

MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

October 31, 2024

RE: Brampton Charter for Improving the International Student Experience

Dear College or University President,

The City of Brampton is calling upon all colleges and universities, both public and private, to endorse our International Student Charter if they have students living in our city.

As the fastest growing big city in Canada, Brampton is home to more than 700,000 people, including thousands of international students. We are proud of these students and recognize their significant contributions to our city's culture and economy. However, we also recognize many international students face financial challenges, housing insecurity and a lack of adequate institutional support, making them prime targets for exploitation.

[The Brampton Charter for Improving the International Student Experience](#) presents a commitment to make a positive difference in the lives of international students who choose to stay in Brampton while they study in Canada. The Charter includes shared principles, recommended actions, and mechanisms for accountability.

Guiding Principles

- Appreciate that international student experiences are complex, multifaceted, distinctive, and as heterogeneous as the students themselves.
- Respect that international students contribute diverse perspectives enriching the learning experience for all students and are not competing with domestic students for postsecondary spaces.
- Recognize the distinct stressors, atypical obstacles and macro- and micro-level factors that influence the lives of international students.
- Acknowledge the need to view the international student experience holistically beginning from when a student considers studying in Canada to beyond graduation.
- Define the international student experience to encompass physical, mental, social, cultural, financial, and academic well-being, including immigration, employment, housing, health, racism, food security, language and belonging.
- Respond through multi-stakeholder engagement to fill gaps and bridge silos that challenge a smooth and seamless international student experience.

The City of Brampton has been working to do everything in our power to create meaningful change for international students. On October 23, 2024, we announced bold actions aimed at tackling the exploitation of international students in recognition of the severe vulnerabilities many of these students face both in Brampton and across Canada.



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A resolution addressing these vulnerabilities was put forward by the City of Brampton's Community Services Chair, Rowena Santos. The approved Council resolution focuses on strengthening local protections, community-driven solutions, and advocates for systemic change at the provincial and federal levels to ensure the safety and well-being of Brampton's international student population.

The City will collaborate with community partners to develop a culturally sensitive pilot program to provide wrap-around services, including housing assistance, mental health support, employment resources, settlement support and anti-trafficking interventions tailored to the unique needs of international students.

The City is calling on the federal government to fund this pilot program and to further enable approved local service groups to provide needed services for international students.

The City is also calling on the federal and provincial governments to review policies that exacerbate the vulnerabilities of international students. Current visa restrictions on work hours force many students into unsafe employment, while conditions related to deportation are weaponized by traffickers. Brampton is urging for legislative changes, including increasing legal working hours, removing deportation conditions tied to "sex work" and expanding access of local support programs to international students.

We hope that you will join our efforts by endorsing the Brampton Charter for Improving the International Student Experience. Together we can create real, lasting change for our students.

Sincerely,



Patrick Brown
Mayor



Rowena Santos
Regional Councillor



Gurpreet Malhotra
CEO, Indus Community Services