

# CBIE 2008 Membership Survey Results

The survey was conducted from September 30 to December 12, 2008 using an online questionnaire. There were 166 respondents representing 17% of the total member population (963 delegates, voting and non-voting) and nearly 60% of member institutions. Sixty-six percent of respondents were from universities, 27% from colleges and 7% from school boards and NGOs. In terms of position, the largest percentage of respondents was Directors, International (21%), followed by International Student Advisers (16%), and Associate Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents and Presidents (11%).

From a geographical perspective, all 10 provinces were represented with the highest number of respondents coming from Ontario (34%), followed by British Columbia (19%) and Québec (16%).

## Communications and Publications

Members are more likely to read listserv messages, which they find to be very useful, or email messages from CBIE, over any other form of communication, including print publications and the CBIE website, which some respondents commented was not kept up-to-date. While the E-Internationalist received favorable reviews, many respondents did not recall receiving it or were not aware of its existence.

## CBIE Activities and Benefits of Membership

Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated that their institution benefited one way or another from their membership while 8% indicated the opposite. When asked in what way their institution benefited from membership, responses were varied. Most positive responses referred to professional development, networking, advocacy work and member support, particularly as it relates to immigration, project participation, listservs and the conference. However, school board representatives indicated that CBIE activities did not include, for the most part, basic education and that the membership had little to no value for them. The lack of CBIE staff campus visits was mentioned.

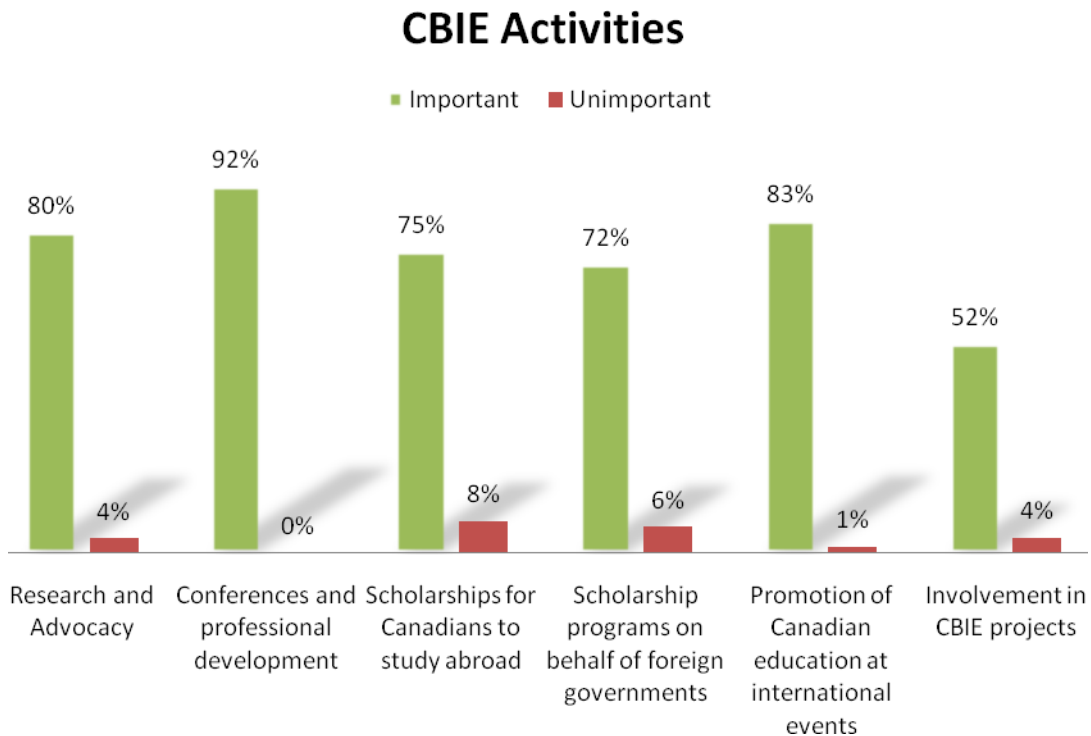
Members view the conference and professional development, the promotion of Canadian education at international events, research and advocacy, and scholarships for Canadians to study abroad as CBIE's most important activities.

The following comments reflect the typical opinion of respondents regarding CBIE's leadership in the sector:

*"CBIE has always played a strong role in providing a forum for and educating international student advisers. We have also benefited from hosting international students coming to Canada through CBIE management of scholarship programs."*

*“Absolutely essential. CBIE is the perceived, real and only trusted authority on international education matters in our country.”*

However, some respondents indicated that CBIE appeared “unfocussed” and that their institution turned to AUCC for leadership in international education. Others thought CBIE was a “fair” leader and that more could be done to promote Canadian education abroad.



Below we provide more detail on two top-ranked activities. While a third area, Promotion of Canadian education at International events, also garnered a high ranking, above 80% considering it an important activity, no detail was provided. We assume that members value activities typically undertaken by CBIE, such as ensuring a Canadian presence at NAFSA, EAIE and CONAHEC through the delivery of Canada-focused sessions, organizing the Canadian presence for government (as was done in 2006-07) and supporting members in ensuring their presence (e.g. Canadian reception at NAFSA).

#### Conferences & Professional Development

The majority (66%) of members reported having attended our annual conference in the last three years. Fewer than half of members attend the regional conferences. Eighty-one percent of respondents attend

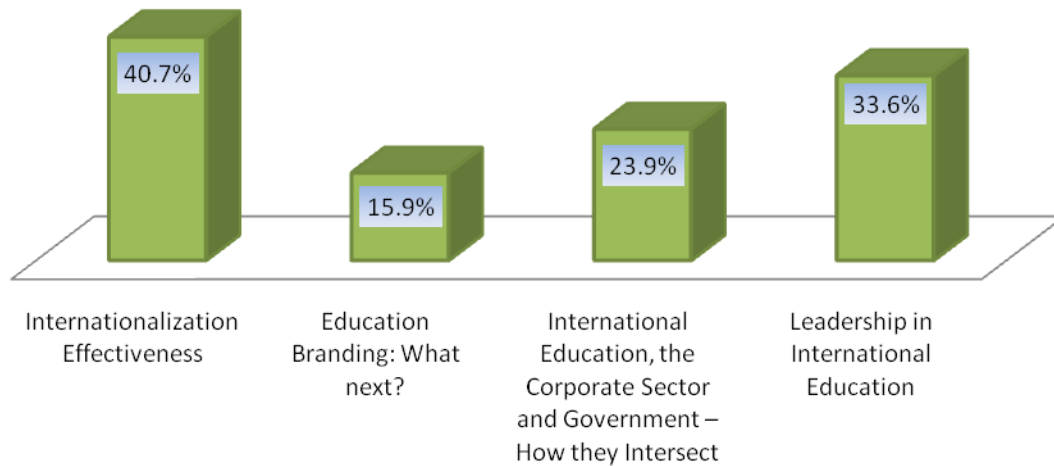
other conferences, including NAFSA (38%), CECN (13%), EAIE (10%), APAIE (8%), CONAHEC (3%), and CIEE, ACCC and BCCIE (all at 2%).

The membership views the conference as a very useful and successful endeavour with networking and professional development mentioned most often as the greatest benefit of attending. Other than indicating that they might send more people to the conference if it were held in their city, for the most part, respondents stated that the location was not a deterrent to their participation.

Most respondents were favorable to attending a Canadian international education conference outside Canada, provided that cost was not a factor. A number of respondents mentioned that a November conference was not the best time and that October would likely be more suitable.

Respondents did not, for the most part, make a connection between the conference theme and their reason for attending. The following graph shows respondents' choice for the 2009 theme selection.

## 2009 Conference Theme



### Research & Advocacy

Advocacy is viewed as a very important role played by CBIE and one where CBIE is a leader, particularly in the area of student visas, off-campus work permits, post-grad work permits and study permits.

On the question of research, the following were provided as suggestions:

1. CBIE and AUCC meet to plan what research should be carried out and who would be doing it.
2. Another respondent suggested that “CBIE’s website be updated to include study abroad data on institutional members, including colleges”.
3. Yet another respondent proposed that an “environmental scan of international education activities in Canada” should be done.

### Other Findings

This section offers responses that appeared sufficiently frequently to be considered typical. In general, they were suggested at least by 50% of members.

- Members are satisfied by the activities and services offered by CBIE, however they would like to see more promotion of Canadian education abroad.
- Members are unsure of their association with CBIE. Many are unsure if they are voting delegates, unsure of the full extent of services offered by CBIE, unsure of membership fees, and unsure of the activities CBIE engages in. A substantial number of members seem to be misinformed or uninformed (23%).
- The conference is important to most members, though some have difficulty working it into their schedule, and financial restrictions prevent some from fully participating or participating every year.
- Many see professional development as essential to their membership within CBIE. This is perhaps the reason the conference is seen by members as a great opportunity. They are happy with steps taken thus far to promote professional development; they would however like to take it a bit further.
- School boards and districts are not pleased with the services offered and feel they are not a target audience. They do not see which services may help their institution.
- Interaction with federal departments and agencies is a concern for members. They wish more could be done at the governmental level although they do appreciate the lobbying CBIE has done on their behalf.
- Members wish for an increase in interconnectivity between members and CBIE board/staff. It appears there is a disconnect between members of CBIE in the sense they do not interact with each other as members of CBIE. They look to CBIE to be a broker between members in certain respects.

## Concluding Remarks

The survey, which was designed to assess overall member satisfaction, provided some gratifying results but a number of warning signals also surfaced. There is a general consensus that CBIE is acting on behalf of the membership to the best of its ability but that more could or should be done, especially in the areas of professional development and promoting Canadian education abroad.

Professional development was mentioned numerous times as being one of the main benefits of membership. CBIE's professional development at this time primarily consists of workshops and sessions at the conference. Further research should be conducted to identify members' needs in professional development and a strategy to address these needs put in place. One respondent suggested that CBIE collaborate with Queen's University's International Educators Training Program (IETP) in implementing a national standardized certification training program for international educators.

School district members reported that their requirements differ from those of post-secondary members and that CBIE programs do not fully meet their needs. As of January 2009, there are 12 member school boards included in CBIE's membership. One respondent suggested that the school boards be called to attend a meeting where membership support would be discussed.

In advocacy, a respondent reminded us that CBIE started as an advocacy group for international students while a few other respondents stressed the need to promote to Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada the importance of financial support to market Canadian education.

*One respondent said, "My concern is that there are areas in which we seem helpless, especially having to do with immigration matters. I wish CBIE had greater influence on policies that have to do with study permits and visas. Especially, how study permits are granted in the Embassies abroad."*

The areas of scholarships, international development and service exports were addressed only briefly in this survey and should be the object of further scrutiny in the next member survey.