

## **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 One | Thursday, November 1, 2012**

#### **Session 4A | Employer and student expectations/experiences**

***Facilitator: Ellen Passmore, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities***

***Graham Donald, Brainstorm Strategy Group***

Why do students choose to attend PSE? The top reason is to get a job, next is the desire for knowledge of an academic field. This focus on the job market necessitates a cultural shift in educational institutions.

Student expectations and goals can be contradictory. For instance, the number of students who say they want to have one employer for their career is increasing, but they think they will leave their first employer quickly. Students express great concerns about the economy, yet salary expectations increase regardless. The top career goal for students is not monetary however. Rather, it is a good balance between work and life.

The most influential people in students' choices in careers and schooling are parents. However, the extent to which parents are equipped to be of help in decision making is questionable.

Students increasingly say that they want to work for government or non-profit. How does this bode for the private sector?

***Paul D. Smith, Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers  
Campus recruitment and benchmark survey report***

The survey showed that the new grad market continues to struggle. There were less jobs per respondent. Arts, entertainment and recreation increased the number of job offers. Meanwhile, the service sector showed the greatest decline in job offers. Hiring was more active in Quebec.

Survey asked for the five skills most valued and five skills least valued by employers. The most valued skills included teamwork, problem solving and a strong work ethic. The least valued included tactfulness and strategic planning.

Employer pre-screening criteria included:

- Degree
- Program of study
- WIL
- Co-curricular involvement
- Academic performance

The top piece of advice employers gave to potential new hires was to do research and know the employer well.

The most unfilled positions were in engineering and banking.

***Leyden M. Fonte, Toronto Region Research Alliance  
Research & Innovation Jobs***

Focus on research and innovation jobs, both in terms of the Toronto region labour market and the international scientific production. Government, private and academic cooperation resulted in a study of more than 60 occupations in six occupational groups. The data set used accounted for about 12% of the employed population. Using the number of graduates per program, the hiring demand per occupation and the interest on the part of youth in working in each occupation, it is possible to predict long term supply and demand for specific occupations and occupational fields.

The findings are that most fields of study, such as sciences and health, have an oversupply of graduates. At the same time, some fields, such as IT, engineering and technical sales are largely undersupplied.

Suggested next steps include a national database for high school and PSE students, as well as finding and using alternative data sources for workforce analytics, among others.

***Alysha Li, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance  
Employer and student expectations/experiences***

Ontario students accumulate more debt and pay higher tuition than students in other provinces. Furthermore, there are greater tuition increases each year in Ontario.

Students were asked if postsecondary education was living up to their expectations. Preliminary themes included the following. Students “hired” their education for several related reasons, first of which is to get a job. Another popular response was that students felt that they were “expected” to go to college or university. PSE is widely seen as a “pre-requisite for life.” Many students don’t seriously consider whether or not they want to go to PSE because they don’t see it as a choice.

Li recommends encouraging students to think critically about what they want to achieve.