are the international students? How COVID-19 could affect Northern Ontario's economy*, go read the briefing note here:
<https://www.northernpolicy.ca/covid-19international-student>



Media Interviews: Author Hilary Hagar and NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

About the author:

Hilary Hagar is originally from Hamilton, ON, and is a recent graduate from the University of Guelph with a B.A. (Hons) in International Development, Hilary values interdisciplinary approaches and is passionate about community economic development and poverty alleviation. During her undergraduate degree, Hilary completed participatory research in both Cuba and Bolivia. Closer to home, Hilary has also contributed policy debates on issues ranging from greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario agriculture to Inuit nutrition and health. An avid outdoors enthusiast, she spends as much time as possible camping, hiking, and canoeing.