

Challenging Thinking for Challenging Times: *Conference Keynotes, Campus Presentations, Retreats & Workshops*



At a time when many colleges and universities stand at the crossroads, and higher education faces the prospect of unprecedented political, economic, social, and technological change, a new perspective can stimulate innovative thinking and out-of-the-box decision-making.

More than 13,000 subscribers get a daily dose of Ken Steele's perspective through *Academica's Top Ten*, a daily round-up of news, trends, and research findings shaping the Canadian higher-education sector. Ken has become a fixture at dozens of regional, national and international conferences, delivering keynote addresses that put the broader sector in context and weave together emerging trends and data from a wide variety of sources. In recent years, campus leaders across Canada have benefited by adding Ken Steele's perspective and provocative ideas to board retreats, academic planning sessions, enrolment management committees, and other strategic and professional development events.

Our executive relies on Ken for an amazing birds-eye view of the PSE landscape.

New Topics for 2012:

- 1. The Road Ahead for Higher Ed*
- 2. Selling the Academy without Selling Out*
- 3. Media Goes Social*
- 4. Your Role in Student Success*
- 5. Getting Strategic About Enrolment*
- 6. Data-Driven Enrolment Management*
- 7. The Future-Ready Campus*

Current Topics

Ken always customizes his presentations to suit your institution, your group, and your current priorities. The following topics are perennial favourites, and Ken is continually revising and updating his material, which includes video clips, plenty of stimulating visuals, and humour. Each topic can be presented in 90 minutes, but for lasting effect should ideally be followed by time for group Q&A, discussion, or workshops.

The Road Ahead for Higher Ed: Emerging Trends 2012

(90-120 min or full-day workshop)

In this fast-paced, entertaining, and sometimes startling presentation, Ken synthesizes a vast array of research, news, trends and forecasts to provide an unparalleled “big picture” view of emerging trends shaping the course of higher education in Canada and around the world. Always up-to-the-minute and continually changing, “The Road Ahead” explores the signs of change in demographic projections, evolving social and political trends, growing economic pressures, budgetary responses from outsourcing to advancement, internationalization, new approaches to classroom pedagogy and a range of new technologies. Governing boards and senior administrators should note the warning signs of increasingly litigious students, precarious presidencies, and faculty unrest. In particular, Ken warns that the disintermediating power of the internet may seriously disrupt the traditional business model of higher education, with new global competition, open educational resources, and peer-to-peer learning sites.

A customized version of “The Road Ahead” is an ideal opening keynote for any conference, retreat, PD day or strategic planning process. It can also be broken into 30-minute themes, to be interspersed with roundtable discussion and workshop activities, for a half-day or full-day program.

Provocative ideas that challenge existing paradigms.

Selling the Academy without Selling Out: Branding and Marketing Higher Education

(90-120 min or full-day workshop)

Thanks to the trends outlined above, Canadian colleges and universities have to work harder than ever to differentiate themselves, develop a regional or national reputation, and attract students, faculty, public and private support. On most campuses, the words “branding” and “marketing” are no longer dirty words, and some institutions have been remarkably aggressive in their promotional tactics, student guarantees, and even negative campaigns.

In this intensely visual multimedia presentation, Ken provides a sampling of the good, the bad, and the downright odd in higher education marketing and branding worldwide. For each audience, he will select ads and commercials from hundreds in his library, drawn from his YouTube channel and daily coverage in *Academica’s Top Ten*.

Ken has helped dozens of institutions develop a campus-wide consensus about branding, a data-driven understanding of their current institutional reputation, and a strategic approach to creating a strong differentiated position that attracts students and faculty from a distance. When appropriate, he can provide a theoretical model of PSE branding that can build campus consensus around a sometimes contentious process, or work through the branding process with your marketing team. He can also chronicle the “death throes” of traditional media, and the rise of new media and tactics that colleges and universities are finding particularly effective.

A customized version of “Selling the Academy” can be eye-opening and inspiring for marketing, communications and advancement professionals, but can also be presented as an amusing break for faculty and staff, over lunch or dinner in a full-day program. It can be particularly useful to create common language and pave the way for an institutional branding process, to stimulate new thinking in a campus communications or strategic enrolment management committee, or to broaden the horizons of recruitment and admissions staff.

True leader and visionary... professionalism, sage counsel, and lively discussion.

Media Goes Social:

Social Media and PSE Marketing

(60-120 min or half-day workshop)

In the past 5 years, college and university marketers have had to jump on board the social media bandwagon, creating YouTube channels, Flickr pages, Facebook pages and groups, Twitter feeds, student and faculty blogs, and even developing strategies to leverage geolocation services like FourSquare, and virtual reality platforms like Second Life. The pressure to appear “cutting-edge” can sometimes overwhelm logic, and often the use of social media is neither strategic nor wise.

In this presentation, Ken will provide a level-headed look at research data on the use and influence of social media sources, and examples of innovative contests, strategies and other tactics being used by colleges and universities worldwide to connect with a variety of audiences using “web 2.0” or social media. He may well introduce you to new developments you’ve never heard of, and amusing student initiatives that reflect what they most value in the new media.

Ken usually shares selected examples of institutional, student, and union communications in social media, from lipdubs and flashmobs to campaign commercials and music videos. He can also provide some entertaining examples based on the missteps of those who have gone too boldly into the new frontier: cautionary tales for senior administrators, marketers, faculty and students.

A customized version of “Media Goes Social” can open a conference or workshop on student affairs, marketing and communications, or even the use of new technologies in the classroom. An abbreviated version can be used as lunch or dinner entertainment in a full-day program.

For experienced social media practitioners, Ken delivers more focused and customized presentations, including “Top Ten Social Media Takeaways for PSE Marketing,” which focuses on the creation of perceived value, bidirectional communication, and getting messages to go viral.

Your Role in Student Success:

Enhancing Student Retention

(90-120 min or half-day workshop)

As demographics decline in many regions of North America, colleges and universities have recognized the importance of student retention to effective enrolment management. Many have subscribed to surveys of student engagement and launched retention initiatives that integrate early warning systems, coordinated advising, online program audits, and a wide range of support services and programs. On many campuses, the support services exist for at-risk students, but they are underutilized, and not accessed until it’s too late for the student to save their term. The discipline of Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) emphasizes that effective retention initiatives demand cross-campus collaboration, cultural change, and a commitment to retention on the part of administration, faculty and staff. “Retention is everybody’s business.”

In this fast-paced presentation, Ken provides an overview of student retention research in Canada and abroad, identifies some best practices and promising practices from a range of institutions, and emphasizes the human equation in student engagement and success.

A customized version of “Your Role in Student Success” can introduce a planning session for your SEM or Student Success committee, or can open the eyes of faculty and staff to their own role in retention initiatives on campus. It can also be broken into 30-minute themes, to be interspersed with roundtable discussion and workshop activities, for a half-day workshop.

Getting Strategic About Enrolment: Effective SEM Strategies and Tactics *(90-120 min or full-day workshop)*

As many colleges and universities explore, introduce, or renew a Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan, it can be helpful to gather stakeholders together to build consensus and brainstorm the improvements most appropriate for the institution's culture.

This practical, visual and multimedia presentation will provide an overview of SEM theory, planning principles, and goal-setting, and will explore with examples strategies and tactics to enhance PSE participation, institutional reputation (brand), student recruitment (marketing and outreach), applicant conversion, student success and retention. From expensive campaigns and high-tech alert systems, to simple human connection with applicants and students, Ken will provide plenty of food for thought as your institution works to better manage its enrolment based on current priorities and goals.

A customized version of "Getting Strategic About Enrolment" can introduce a planning session for your SEM or Student Success committee, can help your marketing communications and recruitment staff understand their role in the larger scheme of SEM, or can introduce campus faculty and staff to the full scale and scope of SEM practices on other campuses.

"Getting Strategic About Enrolment" can also be broken into 30-minute themes, to be interspersed with roundtable discussion and workshop activities, for a full-day workshop on enrolment management. Data from your own Academica Group surveys, such as the UCAS, ADS, or DNA, can be integrated into the presentation to help facilitate data-driven action.

Data-Driven Enrolment Management: Understanding and Actioning Research Results *(90-120 min or half-day workshop)*

Ken visits the campuses of many Academica Group clients to help interpret the findings of our enrolment surveys, including the UCAS™ (University College Applicant Study™), ADS™ (Acceptance Declined Study™), and DNA™ (Did Not Apply™ survey). If your institution has conducted our surveys for two or more years, it can be useful to examine the longitudinal trends.

Ken's two decades of experience in branding, marketing and recruitment, and his immersion in news and trends affecting the Canadian higher education landscape, make him a dynamic speaker who can provide unique context for our research data, and connect it to broader demographic, social, political and technological trends.

Whether for your senior administration, your SEM committee, your marketing communications department, or your committee of deans/chairs or program coordinators, Ken can present key findings, facilitate a roundtable discussion of implications, explore questions for further investigation, and suggest actionable strategies and tactics drawn from his perspective.

Research results can be the foundation for a fruitful half-day workshop, or if you have more than one audience or more than one type of survey, a full-day workshop may be more appropriate.

Obviously, this presentation requires your institution to purchase the UCAS™ (University College Applicant Study™), ADS™ (Acceptance Declined Study™), and/or DNA™ (Did Not Apply Survey) well in advance of the presentation date, to ensure that data is available.

Ken has a unique ability to transform data into a riveting, visually-pleasing story that has lasting impact.

Engaging, stimulating, and provocative... guaranteed to make audiences think about the future of PSE.

The Future-Ready Campus: Planning for 2025

(90-120 min or half-day workshop)

In this fast-paced, entertaining, and sometimes startling presentation, Ken synthesizes a vast array of research, news, trends and forecasts to provide an unparalleled “big picture” view of the higher education world of the not-too-distant future. By 2025, there will be far fewer traditional-aged college and university students in most regions of Canada, but a higher proportion of them will be participating in PSE. Government funding will be more targeted and is unlikely to keep pace with escalating costs. New technologies will transform delivery modalities, the nature of texts, and approaches to pedagogy in the classroom. Public and political pressure will have heightened for outcome-based evaluation of PSE, from student completion to knowledge transfer, employment and return on investment.

In this thought-provoking look ahead to the campus of 2025, Ken will raise some fundamental questions that every Canadian college or university should be examining now, and address some of the steps that campus leaders can take now to prepare for the future ahead – a future that may arrive even sooner than we anticipate.

A customized version of “The Future-Ready Campus” is an ideal opening keynote for strategic planning retreats, governing board retreats, or conferences involving campus leaders at many levels of the organization.

Ideally, the presentation can be broken into separate themes which can introduce roundtable discussion and debate, or workshop activities, for a half-day or full-day program.

Ken plunged into a day and a half of meetings with a perspicacity unmatched in my experience, emerging with a thorough understanding of who we are and what we needed. His tactical and strategic recommendations helped lead to a 51% increase in enrolment this fall!

- Dr. David Helfand,
President, Quest University

Background

Ken Steele

Ken Steele is co-founder of Academica Group Inc., which now has offices in London Ontario, Toronto, and Boston. Ken's area of consulting practice is institutional brand strategy and recruitment marketing, and he has led major projects in recent years for Algonquin College, the University of the Fraser Valley, Lethbridge College, Mount Royal University, the University of Lethbridge, Lakehead University, Grande Prairie Regional College, and the University of Saskatchewan, among others.

Five years ago, as a service to Canada's higher education community, Ken founded a free daily newsbrief, *Academica's Top Ten*, which summarizes important events, emerging trends, research findings and aspects of youth culture for more than 13,000 subscribers, including college and university presidents and senior executives, government policy analysts, faculty, high school guidance counselors, and national media editors. (Ken is now very grateful to have a full-time associate news editor, Katherine Fletcher, to ensure the *Top Ten* continues to be daily, despite his travel schedule.) Ken has written numerous articles and white papers on institutional marketing and strategy, a syndicated column on graphic design, and a regular blog on higher education issues, and now manages a YouTube channel featuring notable higher education commercials.

Ken is a "recovering academic," who was an award-winning PhD candidate in English Literature at the University of Toronto, before leaving academia to found a regional advertising agency in 1990. Ken and his team developed branding, marketing, and advertising campaigns for dozens of corporate, non-profit, and education-sector clients throughout the 1990s, before merging the agency to form Academica Group in 2005.

Academica Group:

Academica Group is the leading source of research insight and marketing innovation for North American higher education. With offices in Toronto, London, and Boston, Academica Group offers integrated services in four practice areas:

RESEARCH: Our applied research division surveys more than 250,000 college and university applicants every year, on behalf of hundreds of college and university clients, education ministries, and government agencies. 15 years ago, we pioneered the application of consumer research to higher education recruitment with the *UCAS™ Applicant Study*, which has grown into the largest and most comprehensive international syndicated survey of college and university consumers in the world.

CONSULTING: Academica's consulting team facilitates institutional strategic planning, positioning and brand strategy, strategic enrolment management, marketing audits and integrated marketing communications planning. Our international partnership with SEM Works brings depth and breadth of Strategic Enrolment Management consulting to our clients.

CREATIVE: Our creative studio develops award-winning brand identities, print materials, online and offline marketing campaigns for clients ranging from the Ontario Ministry of Education to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. Academica's creative director is a leader in the Native American design community, and our team has decades of experience in the education and technology sectors.

TECHNOLOGY: Academica's technology division combines expertise in information architecture and user interface design with an experienced open source web development team. Our social media strategists have worked with scores of institutions, and experimented with the first cross-platform social media application for higher education applicants running on Facebook and MySpace. RealityCampus™ is a new turnkey solution to bring interactive video testimonials to a recruitment website or microsite.

Testimonials

“Canada is lucky to have Ken Steele, one of the most knowledgeable and trusted analysts of the remarkable changes we are seeing in PSE in Canada. Never one to pull punches he nevertheless delivers difficult news and uncomfortable insights in a convincing yet low key and gentle manner.”

- *Dr. Alan Shaver, President & Vice-Chancellor,
Thompson Rivers University*

“Ken’s unique perspective on the Canadian post-secondary sector was evident at every step in the Positioning Summit, market survey, and his comprehensive White Paper.”

- *Dr. Dave Marshall, President,
Mount Royal University*

“Ken is an excellent speaker who can engage a variety of audiences from faculty through to Board members. Ken always includes provocative ideas that challenge existing paradigms and cause audiences to walk away with lots to think about.”

- *Tracy Edwards, President & CEO,
Lethbridge College*

“Ken has a truly remarkable command of current developments in the world of postsecondary education, both in Canada and beyond. His presentations are engaging, stimulating, and provocative — and delivered in a manner guaranteed to make audiences think about the future direction of PSE and the ways in which their own institutions might make the most of them. I recommend him highly.”

- *Dr. Leo Groarke, Provost and VP Academic,
University of Windsor*

“In one word, Ken’s presentation was ‘OUTSTANDING.’ He was strategic, informative, engaging and entertaining. In our formal evaluation of our planning session, Ken’s presentation was ranked the highest, receiving an average score of 9.6 out of 10. We will definitely be using Ken’s services in the future.”

- *Dr. Gordon Nixon, Vice-President Academic,
SAIT Polytechnic*

“Ken has the unique ability to engage meaningfully with individuals at all levels in our organizations and his presentations are sure to be transformational in any organization.”

- *Stefanie Ivan, Associate Vice-President Student
Services, Grant MacEwan University*

“Ken is a lively and engaging presenter who brings his material to life through anecdote and compelling visuals. More than that, though, he is an evangelist for university communications and a subject matter expert.”

- *Richard Fisher, Chief Communications Officer,
Development & Alumni Engagement, UBC*

“Academica’s Top Ten provides an amazing bird’s eye view of the PSE landscape. No college exec has the time or resources to fly that high — so we’re very glad of your wingspan and flight speed.”

- *David Sovka, Associate Director, College &
Community Relations, Camosun College*

“Ken is an energetic speaker who uses vivid images and compelling data to stretch the thinking of his audience. His presentation prompted engaging discussion about the future of our field and our place in it.”

- *Tracey Taylor-O’Reilly, Director, Centre for
Continuing Education, McMaster University*

“It’s not a Canadian university PR/marketing/web conference without a @kensteele presentation!”

- *Ryan McNutt, New Media Officer,
Dalhousie University, on Twitter*

“If you’re looking for a session which presents many key trends and issues, and from which you can spin off any number of learning conversations, Ken’s will do it.”

- *Anna Kae Todd, VP Academic,
Bow Valley College*

“Ken has provided critical consultancy as we look to understand our current and future student milieu; then, and perhaps of even greater value, he has provided critical facilitation as we look at ourselves in reaction to those understandings. We are much the better for Ken’s insights and counsel.”

- *Gerry Kendall, Registrar,
University of Alberta*

“Ken delivered a riveting presentation to a rapt audience using language that effectively bridged the stark realities of the marketing world and the more traditional perspectives of academia.”

- *Robert Buchan, Vice-President External,
University of the Fraser Valley*

Recent & Upcoming

Every year, Ken makes more than 50 presentations – from keynotes and workshops at regional, national and international conferences, to research presentations and professional development sessions on college and university campuses.

Board Retreats

Olds College (Mar 2012)
Lethbridge College (Nov 2011)
SAIT Polytechnic (May 2011)
Brandon University (Mar 2011)
St. Mary's University (Feb 2011)
GPRC (Jan 2011)
Algonquin College (Jan 2011)
Red Deer College (Jan 2010)
Carleton University (Oct 2009)
University of Regina (Oct 2009)
Wilfrid Laurier University (Sep 2009)
Concordia UC (Aug 2009)
University of Alberta (Jul 2009)
UOIT Board of Governors (Jun 2009)
U of Saskatchewan (Oct 2008)

Strategic Sessions

Brock University (Dec 2011)
Medicine Hat College (Nov 2011)
Bow Valley College (Oct 2011)
Northern College (Aug 2011)
Lakehead University (Jul 2011)
Trinity Western University (Jun 2011)
University of Calgary (Jun 2011)
Cambrian College (May 2011)
Medicine Hat College (May 2011)
University of Alberta (Apr 2011)
Simon Fraser University (Apr 2011)
Vancouver Island U (Feb 2011)
UOIT (Nov 2010)
Conestoga College (Nov 2010)
Camosun College (Sept 2010)
SAIT Polytechnic (May 2010)
University of Alberta (Jan 2010)
Grant MacEwan University (Jan 2010)
Laurentian University (Apr 2009)
Algonquin College (Mar 2009)
University of Victoria (Jan 2009)
St. Clair College (Dec 2008)

Brescia University College (Dec 2008)
University of Calgary (Oct 2008)
U of the Fraser Valley (Jul 2008)
Queen's University (May 2008)
York University (Nov 2007)
Sault College (Oct 2007)
Seneca College (Oct 2007)
Cambrian College (Aug 2007)
Mount Royal University (Jun 2007)

PD Presentations

Northern Lights College (Feb 2012)
U of Western Ontario (Feb 2012)
Centennial College (Feb 2012)
Lethbridge College (Nov 2011)
Mount Royal University (Nov 2011)
Mohawk College (Aug 2011)
SAIT Polytechnic (June 2011)
Bow Valley College (Apr 2011)
Memorial University (Mar 2011)
University of Manitoba (Mar 2011)
Thompson Rivers U (Feb 2011)
Humber College (Jan 2011)
SAIT Polytechnic (Sept 2010)
GPRC (Aug 2010)
Mohawk College (Jun 2010)
Bow Valley College (Mar 2010)
Lethbridge College (May 2009)
U of Western Ontario (Feb 2009)
U of Saskatchewan (Jan 2009)
ACAD (Oct 2008)
Loyalist College (May 2008)

Conference Keynotes

CAAHP Conference (May 2012)
Alberta Student Services (May 2012)
Academica Summit (TO, Apr 2012)
Academica Summit (Calg, Apr 2012)
CBIE Conference (Ottawa, Nov 2011)
Academica Summit (Hali, Nov 2011)

CFBSD Conference (Calg, Oct 2011)
AACTI System Workshop (Oct 2011)
CCW Workshop (Ottawa, Oct 2011)
CIEC Synergy (Toronto, Oct 2011)
CBUC (Ottawa, Sep 2011)
WARUCC (Saskatoon, Jun 2011)
CO Con Ed (Niagara Falls, Jun 2011)
OCUFA Worldviews (TO, Jun 2011)
CanHEIT (Hamilton, Jun 2011)
ACCC (Edmonton, Jun 2011)
OACUHO (Toronto, May 2011)
CO Edu Tech (Sarnia, May 2011)
Academica Summit (Calg, Apr 2011)
PSE Web (Toronto, May 2011)
Academica Summit (TO, Apr 2011)
WestVAC (Victoria, March 2011)
PACRAO (Calgary, Nov 2010)
SEMM Forum (Hali, Nov 2010)
SEMM Forum (Vanc, Nov 2010)
ICE Synergy IV (Toronto, Sept 2010)
CO Recruiters (Barrie, Sept 2010)
PSE Web (St Catharines, May 2010)
SEMM Forum (TO, Apr 2010)
SEMM Forum (Calg, Apr 2010)
SEMM Forum (Boston, Apr 2010)
CAUCE (Ottawa, Feb 2010)
CACEE Ontario (Toronto, Dec 2009)
AACTI (Edmonton, Oct 2009)
ICE Synergy III (Toronto, Sep 2009)
COU Liaison Workshop (Aug 2009)
WARUCC (Edmonton, Jun 2009)
AARAO (Charlottetown, Jun 2009)
CALL Languages (London, May 2009)
NAUBCS (Winnipeg, May 2009)
SEMM Forum (TO, Apr 2009)
SEMM Forum (Calg, Apr 2009)
COU Secretaries (Toronto, Feb 2009)
OURA (Ottawa, Feb 2009)
CRALO (Oakville, Nov 2008)
ARUCC (Halifax, Jun 2008)
AARAO (Halifax, Jun 2008)

Details

Speaking Fee

To be fair to all institutions and conferences, Ken's *per diem* for speaking or facilitating is consistently **\$4,900 plus HST**, travel and accommodation expenses. (All airfare will be booked "Latitude" economy class). In special circumstances, Academica Group may consider waiving a portion of Ken's fee in return for sponsor recognition at the event.

Included Services

For a single *per diem* fee, Ken includes a preliminary call to discuss the audience and priorities, up to **4 hours of preparation time**, travel time within Canada, and up to **5 hours of campus presentations**.

Facilitation of some retreats or strategy sessions may require more extensive preparation and are therefore estimated individually. Some sessions benefit from the creation of a custom white paper for circulation to participants in advance.

Ken will provide a **PDF of the slides** from any presentations after the fact, which can be distributed within your institution, and institutions can opt to record his presentations for viewing by internal audiences.

Scheduling

Ken's travel schedule is often booked **months in advance**, so please contact him as early as possible to pencil in your board retreat, committee meeting or campus event. Ken will take into account travel schedules from London, Ontario when determining feasible timing for events – often it is advisable to arrive the evening before to ensure that no travel delays create an emergency on the day of the event.

Technical Requirements

Ken makes extensive use of visuals and multimedia clips in his presentations, so he must **use his own laptop**. For optimal results, the institution or conference organizer should provide a data **projector**, cable and screen, dimmable lighting, wireless lapel **microphone** and **audio connection** for Ken's laptop.

Billing

Upon execution of a letter of agreement, Academica Group will invoice 50% of the total speaking fee to cover up-front travel costs. The balance, including detailed travel and accommodation expenses, will be invoiced upon completion of the engagement. HST or appropriate sales taxes will be included.

To discuss the possibility of scheduling Ken Steele at a conference, campus event or board retreat, please don't hesitate to contact him directly:

Ken Steele

Co-Founder, Academica Group Inc.

ken@academica.ca

Cel. 519.432.3600

“In one word, Ken's presentation was 'OUTSTANDING.' He was strategic, informative, engaging and entertaining.”