

## **Learning to Earning | Higher Education and the Changing Job Market Session Summary**

**Civic Ballroom  
Sheraton Centre Toronto  
123 Queen Street West, Toronto, M5H 2M9**

*Thanks to Ian Hartlen and Adrian Philp, recent graduates from the Master of Public Policy Program at the University of Toronto, for their work in summarizing the conference.*

### **Day Two | Friday, November 2, 2012**

#### **Lunch Keynote**

***Ian Shugart, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada***

Investment in education continues to increase both publicly and privately. Canada is doing well in measures of educational attainment. This is paying off in the labour market, though we are still feeling the effects of the recent recession. Of course, PSE is increasingly important for employment.

Shugart asserts that valid questions remain. Are we making good decisions? What standards and criteria are we using to judge these decisions? Are these decisions optimal for students? Will they get the payoff they expect? Do they have the necessary information? How do we get the best return on public and individual investment?

The central challenge is in reconciling global economic uncertainty with employment skills and education. There are demographic challenges as well. Labour market productivity has primarily been the result of labour market growth which can no longer be taken for granted. Seismic shifts in the global economy and an increasing pace of technological advancement as well as the fiscal realities of current economic challenges lead to the strange combination of high unemployment and a large number of unfilled jobs.

Education is still valuable on the job market, even during times of recession. New jobs require higher education while most jobs that are shed required less education. These trends are likely to be sustained.

Colleges and universities need to work more than they already are with employers to help solve these issues. Short-term needs should not dictate everything, but too often graduates don't feel prepared for the labour market and employers complain of not seeing the right skills. More collaboration is necessary, as is better information for students so they can make better choices.

The challenge is not just to collect and publish information. It's publishing the right things to make a difference. Looking further upstream in the decision making process will be helpful.