

Diversity at Centennial

By Dr. Eva Aboagye

Centennial Student Population¹

At Centennial College you enter a world of true diversity, a campus that is bustling with a rich blend of people from all corners of the globe. The Institute will enable the College to utilize the diversity that exists throughout the College in ways that enhance and support learning for all members of the College Community. A visitor to the campus will see a student population that is made up of a slightly higher proportion of female, and more than a third come from backgrounds with a first language that is neither English nor French.

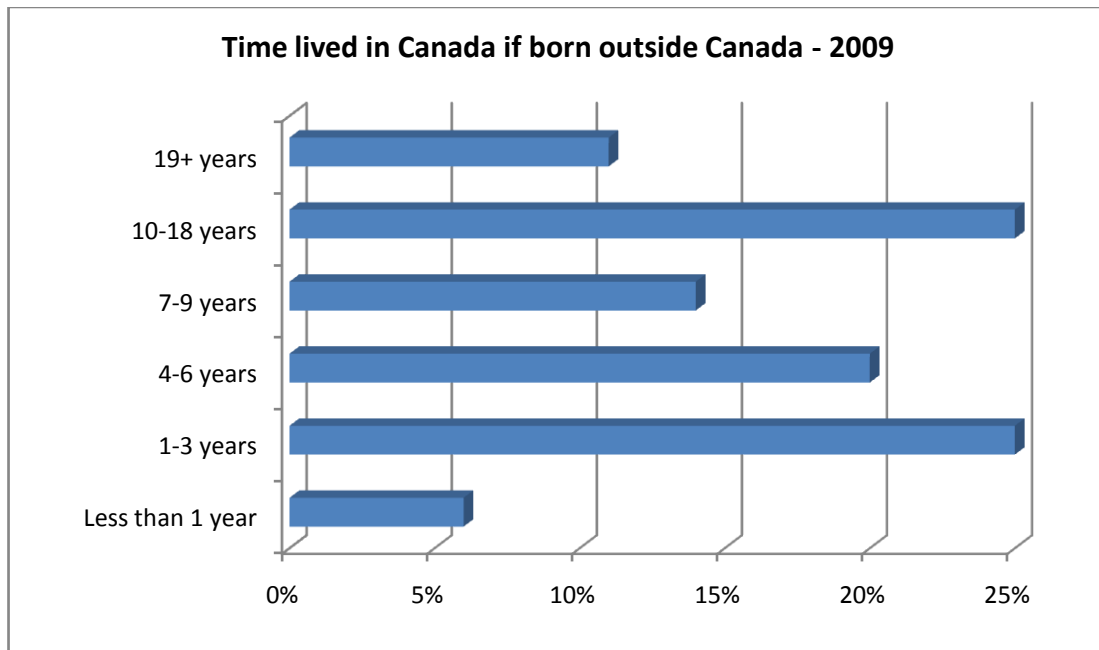
The rich diversity of cultures at the College make the learning experience a truly special one. About a quarter of the student population describe themselves as Canadian, while a fifth describe themselves as South Asian and a similar proportion as Chinese. A tenth of the population describe themselves as Caribbean. Also present at the College are students from countries on all of the continents including Latin and South America, Middle East; North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa; Europe; and South East Asia, Eastern Europe and Asia.

For example in 2007, the place of birth for first year students who enrolled at the College were from 92 countries from all around the world. The places of birth listed were Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbados, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, South Korea, Lebanon, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestinian Territory, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Republic of Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

¹ Student Satisfaction Survey 2009

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There is also a high proportion of immigrant students (new and old) at the College. More than half of the student population was born outside Canada and of those born outside Canada, about a third had been in Canada for three years or less as shown in the table below.

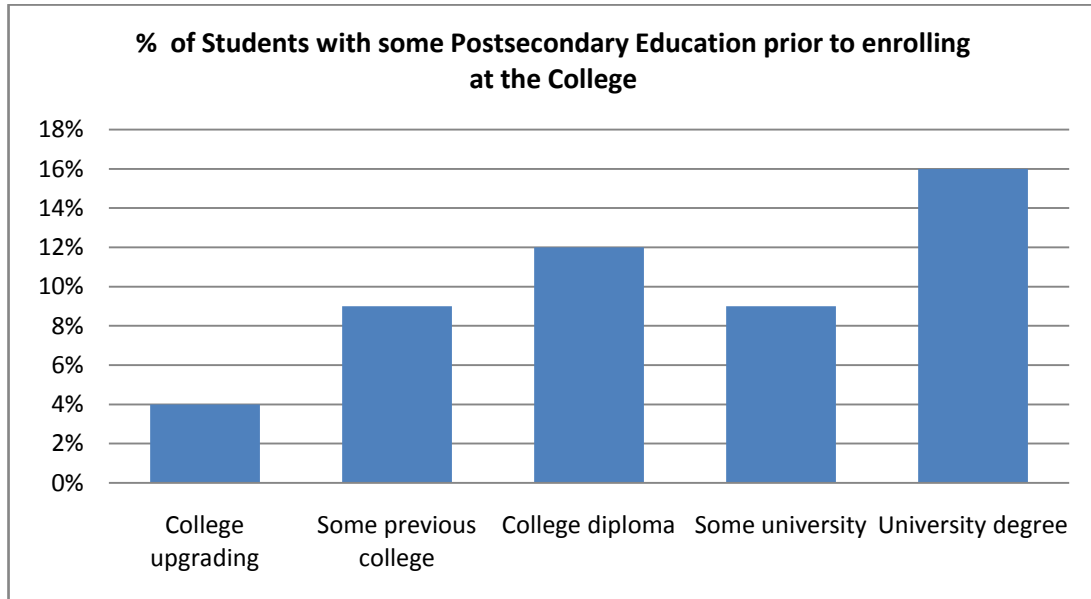


For a number of our immigrant students, programs like our fast track programs, bridging programs and the language supports are extremely important for a smooth transition to the Canadian labour market.

There is also a rich diversity of educational backgrounds in the classrooms at the College. We value the educational and life experiences our students bring with them and encourage the sharing of those experiences as part of our learning environment.

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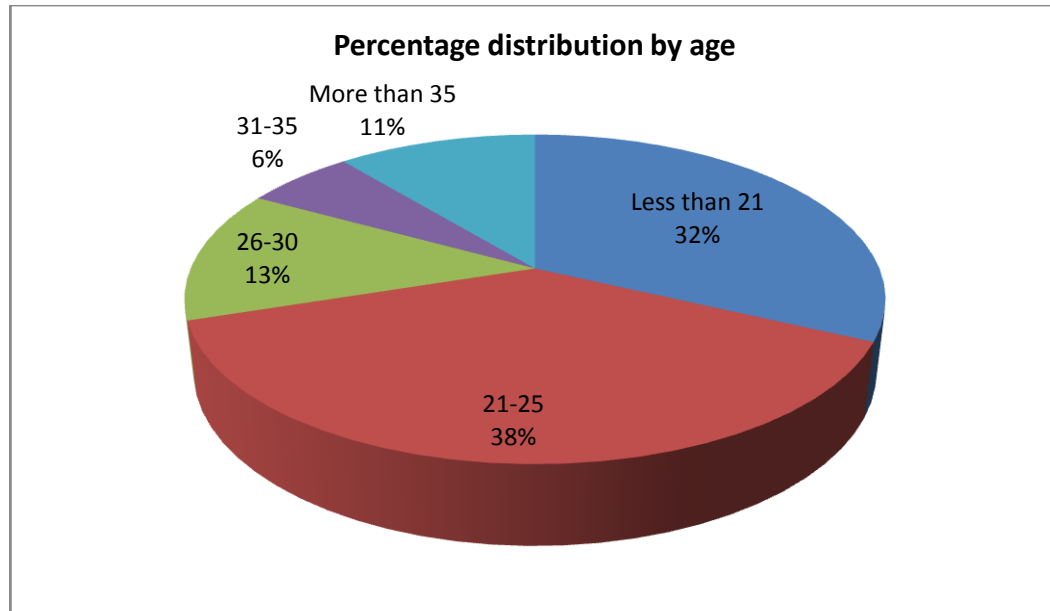
As illustrated below 16% of our students already have a university degree and have come to us to acquire some specialized skills to assist them in the work place.



We are also aware (see chart on the next page) that approximately three quarters of our student body are mature students with responsibilities and for some of them, they may be coming back to school after a long time off. In order to ensure success for everyone we have in place supports that assist with the transitional period.

In addition, there are a host of special programs including the Second Careers program, the Helping Youth access Postsecondary Education (HYPE) program and a number of continuing education programs for people who are working and cannot attend full-time.

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Centennial College values this rich diversity covering ethnicity, age, gender, place of birth, and educational background. The College is able to tap into resources available internally within our classrooms to enrich the learning experiences of students and to enhance the sharing of knowledge amongst students.

