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Brandon University a key player in immigration study

Posted January 21st, 2013 by Alycia Rodrigues

Brandon University (BU) recently announced its role in a \$2.5 million dollar immigration research study. The study collaborates with other universities and institutions over a span of seven years to assess what brings immigrants to Canada and what kind of an impact they provide, with an emphasis on mid-size cities and small towns. The intention is to provide policy makers and service providers with information to assess current and future immigration factors.

Other universities and institutions involved include Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of Waterloo, the University of New Brunswick, Carleton University, and York University. The cities of Calgary, Saskatoon, London, Moncton, and Ottawa are also involved in the study, as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Government of Canada Citizenship and Immigration, and Government of Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

The Globe and Mail recently published an article discussing why Canada needs immigrants. Small towns, such as Steinbach and Winkler, are losing a lot of their young citizens to opportunities in bigger cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, argued Joe Friesen, demographics reporter for G&M.

Friesen also argued that Canadians are not having enough babies and, given the potential to become a leading-edge super power, reliance on immigrants has been and is becoming increasingly important. The future of Canada is at a tipping point and questions of change are hanging in the air, waiting for a response on how to sustain equality for all Canadians.

Dr. Bill Ashton, the director of BU's Rural Development Institute (RDI), is the chairman for the prairie research project titled Pathways to Prosperity: New policy directions and innovative local practices for newcomer integration and attraction.

"This study will allow us to drill down into the challenges of rural immigration, including language training, housing, and a host of other factors which may not be present in big cities," said Ashton.

Dr. Dean Care, the acting vice-president of BU, gave his support of the research study.

"I am extremely pleased that Brandon University is joining other Canadian universities as a partner on this important research project. Being a rural-based university, BU is well positioned to make a significant contribution to this project; especially one with such relevance to our local community."

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