

**Future of Skilled Labour Force in Canada and Atlantic Canada: Attracting and Retaining
International Students in the region to fill the skills gap.**

Scotiabank Theatre (903, Robie Street, SMU campus).

February 10, 2023

Organizer: Ather H. Akbari

AGENDA

9:00 **Registration**

9:15 – 9:30 **Greetings**

Dr. Ather Akbari – Event Chair

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray (President and Vice Chancellor of Saint Mary's University)
- Dr. Harjeet Bhabra (Dean Sobey School of Business)
- The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P. (video)
(Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)

9:30 – 10:45 **Keynote 1**

- Dr. Mikal Skuterud – University of Waterloo
Future of Canada's Skilled Labour Supply (Topic: labour supply challenges, policy opportunities and international students as economic-class immigrants)
- *Discussant:* Dr. Stephanie Thomas – Saint Mary's University (Economics Department)
- Q & A

Moderator: Thomas Storring (Director Economics and Statistics, N.S. Department of Finance)

10:45 – 11:00 **Break**

11:00 – 12:15 **Immigration and labour supply challenges in Atlantic Canada arising from
demographic change: Federal and provincial response**

Atlantic provinces have the highest proportion of elderly population in the country. While this opens up some new opportunities, it also poses challenges for the region's economic future. How are the federal and provincial governments responding to the challenges?

Speakers:

- Jeremy Smith (Director – Immigration and Population Growth, NS Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration)
- Jeff Young (Director - PEI Office of Immigration)

Moderator: Ron L'Esperance (Principal - Group ATN, Inc.)

12:15 – 1:15

Networking Lunch

1:15 – 2:30

Keynote 2

Dr. Feng Hou – Statistics Canada

International students as a source of labour supply during the period of study and after graduation (Topic: statistical evidence on international students filling labour supply gaps)

- *Discussant:* Dr. Joniada Milla – Saint Mary's University (Economics Department)
- Q & A

Moderator: Dr. Paul Dixon (Professor, Operations Management, SMU)

2:30 – 2:45

Break

2:45 – 4:00

Panel Discussion

International student enrolments grew significantly between 2010-2020. What trends in enrolment and graduates have we seen since? The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) will share highlights from recent reports to provide a foundation for dialogue with panelists from Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU), Atlantic Colleges Atlantique (ACA) and international alumni exploring the shifts in the demand for educational programs, Atlantic Canada's competitive advantage and some barriers in attraction and retention of international students.

- Introduction: Lisa O'Connell (Director, Research & Data Analysis, MPHEC)
- *Panelists:*
 - Peter Halpin (Executive Director, AAU)
 - Jeffrey Taylor (Associate Vice President, Applied Research and Innovation at Nova Scotia Community College – also representing ACA)
 - Jose Alejandro Gonzalez, UPEI Alumnus (2021)
 - Chandika Ramful, SMU Alumnus (2018)

Moderator: Dr. Paul Dixon (Professor, Operations Management, SMU)

4:00-4:05

Closing Remarks

Dr. Akbari – Event Chair