

Proposal for
Ryerson Centre on Immigration and Settlement (RCIS)
In Accordance with Senate Policy on Research Centres (#144)

Introduction

Never before in human history have so many people been relocating so far, so rapidly, and so often from where they (and their ancestors) were born. Immigration – and its corollary, settlement – will continue to be among the 21st century’s most defining social phenomena. RCIS’s work to develop a rich understanding of immigration and settlement issues is, therefore, critical to social justice, well-being, and prosperity here in Canada and around the world.

Mission

The Research Centre on Immigration and Settlement (RCIS) at Ryerson University will be a global leader in the transdisciplinary exploration of international migration, integration, and diaspora and refugee studies. In addition to supporting research in these areas, the Centre’s mission includes mentoring students, as well as consolidating Ryerson’s reputation as the pre-eminent site of knowledge development and exchange with governments, community organizations, and other academics.

The creation of RCIS has been identified as one of the objectives in the University's latest 5-year-academic plan. In its interdisciplinary nature and through its support both for scholarly exploration and public engagement, the Centre is poised to foster substantial knowledge gains and positively influence social well-being.

Goals

The overall goal of the RCIS is to advance policy-related research and scholarship in the areas of immigration and settlement studies, both nationally and internationally. Its specific objectives are:

- To enhance Ryerson’s reputation as the leading university in the areas of immigration and settlement studies.
- To build on faculty members’ strengths in the areas of immigration and settlement studies.
- To increase Ryerson’s external funding capacity.

- To establish Ryerson as the pre-eminent site of immigration-related policy deliberations.
- To share knowledge with individuals and organizations outside the university sector.
- To bolster Ryerson’s connections to immigrant communities and to the organizations that represent and serve newcomers.
- To continue to attract high-quality students and to support the further development of Ryerson’s programs and courses related to immigration and settlement studies.

Background

In 2017 – just six years from now – Canadians will come together to celebrate their country’s 150th anniversary. One of the most striking developments on which we will reflect is the extraordinary growth in our country’s ethno-cultural diversity. From a nation that even just 50 years ago was primarily composed of people who traced their ancestry to Europe (especially the United Kingdom and France) and of First Nations peoples, Canada has transformed into arguably the planet’s most dynamic multicultural mosaic.

Canada has a proud history of being a welcoming home for immigrants. For over a century, the proportion of Canada’s population born outside the country has been significantly higher than in most other industrialized countries, including the United States. Taking the example of people who identify as members of a “visible minority” (a non-aboriginal person who is non-Caucasian or non-white), Statistics Canada reports that by 2017 there will have been a four-fold increase since 1981 in the number of such individuals. In 1981, Canada’s visible minority population stood at just 1.1 million (4.7%); by 1996, it had crept up to 3.2 million (10%). By 2017, however, the number is expected to soar to approximately 7.1 million (20%), and immigration will be the primary driver of this rapid expansion.

RCIS is committed to integrating theory with social practice. While statistics tell an interesting story, the transformation of Canadian society through immigration is experienced most deeply at the level of public life and work. Governments, community-based organizations, healthcare facilities, and businesses must all grapple with the new ethno-cultural realities of Canadian life. The significant challenges they face include urban (re)development, labour market integration, and equitable access to health services and education.

The Centre has at its core a commitment to helping shape municipal, provincial, and national policies affecting migration issues based on the values of social justice, inclusion, and respect for cultural diversity.

Ryerson University is a natural home for RCIS. Ryerson researchers are focused on finding practical ways to help us live healthier, safer, more vibrant lives, in a society that is more humane, competitive, connected, and sustainable. As Canada’s most urban university, Ryerson

is particularly committed to generating new knowledge about and approaches to immigration and settlement – issues that are especially relevant to cities and their inhabitants.

Ryerson is uniquely positioned to study and contribute to the evolution of immigration and settlement research and policy formation. Toronto, after all, is the destination of over 43% of all immigrants to Canada. More than half of the city's population is foreign born, and 47% of those people have a mother tongue other than English; indeed, over 140 languages and dialects are spoken in Toronto (the top five are Chinese, Italian, Punjabi, Tagalog, and Portuguese). This is appropriately reflected in Toronto's motto: *Diversity Our Strength*.

Immigration and settlement studies have a substantial history and presence at Ryerson and are already major components of the high-calibre research and teaching carried out at the University.

Planning for RCIS has taken into account the following successes:

- In 2004, Ryerson launched the interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies. The first such program in Canada, it is devoted to the advanced study of immigration policy, services, and experiences. It is also the only graduate program in the country that focuses exclusively on the consequences and opportunities arising from transnational human mobility as it relates to Canada.
- In 2009, Ryerson launched an interdisciplinary PhD in Policy Studies. One of the three fields in which students can specialize is Immigration, Settlement, and Diaspora Policies.
- The faculties of Arts and Community Services deliver a wide range of courses that expose students to historical and contemporary issues affecting transnational migration.
- Through its Gateway for International Professionals, The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education has established Ryerson's leadership in helping newcomers bridge the gap between the credentials and experience they bring with them and rewarding careers in Canada.
- The Diversity Institute at Ted Rogers School of Management works with organizations to develop customized strategies, programming and resources to promote new, interdisciplinary knowledge and practice about diversity.

Objectives

- Establish an endowed Research Chair in Immigration and Settlement.
- Support Ryerson faculty members in their applications for major research grants.
- Organize regular international conferences on immigration and settlement.
- Engage in the publication and promotion of immigration and settlement research by Ryerson faculty members.

- Involve graduate students in research projects and other Centre activities, as well as develop their capacity to conduct their own scholarly and applied work.
- Establish links with related Centres and researchers in Canada and abroad.
- Organize public seminars and workshops.
- Develop partnerships with external organizations, including government and community-based service agencies.

Expertise

Notably, Ryerson expertise in this area extends to most Faculties and Departments. Below are brief profiles (see Appendix I - Curriculum Vitae) of the group of Ryerson experts currently engaged in immigration and settlement studies, who actively participated in the Ad Hoc Committee behind this proposal.

- **Sandeep Kumar Agrawal:** Professor in the School of Urban and Regional Planning and director of the Master of Urban Development program. Research expertise: urban design; design review; ethnic enclaves; impact of ethnicity and multiculturalism on planning policies.
- **Mehrunnisa Ahmad Ali:** Associate Professor in the School of Early Childhood Education and the Ryerson Director of the Centre of Excellence in Immigration and Settlement, the Ontario Metropolis Centre (CERIS). Research expertise: newcomer children, youth, and families; parent–teacher relations; preparation of teachers to work with diverse populations.
- **Tariq Amin-Khan:** Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Research expertise: the security state and securitization; the post-colonial state; capitalist globalism and international development; political and militant Islam; comparative study of multiculturalism, nationalism, and issues of South Asian state and society.
- **Sedef Arat-Koç:** Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Research expertise: Immigration policy and immigrant women in Canada, racialization in Canada.
- **Harald Bauder:** Associate Professor in the Department of Geography. Research expertise: political economy of immigration and settlement; labour market experiences of immigrants; immigration discourses in Canada and Germany.
- **Morton Beiser:** MD, Professor of Distinction in the Department of Psychology. Research expertise: immigrants and health.
- **Marco Fiola:** Associate Professor in and Chair of the Department of French and Spanish. Research expertise: language policies and language barriers in the public sector.
- **Grace-Edward Galabuzi:** Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration and a research associate at the Centre for Social Justice. Research expertise:

local community responses to global economic restructuring in the global North and South; the racialization of the Canadian labour market; social exclusion and the social economic status of racialized groups in Canada.

- **Usha George:** Dean of Faculty of Community Services, Professor in the Department of Social Work. Research expertise: social development; newcomer settlement and integration; and diversity and organizational change.
- **Sutama Ghosh:** Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography. Research expertise: migration and settlement geographies; transnationalism; urban social geography; critical “race” theories; postcolonial theories; theories of space.
- **Francis Hare:** Professor in (and former director of) the School of Child and Youth Care. Research expertise: youth in transition from care; the evaluation of services for children and youth; the experience of separated immigrant and refugee youth in care.
- **Mustafa Koç:** Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Research expertise: food studies, security, and policy; globalization; sociology of migration.
- **Anne-Marie Lee-Loy:** Assistant Professor in the Department of English. Research expertise: theories and representations of cultural and national identities; the relationship between literature and the production of knowledge, with an emphasis on Asian experiences in the America; Chinese Caribbean fiction.
- **Iara Lessa:** Associate professor in the School of Social Work. Research expertise: social policy, single motherhood, immigrant women, food security and gender, and processes of marginalization in Canadian society.
- **Henry Parada:** Associate Professor in the School of Social Work. Research expertise: analysis of institutional practices; social work epistemology; institutional ethnography methodology; Latin America social work; community development; anti-oppression; child welfare.
- **Wade Pickren:** Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology. Research expertise: the circulation and transformation of scientific knowledge and practice (historical and contemporary); the transformation of culturally based beliefs about identity and health in the immigration and acculturation process; resilience in adult immigrants.
- **Daniel Rubenson:** Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Research expertise: political behaviour and electoral studies; campaign effects; leadership; political communication; political participation.
- **John Mackie Shields:** Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Research expertise: immigration policy; multiculturalism; social integration.
- **Myer Siemiatycki:** Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration and the first director of the MA Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies. Research expertise: civic participation of immigrants in Toronto.

- **Cheryl Teelucksingh:** Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Research expertise: Ethno-racial and immigrant settlement patterns in Toronto environmental justice, socio-spatial theory, and applied geographical information systems.
- **Vappu Tyyskä:** Professor in the Department of Sociology and Director of the MA Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies. Research expertise: immigrant families and youth.
- **Shuguang Wang:** Professor in the Department of Geography. Research expertise: immigrants' settlement patterns; immigrants' economic performance; ethnic economy.
- **June Yee:** Associate Professor in the School of Social Work. Research expertise: race and racism; access and equity issues for ethno-racial minority clientele in health, education, and social services.

Planned Activities for Funding Period

The Centre will:

- attract funded research to achieve the Centre's overall objectives
- generate scholarship in the areas of immigration and settlement studies
- influence policy in the areas of immigration and settlement studies
- contribute to knowledge mobilization and translation that will influence practice related to immigration, settlement and integration
- enhance the academic and professional potentials of our graduate students

Governance

As a University Centre, RCIS reports to the Vice President, Research and Innovation (VPRI).

Faculty Affiliation

- by application, based on a record of research in the area of immigration and settlement studies, including international migration, integration, and diaspora and refugee studies.

Director:

- 3-year term, maximum of two consecutive terms, to report to VPRI.
- Selected by a committee consisting of
 - 5 elected faculty members (nominated from and elected by faculty affiliated with the Centre; with attention to representation across the university);
 - 2 members appointed by the VPRI
- the Director will:
 - be responsible for the operational aspects of the Centre
 - report to the VPRI, including required written annual reports
 - seek advice from the Advisory Committee on matters related to policy

- o engage in external fundraising
- o provide leadership in research by initiating and encouraging applications for major grants and contracts
- o oversee and coordinate information, publication and promotion activities
- o oversee the work of a part-time staff member (graduate student RA) who assists with the daily running of the Centre (newsletter, website, workshops, promotion, etc.)
- o foster national and international networks
- o foster links with the Directors of Ryerson graduate programs in this field
- o be the main official representative of the Centre
- o work toward creating a position for a an Endowed Research Chair in Immigration and Settlement

Advisory Committee:

The Advisory Committee will consist of:

- the Director
- VPRI or designate
- 5 elected faculty members from among RCIS affiliates, for one or two-year terms (for the sake of continuity), with consideration given for proportional representation across faculties and a chair elected from among the faculty members
- 2 elected graduate student members
- stakeholder representation (invited representatives from different levels of government and from agencies serving immigrants and refugees), not to exceed the faculty complement

The Advisory Committee will:

- meet at least once each academic year, and set other meetings as needed
- provide feedback and advice to the Director on policy matters
- provide operational assistance with regard to ad hoc sub-committees
- provide input on strategic direction of the Centre
- provide advice and assistance with fundraising initiatives

Physical Space Requirements

Two standard faculty offices.