



Pathways to Prosperity

Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal are still attracting the most immigrants in Canada, but over the past decade more new Canadians have been finding homes in small and mid-sized urban cities. It's a trend those working on a new national initiative called *Pathways to Prosperity*, which includes researchers from Saint Mary's, are trying to encourage.

In 2011, over 60% of immigrants lived in one of our three biggest cities, and yet from 2007 to 2011 Vancouver and Toronto have both attracted almost 20% fewer immigrants than they did from 2002 to 2006. Over the same period, however, Winnipeg experienced an increase of 220%; Trois-Rivières, 246%. Moncton had the largest growth rate at 324%.



Dr. Terry Murphy is looking for ways to help immigrants put down roots in the rural areas of the province

Immigrants are still drawn to our most populated areas, but as they're more often finding in mid-sized cities, there are opportunities to thrive in smaller communities.

Saint Mary's Religious Studies Professor Dr. Terry Murphy is trying to promote this trend in Nova Scotia's town and cities through the *Pathways to Prosperity* initiative, a \$2.5 million program funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. It aims to bring together researchers, government departments and community partners from across the country to explore new ways of attracting and retaining immigrants to less-populated areas.

For Nova Scotia, in particular, this initiative is especially important. Over the past twenty years, the province's economic growth has been lower than any other province in Canada, but now the provincial government is recognizing through its "jobsHere" plan that new Canadians are essential to kick-starting the economy. *Pathways to Prosperity* will hopefully complement this plan.

Dr. Murphy, the co-applicant for Nova Scotia on the program who has been at Saint Mary's since 2001, is part of a team of researchers from almost every university in the province and non-academic partners like the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration. Together over the next seven years, they'll be helping to improve policies and practices that don't just attract newcomers, but also help settle and integrate immigrants in places like Cape Breton, Hants County and Halifax. The province's largest city only saw a 6% increase in the number of immigrants over the past decade.

"I have a long-standing interest in both historical and contemporary immigration to Atlantic Canada," says Dr. Murphy, "and in the social, cultural and economic benefit that newcomers bring to a province such as Nova Scotia."

That interest, coupled with his commitment to Canadian immigration research, led to Dr. Murphy being named Chair of the Atlantic Metropolis Centre (AMC) in 2004, a position he still holds today. Somewhat similar to the *Pathways to Prosperity* initiative, the AMC brings together researchers, government representatives and non-governmental organizations to pursue policy research on immigration, population migrations and cultural diversity in Atlantic Canada.

The AMC will end in March 2013, but Dr. Murphy and his colleagues—who include Saint Mary's researchers Madine VanderPlaat, Evengelia Tastsoglou, Alexandra Dobrowolsky and Ather Akbari—are hoping they can continue to make a positive impact on immigration policy through *Pathways to Prosperity*.

"This new partnership, though distinct from the AMC, offers an opportunity to maintain and build upon the considerable momentum that has already developed in collaborative research in this important field," says Dr. Murphy.

Although the grant was just awarded in April, Dr. Murphy has already recruited policymakers and community partners to take part in the initiative, and he'll continue to nurture and expand these partnerships over the years ahead. He'll also act as the link between the national secretariat based at Western University and Nova Scotia's researchers and partners, as well as participate and facilitate consultations aimed at defining research projects for the near future.

We won't know the full impact *Pathways to Prosperity* will have on immigration in Nova Scotia until the initiative ends in 2019. But by investing in long-term projects like these with experienced people like Dr. Murphy at the helm, the future is bright for welcoming more new Canadians to this province eager to contribute to our growth.

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