



BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL
2600 RUE COLLEGE, SHERBROOKE QC J1M 1Z7

ADVOCACY STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Developed by the Advocacy Positions Committee of the BSR
Adopted by the Board of Student Representatives on November 3, 2025

The BUSRC is dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of all students, both local and international. We represent a community built on values of inclusion, working to ensure that every student at Bishop's has the opportunity to learn and grow. The BUSRC believes it is important to uphold the spirit of unity and mutual support that defines Bishop's, while speaking out on issues that impact the accessibility, diversity, and integrity of higher education in Quebec.

As members of the Bishop's University community, we stand united in support of our international students who enrich our campus and our classrooms. Bishop's has long been a home where people from around the world come together to learn, share culture, and build lifelong cross-cultural connections.

We are deeply concerned about the recent legislative measures proposed by the Government of Quebec regarding international student enrollment, the Quebec Acceptance Certificate (CAQ) process, and the Quebec Experience Program (PEQ). These measures risk undermining the diversity, inclusivity, and international spirit that define higher education in Quebec and the Bishop's community.

We believe that international students are not only learners but are contributors to Quebec's social, cultural, and economic life. We urge the government to reconsider these measures and to engage in meaningful dialogue with students and institutions across the province around this legislation.

Section 1 – The Issue

- The Government of Quebec has proposed new legislation affecting international students, including changes to the Quebec Acceptance Certificate (CAQ) and the Quebec Experience Program (PEQ).
- These changes could limit the number of international students permitted to study in Quebec and create additional barriers to study permit renewals and post-graduation immigration pathways.

- The proposed CAQ quotas risk restricting access to Quebec universities. This will especially affect smaller institutions like Bishop's University that rely on international enrollment for diversity and sustainability.
- Many international students already studying in Quebec may face uncertainty, stress, and instability due to unclear timelines and inconsistent application rules which we believe will be exacerbated by these policies.
- At Bishop's, international students represent a vibrant mix of cultures and countries, contributing to academic excellence, research, and community life which could be threatened by new legislation.

Section 2 – Our Recommendations

We urge the Government of Quebec to acknowledge our recommendations and recognize the vital contributions of international students to Quebec society and its universities.

1. Maintain Open and Transparent Consultation

- Establish mandatory consultation with students, universities, and community representatives before implementing any policy changes affecting international students.
- Ensure all decisions are informed by collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility.

2. Protect Access Through Adequate CAQ Quotas

- Establish sufficient CAQ quotas to prevent a decrease in the number of international students.
- Exclude currently enrolled international students from any quota restrictions to protect their right to complete their studies without disruption.

3. Restore Fair Immigration Pathways

- Reintroduce the PEQ (Programme de l'Expérience Québécoise) for graduates to allow a fair transition to permanent residence.
- Facilitate accessible pathways that help international students integrate and contribute long-term to Quebec's economic and cultural vitality.

4. Recognize the Value and Contributions of International Students



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- Recognition that International students bring culture, creativity, and diversity to Quebec's universities and communities.
- Acknowledgement that Bishop's University hosts students from more than 70 countries, enriching academic dialogue and fostering global citizenship.
- Awareness that International students play a key role in Quebec's innovation, research, and regional economies, especially at institutions such as Bishop's, where graduate programs are predominantly composed of international students.

5. Protect Equity for Both English and French Institutions

- Ensure equal access and opportunity for international students in both English and French institutions.
- Recognize that bilingualism and intercultural collaboration are at the heart of Quebec's international student reputation and educational excellence.

The government of Quebec has previously recognized the vital role international students play in our province's educational and cultural landscape. These policies were not created as supportive measures to address growing concerns; they do not consider the long-term impact on Quebec society, higher institutions and current international students. These policies should be created (maybe changed even) in tandem and in consultation with not only the higher education institutions they jeopardize, but the international student community they hinder. Recognition of the role international students play should not be limited to one institution but to all universities across Quebec.

We call upon the government to reaffirm this commitment by ensuring that every institution, large or small, has the ability to welcome and support international students. Their presence strengthens our classrooms and our research. As representatives of the BUSRC, we urge the province to act in partnership with students and universities to preserve the diversity and inclusivity that have long been a source of pride for Quebec's higher education system.