

Canada should stop pushing away international students

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Martlet (CUP)

Canada has a labour shortage. Heck, it might even have a labour crisis.

A report last January by Human Resources and Social Development Canada identified that there was a severe shortage of workers in many important occupations throughout the country.

This shortage is worst in the health care sector, where Canada is lacking doctors, nurses, pharmacists, medical technicians, and dental assistants.

Jobs in management, oil and gas, construction, computer engineering, and academia are opening up in large numbers, but with no one to fill them. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimated that there were 251 000 long-term job vacancies in Canada last year.

With more unfilled jobs in Canada than Saskatoon has people, you'd think that the government would be eager to attract bright young people to our country to earn a degree and start a career.

But think again: after paying a fee of \$125 in order to have their study permit reviewed, a prospective

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international student must prove that they have enough money to pay their tuition fees, living expenses, as well as return transportation to their home country. They also pay tuition fees that can be up to three times higher than those paid by other Canadian students—and what’s worse, they also can’t access the Canada Student Loans program.

To make a Canadian education more affordable for the most talented young immigrants, you’d think we’d set international students to work. Jobs and merit-based scholarships are an international student’s only funding options once they get here, as they sometimes aren’t eligible for needs-based bursaries or student loans from their schools. Even if they do find a job, they are only allowed to work full-time in the summer.

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However, despite the requirement of making a promise to leave, international students can still apply for a post-graduate work permit once they’re finished school. But they have to find a job first—and they only have 90 days after their last exam is marked to do it, or they’re sent home. And it can’t be just any job—it must be directly related to the student’s degree.

They also need to convince an employer to hire them without being able to commit long-term. Post-graduate work permits last a maximum of two years—one year if the job is in Vancouver, Montreal, or Toronto, or if the student earned their degree there.

It doesn’t make sense that these gifted students, who earn scholarships or awards from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, can’t get a work permit.

More than 130 000 international students are attending our universities right now. The country is earning a failing grade at keeping them here, and that’s got to change, because more than a quarter of a million jobs are at stake.

From Descartes to Devo

Pop culture classes can connect almost anything

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While pop-culture courses offer a broad scope of material to study and feature intelligent lectures that make connections between Ice Cube and Derrida interesting, I could only scoff and murmur my frustrations about how the Arts faculty is a load of crap.

Somehow I can’t understand how a raver pumping and twisting to Aphex Twin is realizing their “self” according to the mirror stage development of Jaques Lacan. These people pumped and twisted because it was fun—or because they were so high that dancing was simply the best thing ever.

It seems that through these classes, the films and bands I’d enjoyed on a personal level have been stripped of all their fun and reduced to trivia and connections on some broader level that I’m convinced even the artists want no part of.

Studying current cultural trends is vital and can lead to a rewarding understanding of a piece of art, but what might be missing from the study of popular culture is some basic introduction.

Where cultural studies should begin—and with a real focus on contemporary music and film as literature—is at a younger level. High school

could be a better place to start studying rap culture, where the focus of an English class is not just Robert Frost’s “The Poison Tree,” but also includes a thematic analysis of *Curtis* by 50 Cent or a report on a particular episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I know that I’d be much happier deconstructing an album from a post-structural standpoint now if I had whetted my brain with essays of how 50 Cent’s gunshot wounds correspond to particular songs.

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As a bonus, some kids who would never have bothered otherwise might actually start caring about studying something. My problem with pop culture classes really comes from the fact there aren’t enough of them yet.

Let’s slip some *Family Guy* into the curriculum and make *Heroes* mandatory viewing. Keeping our education contemporary is necessary, and after all, we’re studying this stuff on our own time anyway.

So pop culture profs, it’s not like you’ve done wrong: you’ve just got to get ‘em earlier than a 200-level course.





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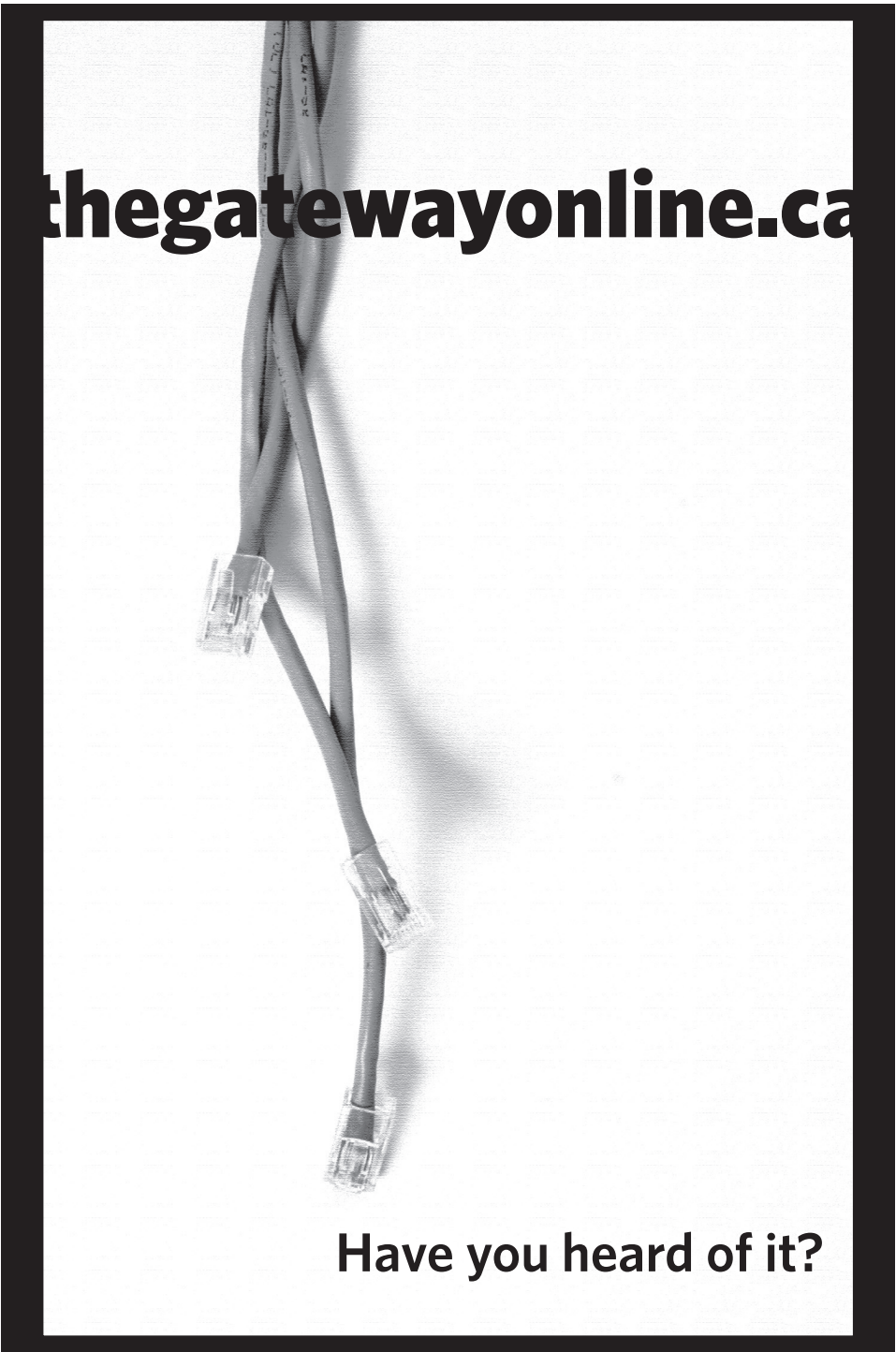
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