AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CANADA: A STUDY OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES

A Signature Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master of Business Administration Degree

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Abstract

This research project is an environmental scan of the programs designed to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada, with a particular focus on the Maritime Provinces. The economic importance of education is critical to a jurisdiction’s prosperity; not only on a financial level, but also on a social one. Numerous academic studies cite that of all investments, education provides returns far greater than most. A more educated society places fewer obligations on social services such as health, unemployment insurance, and welfare. The goal of this paper is to outline barriers that would prevent qualified, willing, and able students from attending post-secondary studies following a student’s successful completion of secondary education. University, college, and other vehicles of post-secondary training are not suitable for everyone. The objective of the paper is not to promote post-secondary education as the right option for everyone, but instead focus on identifying the hurdles and barriers of those who have a desire and ability to pursue post-secondary education in Canada. Once these barriers are identified, the purpose of this paper is to outline particular programs designed to service and support efforts to decrease, reduce, or eliminate the barriers identified. This research article contains detailed resources that exist in the form of programs to support potential students in efforts to obtain higher education, as well as a review of the gaps and opportunities that could exist from identified programs.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ideally, post-secondary education would be accessible to anyone who meets the requirements and wishes to pursue such a path (Finnie, 2012). The challenge of access does not exist when individuals lack desire or aspirations to attend post-secondary education. The challenge is when someone who does wish to pursue post-secondary education and cannot do so due to a barrier affecting access to post-secondary education.

The introduction starts with a background of the research found in the literature review. The background is made up of the following sections; importance of education, educations effect on employment, barriers to post-secondary education, skilled labour shortage, educational opportunities, and belief in education.

The subsequent sections delve into the intent of the research. This paper’s intention is to outline what programs exist to help youth in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education, how these programs compare, and what gaps may exist. The problem statement is a declaration of the challenges that exist within education and barriers to accessing post-secondary education. The purpose statement outlines intended accomplishments including the collection, comparison, and evaluation of programs designed to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Assumptions and limitations are stated near the end of the introduction and outline specific understood truths and particular areas of exclusion.
Background

Importance of Education

Higher education provides life experiences far beyond just intellectual knowledge. Individuals learn skills and gain knowledge that assists development of future career endeavors, as well as help cultivate Canada’s ability to compete in the global economy (Employment and Social Development Canada, n.d.). The choice to pursue higher education is an important decision that shapes one's future. Access, availability, and opportunity in this important life decision should not be limited by a myriad of barriers.

Most people understand the benefits of post-secondary education and are aware that the benefits typically out-weigh the costs (Finnie, 2012). Access and motivation to pursue post-secondary education are identified as challenges, as decisions regarding post-secondary education participation are sometimes engrained into children at a young age (Finnie & Mueller, 2008). Some people admit they always knew they were going to go to university or college (Finnie & Mueller, 2008). Parental influence and experience in schooling, both positive and negative, play a major role in developing a mindset towards pursuing or not pursuing post-secondary education (Finnie & Mueller, 2008). Students may be motivated in various ways to make the decisions regarding post-secondary education. The real challenge is not that everyone must (or should) attend post-secondary education in one form or another. The challenge exists if an individual has a desire to pursue post-secondary education and the talent to do so, no barrier of any type should stand in the way.
Educations Effect on Employment

From 1990 to 2010, the number of job opportunities for post-secondary education graduates more than doubled to 4.4 million (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011). During this same time period, job opportunities for individuals with high school diplomas (or less) decreased by 1.2 million (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011). A university education provides a social interaction level that builds a strong base for civic engagement in the future (Employment and Social Development Canada, n.d.). After the economic downturn of 2008, the less educated portion of the Canadian population struggled to find rewarding employment (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Further, unemployment rates of individuals with less than high school education were three times higher than those with a university education (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Job openings resulting from retirements and new job creation in the decade leading up to 2015 will require over 1.4 million university graduates and over two million college graduates (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Barriers to Post-Secondary Education

Research has been conducted on the topic of post-secondary education access. Some of the more noted authors have compiled lists of what each discovered as barriers to post-secondary education access. Finnie (2007) named high school grades, social/academic engagement, parental influences, family income, parents’ education, and standardized test scores as potential barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada. Research by Junor and Usher (2006) identified low family income as a barrier to accessing post-secondary education and student debt as a growing national concern. Christofides, Hoy,
and Yang (2006) outlined affordability, parents’ education, family income, government support, as well as return on investment as barriers to pursuing a university degree.

**Skilled-Labour Shortage**

Canada is headed towards a skilled labour shortage as the baby boomers generation retires (Papadopoulos, 2004). Canada has recognized the importance of a highly-skilled and highly educated workforce to compete with global economies. While this need for skilled labour had been understood, there remain hurdles to gaining access to post-secondary educational opportunities. Canada (much like the rest of the developed world) foresees an inability to keep pace with technology, leading to further suggestions that there may be an impending labour shortage in the years to come (Papadopoulos, 2004).

The way in which a country educates its youth has a powerful impact on economic prosperity. For decades, researchers have focused on the potential of open opportunity education and thus the removal of barriers that result in limited access to post-secondary education (Cukier, et al., 2008). Extreme growth in technology, coupled with growing demand for information technology components in every sector of business point toward a national skilled labour shortage in Canada and around the world (Cukier, et al., 2008). An educated and skilled work force can help to keep pace with an impending labour shortage and can open the doors of opportunity for higher education (Cukier, et al., 2008).
Educational Opportunities

Opportunity exists in the way of opening access to post-secondary education in Canada. Examples of best practices to helping access higher education can be investigated to make post-secondary education in Canada be open and not guarded by barriers. The ability to compile research towards overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education at the provincial level in the Maritime Provinces and across the country has value to mitigating the issue of barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Canada recognizes the opportunity to grow intellectually and innovatively if there is an increase in individuals pursuing and succeeding in post-secondary education.

Belief in Education

In 2003, a survey conducted by Statistics Canada found that 93% of parents believed their children would attend post-secondary education (Shipley, Ouellette, & Cartwright 2003). Canadians by and large believe post-secondary education will lead to higher wages, job security, and social stability (Vaccaro, 2012). The assured belief of parents, students, and the general public warrants the importance of this subject of overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education.

Problem Statement

A student’s family income, parents’ education level, and other socially related influences each play a role in access to post-secondary education (Christofides, Hoy, & Yang, 2009). Students are challenged with different factors that have potential to affect consideration and ultimately the decision of post-secondary educational studies. These
barriers have effects on the future considerations of Canada’s skilled labour requirements. The problem and effectively the opportunity is based around the idea that these barriers can be reduced, overcome, and eliminated by way of programs provided in Canada. Research on programs related to diminishing barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada is an opportunity that holds interest for many stakeholders (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011). To the author’s knowledge there is no repository of programs designed specifically to help students overcome barriers to post-secondary education in Canada’s Maritime Provinces.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research was to identify what programs exist to service and support youth overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick (Maritime Provinces) through an environmental scan. The scan found programs to service and support students in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education in the Maritime Provinces. The research of barriers found in the literature review paved the way for creating a repository of programs that worked to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Additionally, opportunities and gaps were outlined in detail as certain barriers may tend to be more aggressively targeted.

**Research Questions**

The intention of this research is to answer each of the following questions. The initial intent was the identification of programs that exist to service and support youth access to post-secondary education in Canada’s Maritime Provinces. Once the programs were
identified they were compared and contrasted to identify what barriers each program and service sets out to overcome. The last objective of this research was to outline gaps and opportunities that exist within current programs and what could be looked into for future research.

1. What programs exist to help potential youth in over-coming barriers to accessing post-secondary education?

2. How do existing programs in the Maritime Provinces compare with regards to over-coming barriers to accessing post-secondary education?

3. What gaps are there in existing programs that are designed to over-come barriers to accessing post-secondary education?

**Assumptions**

The assumptions are underlying elements assumed to be true for the purpose of a report (Creswell, 2002). Assumptions help guide the framework of this paper. The assumptions associated with this research are as follows:

- For the purposes of this report youth were individuals 29 years of age or under who were eligible based on age to attend post-secondary education, unless otherwise stated.
- The data collection was conducted in an unbiased manner.
• Program information collected from the programs website was assumed to be true and unbiased.
• The information gathered was the most current and relevant to the subject.

Limitations

Limitations are part of all studies and are important to recognize to outline parts of the research that although recognized are limited in one form or another (Creswell, 2002). Limitations for this study are listed as follows:

• The information researched related to barriers to post-secondary education is mainly that of Canadian content and statistics.
• Data was collected during the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014 and typically makes reference to information of years prior.
• The information regarding programs was restricted to publically available information directly affecting Maritime students.
• Post-secondary education encompasses any form of higher education following secondary schooling. For the sake of this paper mainstream universities and colleges were the focus and used for reference.

Nature of the Study

As described in the above sections the intention of this paper is to collect information on programs that exist to service and support students overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education. The nature of the study is to do an environmental scan of programs and services that exist in the Maritime Provinces. The goal of this paper was to collect
information specifically on programs that exist in the Maritime Provinces to service and support overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education.

The environmental scan was done through a search practice using key words that are detailed in the Methodology section of this paper. Using different combinations of key words captured different results and additional programs. These key words captured programs from many angles including government resources, educational institutions and charitable organizations. After the list of programs was collected, each was described including the programs purpose, objective, and intention. Additionally, any background information and contributions made was included in the descriptor.

The introduction provided a background to the subject of post-secondary education access for youth in Canada. Much of the information is the basis the literature review builds on. The problem and purpose statements set up the goals of this research. Following the outline of the assumptions and limitations, the nature of the study outlined the general methodology of the research. Further details can be found in the methodology section found in chapter three of this document, following the literature review which provides the foundation of the research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review is an account of the published academic research, government reports, and other related resources on the topic of barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada. The literature review is broken into four major sections; financial, socio economic, preparedness, and geographic each represents a grouping of barriers to accessing post-secondary education. The last section beyond the above mentioned four sections of the literature review talks in detail about the process for the collection of research related to programs that exist to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Information on how these programs operate and what research has been done to identify successes and learning opportunities. The objective was to identify key factors relating to barriers to accessing post-secondary education based on academic literature and other related resources. Further, the Maritime Provinces were highlighted in statistical data measured against Canadian averages and other provincial information. Government statistics highlighted key figures and were further supported by Statistics Canada.

The research process began with general searches using EBSCO Host and the utilization of ERIC and Academic Search Complete. Key search words included post-secondary, education, access, barriers, financial, economic, preparedness, geographic, Canada, provincial, federal, support, university, college, and motivation. Based on different combinations of key words numerous articles were found. Beyond the above listed search resources, similar searches were conducted using Google Scholar and general internet searches using Google. When searching for a particular subject with in barriers to access,
secondary words were used including: student loan, debt, distance, travel, online, parent income, parent education, achievement, language, and culture.

After the initial collection of data was complete, articles were cited and reviewed to organize information and subject matter of articles into sub-categories. Academic literature was balanced with supporting government or statistical data to compile information needed to summarize findings in each of the four major outlined sections of the literature review. The major sections of the literature review were identified through the consistency of mention within the literature. Financial barriers, geographic barriers, socio economic barriers, and preparedness barriers outline the sections of literature review. Throughout the research process, reference was made to the Maritime Provinces. Beyond the general collection and investigation of data, comparisons were made nationally and of other provinces to that of the Maritime Provinces showing contrasts, trends, and statistics.

Financial

The topic of attending post-secondary education often raises financial concerns among individuals who are considering the investment. Economists and policy makers spend significant amounts of time and money focused on the question of educational policy and spending (Finnie, 2007). Increases in costs of tuition negatively affect access to post-secondary education for students, in particular students for low-income families (Junor & Usher, 2006). Although government funding, student loans, and likewise programs have sought to make access to financial resources more available, there still remains the
burden of impending debt load and general debt aversion by some groups of people (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011). The financial section of this paper will touch on related subject areas including cost, tuition, funding, student loan, debt load, and debt aversion.

Cost

Before the mid-1990s, Canadian post-secondary education was relatively inexpensive as a percentage of the total cost of education (Finnie, 2007). Government cut-backs in funding for educational institutes forced colleges and universities in Canada to make up the difference in revenues through other forms, most notably tuition (Luong, 2010). Between 1989 and 2009, the average tuition fees for Canadian universities and colleges more than doubled as a percentage of total revenues (Luong, 2010). Additionally, government funding dropped from 72% to 55% (Luong, 2010). This change in revenue structure forced universities and colleges to raise tuition fees providing a larger financial barrier to accessing post-secondary education in Canada (Luong, 2010).

Tuition

Increases in the cost of tuition affect low-income families and can lead to fewer individuals obtaining higher learning through university education (Christofides, Hoy, & Yang, 2009). The choice to attend university is prompted by economic considerations regarding affordability (Christofides, Hoy, & Yang, 2009). University undergraduate tuition fees saw a 36.4% increase in Canada from 2000/01 to 2008/09 (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Prince Edward Island tuition increased by 28.9% from 2000/01 to 2008/09 (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Over the same time period, Nova Scotia increased 27.8% and New Brunswick at 55.5% which was only surpassed by British
Columbia’s tuition increase, which nearly doubled with a 93.8% increase (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

**Funding**

Almost paradoxically, government funding and contributions are noted as barriers in that these play a major role on the quality and accessibility to post-secondary education in Canada (Junor & Usher, 2006). Policy makers and political candidates who do not provide an education platform are not likely to be taken seriously (Junor & Usher, 2006). Loan programs provide positive opportunities with regards to access to funding for post-secondary education (Finnie, 2007; Luong, 2010; Vaccaro, 2012). Public pressure on the Canadian government makes the opportunity to increase funding for post-secondary institutions by way of tax increases very difficult (Junor & Usher, 2006). According to Junor and Usher (2006) regardless of what kind of grants, aid, or subsidies are available, access to post-secondary education will remain for the most part constant unless governments make changes to affect supply by increasing resources available to post-secondary education institutions.

**Student Loan**

The student loan system in Canada is a national organization that disperses federal funds, based on needs assessments conducted by the provincial government of each province (Finnie, 2002). Canada Student Loans Program was established in 1964 to supplement resources of individuals and families of students pursuing post-secondary education (Raaflabu, 2006). Government sponsored student loans are often the first choice of
funding for students pursuing post-secondary education without savings or other forms of funding available, largely due to the fact that interest on Canadian Student Loans does not accumulate until the student leaves school (Luong, 2010). Students are given nine and half years to repay student loans following a six month grace period after program completion (Raaflaub, 2006). Between 1995 and 2005, the percentage of students who needed to borrow money in one form or another increased from 49% to 57% (Luong, 2010).

Debt Load

Student debt is an important consideration around the discussion of affordability and access to post-secondary education (The Educational Policy Institute, 2008). How students manage debt following completion of post-secondary education affects the next generation of students through examples set both positively and negatively (The Educational Policy Institute, 2008). Luong (2008) stated that in 2005, Canada was graduating a higher percentage of students with student loans, and more of these students were graduating with larger debt loads then in years past. From 1995 to 2005, the amount of students graduating with student loans from both government and other sources of funding increased from 20% to 26% (Luong, 2010). Notably, the amount of Canadian students owing over $50,000 tripled to 6% in 2005 (Luong, 2010).

Debt Aversion

The issues of student debt and the fear of taking on excessive loans in order to provide a more opportunistic future is a barrier to a potential student (Finnie, 2002). Aversion to debt is not only felt by students of low-income families but of all those uneasy about the
costs of education (Statistics Canada, 2006). Borrowing for the sake of education is widely accepted as a lifetime investment (Luong, 2010).

**Socio Economic**

The second section of the literature review is related to socio economic barriers affecting post-secondary access. A positive influence towards education or likewise family influence can provide the much needed early exposure to the thought of attending post-secondary education. Early exposure to post-secondary education is positively related to future attendance (Finnie, 2012). One common consideration in the literature is parental education being linked to increased family income equates greater access to post-secondary education (The Educational Policy Institute, 2008). Parents who have obtained post-secondary education understand the value and have similar expectations for their own children, furthermore, higher educated parents are also more likely to have higher incomes, therefore the influence on their children is reflected accordingly (The Educational Policy Institute, 2008). The socio economic section focuses on three sections: family income, parents education, and language.

*Family Income*

Students of higher family incomes are 21% more likely to attend post-secondary education than students of low family incomes (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Students from low-income families are generally less engaged in post-secondary education both academically and socially (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Low family incomes present challenges to young people throughout elementary and secondary schooling such as an inability to afford tutoring, lack of access to technology, and less opportunities
compared to their peers (Vaccaro, 2012). Low family income has a negative effect on the equity of opportunity during secondary education (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). These same students are less likely to be involved in extracurricular activities or use support services and are generally less motivated overall (Engle & Tinto, 2008). In 2006, only 27.5% of students from family earnings less than $25,000 attended university in Canada, while 48.6% of students from family incomes of over $100,000 attended university from the same category (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Parents’ Education

Having at least one parent with a university degree increases the chances of participation at university by almost 30% (Finnie, 2007). Such influences can encourage students to pursue the appropriate grades and an applicable course schedule during secondary education that will facilitate post-secondary education entrance (Finnie, 2012). A student whose parents do not have post-secondary education face increased barriers by lacking an understanding of the preparation needed in entering post-secondary education and the process it involves (The Educational Policy Institute, 2008).

According to Finnie (2012), parental education is a stronger predictor of university attendance in Canada than family income. Importance is stressed on the early cognitive and behavioral influences that affect the rates of post-secondary education participation (Finnie & Mueller, 2008). The level of parents’ education plays a factor on motivation to participate and expectation to succeed in post-secondary education (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011). Only 17% of students attend post-secondary education with parents who have a
high school diploma or less, meanwhile 50% of students whose parents have graduated from university attend post-secondary education (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011). Motivation towards post-secondary education participation starts very early in life and if a student does not have parents with higher education, the motivation would otherwise have to come from another source (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011).

**Language**

English as a second language students emphasized how fear and anxiety were immediate challenges of post-secondary education (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Students who are not educated in English are most commonly evaluated in the form of standardized tests to determine proficiency (Cooke, 2011). While standardized testing is most common the tests used are not all comparable (Cooke, 2011). Provincial bodies and even individual schools have varying degrees of eligibility determinants (Cooke, 2011).

Students of different nationalities often face unfair prejudice and stereotyping due to their cultural and language barriers (Yakimchuk, 2010). Cultural and language differences are often mistaken for language related disabilities as the characteristics are comparable to those affected by learning disabilities and communication disorders (Yakimchuk, 2010). Language proficiency tests are designed to ensure students are adequately prepared to take on further academic challenges (Cooke, 2011). The age that a child is introduced to English as a second language has an effect on the potential of success, even when controlled by length of time spent and previous ability in first language (Murphy, D'Silva, & Gunderson, 2012).
Preparedness

The third section of the literature review looks at the subject of preparedness. Government organizations have gone to great lengths to help provide assistance to underprepared students with regards to post-secondary education access, including the aforementioned Canada Student Loans program, numerous bridge programs, and development courses to address shortcomings in preparation (Engle & Tinto, 2012). Students from low-income families are more likely to be under-prepared when starting post-secondary education (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). The preparedness section is broken into three sections including information, engagement, and achievement.

Information

One of the challenges faced by the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) is being able to provide educational information to all Canadians that are making decisions regarding the direction of a student’s further education. Without a clear understanding of post-secondary education options, students may not pursue post-secondary education or be at risk of making decisions that will limit their choices in the future (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010). Results from the Youth in Transition Survey showed that when first year students in the 18-20 year old cohort were asked if they had found the right program for them, 87% of eventual post-secondary education graduates answered 'yes', while 40.1% of eventual non-graduates of post-secondary education from the same cohort said 'yes' (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). Information and the ability to make a choice based on measured options can alleviate a barrier to post-secondary education.
Engagement

Student engagement in high school is positively correlated to university attendance, but not college attendance (Finnie, 2007). Self-efficacy (feeling competent or confident) is an important variable of engagement for students (Finnie, 2007). Students involved in learning communities were more academically and socially engaged in academics (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Attending class, completing assignments, and spending more time on homework all foster a more positively engaged student (Finnie, 2007). Students who chose to leave post-secondary education prior to graduating often cite lack of social and academic engagement during their first year (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002).

Achievement

A close relationship exists between university participation and an individual’s high school grades (Vaccaro, 2012). Finnie (2007) found that if a student’s grade average in high school were to increase by 10% the likelihood of attending university would increase by 21%. A combination of high grades across different subjects versus being strong in one or two areas yields a higher likelihood of attending post-secondary education (Finnie, 2007). Students who are taught the value of academic achievement early in life both academically and otherwise are ultimately more likely to attend post-secondary education (Finnie, 2012). Taking advanced classes and a more challenging high school schedule, in particular advanced math, increases the chances of attending post-secondary education (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Students with grade averages under 70% are less likely to attend post-secondary education compared to students who report grade averages over 70% (The Educational Policy Institute, 2008). Only 7% of students
who have either a mathematics or language grade in the 90-100th percentile do not attend some form of post-secondary education (Vaccaro, 2012).

Finnie (2007) stated that good work ethic is the simplest path to academic success beyond high school, and work ethic is highly correlated to students who have parents with post-secondary education. According to 12.8% of high school students who graduated but did not pursue post-secondary education one of the barriers to post-secondary education was not having high enough grades to gain access to the program of choice (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). Employers noted that grades achieved in high school provide some indication of skills and knowledge youth have acquired (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). Low grades achieved, lack of academic participation, and below level reading scores each have a correlation to decreased participation in post-secondary education (Finnie, 2007).

Geographic
The distance a student has to travel for post-secondary education, in particular university can play a major role on likelihood of attendance. Frenette (2006) determined that previous studies had not defined a particular distance in relation to appropriate proximity to post-secondary education. Frenette (2006) further defined that almost 20% of the Canadian population as a whole lived outside 80 km from the closest university, which was determined to be ‘beyond commuting distance for most’. The geographic section of the literature review will touch on geographic barriers related closely to post-secondary accessibility. This section is broken into three parts, actual distance from post-secondary...
institutions, the type of dwelling a student grew up in, and enrollment rates by province in relation to participation by capita.

**Distance**

In Canada, the percentage of the population that resides further than 80 km away from a university is 19.1% (Frenette, 2006). In Prince Edward Island, the percentage of the population that lived further than 80 km from a university is 13.7%, Nova Scotia 13.6%, and New Brunswick 19.8% (Frenette, 2006). A substantial variation exists between universities and colleges in Canada with respect to commuting distance. Students who live more than 80km away from a university are only 68% as likely to attend university, however, only 3% of the population in Canada live further than 80 km from a college (Frenette, 2004). Students who live closer to a university can cut costs by living at home. Universities also tend to cluster around major city centers (Frenette, 2006).

**Dwelling**

Students who live in urban dwellings attend university 45% of the time, while students from rural dwellings only attend university 34% of the time (Butlin, 1999). The added distance and additional expenditures reduce a potential students desire to enroll in university (Frenette, 2006). The Canadian student loan program looks to counter this potential barrier by providing additional funding for variables related to distance to post-secondary education and costs associated (Frenette, 2006). These additional loans add to cost and debt considerations of attending post-secondary education, especially for students of low income families (Frenette, 2006).
**Enrollment**

The province in which a student grows up in can have an influence on where and if a student pursues post-secondary education (Frenette, 2006). Nova Scotia students are most likely to attend university of all the provinces in Canada (Frenette, 2006). A large contributing factor is Nova Scotia has eight universities in a relatively small geographic area, which in turn leads to the highest enrollment rate per capita at 3.5% (Frenette, 2006). New Brunswick has a 2.5% enrollment rate per capita (Frenette, 2006). Alberta has the lowest enrollment per capita at 1.9%, followed by Prince Edward Island with 2.1% (Frenette, 2006). Although Prince Edward Island is a geographically smaller province, the province is reasonably well served with only one university as 86.3% of the population lives within 80 km of the University (Frenette, 2006).

**Programs**

Additionally, research was conducted by way of an environmental scan to examine programs that exist for the purpose of overcoming the barriers outlined in the literature review. Ogilvie and Eggleton (2011) noted that secondary students often have limited knowledge of such assistance programs available. This process involved the use of the search website Google to find programs that met the criteria that satisfied the objective of the scan. Key word searches using the names of provinces and institutions assisted in the collection process. Additional keywords such as bonds, loans, and grants outlined resources for overcoming the financial barrier, for example. Further detail is outlined in the methodology section of this paper.
The previous sections of the literature review were established because of the commonality of their coverage throughout the literature on barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Barriers defined by the review made up the background required to conduct further research with regards to programs that exist to overcome such challenges in accessing post-secondary education. Using the information from this chapter, the following chapters will delve into opportunities and further challenges that exist within Canada’s Maritime Provinces.

The search for academic research on the subject of programs that exist to service and support barriers to accessing post-secondary education utilized the following process; First, general searches were conducted on EBSCO Host’s Academic Search Complete using words such as programs, education, support, services, preparation, outreach, academic, post-secondary, students, college, university, and readiness. Second, the same searches were made using Google Scholar. The results found via Google Scholar were most beneficial. Lastly, an increased effort to find data with Canadian content was less successful. The content to follow consists mainly of sources referring to education in the United States. Research on programs in Canada is less apparent and if rich research exists the author was not able to identify it. Further the content presented from the United States perspective is seemingly relevant and comparable, from the perspective of the ability of programs to help prospective students overcome barriers. One noticeable difference is the United States refers to a four year college similar to the way Canada defines university. The terms pre-collegiate and post-secondary will be used interchangeably throughout the following section unless otherwise specifically differentiated.
Limited research was available on pre-collegiate preparation programs and less is known about which programs or program aspects best serve students in pursuing post-secondary education (Gullatt & Jan, 2003). Despite increased enrollments, gaps exist in who enters post-secondary education (Swail & Perna, 2002). According to Gullatt and Jan (2003), researchers and practitioners often agree that preparation programs help elevate student desires and increase exposure to the rigors of post-secondary education at an early age. Research by Coleman (2011) outlined the success of outreach programs and their positive impact particularly on students of low income families in improving the likelihood of attending post-secondary education. A study found that the grade point average of students involved in pre-collegiate preparation programs was 3.31, where the entire sample grade point average was 2.76 (Coleman, 2011).

A focus of policy makers is to look at programs designed to supplement school based learning (Swail & Perna, 2002). Pre-collegiate preparation programs provide the most consistent form or academic support for the educationally disadvantaged (Gullatt & Jan, 2003). Likewise, programs designed to assist in preparation efforts are increasingly focused on creating a college going culture (Gullatt & Jan, 2003).

Family involvement and the presence of role models were recognized as a critical factor in the decision of whether or not a student pursues post-secondary education (Gullatt & Jan, 2003). Role models are typically found in effective post-secondary preparation programs (Gullatt & Jan, 2003). The level of parent involvement can vary, and some
programs include parent involvement as a requirement (Swail & Perna, 2002). One continuous barrier to post-secondary access is lack of program information available for both students and parents (Coleman, 2011). Providing parents with information on high school course requirements and information related to post-secondary education increase the chances of a student pursuing college or university. This is particularly true when parents do not hold any form of post-secondary education on their own (Coleman, 2011).

The focus of many policy makers has been narrow in that they are mainly concerned with providing financial aid to those who need it to attend post-secondary education, although merely making financial resources available does not ensure equal access for all students (Swail & Perna, 2002). Beneficial programs that are specifically designed to increase access to post-secondary education do so by way improvements in academic, social, and cultural challenges (Coleman, 2011). Programs of educational preparation most often succeed if high standards are set for participants, programs, staff, and structure (Gullatt & Jan, 2003).

Swail and Perna (2002) note that more attention needs to be focused on preparation related to academics, social needs, and psychological challenges to prepare students for post-secondary education. Personalized attention, understanding students’ unique challenges, sensitivity to cultural backgrounds, educational mentoring, and other forms of support all increase the odds of a student pursuing post-secondary education (Gullatt & Jan, 2003). Many programs promote the use of peer support groups as an effective contributor to increased student achievement (Gullatt & Jan, 2003).
This section discussed research related to programs that exist to service and support students in pursuing post-secondary education. A common theme is early intervention helps increase the chances of successfully enrolling in post-secondary education (Gullatt & Jan, 2003). Participating in any type of outreach or assistance program in high school nearly doubles the odds of ‘at risk’ students gaining access to post-secondary education (Coleman, 2011). Continued gaps in post-secondary enrollment despite significant dedication of resources suggests a more comprehensive approach to programs designed to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education (Swial & Perna).
Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology describes in detail how data and information was collected for the purposes of this paper. The objective of this research was to create a repository of programs that looked to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada’s Maritime Provinces. Research was conducted in the context of an environmental scan. Programs were then compared and contrasted to identify similarities, differences, and opportunities. The final component of this research beyond collection and comparisons of programs found to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education was to outline gaps and opportunities for interested stakeholders and future research.

Data Collection

The search process was limited to what programs existed in the Maritimes or in some way benefited the youth who resided in one or more of the three Provinces. Any program in the Maritimes designed to help individuals overcome barriers to post-secondary education was considered. Many of the helpful resources related to programs were found within government and educational institution websites. Using the search engine Google, key words including education, barrier, access, transition, university, college, post-secondary, scholarship, bursary, bond, funding, loan, preparation, student loan, assistance, and higher education identified several programs of note. Searches using each of the three province names helped narrow the finding to specifically Maritime programs. School names of all the mainstream colleges (Appendix A) and universities (Appendix B) in the Maritimes assisted to further source programs. Many of the key search word
combinations found government websites such as Service Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

*Data Analysis*

The environmental scan identified 21 programs that met the criteria of the search. Of the identified programs each was compared with regards to overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Criteria included physical location, organization goals, and provinces serviced. Additionally programs were measured for effectiveness based on any noted results or accomplishments. Finally and most importantly was the objective of each program or service and to what barrier or barriers each worked to overcome.

The programs that met the criteria are listed in the results and findings section of this document. Included is a description of some of the details of each program and service. After the programs were outlined, they were evaluated for what gaps existed within the identified programs and what opportunities existed for overcoming additional barriers to accessing post-secondary education.

The location of the program was considered and noted if a location or benefit could be found in the Maritime Provinces. Some programs that were listed may not exist in the Maritime Provinces but never the less provide a service to the Maritime region. Programs were organized and identified to what barriers each set to overcome and noted any results or progress since each program’s inception. Information was gathered from each
identified programs website or corresponding website that listed a program’s features and information.

**Common Terms**

Some of the common terms that were used in this paper are listed and defined below:

*Barrier*: a reason in which a student does not have access to post-secondary education or makes a decision not to pursue post-secondary education.

*Student loan*: unless otherwise stated, refers to the Canadian Student Loan Program.

*Post-secondary education*: education received beyond high school (ie. college, university, or trade schooling).

*Access*: the acceptance, participation and enrollment into a post-secondary educational institution.

*Participation*: the act of enrolling and attendance in a post-secondary education institution.

*Programs*: for the sake this paper, programs are resources, organizations, initiatives, or organizations that work towards overcoming barriers to post-secondary education in some form.

Through the steps detailed in the methodology the step by step process involved in this research is outlined. The design of program searches, collection of data, and analysis of data. The goal of chapter three is to outline in detail the process used in chapter four. Future research can be modelled off of this design and should achieve similar results.
Chapter 4: Results/Findings

The purpose of this research was to find what programs exist to service and support youth in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education in the Maritime Provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick). Information was collected through the use of an environmental scan. The information was gathered on existing programs that in some form aimed to service and support one or more barriers to accessing post-secondary education in the three Maritime Provinces. Programs were measured and organized to identify what barrier(s) each addressed. The goals and objectives of each program were also listed.

The list of programs outlined were collected on the basis that they existed to meet one or more of the four types of barriers outlined within the literature review. A summary of all the programs and the barriers in which they identify is found in Table 1. Additionally, each program or service had to have a physical location in one or more of the Maritime Provinces or otherwise make a noted impact on the Maritime Provinces with regards to overcoming one or more barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Each program is supplemented with a description of objectives, attributes, and features. Additionally, barriers in which each program looks to overcome are noted under each description.

Research Question 1: What programs exist to help potential youth in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education?

Transition Program – University of Prince Edward Island
The objective of the Transition Program at the University of Prince Edward Island is to provide guidance including academic and peer support to new or returning students in overcoming barriers related preparedness. Established in 2003, the program is designed to ensure students get their university careers off to the best start possible. Through this program, students acquire the necessary skills and attitudes towards education and pursuit of knowledge that foster lifelong learners. This program also acts a step stone into further academic studies.

Barrier(s): Preparedness, Socio Economic

**Transition Year Program – Dalhousie University**

The objective of the Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia is to increase access to the university and successful participation by students. This program was established in 1970, as part of the Dalhousie University College of Continuing Education. The program works in helping to achieve campus diversity and leads students into credit study programs. The course work includes subject areas such as self-management, math strategies, textbook learning, exam preparation, paper writing, and study habits.

Barrier(s): Preparedness, Socio Economic, Financial

**Transitions Program – Holland College**

The objective of the Transitions Program at Holland College, Charlottetown and Summerside, Prince Edward Island is to provide Island students the opportunity to make informed decisions regarding post-secondary education options. The Transitions Program at Holland College is student centered, activity based learning for high school students
who may be disengaged in secondary schooling. The goal is to build student confidence and preparedness for post-secondary education. The program partners with island schools and as of 2014 served approximately 80 students.

Barrier(s): Preparedness, Socio Economic

_Making the Transition – St. Mary’s University_

The objective of the Making the Transition booklet provided by St. Mary’s University is to outline some of the changes and challenges that a student may experience at university. The booklet itself is written as a parents’ guide stressing the importance of parental influence on a student post-secondary journey. The 16 page booklet offers tips on how to support a parents’ first year student through first year of study. The booklet outlines some potential challenges students may face similar to barriers discussed throughout this paper. Information on environment, class sizes, and learning strategies are included in the booklet. Although this booklet is given to students who are often already accepted to university the content is similar to challenges and barriers identified through barriers to access and can be used as a guide to overcome such barriers.

Barrier(s): Preparedness

_Zero Interest Provincial Student Loan – Prince Edward Island_

On October 1st 2012, Premier Robert Ghiz announced that all provincial student loans issued after Jan 1st 2001 would have a zero percent interest rate. The loans are held by Prince Edward Island Student Financial Assistance Corporation. The cost of the program to the province totals approximately $500,000 per year. Approximately 2600 students
benefit from the program. An average student’s savings in their first year of repayment would be $1000.

Barrier(s): Financial

*University College Entrance Preparation Program – Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada*

The objective of the University College Entrance Preparation Program is to provide financial assistance to status Indian and Inuit students enrolled in university or college entrance programs to help students achieve the academic level required to enter degree or diploma programs. Supports include tuition fees, travel costs, and living expenses. This Government of Canada program provides further relief to barriers which the aforementioned transition programs looked to overcome.

Barrier(s): Financial, Geographic, Preparedness

*Pathways to Education – Halifax Spryfield*

The objective of Pathways to Education is to help youth in low-income communities finish high school and make the transition into post-secondary education. The program addresses barriers to education by providing leadership, expertise, and community based programs. The Pathways programs provide academic, financial, and social supports to youth. Established in 2001, the results of this program have reduced high school dropouts by as much as 70% and increased the post-secondary attendance rate by up to 300%.

Barrier(s): Preparedness, Financial, Socio Economic,
Post-Secondary Student Support Program – Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

The objective of Post-Secondary Student Support Program is to provide financial assistance to status Indian and Inuit students enrolled in eligible post-secondary educational programs. Students who are registered status Indians (residing on or off reserve) who have been living in Canada for the 12 months prior to applying for funding are eligible. Supports include tuition fees, travel costs, and living expenses.

Barrier(s): Financial, Geographic, Socio Economic

Island Student Award - Prince Edward Island Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning

This award is available to eligible full-time Prince Edward Island students enrolled at University of Prince Edward Island and Maritime Christian College. The awards and bursaries offered by the Government of Prince Edward Island do not require application. The award is conditionally placed on a student’s account in January of a students’ first year.

Barrier(s): Financial

Island Skills Award - Prince Edward Island Department of Innovation and Advanced

This award is available to eligible full-time Prince Edward Island students enrolled at Holland College or College Acadie I.-P-E. The awards and bursaries offered by the Government of Prince Edward Island do not require application. The award is conditionally placed on a student’s account in January of their first year.
Barrier(s): Financial

**George Coles Bursary - Prince Edward Island Department of Innovation and Advanced**

This bursary is valued at up to $2,200 and is provided by the Government of Prince Edward Island to first time, first year student residents of Prince Edward Island who are enrolled full-time at the University of Prince Edward Island, Holland College, College Acadie I.-P.-E., or the Maritime Christian College. The award does not require application and is applied to eligible student’s school accounts in January of their first year.

Barrier(s): Financial

**Registered Education Savings Plan**

This program is an educational savings tool that provides a tax-sheltered education savings with a contribution limit of $50,000 per beneficiary. The plan was established by the Government of Canada in 1972 to encourage family savings for children’s education.

Barrier(s): Financial

**Canada Education Savings Grant**

This program was started in 1998 to provide a matching incentive of 20%, to a maximum grant of $7,200 per beneficiary to motivate parents to make stronger contributions. In 2004, and additional grant was set up for low-income families. An additional 20% in matching incentive up to 40% total, up to $7,200 per beneficiary. Encouraging greater use of the Register Education Savings Plan
Barrier(s): Financial

*Smart Saver – www.smartsaver.org*

This is a non-profit organization that helps families learn how to start Registered Education Savings Plans and how to get Government money for their children’s education after high school. The program is based out of Toronto, Canada, but the information is relative to any Canadian family. The website stresses the assistance is there but too often is not taken advantage of for various reasons including simply not knowing of its existence. This resource is provided in 14 languages and outlines funding opportunities and how to take full advantage of these programs to best serve your family’s educational goals.

Barrier(s): Financial

*Canada Learning Bond*

This bond represents the Government of Canada’s contribution towards opening a Registered Educational Savings Plan for a child. The government deposits and initial $500 at the start of the plan and up to a possible total of $2000 by the time the child is 15 years old. To be eligible for this bond the child’s family is receiving the National Child Benefit Supplement. The above government funding is available even if no actual contribution is made by the family, only that the savings plan is opened.

Barrier(s): Financial

*Grant for Students with Dependents – Service Canada*
This grant program by Service Canada provides financial assistance to students with dependent children less than 12 years of age.

Barrier(s): Financial, Socio Economic, Cultural

Grant for Students from Low-Income Families – Service Canada

This grant program provides financial assistance in the form of a grant for students of low-income families attending post-secondary education. The grant provides $250 per month of study. The grant is available for each year of the undergraduate studies as long as the individual continues to qualify.

Barrier(s): Financial, Socio Economic

New Brunswick Tuition Rebate

Anyone who on or after January 1, 2005, pays tuition, graduates from an eligible post-secondary institution, lives and works in New Brunswick and pays New Brunswick personal income tax, is eligible for a non-taxable rebate of 50% of a student’s tuition costs with a maximum lifetime rebate of $20,000.

Barrier(s): Financial

College Foundation – Holland College

The objective of this program is to prepare students for future post-secondary studies. Unlike most college programs that prepare a student for an industry or specific type of job this program gives the opportunity to build essential skills and explore career opportunities. The program is designed with eight core courses and two electives where
the student may choose from a list of courses from a variety of diploma programs offered at the college. The program suits individuals that are unsure of career choices, do not possess the grades necessary for career choice, or require higher marks in core subjects. The benefit from a prep year buildings skills, having experiences, and participating in a post-secondary environment are beneficial in working to overcome barriers to post-secondary education.

Barrier(s): Preparedness

*Foundation Year Programme – King’s College*

The object of the program is to provide exposure, engagement, and exploration through a one year academic preparation program. Designed for students striving to improve writing, reading, and build intellectual dialogue. The program is equivalent to four full year courses, eight of ten typical first year credits. Foundation year provides a solid foundation for a smooth transition to upper year studies. The highly coordinated curriculum includes support tutors to encourage and assist students.

Barrier(s): Preparedness

*University Preparation Courses – Dalhousie University*

The objectives of the university preparation courses at Dalhousie are to provide a solid foundation in a subject before going to university. Preparation courses are non-credit and demand regular attendance and have homework requirements similar to actual university courses. Preparation for university life and increased academic abilities learned in a university environment. The program provides opportunity to obtain familiarity with
university level expectations and campus life. The benefits of Dalhousie’s university preparatory programs allow students to alleviate anxiety towards preparedness, cultural, and financial barriers.

Barrier(s): Preparedness, Financial

Canada Student Loans Program

The Canada Student Loans Program provides loans for financial assistance for post-secondary students who demonstrate financial need. Need requirements include tuition, books, travel, relocation, and general living expenses.

Barrier(s): Financial, Socio Economic, Geographic

Transition to UNB Parent/Student Evenings – University of New Brunswick

The transition to University of New Brunswick information evenings are designed to ease the transition from high school to university. The objective of the program is to overcome challenges related to preparation and information. The sessions are open to anyone who wishes to attend free of charge and includes opportunities for campus tours, to meet faculty, and have questions answered concerning the programs a student may wish to pursue.

Research Question 2: How do existing programs in the Maritime Provinces compare with regards to overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education?
The environmental scan identified 21 programs found in some way to have a benefit for student youth of the Maritime Provinces with regards to overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education (Table 1). Financial and preparedness tended to be the barriers best serviced in the Maritime Provinces. Of the 21 programs, 14 are recognized to challenge the financial barrier. The preparedness barrier is an objective of nine of the 21 programs identified. Six programs where noted to help diminish the socio economic barrier and the Canada Student Loans Program adds additional support for relocation found under the geographic barrier. The identified programs work towards solving multiple barriers within their objectives. Each of the programs identified had some connection to government in being a government initiated, government funded, or government supported.

Preparation and transition programs closely target the objective of overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Programs with preparation as one of their key objectives more often aimed to overcome more than just one barrier. In contrast many of the programs that served assistance with financial barriers did not provide any addition benefits. Alleviating costs associated is the practice in which is most easily measured. A reduction in cost can accurately measure the cash value of the savings. Although as stated throughout the research cost of post-secondary education alone is not the only factor affecting post-secondary access.

*Table 1*
Research Question 3: What gaps are there in existing programs that are designed to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education?

This collection of programs outlines resources that students and parents should be aware of when considering the decision regarding post-secondary education. There exists an opportunity to ease not only the financial costs of the investment to pursue post-secondary education, but further some of the less tangible factors like language, engagement, and distance to name a few. Important to note is the resources that can be found within an educational institutions website are quite often very beneficial. Government organizations similar to educational institutions also offer numerous resources.
resources and forms of assistance. Programs were broken down into three types of programs based on their business type. Table 2 illustrates the program types.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF PROGRAM</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-Profit</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over one third of the programs recognized in the environmental scan were from university and college websites and resources. Many of these programs are in place to encourage students to pursue post-secondary education following high school. It is often in a school’s best interest to draw potential students to their institution, but with that in mind, some of the resources listed on each of these mainstream post-secondary institution websites are of great value. The understanding that some of information is available can help a student make a more informed decision and negate some barriers to accessing post-secondary education by using these resources among others.

Chapter four presented the results of the analysis guided by the three research questions outlined in the introduction. A description of each program identified was listed.
Interpretation of the results is found in chapter five which focuses on the findings based around each of the research questions.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusions and recommendations of this paper arise from the interpretation of the results found in chapter four. Interpretations are based on the ability of existing programs to service and support students in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education in the Maritime Provinces. Government, at both the federal and provincial level, recognizes the importance of education and the benefit to society. A more educated society relies less on support services. Therefore, the investment in education that leads to a better quality of life offers return, as educated citizens more often become tax-payers and are less likely to rely on society (Ogilvie & Eggleton, 2011).

The Maritime Provinces are reasonably served with programs to overcome most of the outlined barriers. Prince Edward Island has provincial interest free student loans, transition and foundation programs, and a collection of bursaries and awards to which the majority of students are eligible. New Brunswick supports students with a tuition rebate program and transition to university information sessions for both students and parents. Nova Scotia has the sole Maritime location of the exciting Pathways to Education program. Nova Scotia also has a transition year program and a detailed making the transition information guide that each help alleviate barriers to post-secondary education.

The programs are often products of the university and college institutions themselves who see the value in further preparation, training, and information. Educational institutions can help a student make an informed decision of what path to pursue. Programs such as registered education savings plans, education savings grants, and
learning bonds all assist in the improved access to post-secondary education. The only program listed that is seldom utilized in the Maritime Provinces was the Smart Saver program based out of Toronto. However, since the website contains very useful information for students and, in particular, parents, it was considered as a valuable resource to Maritime students.

Many of the programs mentioned throughout the results and finding sections were not easy to find or identify. Comparatively the educational institutional information and websites were not always straightforward for an individual not yet affiliated with the school or institution. An opportunity that exists is to further compile information under this same subject of programs that exist to help potential youth in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education in one location. This may be best as an informative website, but most likely multiple forms of media could be used. This initiative much like the programs mentioned in this paper would require support from government and effective management to remain accurate and relevant.

Opportunity exists with regards to geographic barriers such as distance and dwelling. By averaging the Maritime Provinces 15.7% of the population live outside 80 km from the closest university (Frenette, 2006). Frenette (2006) stated that the importance of university proximity as university graduates tend to earn more than graduates with lower levels of post-secondary education. Canada Student Loans program recognized the geographic barrier and has some supports in place to help overcome its challenges.
The scope of this subject was vast and in an effort to stay specifically on the task of identifying programs that exist to help youth overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada, and more specifically the Maritime Provinces, some potential subjects considered for inclusion were left out. Two subjects in particular that could build on this paper through future research would be barriers related to ability/disability and challenges faced by aboriginals, first nations, Inuit peoples. The subject of disability and ability is rich in quality research and overcoming barriers related to post-secondary education access for this group of people would be of particular interest to many. Aboriginals, first nations, and Inuit peoples face many of the same barriers recognized in this paper. This being part of the reason for aboriginal, first nations, and Inuit people’s exclusion, although in some cases these same barriers are more extreme than that of the general population.

Based on the results found in this paper there is an opportunity for research towards overcoming geographical barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Beyond the additional funds available through the Canada Student Loans program, little was found to overcome this distinct barrier. Additional programs to support youth challenged with the geographic barrier could have very positive benefits. In particular for Aboriginals, first nations, and Inuit populations who more often live in northern parts of Canada and face more extreme geographical challenges.
Recommendation 1: Continued government research in the area of geographic supports for students who face this less served barrier. In particular for students who live outside commuting distance to the closest university would benefit.

Further research could be conducted on the barriers to accessing post-secondary education within other regions of Canada. The Maritime Provinces are smaller in physical size and allow for closer connection and collaboration on certain programs. Distance and other geographical factors may be more extreme in other parts of Canada where the population is larger. As well poverty rates in different provinces and large cities could play a factor in how extreme a barrier is.

Recommendation 2: Continued research similar to that of this paper in different regions of Canada. This continued research has opportunities that could more accurately identify barriers and what programs exist to overcome challenges.

Some of the stakeholders who would find this research most beneficial would be parents, teachers, and school administrators. In particular the socio economic factors that can begin to affect access to post-secondary education at primary and elementary levels though cultural considerations as simple as motivation, desire, and understanding. Youth have many reasons to attend or not to attend post-secondary education. The desire of this author is that a student who has the capability, requirements, and desire should not be affected by any of the barriers outlined in this document.
Recommendation 3: Development of an organization to be the host for programs and services designed to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education. A website would as first seem most practical, but various types of media can add to such an organization's value.

Recommendation 4: Utilizing the most current social media mediums to promote programs that are designed to overcome barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Building on recommendation 3 videos, photos, and literature are each important forms of media.

Recommendation 5: Each of these recommendations has a connection to each other as they all look towards the same goals. Any form of communication improvement helps the cause. The fifth recommendation is to create a blog where all stakeholders alike can share information related to the subject of post-secondary education access.

The continued identification, introduction, and implementation of the programs like the ones recognized in this paper and similar ventures serve not only the parents and students that enroll, participate, and benefit but further the Canadian society. The intended importance of this paper was to recognize the programs that look to service and support students in overcoming barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada’s Maritime Provinces, the continued pursuit of such programs is for the better of all Canada’s citizens.
Works Cited


Shortage in the Canadian Information and Communications Technology Sector A Critical Interrogation of Discourse_2009.pdf


Appendix A: Association of Canadian Community Colleges

New Brunswick

New Brunswick College of Craft and Design
New Brunswick Community College
College communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick

Nova Scotia

Universite Sainte-Anne – College de l’Acadie
Canadian Coast Guard College
Dalhousie Agricultural Campus of Dalhousie University
Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Cape Breton University

Prince Edward Island

Holland College
College Acadie I-P-E

Appendix B: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

New Brunswick

Mount Allison
St. Thomas
Universite de Moncton
University of New Brunswick

Nova Scotia
Acadia
Cape Breton
Dalhousie
Mount Saint Vincent
Nova Scotia Community College
Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
St. Mary's
St. Xavier
Universite Sainte-Anne
University of Kings College

Prince Edward Island
University of Prince Edward Island