

The Canadian View of the Future of Higher Education in Graphic Communications

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The logo for Ryerson University, featuring the text "RYERSON UNIVERSITY" in white, uppercase letters on a blue rectangular background. To the right of the blue rectangle is a vertical yellow bar.

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Everyone Makes a Mark

Main Points

- Overview of graphic education in Canada
- How do Canadian institutions approach graphic education?
- Challenges faced by institutions
- Matching graduate skills to labour market needs
- The Future

Overview of Higher Education in Canada

- Publically funded by provinces, sometimes with additional support for (re)training of workers
- Industry support remains important, especially through investment in technology, but there are some challenges
- Programs in universities and colleges are changing
 - Certificate programs (4-10 months) (NorQuest College, Winnipeg Technical College)
 - Diploma programs (2-3 years) (BCIT, Alberta Institutes of Technology, Algonquin College, Ahuntsic College, CEGEP Beauce-Appalaches, Nova Scotia Community College, College of the North Atlantic)
 - Degree program (4 years) (Ryerson University)
- Programs for adult learning or industry training

Approaches to Graphic Education

- Focus on technology and management of graphic companies
- Changes in technology: some programs are changing from a traditional offset-centric focus:
 - Changes in prepress technologies
 - Digital plus offset, some consideration of wide-format digital
 - Greater inclusion of flexo prepress and printing
 - Increasing importance and sophistication of packaging
 - Strengthening management of graphic companies with inclusion of current management philosophies, including lean manufacturing, six-sigma, JDF automation

Approaches to Graphic Education

- Connection with industry remains quite good, as are employment opportunities for graduates
- Some college programs are switching to shorter, more intensive programs consistent with college mandate to help train new workers for industry
- There appears to be both opportunity and demand to provide training for industry, but there are challenges in doing so
- Some areas for future work:
 - Articulation from college to university programs
 - Accreditation (eg. CPISC, ACCGC)

Challenges

- Geography: Canada is a very large country, adjacent to the major USA market
 - Company decisions are made at Canadian or USA head offices
 - Regional sales offices are limited in the support they can provide
 - R&D is mostly done at USA locations
- A national strategy for graphic education does not exist
 - Education is a responsibility of provinces with differing regulations, funding, priorities, and educational systems
 - Programs are generally small and geographically diverse; learners have limited geographic mobility
 - CPISC has brought together most institutions for the first time only a few short years ago

Challenges

- Resources
 - Challenging economic environment, with more company decisions made centrally, affecting provision of equipment and material support
 - Budgets from governments are also constrained
- Attracting motivated, knowledgeable students, especially in certain geographic areas
 - There has been some contraction of programs, especially those at the college level
 - Awareness and appeal of graphic industry is poor among secondary school applicants
 - A significant number of students enter graphic technology or management programs with an interest in graphic design
 - Print media is often not favourably portrayed in popular media, nor by high school teachers and counsellors

Matching Skills to Labour Market Needs

- Decisions in this regard are made by each institute
- CPISC, Industry Associations (National and Regional)
- Program Advisory Councils
- Good relationships with industry
 - Challenges exist due to geographic area and the number of companies and diverse sectors in our industry
- Work practicums / internships
 - Feedback from employers
- Industry tours and guest speakers
- Alumni communications / feedback

The Future

- Changes in equipment and technology will force curricular changes
 - In order to ensure that graduates have new and in-demand skills
- Some programs will consider/include broader definitions of graphic media
 - e-books and e-pubs, multimedia, graphic content for mobile devices, etc.
- Increased importance of effective management practices
- Coming together of various educational institutes through national bodies
- Dealing with challenges of funding and support
- Increased importance of marketing graphic programs to secondary students, teachers and parents
 - Changes in industry demand strong, nimble, problem-solvers as graduates

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- *Thank you for listening*

Thank You!

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Ian Baitz: The Canadian Perspective