



# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Warden and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	December 9, 2021
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	EDTC-CW-01-22
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Georgian College International Student Supports</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW01-22; Endorsed by County Council per Resolution CC11-22 January 13, 2022

## Recommendation

1. That Report EDTC-CW-01-22 regarding Georgian College International Student Strategy, be received; and
2. That in accordance with the approval provided by Council through endorsement of report EDTC-CW-03-20, staff be authorized to utilize the \$33,000 previously set aside from the Economic Development Initiatives Reserve for this project.

## Executive Summary

On December 12, 2019, County Council supported report EDTC-CW-03-20 to share the costs of an International Student Coordinator position with Georgian College. With the onset of the pandemic, International Students were unable to travel. and the hiring process paused.

As restrictions ease, International Students are returning to campus and the position is now proceeding. Given the uncertainty of the pandemic, the funds were not budgeted in 2021 and staff require Council endorsement to forward the previously approved funds.

## Background and Discussion

While the position was paused through the pandemic, Grey County, Georgian College, Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce, and the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership partnered on a research program with the support of the Province and a Rural Economic Development Grant. The program, titled, *Making Grey Bruce Home for International Talents* delved into challenges facing International students through a series of interviews and focus groups to better understand and document experiences and needs. The work was completed in

March of this year and included a case study and report along with five broad recommendations:

- Improve information regarding the location of the Owen Sound campus
- Improve public awareness for opportunities to participate in the Homestay program or private room rental.
- Improve transportation support and awareness for students.
- Connect students to community members and organizations to support language and build social capital.
- Provide supports for international students about employment and immigration in Canada.

Supported by the findings of this research and a campus strategy, leadership is prepared to invest in this position as a priority. While Georgian College is gearing up to once again welcome International Student cohorts to Owen Sound, the proposed contract position has been re-introduced as a full-time continuing support staff. The Campus International Student Coordinator will:

#### **Support new cohorts**

- Provide on-site support to meet the transitional needs of incoming cohorts of international students, including housing, food service, and the coordination of peer mentors to meet emergent needs
- In collaboration with college stakeholders, coordinate and plan the transition, integration, and settlement of new international students on the Owen Sound campus
- In consultation with international students and College staff, determine service priorities to attract, transition, and retain international students in the Grey-Bruce region.

#### **Sustain support through to graduation**

- Promote and facilitate awareness of the importance of international students to both the College and the region with community members and organizations
- Work with student advisors and/or other college stakeholders to determine needs of at-risks students on campus
- Organize and facilitate events with community partners in support of student integration and retention into the local community
- Support cultural diversity programming and education to address the unique cultural needs of the student population
- Identify and develop relationships with potential community partners

#### **Develop fulsome international student transition and success program**

- Provide recommendations on areas for development and opportunities for improvement that will increase student engagement and retention
- Establish a framework and process for ongoing, sustainable facilitation of integration and community efforts to support international students
- Facilitate the implementation of a minimum of 3 initiatives with community partners to address prioritized service gaps
- Create and maintain an inventory of relevant community services currently available

## Research, assessment, evaluation, and reporting

- In collaboration with the Executive Director, identify scope of data collection points and processes
- Identify metrics and collect data to measure the success of initiatives
- Identify gaps and/or deficiencies in services currently available by connecting with students and other stakeholders to understand the experiences and barriers to service.

The success of Georgian College's Owen Sound campus is critical to our regional economy. Given current demographics in Ontario, a major driver of campus and community growth across the province is through the recruitment and retention of International Students.

As a dedicated resource, this position will benefit from the knowledge and resources within Grey's economic development team to build the processes and relationships with the private sector to assist students secure housing, jobs, transportation and positively integrate into the community. This position will also fill the gap left by the immigration services coming into the region, ensuring the specialized needs of International Students are properly served.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

The position will be housed and supervised by Georgian College.

Pursuant to section 107 of the Municipal Act, 2001, the County may make grants to any person, group, or body for any purpose that Council considers to be in the interests of the municipality. Such grants must respect the provisions of section 106 of the Act, which prohibit assisting any "manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise". Georgian College does not fit that description.

## Financial and Resource Implications

The one time funds of \$33,000.00 have remained in the Economic Development Initiatives Reserve for the past two years with the approval of report EDTC-CW-03-20. This report is brought forward as the funds were unbudgeted in 2021.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal – CAO, Director of Finance
- External – Georgian College

## Appendices and Attachments

[Making Grey Bruce Home for International Talents – Project Report](#)

[Making Grey Bruce Home for International Talents – Case Study](#)