

# COU Update

As of May 23, 2014

COUNCIL OF  
ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

CONSEIL DES  
UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

# COU Update – May 2014

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## **Note to user**

For quick access to a particular issue, you can click on a title in the Table of Contents and you will be immediately directed to the issue in question. There are four main sections within an issue: update, background, division and last updated. If “updated” is included in the title of an issue, it has been updated and there is new information. The “updated” section at the bottom will inform you of the last time the issue was updated.

Please note that the COU Update is intended for COU members and affiliates. The COU Update is not a public document and is not intended to be distributed outside the university sector.

## **Common Acronyms**

BIU	Basic Income Unit
BOI	Basic Operating Income
CFI	Canada Foundation for Innovation
COFM	Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine
COUPN	Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing
CSAO	Council of Senior Administrative Officers
CUPA	Council on University Planning and Analysis
EDU	Ministry of Education
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEQCO	Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MGS	Ministry of Government Services
MoHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
MRI	Ministry of Research and Innovation
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
OADE	Ontario Association of Deans of Education
OCAV	Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents
ONCAT	Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer
OCUPRS	Ontario Council of University Programs in Rehabilitation Sciences
OCUR	Ontario Council on University Research
OEN	Ontario Education Number
OICAH	Ontario Interdisciplinary Council for Aging and Health
OSAP	Ontario Student Assistance Program
OUAC	Ontario Universities Application Centre
Quality Council	Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance
SMA	Strategic Mandate Agreement

## Updated: Advocacy Initiatives

### Update:

**Ontario Election:** The Ontario election was triggered May 2 when the NDP said it would not support the minority Liberal government's budget. Election day is set for June 12. The dropping of the writ resulted in the death of all bills that were in the House (including those listed further below in this section). COU received an update on the status of the below policy initiatives and programs in light of the election:

1. Capital Expansion RFP (Satellites/capacity expansion) – this process will continue as set out previously to the sector in correspondence until such time as a newly elected government determines if a change is required. The due date for letters of intent still applies.
2. Teacher Education Transition Funding – because this was a new proposal, and new funding, it will not go forward at this time. It will be up to the next Minister and government to determine its status.
3. SMA process – all but four colleges and two universities have signed agreements from the Deputy. Agreements that have already been signed will stand. The Deputy is not permitted to sign any agreements during this period.
4. Online initiative – while year two (2014-15) funding is approved in the Ministry's budget as part of a multi-year plan for investment in this area, there will be no further flow of funds from the Ministry for the next year's activities until after a new government is formed and the file is reviewed.
5. ONCAT funding – their funds are on a regular payment schedule under a signed Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) and will continue to flow.
6. HEQCO funding – its funds will continue to flow under a continuing TPA.
7. Kemptville/University of Guelph – while the Premier had signed off authorizing a sole source procurement approach for two named facilitators, no contract will be signed – the project is deferred and facilitators have been informed.
8. International Student Program (ISP) designation – MTCU is working to ensure the necessary roll out for the federal government's ISP designation and they hope to get completed designation agreements out to universities in mid-May.
9. Program approvals process – the Deputy has requested an opinion from the government's legal branch about whether decisions during the writ related to universities can be delegated to the Deputy. Additional information will be communicated as it becomes available.

**Election strategy:** COU will remain neutral during the Ontario election campaign. However, a questionnaire on sector issues has been submitted to the three main party leaders. To date, a response has been received by the PC party, which contained a form letter and link to their [Million Jobs Plan](#). The Plan indicates that the PCs will encourage greater participation in STEM and business fields; encourage greater participation in colleges; increase access for persons with disabilities and ensure access to PSE regardless of finances. The PCs have also indicated that they will cancel the Ontario Tuition Grant ("30% Off Tuition"). The NDP have not yet released their

platform and the Liberals are running on their Budget that was defeated earlier this month.

COU has also recommended that universities reach out to candidates in their ridings to provide information on the sector and individual universities. Kits have been provided that include:

- Key messages;
- 2012 Graduate Survey and infographic;
- COU University Works report and infographic;
- COU Entrepreneurship at Universities report and infographic;
- Gandalf Group Survey infographic; and
- Bringing Life to Learning experiential learning report and infographic.

A series of conference calls for updates on election issues is being convened on Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. for Government Relations and Communications Directors to provide information on the platforms and campaigns as well as to explore how the election is playing out around the province.

Since the jobs agenda is a theme of all the parties, COU is using social media to promote positive aspects of university education including employment statistics, and efforts to prepare students for the workforce.

**Government Relations:** COU had the opportunity to influence the [Summit on Talent and Skills in the New Economy](#), organized by the Office of the Premier. COU President Bonnie Patterson kicked off the discussion. The half-day meeting brought together university and college presidents, business representatives, labour groups and non-profit organizations to discuss the development of successful strategies to boost the province, economically and socially. There were three panels – Skills for the Future, Opening up the Experiential Path for Ontario Graduates, and Model Partnerships across Sectors. Each panel comprised presenters from the various stakeholder groups and included approximately 30 minutes for comment and discussion. The Premier challenged participants to implement a concrete solution or new initiative that would contribute to the development of Ontario's skills and talent, and to report back in three months' time on their progress.

COU has been active in advocating for amendments to recent government and Private Members' Bills, as listed below, in the best interests of the sector.

**Bill 69, Prompt Payment Act:** In a letter to the Premier, and in discussions with government officials from all parties, COU has expressed concern about the potential of this Private Member's Bill (introduced by Steven Del Duca, MPP for Vaughan) to restrict freedom of contract in ways that would have a significant impact on the ability of universities to negotiate payment terms and conditions in dealing with contractors. The letter was also shared with the three-party committee reviewing this bill, which has also faced significant opposition from other organizations and stakeholders. COU has spoken to Mr. Del Duca as well as to opposition member and House Leader's staff about this bill. For additional details, see the [University Operations Advocacy](#) section.

**Bill 151, Schedule 4 of An Act to amend various Acts, 2013** (also called the *Strengthening and Improving Government Act*): COU has been strongly advocating for amendments to this Bill regarding concerns about the protection of students' privacy. While the collection of data for the purposes of improving higher education policy is essential -- for example, universities currently partner with MTCU on the implementation of the Ontario Education Number (OEN) for university students -- COU believes that any information that would personally identify a student should not be required for any research or data purposes. COU has recommended four amendments to the Bill.

1. A provision should be included that specifies that the OEN will be used in research and analysis as the identifier of an individual anonymized record.
2. OUAC should be excluded from Bill 151.
3. Collection of personal information concerning Aboriginal status should not be permitted.
4. Collection of personal information on the use of student services (for example: disability/accessibility services, health services, counselling services) should not be permitted.

COU has reached out to political staff in the Ministry and opposition parties regarding this bill as well. For further information on how Bill 151 relates to the OEN, see the **Ontario Education Number** section below.

**Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act to establish the Advisory Council on Work-Integrated Learning:** This Bill was introduced in the provincial legislature on March 17, 2014; it would establish an Advisory Council on Work-Integrated Learning to advise the Minister regarding work-integrated learning opportunities for postsecondary students. In a letter to the Clerk of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, COU has expressed concerns about Bill's mandate and definitions, and offers an alternative approach to meeting the Bill's goals. Rather than a new Advisory Committee, COU recommends that MTCU (under its existing powers) could convene a working group composed of key stakeholders to make progress toward the goals of promoting and facilitating work-integrated learning opportunities in Ontario.

**Pre-Budget Consultations:** COU submitted its 2014 provincial pre-budget submission in February. The submission was presented to Finance Minister Charles Sousa on February 26. The following recommendations have been submitted to government:

- **Financial Sustainability:** avoid further cuts or policy decisions that add costs to institutions
- **Research:** reinstate the Ontario Research Fund-Research Excellence program; match infrastructure dollars through the Ontario Research Fund-Research Infrastructure program; maintain funding for the Early Researcher Awards
- **Enhancing Teaching and Learning:** maintain current per-student funding for Teacher Education programs; invest in new buildings and deferred maintenance to improve campus infrastructure

- **International Students:** eliminate the International Student Recovery program, or at least cap the recovery at the 2013-14 level; allow a portion of funding already allocated to graduate expansion to be used for operating grants to attract top international PhD students
- **Removing Barriers to Innovation:** work with universities to streamline and reduce the reporting burden on institutions

At the Budget consultations on February 26, Minister Sousa expressed concerns about unpaid internships, including those offered by universities, and noted that the government does not support them. COU has since written to the Minister to express concerns about this position, urging the government to distinguish between unpaid placements that are part of a student's academic program and necessary to complete their program (and for which they receive academic credit), and other kinds of placements students may choose to participate in. COU has requested that the government consult with the sector should they decide to develop a policy concerning unpaid placements of university students.

**Communications:** As before the election began, the jobs agenda has emerged as a prominent theme for all three political parties during the election.

COU has been aligning its communications and government relations strategy towards this theme, with a focus on the employability of graduates.

COU has identified a 12-month communications plan that spans from May 2014 to April 2015.

Each month, COU will launch at least one communications “spotlight” to advance the value of a university education. These will include reports, videos, online quizzes, online graphics, earned media, op-eds and social media campaigns. COU will be asking universities to promote these sector-wide initiatives on their own campuses and their own communications channels.

The plan was presented to OUPAC at the spring retreat in Guelph on May 16.

**Other:** The government announced the extension of the temporary solvency exemption for university pensions plans in December 2013, and efforts continue to secure changes that will address the reduction in teacher education funding and proposed changes in tuition administration.

COU organized a University Day at Queen's Park on November 19, where Executive Heads and their Board Chairs met with government officials to celebrate university successes and contributions. The theme of the day, *Ontario Universities: Fuelling Success*, allowed university representatives to discuss how universities contribute to the momentum of the province economically, culturally and socially. Representatives discussed how universities prepare students for success; boost economic growth through research, business partnerships, community revitalization and social innovation; and expand the talent pool by engaging underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities and Aboriginal students, as well as attracting top talent from around the world. A total of 27 meetings were organized throughout the day with cabinet ministers,

opposition leaders, MPPs, deputy ministers, and chiefs of staff, with a reception held in the evening. [\*\*Photos from University Day can be viewed\*\*](#) on the COU website.

**Division:** Communications and Public Affairs

**Updated:** May 2014

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## **Updated: Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs)**

MTCU has initiated a process of discussion of universities' strategic mandates.

**Update:** With the Ontario election called for June 12, the SMA process is on hold.

MTCU has indicated that all but four colleges and two universities have signed agreements from the Deputy Minister. MTCU has indicated that signed SMA agreements will stand. The Deputy Minister is not permitted to sign any agreements during the writ period.

In a MTCU memo, dated April 16, it was announced that the temporary suspension on program approvals has been lifted for those universities with signed SMAs. However, there is still no new programs approval process in place. MTCU staff has indicated that they would like to have a new process in place soon after the election.

**Background:** On June 27, 2012, the Minister wrote to Executive Heads of colleges and universities asking each institution to submit a proposed SMA by the fall of 2012. All submissions, from both the university and college sectors can be found online on the **HEQCO website** (available at the hyperlink). The **university submissions** can be found on the COU website (available at the hyperlink).

COU reviewed the initial SMAs from the fall of 2012 and found many common themes. The SMAs reinforce universities' commitment to innovation across many different aspects of their academic enterprises and operations. The university SMAs reinforce the university missions of teaching, research and community, but are highly differentiated in their approach to these missions. The SMAs include good examples of productivity and of responsiveness to government priorities such as technology-enabled learning, experiential learning and broadening credential options.

A HEQCO review panel provided its **report on the SMAs** to government in March and the report was publicly released on April 4, 2013 (the report is available at the hyperlink). HEQCO's review was intended to select "lead institutions" who "would be the first to receive funding to pursue their mandates starting as early as 2013-14." However, HEQCO's report did not assess individual SMAs; instead, the report set out a series of recommended policy directions for the province to pursue that would enhance the quality and competitiveness of the PSE sector in Ontario.

Executive Heads of universities met with Ministry representatives for a summer roundtable discussion of differentiation and SMAs on July 10, 2013. The Ministry appointed Paul Genest as Special Advisor on SMAs (Universities); his role is to negotiate the details of SMAs with institutions.

MTCU released **Ontario's Differentiation Policy Framework for Postsecondary Education** on November 29, 2013. The paper outlines the government's priorities, a differentiation framework with eight components, and possible metrics for each component. Universities were required to submit their updated Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMAs) submissions on December 20, 2013. The agreements reached in

the SMAs will include multi-year graduate space allocations. The SMA process will not include new program approvals; however, MTCU will give consideration to programs identified in a university's SMA as an "area of growth."

The metrics for the SMAs include sector-wide metrics as well as the opportunity to suggest institutional specific metrics.

As part of the discussions with Special Advisor for university SMAs, Paul Genest, universities will be able to revise their SMA proposals, leading to a final agreement in March 2014. MTCU has indicated that final agreements are intended to be public documents.

On March 3, 2014, MTCU circulated a memo to Executive Heads that provided more details on the graduate allocations that will be part of SMAs. Spaces for the next three years (2014-15 to 2016-17) will be allocated using three envelopes:

- A "Reset Envelope" for universities whose enrolment is significantly above or below their current targets;
- A "General Allocation Envelope," informed by research metrics; and
- A "Priorities Envelope" to support niche strengths and Ministry and institutional priorities identified through the SMA process.

MTCU circulated a memo to Executive Heads on March 11, 2014 that included an Institutional Data Report filled out with each institutions' data for each of the system-wide metrics identified in Ontario's Differentiation Policy Framework for Postsecondary Education, a Technical Addendum on Metrics that outlines data definitions and sources, and a Sector Workbook with all institutions data for each of the system-wide metrics. These documents are intended to support the Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) discussions with the Special Advisors.

MTCU has indicated that it is committed to ongoing conversations with the sector on how system-wide metrics can be strengthened, defined and utilized.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Updated: University Operating Funding

**Update:** The 2014 Ontario Budget included few new announcements regarding university operating funding. The Budget maintains the course set by the government for postsecondary education in its 2012 and 2013 budgets. Ministry staff provided updates on MTCU's forecasts for funding required for growth and its projected reductions from efficiency targets and the International Student Recovery in 2014-15 and future years.

As an election has been called, the Budget has not been passed. The following paragraphs indicate what the Budget proposed; changes may be made by the government elected in June 2014.

The budget document indicates that expenditure in the postsecondary sector is expected to increase by \$234M between 2013-14 and 2014-15, mainly as a result of continued funding to support enrolment growth, student financial assistance (including the OTG), and other ministry programs. Increased transfers to universities and colleges are only a part of the overall proposed increases.

<b>Overall funding impacts for university transfer payments*</b>	\$M		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Total increases for enrolment	69.2	135.2	159.9
Total reductions in grants	(36.7)	(71.6)	(79.3)
Other base changes	3.8	3.0	3.0
Investments	1.0	6.6	4.2
Net increase	37.3	73.2	87.8

For more information on budget increases associated with enrolment, please see the [Planning and Funding of Enrolment \(undergraduate and graduate\) section](#).

The 2014 Ontario Budget included proposed reductions in universities' operating grants that were announced in the 2012 Ontario Budget. The table below provides updated projections for the reductions – if they are implemented:

<b>Reductions – Universities*</b>	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	\$M		
Efficiency targets	(29.3)	(30.4)	(30.4)
International student recovery	(7.4)	(16.8)	(24.5)
Teacher education		(24.4)	(24.4)
Total reductions	(36.7)	(71.6)	(79.3)

The 2012 Ontario Budget announced reductions to university operating grants, described as "policy levers" or efficiency targets. According to the proposed 2014 Budget, the reductions for 2015-16 and 2016-17 would remain at the 2014-15 level of approximately two per cent of enrolment-based operating grants.

\* Changes in each year are relative to 2013-14. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

The projected savings to government from the International Student Recovery (ISR) fee have been updated, and projections for two years added. Despite COU's advocacy to eliminate the ISR fee, the budget indicates a proposed ongoing assumption that it would continue to be levied on new and continuing international students (excluding PhD students), and continue to grow.

MTCU staff confirmed that MTCU's proposed budget includes the funding reduction for teacher education programs and also a provision for additional supports for transition to the longer teacher education program in 2015-16. The proposed budget does not include additional funding in 2015-16 to offset the loss of tuition revenue in the start-up year when only half the eventual cohort of consecutive education students is admitted.

For universities where teacher education funding is more than 5% of their operating budgets (Nipissing, Lakehead, Brock and Trent), the budget proposed that the reduction in per-student funding for education programs would be phased in over three years. The funding available to offset revenue loss would be \$5.8M in 2015-16 (75% of eventual reduction) and 3.5M in 2016-17 (50%). The intent was to provide one more year of transition in 2017-18 (25%) and then end the transitional funding.

Enrolments in teacher education programs of Aboriginal students and in technology education programs would be exempted from the FTE caps on teacher education programs. All students in concurrent education programs from 2013-14 and prior years would be funded.

The budget proposed a fund of \$1M in 2014-15 and \$0.5M in 2015-16 to support collaborative projects among faculties of education to develop shared online courses (and perhaps other shared resources) to support low enrolment courses in teachable subject areas.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

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## Updated: Planning and Funding of Enrolment (undergraduate and graduate)

### Update:

**Funding for enrolment growth:** As an election has been called, the Budget has not been passed. The following paragraphs indicate what the Budget proposed; changes may be made by the government elected in June 2014.

While not explicitly laid out in the 2014 Budget documents, MTCU staff indicates that the Ministry's proposed multi-year allocations maintain the government's commitment to fund the growth expected in postsecondary enrolment for the next three years.

MTCU staff provided an estimate of funding for enrolment growth for the next three years (it is traditional for the provincial budget to set out only three years of projected expenditure). The following table sets out the proposed universities' share of the new funding.

Funding for growth*	\$M		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Undergraduate	31.4	73.0	83.7
Graduate	37.8	62.1	76.2
Total increase for growth	69.2	135.2	159.9

The revised multi-year funding projection for undergraduate growth is consistent with the projection of the CUPA model. Ministry staff indicated that the forecasted growth assumes an ongoing increase of 1% annually to first-year entrants.

After further analysis and discussion with MTCU, CUPA will provide, through COU, an analysis of the adequacy of announced funding to support this growth and an explanation of the differences between the MTCU and CUPA projections.

MTCU staff provided an estimate of funding for enrolment growth for the next three years (it is traditional for the provincial budget to set out only three years of projected expenditure).

**Graduate expansion:** The 2011 Budget committed to provide funding to support the creation of 6,000 graduate spaces. Approximately 1,650 of these spaces were allocated for 2013-14 and 2014-15.

About half of the remaining 4,350 spaces are being allocated for 2015-16 and 2016-17 through the Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs). At present, universities are aware of their individual allocations, but system-wide allocations have not yet been disclosed. MTCU has indicated that it will provide this information once the SMA negotiations are finalized.

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\* Changes in each year are relative to 2013-14. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Depending on enrolment levels, the target date for full graduate expansion might be extended beyond 2017-18.

The table above shows the Ministry's projected funding increases associated with graduate expansion.

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## Updated: Capital Funding and Planning

**Update:** On March 27, MTCU issued a call for proposals. Notices of Intent are due to the Ministry by June 27, 2014; proposals are to be submitted by September 26, 2014.

The Ontario government announced the province's new Major Capacity Expansion policy framework on December 20, 2013. This framework will govern future expansion in the postsecondary sector either through the creation of new campuses or through major expansion at existing campuses.

The proposed 2014 Budget introduced in May, but not passed, confirmed the government's intent to increase funding for renewal of buildings in future years; see the **Condition of University Facilities** section below.

**Background:** In the recent Fall Economic Statement, the Province recognized that despite recent growth in enrolment capacity, some of the largest and fastest growing communities in Ontario do not have postsecondary campuses or have campuses that provide limited local options for students. The government is committed to improving the alignment of future capacity with long-term demand growth to ensure that more students have access to quality learning closer to home.

The main components of the policy include a description of the types of initiatives that will be within the scope of the new initiative; the selection and approval process to be used when a call for proposals is made; and details on implementation and compliance. Funding levels have not been announced.

The 2013 budget indicated that more than \$800M will be allocated over the next three years to fund 20 projects in colleges and universities. This funding had already been allocated and announced. In August 2010, COU prepared a **submission to the Ministry of Infrastructure Consultations on the 10-year Infrastructure Plan** (available at the hyperlink). The submission addressed the key infrastructure priorities for the sector, trends that are expected to impact the use of infrastructure in the sector, and investment priorities.

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## **Updated: Deferred Maintenance**

**Update:** The proposed 2014 Budget introduced in May, but not passed, confirmed the government's intent to increase funding for renewal of buildings in future years; see the [Condition of University Facilities](#) section below.

Following CSAO discussion on the Deferred Maintenance (DM) report expected from the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) in June 2014, the COU Secretariat is updating the Deferred Maintenance Advocacy Report with 2014 data. The CSAO-OAPPA (Ontario Association of Physical Plant Administrators) Task Force on Facilities Condition Assessment will review both the Advocacy Report and the 2014 Facilities Condition report before they are submitted to CSAO and then shared with Executive Heads in September for approval.

The Advocacy Report will be accompanied by a cover letter containing the university sector's request for new funding and any other messaging appropriate for the political climate at the time of its release.

**Background:** COU presented a revised DM Advocacy Report to CSAO in February 2014 showing that the cost of the DM backlog had doubled in ten years. Because a national DM report is expected in June from CAUBO, CSAO has asked for the COU report to be updated to align with the CAUBO data before it is released. Once Executive Heads have reviewed the report, it will be used in meetings with government over the 2014-15 winter leading up to the 2015 Provincial Budget.

COU's advocacy report on deferred maintenance is intended to raise awareness about the growing problem of maintaining buildings on university campuses and the implications of deferring maintenance. The report was undertaken at the request of the Task Force on Facilities Condition Assessment (chaired by Duncan Watt, Carleton University). It emphasizes the risks of continuing to defer maintenance and outlines steps universities have taken to address the problem. The advocacy strategy outlined in the report, initially scheduled for publication in 2013, is being updated to reflect the evolving fiscal and political context in Ontario.

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## **Updated: Condition of University Facilities**

An adjustment to the Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) was announced in Budget 2012. Budget 2013 reconfirmed the lower amount.

**Update:** In April 2014, MTCU announced that it intends to increase funding for facilities renewal, beginning in 2015-16, to address deferred maintenance at universities. The plan includes a phasing in of additional renewal funding growing to a total investment of \$100M to colleges and universities annually by 2019-20 (according to the current formula, universities would receive 2/3 or \$66.7M of the \$100M). Planned new investments in 2015-16 and 2016-17 would increase current funding levels to \$40M annually (universities' portion would be \$26.7M). The proposed 2014 Budget introduced in May, but not passed, confirmed this commitment.

**Background:** Funding for the 2013-14 Facilities Renewal Program was announced on February 4, 2014. The allocation for the university portion is maintained at \$17.3M (reduced from \$26.7M in 2009-10 and earlier years).

In contrast to this allocation, COU's 2010 report on **facilities condition** (see below) finds that, to maintain our campuses in their current condition, universities would require annual expenditures of \$380.8M.

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## **Updated: Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP)**

The report of the Task Force of the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO) and the Ontario Association of Physical Plant Administrators (OAPPA) highlighted the sector's deferred maintenance backlog, which reached \$1.97 billion in 2010.

**Update:** Work is underway to produce a 2014 FCAP report.

**Background:** The FCAP 2010 report was presented to government in March 2011 (MTCU and the Ministry of Infrastructure). Government representatives at the meeting noted that while the data was impressive, the message and urgency related to the data may not be reaching high levels of government. It was recommended that if deferred maintenance is truly a priority for the sector, a higher level, more impactful, report should be developed which clearly highlights the risks of delaying further investment and the impact it is having on health and safety, student experience, and quality of education.

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## Tuition Framework for 2013-14 to 2016-17

**Background:** On March 28, 2013, MTCU announced a new tuition framework for four years, from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

The new framework will cap increases to tuition rates as follows:

Undergraduate Arts & Science and most other programs (Category 1):

Entering students	3%
All continuing students	3%

Professional and graduate programs (Category 2):

Entering students	5%
Students registered in 2012-13 and prior years, and continuing	4% (in 2013-14 and future years until they graduate)
Continuing students under the new framework (entering in 2013-14 and later years)	5%

Overall cap:

Cap on average increase to tuition rates	3%
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On December 5, 2013, MTCU released its *Tuition Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities, 2013-14 to 2016-17*. The document regulates tuition payment processes and dates, program/flat fees and ancillary fees. The following is a summary of major changes in the guidelines.

The framework includes a new tuition billing policy that regulates the timing of fee payments, for OSAP and non-OSAP students, and the amount of deposit that can be charged up to three months before the start of the first term of study. MTCU expects universities to implement the outlined changes for the 2014-15 academic year; these billing practices are mandatory as of 2015-16.

The minimum course load threshold for universities using a program/flat fee framework will be 80% of a normal course load. This change is to be phased-in over three years. Universities that use a program/flat fee structure are not allowed to charge for overload courses. Students with disabilities are exempt from program/flat fee tuition. The moratorium on new program/flat fee tuition structures has been extended to 2016-17.

Universities are not allowed to charge an ancillary fee for confirmation of credential completion and for providing a graduation certificate.

Fees for digital materials that are the property of the student have been added to the list of exemptions from the requirement for an ancillary fee protocol. This means that faculty

will be able to assign digital learning resources and use the evaluative components in these resources. Universities are required to develop their own policies about the use of digital learning resources. COU will soon publish a position paper that universities may find helpful.

COU has collected revised revenue impacts of these guidelines from universities to assess the system wide costs and communicated them to the Ministry.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** January 2014

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## Ontario Tuition Grants

**Current Status:** On January 20, 2014, MTCU announced that students in their final year of a five-year co-op program and students attending private career colleges and other private postsecondary institutions that are eligible for financial aid through OSAP will now be eligible for the 30% Off Ontario Tuition Grant.

The level of the Ontario Tuition Grant (OTG) for each eligible university student increased in 2013-14 by 3% to \$1,730 (consistent with the increase allowed by the tuition framework).

Through the Technical Working Group on Tuition consultations, MTCU has given strong signals that the government would like to implement a tuition-netting scheme in which the value of the OTG is deducted from each eligible student's tuition bill. Working group members have made MTCU staff aware that implementation would require significant resources, including programming changes and time, to be fully operational.

**Background:** In January 2012, the government announced the establishment of the OTG program. University students who are four years or less out of high school with an annual family income of less than \$160,000 can receive a grant of \$800 per term, to a maximum of \$1,600 per year. (In 2012-13, the OTG increased to \$840 per term or \$1680 per year, and in 2013-14, the OTG will increase again, as per above.) Students who receive financial aid OSAP are considered automatically for OTG, while non-OSAP recipient students can apply online to MTCU.

The first phase for the 2011-12 year delivered a 50% benefit commencing in January 2012 (\$800 per eligible university student) and was administered almost entirely by MTCU. Full implementation of the program delivering 100% of the benefit began in 2012-13 and relies upon universities for additional support and administration.

MTCU consulted with colleges and universities on the design and implementation of the Ontario Tuition Grant program. COU established a working group to address implementation issues with MTCU. The working group comprises representatives of the functional areas in universities that will be affected, including registrars, student financial assistance offices, finance and institutional planners.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** January 2014

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## Updated: Student Access Guarantee (SAG)

SAG requirements and impact on the Tuition Set-Aside

**Update:** Under normal circumstances, the Ministry's consultations with COU and Colleges Ontario on the SAG guidelines for 2014-15 would be underway. However, with the election call, the Ministry is not able to hold these policy discussions. It is anticipated, however, that there will be no significant changes to SAG policy in the year ahead, except for increases to the thresholds for calculating the tuition and books shortfall; the current thresholds and the method of indexing them are described below.

**Background:** Following consultation on the SAG guidelines for 2013-14 with COU and Colleges Ontario representatives, the Ministry issued the final guidelines on July 17, 2013.

The SAG guidelines require universities to provide assistance to students to cover their unmet need in the OSAP assessment attributable to tuition and book costs that exceed certain thresholds. For 2013-14, the threshold for calculating the tuition and compulsory fee shortfall is \$5524 (\$6534 for co-op programs); for books the threshold is \$1122. The tuition threshold annual increase is indexed to the maximum allowable tuition increase rate for undergraduate Arts and Science programs, while the book shortfall threshold is indexed to the CPI.

The 2013-14 SAG guidelines provide additional direction regarding levels of non-repayable funding that should be provided to students attending second-entry programs. For second-entry programs, the Guidelines direct institutions to meet at least 20 per cent of tuition/book shortfalls of their second entry students through non-repayable aid. Most institutions will not be affected as their expenditures already exceed this target. On average, in 2012-13, universities met 34 per cent of the value of tuition/book shortfalls of second-entry students with non-repayable aid. Previously, the SAG guidelines provided no direction on the proportion of repayable assistance (e.g. access to a student line of credit) vs non-repayable assistance for second-entry students, but universities had been required since 2011-12 to make formal arrangements with a lender if they intended to meet their SAG obligations through repayable assistance.

As of the 2010-11 OSAP year, institutions are required to automatically provide non-repayable assistance to undergraduate (first-entry) OSAP recipients with tuition/book shortfalls, i.e., the student does not have to make a separate application. The ministry is of the view that institutions generate sufficient funds through the Tuition Set-Aside to cover their SAG obligations.

**Division:** Office of the Secretary to  
Council

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Updated: Ontario Education Number (OEN)

MTCU is moving forward with the implementation of the OEN in the postsecondary sector.

**Update:** At the time the Ontario election was called for June 12, Bill 151 had not yet moved past second reading to the Committee stage.

It can reasonably be anticipated that this legislation will be picked up by the next government. Advocacy efforts around Bill 151 are ongoing, and have received some traction from the NDP, who were interested in making amendments at the Committee stage.

**Background:** Ontario universities have made great progress implementing the OEN. Presently, universities have achieved approximately a 95% compliance rate, with about a 5% error rate within the 95%. However, there are significant challenges with achieving 100% compliance.

The OEN is a student identification number that is assigned by the Ministry of Education (EDU) to elementary and secondary students across the province. The number, which is unique to every student, is used as the key identifier on a student's school records, and follows the student through his or her elementary and secondary education (and upon implementation, postsecondary education too). The OEN is a randomly assigned number, tied to stable information about the student (name, gender, date of birth). The OEN facilitates reliable records on the movement and progress of individual students through elementary and secondary school, while also protecting their privacy through anonymity and encryption, and enables highly detailed research concerning student success.

An OEN Working Group comprising registrars, institutional planners and others has been established. The Working Group has been meeting with MTCU officials since April 2011. MTCU and EDU have been supportive and created some technological tools to improve the efficiency of implementation.

A COU working group continues to work to develop ideas for better supports for OEN implementation (including changes in the Ministry's IT systems supporting the OEN Registry) and a reasonable approach to compliance for funding purposes.

A separate COU Working Group comprised of individuals from the Council on University Planning and Analysis (CUPA), registrars, and members of the Task Force on Access and Privacy Issues has been having ongoing discussion with MTCU about privacy concerns with MTCU's apparent interest in collecting additional personal information, and, in particular, a concern with linking the PFIS-USER database with the OEN Registry.

On the advice of Executive Heads, COU wrote a letter to Ministers John Milloy and Brad Duguid to express concerns related to Bill 151. As discussed in the [Advocacy section](#), Bill 151 proposes to amend various acts including the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and*

*Universities Act (MTCU Act).* The proposed amendments to the MTCU Act would strengthen and clarify the authority of MTCU to collect and use personal information and gives MTCU the authority to require PSE institutions and OUAC to provide personal information. Among the concerns expressed in the letter, COU advocated for a provision in the Bill that would specify that the OEN will be used in research and analysis as an anonymized record, and that personal information will not be used in research or analysis or used for the purposes of generating funding grants to universities or policy development.

COU is presently seeking a commitment from MTCU to develop a policy and process framework that will:

- 1) articulate the Ministry's current plan for the use of personal information, including the use of the OEN in research and analysis, as permitted by the amended MTCU Act;
- 2) set out an appropriate process for engagement of universities to consider options for, and impacts of, proposed changes in MTCU's requirements for reporting personal information and substantive proposed changes in its use of personal information and the OEN; and
- 3) provide appropriate access to anonymized student-record level data by the universities to support their own research and analysis and to support research and analysis in partnership with the Ministry.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2014

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## **Updated: Teacher Education Funding and Proposed Restructuring**

The provincial government has confirmed that it will require restructuring of Bachelor of Education programs to lengthen the program (and further reduce the number of entering students for a transition year in 2015-16).

**Update:** The proposed Ontario budget outlined limited transitional money for particular universities; however, following the Premier's announcement of Ontario's 2014 general election to be held on June 12, all funding is currently on hold and it will be up to the next Minister and government to determine whether to move forward with the proposed transitional funding.

**Background:** Motivated by the current oversupply of teachers, two years ago MTCU announced a reduction in funding for teacher education spaces by approximately \$7.5M. MTCU announced that funding adjustments would take place over two years with an initial \$5M reduction in 2011-12 and the remaining \$2.5M in 2012-13. This reduction has been implemented. The changes announced in June 2013 are in addition to these reductions.

The target date for implementation of the restructured Bachelor of Education program is September 2015.

In June 2013, the provincial government announced publicly that it will require restructuring of Bachelor of Education programs to lengthen the program and further reduce the number of entering students. Also in June, MTCU wrote to universities indicating that it would reduce per-student grants for teacher education programs starting in 2015-16 – reducing the BIU weight for the teacher education program from 2.0 to 1.5 BIUs (which, when interacting with formula fees in the operating grants means a per-student grant reduction of approximately one-third).

COU established a working group of deans of education and institutional planners that has met several times with MTCU to address funding and implementation issues.

MTCU has met bilaterally with each university with a faculty of education to discuss implementation issues and strategies for mitigation of impacts.

In October, Executive Heads of universities with teacher education programs wrote to Minister Duguid requesting revocation of the decision to reduce per-student funding for teacher education programs by one-third, starting in 2015-16. Minister Duguid has written to universities indicating that the government will proceed with the reduction of funding in 2015-16.

COU also wrote to MTCU in January 2014 setting out an advocacy position regarding transition issues related to the longer teacher education programs, and seeking additional transition funding, more flexibility in the use of transition funding, and clarity concerning the basis of funding for teacher education in future years. COU also requested a commitment from the Ministry to engage universities in the development and analysis of options for the creation of a "stand-alone" operating grant for teacher education that MTCU has indicated it will implement beginning in 2015-16.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Updated: Applications for Fall 2014

The Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) releases monthly statistics between January 2014 and September 2014 on applications to first year undergraduate programs.

**Background:** OUAC released the following preliminary secondary school application statistics to the public as of May 14, 2014:

<b>Secondary School Applicants:</b>	
Number of first choice applicants	90,119
% change compared to May 2013	-3.5%
Number of applications	415,493
% change compared to May 2013	-0.8%

<b>Non- Secondary School Applicants:</b>	
Number of first choice applicants	51,644
% change compared to May 2013	9.3%

The deadline for students currently enrolled in an Ontario secondary school, referred to as Secondary School applicants, was January 15, 2014. Historically, 98% of total secondary school applicants submit their applications by this date.

The second group of applicants, referred to as Non-Secondary School applicants, includes all other applicants (mature students, those taking a gap year(s), and those transferring from another institution or jurisdiction). The January 15 deadline does not apply to these students; most choose to apply later in the cycle (in particular, those transferring from college or another university).

More details and regular updates can be found under the "Statistics" tab at [www.ouac.on.ca](http://www.ouac.on.ca).

**Division:** OUAC

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Credit Transfer – Student Mobility and Pathways

The provincial government is seeking improvement of student mobility and credit transfer pathways in the postsecondary sector.

**Background:** All publicly assisted Ontario universities are members of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT). There is a [separate update on ONCAT](#).

COU's Credit Transfer Technical Working Group (with members drawn from the Council on University Planning and Analysis, registrars, and Ministry staff) has provided advice on data and accountability for credit transfer funding, and ONCAT is moving ahead with development of data and an accountability framework.

COU's Credit Transfer Resource Group continues to discuss ways to facilitate university-to-university credit transfer.

The COU Credit Transfer Technical Working Group provided recommendations to MTCU concerning the allocation of the institutional portion of the credit transfer allocation.

In February 2011, MTCU released a credit transfer policy statement and further information about funding to support credit transfer initiatives. The government also announced that it will establish a new coordinating body, ONCAT.

MTCU is providing \$73.7M over five years for various aspects of the credit transfer initiative:

- \$23.5M for an Innovation Fund (for projects to develop new pathways, much like the recent calls for proposals by the College University Consortium Council);
- \$10.6M for a new website and the ongoing operations of the new coordinating body (ONCAT); and
- \$39.6M for annual allocations to institutions to support credit transfer.

MTCU held a roundtable discussion with Executive Heads of colleges and universities in August 2013 concerning credit transfer. Executive Heads from both sectors expressed a strong consensus that the progress being made with the leadership of ONCAT is significant. The policy directions that ONCAT has developed and the projects it is funding are leading the sector in the right direction, and improvements to student mobility are gathering momentum. Participants at the roundtable urged the Ministry to continue its funding support for ONCAT and to continue to work with ONCAT to reach its policy objectives.

In February 2014, Credit Transfer Resource Group members met with ONCAT to establish a short-term working group to address best practices in credit transfer policies. The group's goals are to review existing policies, develop a set of principles that could lead to best practices, and identify pathways to goals/outcomes. As part of this initiative, the group will consult with all universities and others.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** March 2014

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## Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)

Universities are participating in a new coordinating body for credit transfer.

**Background:** ONCAT has been incorporated and a board has been elected. The university members of the board are: Dominic Giroux (Laurentian) as the university sector co-chair of the board, Peter Ricketts (Carleton) and Rhonda Lenton (York). The college members are: Glen Vollebregt (St. Lawrence College, as of May 2014) as the college sector co-chair, Mary Preece (Sheridan College), and Baldev Pooni (Georgian College). The board includes ex officio members from COU, Colleges Ontario, OUAC and the colleges' application centre. The board also includes student and external members. In October 2012, Glenn Craney was announced as the Founding Executive Director of ONCAT.

ONCAT will advance implementation of a province-wide credit transfer system by:

- Expanding and improving student transfer pathways that respond to student demand, through continuation of funding for pathways projects as under the College University Consortium Council (CUCC);
- Expanding and improving a web portal for information for students about credit transfer ([ONTransfer](#));
- Improving transparency and access to information about transfer pathways and credit transfer;
- Supporting student success for transfer students (for example, improving graduation rates of transfer students, increasing student support services); and
- Providing professional development and best practices forums.

Project funding will be available through the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund to support a variety of projects that will expand student pathways, create more seamless educational experiences and increase collaboration throughout Ontario's postsecondary education system.

In September, 2013, ONCAT released a consultation paper concerning its priorities and proposed activities over the coming months: *Forging new pathways to improve student mobility in the province of Ontario*.

ONCAT's budget for operating expenses in 2012-13 is almost \$1 million. The allocation for project funds was \$5.4 million in 2011-12 and \$7.8 million in 2012-13.

On January 20, 2014, ONCAT launched a Course-to-Course Transfer Guide (C2C Guide). This new database will allow students to explore options for credit transfer and at participating universities and colleges across the province. The database also provides information for high school students and advisors. Approximately 33 colleges and universities are participating in the initial phase of this project.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** January 2014

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## Updated: Teaching and Learning

Ontario universities are collaborating to share ideas and information on teaching and learning innovations to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

**Update:** Planning for the 2014 Learning Outcomes Symposium is underway. The Symposium, entitled, *Learning Outcomes: A Toolkit for Assessment*, will take place at the Eaton Chelsea Hotel in Toronto on October 16 and 17, 2014, and will offer hands-on, interactive workshops to faculty, deans, senior administrators, staff of teaching and learning centers, and others involved in the assessment of learning outcomes.

Co-sponsors for this event include the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS), the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), COU, and the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB).

**Background:** The Council of Ontario Educational Developers (COED) convened a summit on October 18, 2013 at McMaster University: “Faculty Engagement in Educational Development” (FEED). The aim of the summit was to bring together colleagues from across Ontario to explore various models of faculty engagement and to identify barriers and enablers.

A symposium entitled *Learning Outcomes Assessment, Practically Speaking* was held on April 22 and 23, 2013. Nearly 400 delegates attended more than fifty workshops and other sessions at the very successful event. Co-sponsors for this event included the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), and the Canadian Publishers’ Council. The symposium offered interactive and hands-on workshops to guide participants through the “how to” of assessing learning outcomes. Delegates included senior administrators, faculty members, and educational developers from Ontario universities and colleges, provincial government staff from across Canada, and an international roster of guest speakers who led workshops on the assessment of learning outcomes in a range of disciplines.

The first Symposium on Learning Outcomes – co-sponsored by COU, HEQCO, and the Quality Council – was held in April 2012 in Toronto. The three hundred delegates included senior administrators, faculty members, educational developers from Ontario universities and colleges, provincial government staff from across Canada, and an international roster of guest speakers.

During the winter of 2011-12, many universities took part in the “Back to Class” initiative. In some cases, universities employed media relations strategies to promote stories about excellence in teaching at their universities through traditional and social media. In other cases, they invited politicians from all levels of government to participate in classrooms and labs, tours of teaching and learning centres, and demonstrations of effective teaching approaches. This initiative helped to celebrate success in this area

and to build awareness from both institutional and public policy perspectives about innovations in the teaching and learning experience.

COU's report, ***Beyond the Sage on the Stage: Innovative and Effective Teaching and Learning at Ontario Universities*** is intended to encourage a more accurate and positive perception of teaching on Ontario campuses. The report was launched with a well-attended "Toast to Teaching Excellence" reception on April 16, 2012 at Queen's Park. The Minister, MPPs, government officials and staff from MTCU and other ministries, as well as stakeholders from our sector, were invited to attend this celebration of how universities are finding new ways to engage students.

An earlier report titled ***Ensuring the Value of University Degrees in Ontario: A Guide to Learning Outcomes, Degree Level Expectations and the Quality Assurance Process in Ontario*** was released in November 2011. The report explains how Ontario universities ensure the value and quality of their degrees. The report was circulated to government and stakeholders, and received positive media attention.

COU is developing strategies to help universities take initiative to meet their teaching and learning objectives. A Teaching and Learning Task Force has been established under the aegis of OCAV. The Task Force addresses a range of teaching and learning issues, including recommending effective practices to improve instruction, student engagement, and learning outcomes.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Updated: Ontario Universities Online

### Update:

**Centre of Excellence:** A joint Ontario Online Steering Committee (with membership from colleges, universities, Colleges Ontario, COU, ONCAT, and Contact North) has formed and is working to articulate the mandate of the new Centre of Excellence announced by the Ministry. The Centre will be a new incorporated member organization to support technology-enabled learning in the sector. Universities' participation in this initiative is being led by a university steering committee formed by OCAV.

**Background:** In December 2013, MTCU announced the Ontario Online initiative to universities and colleges (a [news release](#) was circulated on January 13, 2014). As a main part of this initiative, the Ministry has made available \$4.65M for the university sector in 2013-14. This funding will support the development of online courses, and will also fund several projects in support of a new Centre of Excellence in online learning. This funding is being administered by a steering committee of OCAV members.

MTCU's announcement is consistent with the directions discussed at the Ministry's July 2013 roundtable. The new initiative will support collaborative work across colleges and universities in the development of online education in Ontario.

In early January 2014, COU issued a series of calls for proposals that will be funded under the new initiative announced by the Ministry. Universities were invited to submit proposals for development or redevelopment of online courses – introductory or foundational courses, or courses to support collaborative delivery of low-enrolment programs, or French-language courses. Universities and others in the sector (consultants or other third party vendors) were invited to respond with expressions of interest in five projects, addressing:

- development of a student portal;
- quality standards;
- effective supports for faculty;
- assessment supports for online courses; and
- cost and revenue sharing models to support university collaboration in delivery of online courses.

165 proposals for online courses were received from 19 Ontario universities. In addition, 15 expressions of interest were submitted for the five strategic projects. Following a review process developed by the steering committee, 68 courses and five projects were awarded funding. The transfer payment agreement (TPA) for this initiative is held by Wilfrid Laurier University on behalf of the university sector. Universities will work to have new and redesigned online courses ready for fall 2014 delivery.

These directions are both consistent with and potentially overlapping with the proposed mandate and functions of the consortium under development among universities (Ontario Universities Online [OUO]). COU will be working with CO, and with the OUO Steering Committee, to ensure appropriate alignment of these initiatives.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2014

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## International

**Background:** COU's 2014 provincial pre-budget submission recommends that government allow a portion of funding already allocated for expansion of graduate education to be used for operating grants for international PhD students in order to attract top graduate students from around the world.

On January 15, the federal government launched a new International Education Strategy that seeks to double the number of international students studying in Canada (to 450,000) by the year 2022. Funding of \$5M per year (announced in the last budget) will be dedicated to the strategy, with most of the money going towards "branding and marketing Canada as a world-class education destination." The strategy will target Brazil, China, India, Mexico, North Africa, the Middle East and Vietnam to improve links to and partnerships with international PSE institutions. Over two years, \$13M will be invested in Mitacs, a national not-for-profit organization that helps Canadian university students obtain placements in academic institutions overseas.

COU continues to liaise between MTCU and member institutions regarding the process for universities to apply to become "designated institutions" under Citizenship and Immigration Canada's International Student Program (ISP). Beginning in the spring of 2014, student visas will only be issued for students who have been offered admission to an institution which has been designated by a provincial or territorial government as eligible to enroll international students.

COU continues to facilitate international delegations as well as to act as a clearing house for information and opportunities for our members. The most recent delegation was led by the Hong Kong Secretary of Education, who asked university representatives to review and consider filling out a pro forma that advertises the requirements for Hong Kong students to study abroad. The Ontario representatives agreed to bring it forward to the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) for consideration. This information now has been sent to International Offices at institutions, who will work with academic vice-presidents and registrars as appropriate to complete the pro forms.

This delegation represents one of many that COU has hosted since the former Premier announced his desire to expand international recruitment. Since then, the Ontario government has reduced its budget for international marketing efforts and implemented a fee on non-PhD international students (as per the [International Student Recovery](#) section).

**Division:** Communications and Public Affairs, Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** January 2014

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## Updated: International Student Recovery

**Update:** COU's 2014 provincial pre-budget submission called for the government to eliminate the International Student Recovery (ISR), or to at least cap the recovery at the 2013-14 level. Despite this, the proposed 2014 Ontario Budget indicates an ongoing assumption that the ISR will continue to be levied.

**Background:** In the March 2012 budget, the government announced that, beginning in 2013-14, MTCU will reduce transfer payments to each college and university to recover \$750 for every international student (excluding PhD students). The recovery would be phased in on a cohort basis with new entering students in 2013-14. In future years, entering students and returning students from the 2013-14 cohort onwards will be included in the count of students used to calculate the recovery.

MTCU consulted about implementation details with a COU working group, comprising Council on University Planning and Analysis (CUPA) and international office representatives. Consultations focused on technical elements of the recovery including count dates, the student counting metric (for example, full-time equivalents or headcounts), the treatment of part-time students and withdrawals, the treatment of 10- and 12-month programs at the Masters' level, and the revenue envelope from which the recovery will be made.

In April 2013, MTCU released guidelines for implementation of the ISR. As announced in the 2012 budget, MTCU will reduce transfer payments to each college and university to recover \$750 for every international student (excluding PhD students) who is entering a program in Ontario in 2013-14. The 2013 budget indicated an ongoing assumption that the ISR will continue to be levied on new and continuing international students (excluding PhD students) and continue to grow.

COU has written to MTCU requesting that the ISR be based on the government's fiscal objectives, and not strictly tied to the numbers of international students. The government should determine and announce its annual target for the recovery, and allocate it among universities proportional to each universities share of non-PhD international students.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Efficiency targets

**Background:** The 2012 Ontario Budget announced the government's intention to reduce the operating grants of colleges and universities beginning in 2013-14. At the time of the budget announcement, MTCU indicated that the university sector reduction would be \$28M in 2013-14 and \$55.5M in 2014-15.

On April 12, 2013, MTCU released a memo that confirmed the reduction in operating grants for 2013-14 of \$28.6M, and also set out each institution's reduction. The memo indicated that the reduction in 2014-15 will use the same method, but with a doubling of the reduction (projected to total \$58M in 2014-15).

The reduction will be allocated to enrolment-based grants, which include: The Basic Operating Grant, Graduate Expansion Grant, Undergraduate Accessibility Grant, and the Nursing Grant. To implement efficiency targets, the Basic Operating Income per Basic Income Unit (BOI per BIU) rate will be reduced in 2013-14 by 0.7%. This will translate into 0.9% reduction in grants per BIU.

MTCU stated its policy intent that the reduction should not adversely affect students, and indicated that the ministry "will work with" institutions on implementation strategies, listing several examples (such as vacancy management and collaborative purchasing). There will be a requirement to report on how each university has implemented the reduction, but details about the required reporting have not yet been released. COU will continue to advocate that reporting be minimal, and in narrative rather than in detailed financial reporting.

**Division:** Policy and Analysis

**Updated:** May 2013

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## Updated: Quality Assurance

Operation of the new Quality Assurance Framework

**Update:** The Quality Council and its Appraisal Committee are meeting monthly to review and approve new program proposals. The Audit Committee meets as needed to review Audit Reports. The first Audit Reports produced under the Quality Assurance Framework were for Brock University and the University of Ottawa. The Summary Audit Reports are available on the [Quality Council Website](#) (at the hyperlink).

Audit site visits for this academic year have been completed at Western, Queen's and Carleton Universities. Final reports from these audits will be approved in the coming weeks.

A one-day meeting of university key contacts in Quality Assurance planned by the Quality Council took place on April 15, 2014 at Hart House in Toronto. Every university was represented at the meeting with 75 participants in total. The program focused on issues that were identified in advance by the QA contacts. Evaluation feedback was extremely positive.

The Quality Council continues to work with COU, the Ontario Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS), ONCAT and the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) on plans for a third Learning Outcomes event. It is scheduled for October 16 and 17, 2014 at the Eaton Chelsea Hotel in Toronto. The theme this year is *Learning Outcomes Assessment: a Toolkit for Assessment*. A call for presentations has gone out and the registration site should go live in the next month. For more information, see the [Teaching and Learning](#) section or contact Amy Stich at [astich@cou.on.ca](mailto:astich@cou.on.ca).

There will be some turnover in membership on the Quality Council in July. Brenda Brouwer, Queen's (representing Graduate Deans) will replace Sue Horton; Jeff Smith, Carleton, will replace Patrick Oosthuizen as a COU Academic Colleague representative. The COU Executive Committee recently approved the appointment of Beverly Harris as the new citizen member of the Quality Council, effective July 1, 2014. Ms. Harris is a former chair of the governing board of Wilfrid Laurier University and a former Chair of the Council of Chairs of Ontario Universities (CCOU).

**Background:** The Quality Council and its Appraisal Committee meet monthly to review new program proposals. The Quality Council website includes decisions on new program approvals along with a brief description of the programs approved.

The Quality Assurance Framework was approved by the Executive Heads of Ontario universities in April 2010. The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance was established shortly thereafter with its first meeting in July 2010. The quality assurance processes that fell under the mandate of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies and the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee were completed by the end of June 2011. The transition of quality assurance responsibilities to the Quality Council is now complete.

**Division:** Quality Assurance

**Updated:** May 2014

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## COU Reports and Symposia

**Conference Board of Canada research and report:** COU has provided input to a report on innovation that will update their 2003 Innovation Skills Profile as well as reflecting on the role that postsecondary education is playing in developing innovation skills. A final report is expected to be available shortly.

**Experiential learning report:** Building on the success of the report, *Entrepreneurship at Ontario Universities: Fuelling Success*, COU is preparing a report to showcase the applied learning opportunities that are positioning students for their careers. The report was released on March 26.

**Going Greener Report:** In June 2013, COU published the [2012 Going Greener survey report](#) (available at the hyperlink). The 2013 edition – COU's fifth annual Going Greener Report – will be released in spring 2014. A committee also has been created to guide the overhaul of the survey and report for the 2014 edition.

**Labour Outcomes Report:** COU published [University Works](#) on February 24, a report highlighting the labour market outcomes of university graduates. Using data from Statistics Canada, the report confirmed that university graduates experienced the highest employment growth of any education group over the last decade, earn more and have lower unemployment rates.

**Deferred Maintenance Report:** COU is developing an advocacy report to raise awareness about the growing problem of maintaining buildings on university campuses and the implications of deferring it. For additional information, see the [deferred maintenance](#) section.

**David Smith Dinner:** The annual Award Dinner, honouring Dalton McGuinty for his leadership in education, hosted representatives of government, business and the higher education community on October 30, 2013. The event was a great success and the speech, video and photos can be [found on the COU website](#). This year's Award Dinner is scheduled for October 8, 2014.

**2014 Learning Outcomes Symposium:** The Symposium will take place at the Eaton Chelsea Hotel in Toronto on October 16 and 17, 2014. Entitled, *Learning Outcomes: A Toolkit for Assessment*, the Symposium will offer hands-on, interactive workshops to faculty, deans, senior administrators, staff of teaching and learning centers, and others involved in the assessment of learning outcomes. For additional information, see the [Teaching and Learning](#) section.

**2013 Symposium of the Ontario Research Chairs in Public Policy:** The prosperity-focused event, the last in the “Tackling Ontario’s Challenges” symposia series, was held on March 19. The education-, health- and sustainability-focused events were held in spring and fall 2013 at Glendon College, York University. For information about the symposia series, visit the [Tackling Ontario’s Challenges website](#) (at the hyperlink).

**2013 Conference of Ontario University Board Members:** Building on the successful Ontario University Board Member Orientation and Training Session of November 2012, the Council of Chairs of Ontario Universities (CCOU) hosted the 2013 Conference of Ontario University Board Members on November 8 and 9. Aimed at all members of the governing boards of Ontario universities, the Conference addressed the ongoing changes and challenges in the university sector and their effects on the fiduciary duties of board members. The Conference featured His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada as a keynote speaker. You can [watch His Excellency's keynote speech](#) on the COU website. Planning for the 2014 conference is now underway.

**Division:** Communications and Public Affairs/Corporate Services/Office of the Secretary to Council

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Updated: University Pension Plans

Sustainability challenges, responding to the Government's agenda on pension reform

**Update:** A highly successful Ontario Universities Pension Symposium, co-hosted by Wilfrid Laurier (WLU) and Aon Hewitt, was held on May 6 at Wilfrid Laurier, with over-subscribed attendance. Attendees included representatives from unions, faculty associations, university administrations and other interested members of the university community. The symposium provided participants with the opportunity to hear about pension issues facing the sector, as well as possible solutions to address the long term sustainability of plans.

### Background:

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	Status
50/50 cost-sharing of current service costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Substantial progress has been made in increasing the level of employee contributions through collective bargaining negotiations at a number of Ontario universities. Some plans have already achieved 50/50. COU (through Aon Hewitt) continues to track progress.</li><li>The Ministry of Finance/government continues to see this is a priority goal toward pension sustainability and one of several directions signaled to achieve permanent solvency relief from government through regulation changes.</li></ul>
Extension of Temporary Solvency Relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Ministry of Finance announced an <b>additional extension of temporary solvency relief</b> in October 2013 for a number of universities. The final regulation was posted in early December 2013. COU had advocated for the extension of relief for an additional three years.</li><li>The <b>final regulation for Stage 2 temporary solvency relief</b> was filed on May 8, 2014 for a number of universities.</li></ul>
Jointly-Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP) feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Having completed a draft straw model for a sector JSPP through the COU University Pensions Task Force, Aon Hewitt has prepared a costing of the JSPP for a sample of universities under a baseline set of assumptions. The costing information will aid in analyzing the viability of this option. The Task Force is examining transition issues in its feasibility work.</li></ul>

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	Status
Pooled Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BPS Pensions Branch (Ministry of Finance) has established a technical Working Group on Pooled Asset Management to advise on the design, governance and transition issues associated with the implementation of a new pooled asset management entity for the BPS.</li> <li>Membership of the group includes representation from government (Ministry of Finance), Ontario Pension Board, WSIB, COU, University of Toronto Asset Management, Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One. John Ilkiw serves as COU's representative.</li> <li>Their first meeting was held in June, and a second meeting in November. The Working Group's Terms of Reference have been revised and the group will now provide an interim report in the winter with a final proposal to the Minister of Finance in spring 2014.</li> </ul>
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) Pensions Research Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OCUFA launched a research project to analyze issues around existing plans and the regulatory regime and to review options for moving forward including a sector JSPP. This project is funded by MTCU.</li> <li>The project scope covers communication with OCUFA's own members as well as the "University Pension Coalition" which includes all major bargaining groups within the sector.</li> <li>OCUFA is focused on research analysis of university pension data collected by COU, and continues to be interested in the availability of the most up-to-date data possible. The Pensions Task Force developed data-sharing protocols with OCUFA and has released to them the data package prepared by Aon Hewitt.</li> </ul>

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	Status
MTCU Joint Working Group (JWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Joint Working Group (JWG) is a forum initiated by MTCU for discussion and sharing of information.</li> <li>Participants include: MTCU, Ministry of Finance, COU's University Pensions Task Force and representatives from OCUFA.</li> <li>A first meeting of the JWG was held in June 2013 to present the straw model of a JSPP. A second meeting in September discussed the costing of the JSPP model, as well as potential governance issues that would need to be addressed in moving to a JSPP.</li> <li>A second meeting in November 2013 consisted of a discussion with a number of guests, including Jim Leech (President, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan) and representatives from CAAT.</li> <li>A third meeting was held in January, consisting of further guests, including Harry Arthurs, Jana Steele (Partner in Osler's Pension Benefits Group who assisted in New Brunswick's pension reform), and Hugh Mackenzie (member of the Board of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, the Ontario Pension Board and the Investment Committee of the Canada Post Pension Plan).</li> <li>The final meeting, held on February 25, consisted of presentations by OCUFA on the outcome of their research project and straw model presentation that consisted of the top benefits from a variety of existing university plans.</li> <li>As the 2013-14 work of the JWG has concluded, COU has submitted a request to MTCU for additional funding to continue to work on solutions to the pension issue in 2014-15.</li> </ul>

The University Pensions Task Force completed its first major milestone on its feasibility study of a sector-wide Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP). Allan Shapira, technical advisor from Aon Hewitt, and members of the COU Task Force met with the Ministry of Finance Broader Public Sector (BPS) Pensions Branch and MTCU in April 2013, to present an outline of a JSPP straw model and to articulate key issues that would need to be overcome, or to be part of a government framework, to implement such a model within the sector. The discussion also touched on the option of one or more plans joining the CAAT Plan (college sector JSPP); however, analysis of this alternative is still in the early stages. The Council of Senior Administrative Offices (CSAO) Pensions Interest Group met in July to review the cost implications of the JSPP model and begin the discussion of governance issues that would need to be resolved in implementing a JSPP.

The Task Force is mapping a communications plan for the Pension Sustainability Project which includes:

- Identifying and prioritizing stakeholders;
- Developing key messages;
- Assessing stakeholder needs and tailoring content, timing and approach;
- Identifying initial as well as ongoing communication needs by stakeholders; and
- Monitoring of stakeholders' positions and media messaging by both COU and members.

In 2012-13, CSAO's Working Group on University Pension Plans' (WGUPP) mandate on pension sustainability reflected the direction outlined in the 2012 Ontario Budget which included the following initiatives:

- consolidation of assets for investment management purposes;
- 50/50 sharing of current service costs with plan members; and
- a sector-wide JSPP.

In the 2012 budget, the government had signaled its intent to introduce framework legislation that would pool the investment management of smaller public-sector pension plans. Under this framework, management of assets could be transferred to a new entity or to an existing large public-sector fund. The former Minister of Finance's Special Advisor – BPS Pension Efficiencies, William Morneau, developed a framework for this change in consultation with stakeholders, including representatives from the university sector. In the spring of 2013, the Ministry of Finance established a Pooled Asset Management Working Group (see above chart).

The 2012 budget also indicated that the government expects single-employer plans to move to 50/50 cost-sharing of contributions between employers and plan members within five years (by 2017). Temporary solvency relief measures are offered as an incentive and further incentives may be considered. The government has indicated its willingness to support efforts to convert single-employer plans to multi-employer JSPPs.

In 2010, the government introduced a two-stage Temporary Solvency Funding Relief program. Stage One effectively provides a four-year window during which employers are not required to fund solvency deficiencies. To access the package, universities had to submit a sustainability plan to the Ministry of Finance. At the end of Stage One, plans are assessed for sustainability. Those plans demonstrating "substantial progress" are eligible to enter Stage Two. In Stage Two, universities are permitted to amortize their solvency deficits over a period of up to 10 years (rather than five). Depending on the timing of individual plans' Stage Two valuation dates, the requirement to make solvency special payments for some institutions begins as early as December 31, 2013. The size of these payments could have serious implications for university operating budgets. Since December 2012, COU has been advocating with government on behalf of the sector for an extension on the temporary solvency relief measures.

**Division:** Office of the President

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## **Updated: Benchmarking Administrative Performance Indicators**

**Update:** In February 2014, CSAO approved the Benchmark Working Group's (BWG) short-list of indicators and directed the group to proceed with further development of data sources and definitions, data-sharing protocols, and pilot testing of indicators already being collected. Since then, discussions have been held with various COU affiliates on how to proceed. A discussion to confirm the proposed approach will take place at CSAO's May meeting. The indicators will be refined and pilot-tested with a small group of universities over the summer, and the Working Group will report to CSAO in the fall with recommendations for full project implementation.

**Background:** In fall 2012, CSAO established the BWG, chaired by Carol McAulay (Laurentian). The objectives of the BWG are to build on internal initiatives (e.g., the Financial Health Survey) and external best practices (financial and administrative benchmarking initiatives in the broader public sector) in order to develop recommended administrative benchmark indicators for CSAO to consider for implementation. The benchmark exercise is intended to help university administrators compare key performance indicators and exchange information on ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

**Division:** Corporate Services

**Updated:** May 2014

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## Updated: Collaborative Procurement

**Update:** The first (2012-13) progress report for the CSAO Collaborative Procurement (CP) project was submitted to the Ministry of Government Services (MGS) in April. The report noted a sector-wide, year-over-year increase in joint purchasing of seven percent. As the letter to the Ministry noted, the initiative was launched part-way through the 2012-13 implementation year. Greater gains are anticipated for 2013-14 with new joint procurement processes and promotional communication initiatives underway.

Some universities have recently purchased new e-procurement software to enable more collaborative purchasing. This platform, however, is far from system-wide. Other universities are seeking funding opportunities to join the e-procurement consortium.

The Ontario University Procurement Management Association (OUPMA, a CSAO affiliate) continues to lead on implementation of the Collaborative Procurement initiative in support of the Steering Committee. The next annual report is due in March 2015.

**Background:** MGS is leading an initiative to increase CP in the broader public sector. Increased collaboration is designed to increase the proportion of purchasing contracts negotiated with partners (other universities, cities, school boards, etc.), leading to lower per-unit prices and lower procurement processing costs. To meet MGS's objectives, CSAO struck a steering committee chaired by Don O'Leary (Guelph) and composed of three CSAO members and three university procurement directors.

The initiative aims to build on the ongoing work led by OUPMA as well as local, regional, and national collaborative efforts.

The CP initiative has highlighted the need for enabling technologies to fully realize the potential benefits of CP. A multi-institutional proposal under MTCU's Productivity and Innovation Fund for e-procurement software was not, however, successful.

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## **Updated: Communicating the Challenge of Financial Sustainability**

**Update:** CSAO engaged the Education Advisory Board (EAB) to conduct a research study to identify best practices within North American universities around this topic. EAB submitted their report “Communicating Financial Sustainability Challenges – Internal and External Communication Strategies” to COU in April 2014. The May CSAO meeting featured a brief presentation on highlights of the report and a group discussion.

**Background:** The financial situation currently facing universities reflects structural challenges created by changes in government policy and regulations, combined with rising compensation costs, deferred maintenance pressures, and other rising costs. Roundtable discussions at previous CSAO forums identified the need for concise, powerful communication tools (e.g., financial scenario-based projections and key messages supported by info-graphics) to help universities effectively communicate the magnitude and complexity of the financial sustainability challenge to a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Such tools and strategies are intended to cultivate a climate in which the need for fundamental change, both within the sector and in government policy, is widely understood and accepted.

CSAO has established a small working group to steer this project. This group is working with the Education Advisory Board, a US-based higher education research institute, to investigate best-practice financial communications tools used by North American universities. The tools will be made available to administrators to engage in conversations with stakeholders about the forces driving the sustainability challenge within their institution and across the sector as a whole.

This project supports and is supported by other work underway in the sector, including pension plan reform, administrative benchmarking, and financial health analysis and reporting.

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## Updated: Advocacy Initiatives – University Operations

**Update:** On behalf of CSAO, there are five operational advocacy issues underway:

- **Regulatory framework for the payment of contractors:** Bill 69 (*The Prompt Payment Act*) was a Private Member's Bill introduced by MPP Steven Del Duca that passed second reading with all-party support before dying on the order paper with the provincial election call. Just prior to the dissolution of the Ontario legislature, the government announced an Independent Review of the *Construction Lien Act*, a move designed to address concerns about the payment system raised in the course of Bill 69 consultations. Along with other broader public sector organizations, COU is monitoring the Independent Review process and will intervene as necessary to advocate for the interests of the university sector.
- **Liability for contractors/subcontractors' health and safety:** The Ministry of Labour has recently begun holding site owners liable for the health and safety of construction contractors (including subcontractors) working on their property. In the past, contractors were solely responsible for the health and safety of their employees. COU is working with the Ontario Association of Physical Plant Administrators (OAPPA) and the Council of Environmental Health and Safety Officers (CEHSO) – both CSAO affiliates – to obtain legal advice to review universities' standard contract language, provide additional language for use in the new legal climate, and propose any other changes in practice required to minimize liability.
- **Energy and emissions regulations:** The university sector is regulated by and reports to the Ministry of Energy on its energy consumption/production levels and greenhouse gas emissions. The Ministry of the Environment has proposed new regulations that would overlap (and conflict) with the regulatory framework established by the Ministry of Energy. These regulations would also require universities to purchase emission credits – an expense that operating budgets are ill-equipped to absorb. COU and OAPPA met with the two Ministries at the end of March and discussions are ongoing regarding the regulatory overlap and reporting burden.
- **Campus policing review:** The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is undertaking a review of policing services in the province. Many universities (and one college) use Special Constables who are granted authority to enforce certain Acts in local jurisdictions. COU is working with the Ontario Association of College and University Security Administrators (OACUSA), a CSAO affiliate, to influence the review to ensure that Special Constable Programs may continue to be used effectively by universities and colleges, given a framework for appropriate training, oversight, and delegated authorities – including at satellite campuses. A second round of consultations is expected later in 2014.
- **Unpaid internships and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage:** MTCU recently issued a new WSIB coverage guideline, prompting the

need for new templates and processes for universities, students and placement employers. CEHSO, a CSAO Affiliate, developed a set of templates and a toolkit, and is undertaking a legal review of the templates/process in English and French before circulating them for use. There are also gaps in WSIB coverage for some students (e.g., in continuing education) and CSAO is engaging in advocacy with MTCU to see these gaps filled.

**Background:** The university sector is subject to regulation on a wide range of operational issues, including Broader Public Sector financial directives (e.g., procurement, travel expenses, salary disclosure), health and safety regulations for workers, environmental regulations, and building codes. These issues require that CSAO and its affiliates, and in some cases other affiliates of COU, liaise with multiple government organizations. Where possible, issues are addressed by CSAO affiliates (sometimes in partnership with their college counterparts), and they are brought to CSAO/COU for action when necessary.

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## Updated: Research Matters

**Update:** The Curiosity Shop has been travelling across the province over the last few months and setting up shop in public venues, where members of the public are being asked to submit their curious questions. Questions from each of the curiosity stops are being selected and answered by Ontario university researchers and posted then on the Research Matters website at [www.YourOntarioResearch.ca/curiosity-shop/](http://www.YourOntarioResearch.ca/curiosity-shop/).

Building on the success of the Curiosity Shop, Research Matters will be launching the Curiosity Cruiser over the summer months. Staffed by four university students, the cruiser will travel across the province, stopping at festivals, events, farmers markets, and other public venues. To engage the public in university research, the cruiser staff will be asking the public to identify “curious objects” along the way. The objects will be related to university research and will be identified on the Research Matters website after each stop. Look for the Curiosity Cruiser calendar, student blog, and curious objects on the Research Matters website in June.

In addition, after successfully popping up at Queen’s Park in February 2014, the Research Matters Pop-up Research Park popped up again on Parliament Hill on April 30. The Pop-up Research Park featured 12 researchers from across the province, who engaged in research related conversations with over 60 MPs, Senators and guests.

Research Matters participated in the 2014 OCE Discovery conference once again and will be participating in the Federation of Social Sciences and Humanities Congress.

**Background:** In 2010, OCUR identified the need for a new approach to ensure effective delivery of its research message to multiple audiences.

Research Matters is an integrated communications strategy that includes a website ([www.yourontarioresearch.ca](http://www.yourontarioresearch.ca)), public events, media relations, advertising and social media (Twitter: @OntarioResearch, Facebook: [www.facebook.com/YourOntarioResearch](http://www.facebook.com/YourOntarioResearch)).

The campaign is guided by three major principles:

- *Public accountability and transparency* – Research Matters aims to instill in its audiences a sense of ownership and pride in Ontario university research.
- *Public engagement with research* – Research Matters will help people think about Ontario university research in new ways by showing its impact where they live, work and play.
- *Long-term commitment* – The campaign is a long-term venture, involving sustained efforts to broaden and deepen the public’s understanding – and experience – of why research matters.

The second year of the public lecture series has researchers answering the question “What Matters Now” and provides an opportunity for the audience to listen, debate and

have their say. The free public events for this year's Research Matters campaign took place in Hamilton, at the McMaster Innovation Park on November 4, 2013, in London at the London Children's Museum on November 26, 2013, in Thunder Bay at the Fort William Historical Park on March 4, 2014 and in the GTA at the McMichael Art Gallery on April 9, 2014. The final public event for the year was held in Kingston at Kingston City Hall on May 21, 2014.

In February 2014, Research Matters ran a highly successful virtual scavenger hunt. Over the course of four weeks, the scavenger hunt had participants answering 21 video clues on research from each of Ontario's 21 universities. Successful student participants were eligible to win cash prizes and other successful participants were eligible to win branded Research Matters merchandise. Winners were announced at the Thunder Bay "What Matters Now" public lecture.

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## Updated: High Performance Research Computing (HPRC)

### Update:

**Provincial Activity:** Compute Ontario, which will oversee Ontario's advanced computing, has been incorporated officially and Dan Sinai, Associate Vice-President, Western University, has been named as its inaugural Chair. The first meeting of the interim board for Compute Ontario was held in April.

**Federal activity:** In February, the Digital Infrastructure Leadership Council held a highly successful national summit in Ottawa. The event was well-attended, with more than 200 participants from across the country. Documentation from the event can be found at <http://digitalleadership.ca/di-summit-2014/>.

In April, Compute Canada announced that Mark Dietrich had been appointed as its new CEO. Mr. Dietrich is a former board member of Compute Canada and CEO of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

**Background:** Over the past decade, research undertaken at our institutions and in commercial labs has become increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure.

Given the way in which this infrastructure was funded and developed over time, often based on regional or local need, Canada has created a diffuse digital infrastructure platform. In order to better understand the issue, OCUR and other partners, such as the Ontario government, have begun to turn their attention to Canada and Ontario's future digital infrastructure needs and building a more efficient and cohesive system from the various component parts that currently exist. The speed of change in this area makes this file complex and one that will require effective partnership, evidence-based policy development, and sustained, long-term advocacy efforts.

**Provincial Activity:** A significant amount of work has been undertaken on this file at the provincial level in the past year. Specifically, the province has:

- commissioned an asset mapping exercise that documents the high performance computing assets (including hardware, software, and staffing and financial information) in Ontario universities, hospitals, and health research institutes;
- worked with Western University (as lead on the CFI Major Sciences Initiatives [MSI]) to ensure that the first period of the MSI project is funded;
- convened a Strategic Advisory Committee of local and international experts to advise in the creation of a new organization that was provisionally called High Performance Research Compute Ontario (HPRCO). This work developed the parameters of Compute Ontario, which includes both compute and data in its mandate; and
- hired outside expertise to work with the Strategic Advisory Committee on the strategic framework and governance for HPRCO, as well as to complete the

process for incorporation and budgeting. These consultants also conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and influencers.

**Federal Activity:** Interest in the digital infrastructure file has increased at the federal level. The federal Science, Technology, and Innovation Council (STIC) has established a working group to look at the issue; CFI hired a consultant to pull together information on the current state of digital infrastructure in Canada; and Industry Canada has indicated that they are considering what work needs to be undertaken on this file. In October 2013, the Tri-Councils and CFI released their consultation document, entitled ***Capitalizing on Big Data: Toward a Policy Framework for Advancing Digital Scholarship in Canada.***

In 2012, through the leadership of the Canadian University Council of Communication and Information Officers (CUCCIO), the Leadership Council for Digital Infrastructure was created. The Council comprises members of the research community, service providers and funding agencies. It is co-chaired by Steven Liss, Vice-President Research at Queen's University, and Jay Black, Chief Information Officer at Simon Fraser University. Its objectives are to provide a national platform for discussions among all stakeholders toward a framework for digital infrastructure and to identify, discuss, and address issues associated with providing Canadian researchers access to the tools and resources that they require to enable research within and across a wide range of disciplines.

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## Updated: AccessibleCampus.ca

**Update:** Since the launch of [AccessibleCampus.ca](http://AccessibleCampus.ca), new resources have regularly been posted to the website. These new resources include: a video workshop by Dr. Mike Condra that examines the continuum of mental health and opportunities for educators to support students with mental illness, an introductory video for educators on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), posters to raise awareness about mental health, an article and checklist on teaching outside the classroom, and the latest news on accessibility law, related events and conferences and other initiatives underway in the sector.

In the coming weeks, the following resources will be posted to [www.accessiblecampus.ca](http://www.accessiblecampus.ca): a Mental Health Handbook, an article and checklist on accessible laboratories, an article and checklist on accessible laboratories.

Since its launch in October 2013, the website has received over 37,000 page views. It has proven to be a success with COU members, as well as with many others from different sectors and an international audience, and is leading the way in accessibility-related resource sharing. A more detailed review of the website statistics is underway.

**Background:** In October 2013, COU successfully launched a new, bilingual website, focused on providing tools to enhance accessibility and increase mental health awareness on our campuses. Accessible Campus is a rich, one-of-a-kind resource that is available at [www.accessiblecampus.ca](http://www.accessiblecampus.ca). New resources and updates are regularly posted to the website.

AccessibleCampus.ca offers over 100 pages of accessibility-related content, including a toolkit that addresses the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) clause-by-clause. The website also includes a reference library of tip sheets and quick guides to enhance everyday accessibility; resources to support educators in creating accessible teaching environments; a series of videos featuring university faculty, staff and students, designed to improve awareness and reduce stigma about mental health on campus; and a page that will highlight key accessibility-related news and events.

Since 2008, COU has worked on several projects that were funded through the EnAbling Change Programme to assist Ontario universities in meeting compliance requirements under the AODA. These projects, amongst others, comprise the AccessibleCampus.ca website.

- Online Customer Service Training Tool – an online training tool to assist Ontario universities in meeting the training requirement under the Accessible Customer Service Standard.
- Accessibility Toolkit – an online toolkit of resources that assist Ontario universities in meeting compliance requirements with accessibility-related standards under the AODA.

- Educators' Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit – online resources designed to assist Ontario universities meet their obligations under Section 16 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR): Training to Educators, as well as mental health-focused resources. There is a **separate update on the EAR Kit** below.
- Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) Student Competition – an undergraduate student competition that encourages innovative, cost-effective and practical solutions to accessibility-related barriers. There is a **separate update on the IDeA competition** below.

**Division:** Strategic Initiatives

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## **Updated: EnAbling Change Partnership: Educators Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit**

**Update:** COU has recently published an article and checklist on accessible learning opportunities outside of the classroom, as well as a video workshop by Dr. Mike Condra that examines the continuum of mental health and opportunities for educators to support students with mental illness. This Spring, COU will publish resources on accessible laboratories, practical spaces and a mental health handbook.

An awards ceremony for the Mental Health 2.0 Competition was held on March 18 at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Brock University student, Kaitlyn Kerridge, took home the top prize for her submission, **Cope-Care-Connect**, a mental health campaign that helps students cope with pressure. The competition, jointly run by COU and the Ontario government, challenged students to submit ideas about using social media to enhance mental health awareness and self-care. COU has benefited from considerable traffic on the contest **website** (122,000+ page views) since it was launched.

**Background:** The EAR Kit project is drawing to a close this summer. Work on this project has been divided into three phases.

Phase 1, “General Tools,” includes tip sheets on making classrooms more accessible, a project backgrounder, and links to external resources on accessible instruction. These tools are all available on the COU website, in both English and French.

Phase 2, “Specific Tools,” is currently nearing completion. Tip sheets on accessible teaching for students with diverse disabilities have been published on COU’s new accessibility website, [www.accessiblecampus.ca](http://www.accessiblecampus.ca). An article by Dr. Michael Prince, Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy at the University of Victoria, has also been published under the title, “Advancing Accessible Teaching and Learning Environments in Ontario Universities.” Covering the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the broader context of accessibility policy, and faculty responsibilities, this article addresses university concerns about implementing legislation in the classroom. A brief video on universities and the AODA will soon be released. In addition, this winter and spring, COU will publish articles and quick reference resources on accessible laboratories and work spaces, online instruction and off-campus field work.

Phase 3, which focuses on mental health and anti-stigma deliverables, is also nearing completion. COU has published a series of ten informational videos on campus mental health. The videos feature the Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), faculty, staff, administrators, and students discussing mental health challenges and solutions in university environments. Interested parties can also review a list of external mental health initiatives on the new accessibility site. In addition, COU will soon publish a mental health handbook for educators, based on a similar guide published by Cornell University. Ontario’s universities will be free to use or modify the text of this document to suit their needs.

As part of this project, COU is also building several mental health resources for administrators to share with students. In December 2013, COU released customizable materials to support mental health awareness events on their campuses. In October, COU launched the Mental Health 2.0 competition, as described above. In addition, in partnership with the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs (OCSA), COU is working to develop an online training module for student leaders.

The EAR Kit has been developed through a highly collaborative process. Faculty members, administrators, and other experts in student accessibility and learning have all contributed to the toolkit. So far, COU has received positive feedback from both university partners and external organizations.

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## **Updated: Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) Student Competition**

**Update:** On May 13, 2014, the winners of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of the IDeA Student Competition were announced at a celebration event at the OCE Discovery'14 Conference. The top nine finalists were profiled at the COU booth on the showroom floor and their projects garnered much interest from conference participants, who included professionals from industry, government, academia, as well as a number of other important guests. His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, visited the booth to meet the finalists and to learn about their IDeAs.

The awards event was emceed by Rob Snoek, Olympic Broadcaster and three-time Paralympian, and the awards were announced by Deputy Minister Wendy Tilford of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, and Dr. Max Blouw, President, Wilfrid Laurier University and Chair of COU.

**The winners of this year's competition are:**

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place: Expandable Portable Accessible Washroom (E-Paw)** – A portable toilet that can expand by four times the usual size to make room for wheelchairs, walkers, strollers and personal support workers – Jasmine Yeung, Carleton University
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Phineas Sensor System** – A sensor that emits a sound when swimmers who have visual impairments near the end of a pool, or runners make their way around a track – Joseph Santarelli, Ahmed Tanashi, Justin Lam, Shuang Song and Nicole Kucirek, Western University
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place (tie): Campus Accessibility Mapping Project (CAMP)** – A mapping system that rates the accessibility of campus paths and corridors to help students with disabilities navigate unfamiliar territory – Nicholas Schoenhoff, McMaster University
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place (tie): AMI-GO** – A mobile app and wristband that vibrates to alert those with visual disabilities that friends are nearby, allowing them to initiate conversation instead of having to be approached – Katie Roepke, Carleton University
- **Bonus Prize Winner (for Para-Sport/Active Living Submission): Phineas Sensor System** – A sensor that emits a sound when swimmers who have visual impairments near the end of a pool, or runners make their way around a track – Joseph Santarelli, Ahmed Tanashi, Justin Lam, Shuang Song and Nicole Kucirek, Western University

**The five remaining top finalists are:**

- **Bird's Eye** – A tablet-like device that allows fans who have visual impairments to get tactile experiences of sports events as they follow the ball by feeling a puff of air, and following the players by feeling pegs – Alley Krug, Carleton University

- **iReadAloud** – A device that allows users to take pictures on their smart phone that can then be translated into text and audio – Gentian Licenji, Hester Lai, Ryerson University
- **POV** – A mobile app that gives users insight into how things look for those who have visual impairments – Mark Goldberg, University of Guelph
- **Talk Box** – A device that uses Open Source data to help students anywhere in the world with cognitive and other disabilities to audibly respond in class – Toni Kunic, York University
- **Wheels In Motion** – A workshop that teaches Grade 3 students what life is like for friends and family in a wheelchair – Shannon Misketis, Mackenzie Danen, Chris Bar and Kyle Boham, Brock University

COU is also working on a sustainability plan for future years of the IDeA Student Competition.

More information on the competition can be found on the **IDeA website** (available at the hyperlink or at [www.accessiblecampus.ca/idea](http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/idea)).

**Background:** The Reference Group on Accessibility proposed the idea of a student competition on accessible innovative designs to encourage accessibility in the early PSE education of students in engineering and design. As a result, COU, in partnership with Western University, developed a proposal for consideration by the Ontario government. This competition was a pilot project aimed at encouraging Ontario's engineering and design students, as well as others, to develop innovative, cost-effective, and practical solutions to accessibility-related issues in the community. Working in teams, the students were encouraged to collaborate with industry, government and community partners (including members of the disability community) to identify an accessibility-related issue, to develop a plan to address the issue, and to implement a solution, with input and guidance from academic and industry experts

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## **Updated: Proposed Amendments to the Accessible Customer Service Standard**

**Update:** On March 3, 2014, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment began a public consultation process on proposed amendments to the Accessible Customer Service Standard. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) mandates that each accessibility standard be reviewed five years after becoming law. As a result, in September 2013, an Accessibility Standards Advisory Council/Standard Development Committee (ASAC/SD) was formed and began its review of the Accessible Customer Service Standard and has made proposed amendments to the following areas:

- Class structure of organizations based on number of employees;
- Policies, practices and procedures;
- Service animals;
- Support persons;
- Training;
- Feedback processes; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

As with past public consultation processes, COU has reviewed the proposed changes and is preparing feedback on behalf of the sector through the Reference Group on Accessibility. The deadline to submit feedback under the public consultation process is May 22, 2014.

**Background:** On January 1, 2008, the Customer Service Standard became the first accessibility standard to be passed into regulation under the AODA. The Standard sets out requirements to achieve accessible customer service by understanding that customers with disabilities may have different needs and finding the best way to help them access goods and services.

The Customer Service Standard applies to all organizations (public, private and not-for-profit) that provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other organizations and that have one or more employees in Ontario. Requirements for organizations pertain to topics such as accessible customer service policies, practices and procedures; service animals; support persons; customer feedback; and staff training.

Public sector organizations were required to comply with the Customer Service Standard as of January 1, 2010.

In response to the Customer Service Standard, COU, in partnership with Queen's University and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, created an online training tool to assist Ontario universities in meeting the compliance requirement for training. The [\*\*Online Customer Service Training tool\*\*](#) is available online at the hyperlink.

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## Accessibility-Related Amendments to the Ontario Building Code

**Background:** On January 1, 2014 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) enacted accessibility-related amendments to the Ontario Building Code (OBC). These amendments will come into effect on January 1, 2015. COU is reviewing the amendments and will bring forward any concerns to the Reference Group on Accessibility at its meeting on March 27, 2014. COU also would welcome hearing from any institution that has feedback or concerns related to the amendments.

On December 24, 2012, MAH began a public consultation process on proposed accessibility-related amendments to the OBC. The consultation focused on potential updates and changes in a number of key areas, including:

- renovations;
- barrier-free path of travel (common access and circulation);
- vertical access (elevators);
- visitable suites in multi-unit residential buildings;
- adaptable design and construction;
- visual fire alarms;
- washrooms; and
- use of guidelines and resource materials.

The Sub-Group on the Built Environment, chaired by Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President, Resources & Operations, Western University, provided consolidated feedback on behalf of the Ontario university sector on these proposed amendments. Key areas that were addressed in the submission are:

- a request that the implementation of rough-ins for power door operators and visual alarms be limited to only 15% of suites of residential occupancy, as opposed to 100% of suites;
- a request that the minimum number of adult changes tables in a building be limited to one per building, as opposed to one per floor;
- a lack of cohesion between provincial and national standards, which could create the need for a specialty product in Ontario, ultimately creating an inflated market for custom products and installation; and
- a request for further clarity on the definition of “extensive renovation.”

The feedback was submitted in March 2013.

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## Design of Public Spaces Standard

**Background:** On December 17, 2012 the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) passed the Design of Public Spaces Standards into Regulation. These standards are focused on the removal of barriers in public spaces such as trails, beach access routes and exterior paths of travel. They do not include areas that are covered by the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

On August 15, 2012, MCSS released amendments to Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The amendments include the addition of Part IV.1, Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment).

These standards are focused on the removal barriers in public spaces such as trails and beach access routes and exterior paths of travel and do not encompass areas that are covered by the OBC. The process of incorporating elements of the Built Environment that relate to the OBC is being undertaken by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Sub-Group on the Built Environment, chaired by Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President, Resources & Operations, Western University, provided consolidated feedback on behalf of the Ontario university sector on these standards. Key areas that were highlighted for clarification in the submission are:

- the definition of “new and redeveloped” with a specific request for greater clarification on the scope of what is considered “significant or substantial changes;”
- requirements for consultation; and
- exemptions for “recreational trails.”

In addition, COU asked that the Standards be streamlined, be consistent in their language, and that templates for reporting be developed. COU further noted a number of areas where there was continued potential for overlap with the OBC, such as curb cuts, and asked that the Ontario government ensure these elements are harmonized to the greatest extent possible. Lastly, COU raised concerns about the obligation to provide 4% of the total number of new off-site parking spaces as accessible spaces.

The consolidated feedback was submitted on October 1, 2012.

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## Updated: Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health

**Update:** On March 26, the Centre launched its “Ask the Expert” Webinar series with an inaugural webinar for PSE stakeholders on Autism on Campus. Free webinars through which specialists share promising practices to address the needs of students with mental health concerns, as well strategies to promote a health campus, will be held on a regular basis. Future webinars include:

- Good2Talk Crisis Line for post-secondary students, on May 28; and
- Early psychosis intervention on campus, on June 25.

To register for the webinars and for a full list of webinars please go to:  
[www.campusmentalhealth.ca](http://www.campusmentalhealth.ca).

The Centre has also recently launched its Community of Practice. The private site (registration is vetted) was created to help Ontario's campus mental health service providers and community partners connect, learn, share, problem-solve and collaborate. To join the Community of Practice, please visit  
<http://connects.campusmentalhealth.ca/>.

**Background:** On June 22, 2011, the Ontario government released its Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In its strategy news release, Improving Mental Health Supports for Ontario Kids and Families, the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Education, and Children and Youth Services committed to “helping more than 16,000 youth transitioning from secondary to postsecondary school by adding more mental health workers on campuses in colleges and universities.”

In September 2012, MTCU put out a Call for Proposals for the Mental Health Innovation Fund (MHIF). COU, Colleges Ontario (CO), the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) and the College Student Alliance (CSA), with support from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario, submitted a successful joint proposal for the creation of a Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (C4ICMH). The Centre is intended to serve as an innovation hub for addressing the needs of students with mental health and addictions issues at postsecondary institutions across Ontario.

As a focal point for postsecondary mental health, the Centre will have three primary functions:

- 1) support for a Community of Practice – a cross-sectoral model designed to unite providers from various disciplines (educators, health, counseling, disability services) in the postsecondary education sector to share best practices and work collaboratively to improve mental health service delivery within the postsecondary sector in Ontario;
- 2) creation of a change lab for mental health innovation on campus – a centralized space in which to identify, incubate, evaluate, and disseminate new ideas and innovations mental health on campus; and
- 3) coordination of community services and expert advisors – a point of access to mental health care experts to assist with challenging clinical issues.

A new Director for the Centre, Catherine Willinsky, was hired and began work on May 6, 2013. Catherine has worked in the field of mental health for almost 20 years, beginning at CMHA National. Two additional support staff were also hired over the summer. The Centre's Executive and Advisory Committees have been established and have begun to meet.

On November 11, the Centre brought together all sector recipients of funding from MTCU's MHIF, as well as representatives from institutions that did not receive MHIF funding for a full-day, knowledge exchange event. The purpose of the event was for recipients to share information about their projects, build partnerships and create a knowledge map of resources and best practices within the PSE sector.

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## **Updated: Aboriginal Communications Campaign**

**Update:** An Aboriginal Strategic Communications Campaign Working Group has been established to oversee the work related to this initiative. This Working Group comprises members of the COU Reference Group on Aboriginal Education, the Ontario Universities' Public Affairs Council (OUPAC), and a member from the broader university community.

Work on this project is divided into four phases: establishment of project governance, development of work plan, implementation of work plan, and development of the final report.

A Project Assistant has been hired and a process is currently underway to hire a Senior Project Coordinator for the campaign. The initial Working Group meeting was held in January 2014 with a monthly teleconference call schedule determined for future meetings.

During the first Working Group meeting, COU was asked to undertake additional communication-related research with key stakeholders to help drill down on specifics related to the most effective methods for each of the target audiences. Also, as part of the campaign, a group of student ambassadors and an Industry Advisory Group are being established to provide input, guidance and insight into the overall campaign.

**Background:** In January 2012, MTCU provided funding to the COU to conduct public opinion and key informant research on communicating Aboriginal learner success at our institutions. This research identified key target audiences for a strategic communications campaign, as well as some general public perceptions about Aboriginal learner success at Ontario universities. Following the release of the research findings, MTCU provided COU with funding to undertake a strategic communications campaign to:

- promote awareness of the success of Aboriginal learners in Ontario to the broader Aboriginal community (including parents and learners), business/industry and government, and the academic community;
- improve Aboriginal learner attraction, retention, and completion at Ontario universities by demonstrating successful transition into and from the postsecondary education system; and
- promote a positive view of, and interest in, postsecondary education within the Aboriginal community.

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## Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Consortium (PHCNP)

PHCNP Provincial Office

**Background:** The PHCNP Program hosted a one-day Faculty Forum in February, 2013 in Toronto to prepare PHCNP faculty to make necessary curriculum changes to best educate NP students for safe and competent practice, in light of the new regulations under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Canada). The Forum featured guest speakers from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the Ontario College of Pharmacy and a panel of clinical experts. It is estimated that it will take the CNO at least two years to make changes to the *Nursing Act* to remove restrictions on NP authority to prescribe most controlled drugs. The Faculty Forum event provided educators with the opportunity to engage in a discourse with regulators and field experts about getting students ready for the future of NP practice in Ontario.

**Division:** PHNCP

**Updated:** March 2013

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## Preparing the Health Workforce to Care for the Aging Population

**Background:** The Office of Health Sciences at COU received funding from MoHLTC to organize a stakeholders' summit on enhancing the preparation of health and social providers to work with the aging population. The "Better Aging: Ontario Education Summit" was held on February 13, 2014, at Baycrest Health Sciences. Bonnie Patterson was Master of Ceremonies for the event. Other notable speakers included Minister Deb Matthews, Minister Mario Sergio, Dr. Samir Sinha, and Dr. William Reichman. A panel of COU researchers provided key background on strengths and gaps in entry to practice education, continuing professional development, and interprofessional collaboration related to working with older adults. Afternoon breakout groups identified areas where particular work is needed to improve educational preparation. The Summit responded to recommendations from Dr. Sinha's Report, *Living Longer, Living Well*, which is informing the government's Seniors Strategy. Preliminary evaluations of the Summit have been extremely positive. The Summit Proceedings and the final report of the COU research projects will be released in April 2014.

**Division:** Office of Health Sciences

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## Tri-partite Committee on College Stand-alone Nursing degrees

**Background:** MTCU established a Tri-partite Committee, with representation from COU, Colleges Ontario, MTCU and MoHLTC to explore whether colleges and a greater number of universities should be allowed to offer stand-alone nursing degree programs. MTCU hired consultants, with input from COU and Colleges Ontario, to analyze the results of a survey developed by the Committee that assessed the current level and nature of collaboration between university and college partners. The consultants conducted follow-up interviews with a sample of university and college collaborative partners to assess the implications of authorizing colleges to offer stand-alone nursing degrees.

The consultants presented their final report to the Tri-partite Committee on College Stand-alone Nursing Degrees on March 7, 2014. The report addresses the following:

- The major impediments to colleges offering stand-alone degrees, including:
  - The (potential) need to increase enrolments for financial sustainability of programs, and the challenges to MTCU in increasing enrolments;
  - The challenges in meeting Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) and nursing accreditation standards (PhD-prepared faculty, research and scholarship); and
  - The added costs – both transitional and ongoing – of stand-alone programs.
- the benefits of existing partnerships
- the perspective of universities

The main concern with the report is that it does not substantially address the potential adverse impacts on students or on the healthcare system.

The main finding (and only recommendation) of the report is that the advisability of allowing a college to offer a stand-alone BScN program can only be determined on a case-by-case basis, with careful attention to the potential challenges regarding enrolment, PEQAB approval and accreditation.

MTCU staff is considering the report and will continue to engage with the Tri-Partite Committee concerning next steps.

COU has indicated to MTCU that universities have significant concerns with the direction that is suggested by the consultant report. COU has emphasized that a policy direction allowing some colleges to move toward stand-alone nursing degree programs carries potential harms for students and the healthcare system, threatens the viability of current partnerships, and runs counter to the government's strategy on differentiation and the efficient use of government resources.

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## Clinical Education Crisis

**Background:** COU submitted its position paper, *Integrating Clinical Education into Ontario's Changing Healthcare System*, to MTCU and MoHLTC in July 2013 (available at the hyperlink). The paper argues that the clinical education system for nursing, rehabilitation science and other disciplines is in a crisis due to the changing healthcare system. Measures need to be put into place to mandate clinical education across the continuum of care, and to further support schools to provide quality clinical education placements for students. The Office of Health Sciences at COU has engaged in meetings with government and stakeholders to discuss the recommendations in the paper and seek endorsement. A survey of programs and placement agencies has been developed to further quantify the degree of the shortage.

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## Medical Trainee Days Data

In 2010, the MoHLTC issued new standards for the collection and reporting of Medical Trainee Days (MTD) data.

**Background:** The MTD data standards were developed to ensure accuracy and increase quality in the final product. Both the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario (CAHO) and the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM) expressed serious concerns with the level of granularity of detail required by the new standards and the inefficiencies involved in collecting the data.

Given that the Faculties of Medicine are responsible for placing learners in training sites, and hospitals rely on accurate MTD data in securing appropriate funding to support clinical learning environments, both have a vested interest in ensuring there is rigor to the data quality.

To resolve the issues identified, COFM Deans, CAHO and MoHLTC established a working group in September 2010 to review concerns surrounding data quality and advise the Deans of Medicine and MoHLTC with recommendations to change the process. An implementation committee was established in early 2012.

Key elements of the MTD process include:

- Universities will provide the hospitals with the initial source data for MTDs;
- The medical school would help resolve any conflicts between hospitals in its region. A total of 6 reports would be created (one report by each medical school) which would then be forwarded to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care after consultation with hospitals.

As a result of this collaborative work, all six Faculties of Medicine are working with their hospitals to develop and implement MTD pilots with their hospitals.

The Faculties of Medicine are working with MoHLTC to proceed to full implementation of the MTD data collection and reporting initiative.

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## Assisting Physicians in Life-Long Learning (APLL)

**Background:** Following an evaluation of Phase I in early 2012, the APLL Project moved into Phase II which included the further development of both the physician participant and physician coach manuals; the creation of the coach training modules; the training of an initial roster of physician coach trainees; and the pilot testing of the coach training modules on an initial roster of physician participants. Results showed that a coaching model is beneficial; however, given that the needs of the participants are so varied, a blended model of coaching and mentorship has been suggested as an alternative. The results will be compiled in several resource documents including an academic paper and a toolkit.

In collaboration with its partner organizations, Continuing Professional Development-Ontario (Physicians) (CPD-O(P)), a sub-group of the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine Continuing Professional Development Committee (CPD: COFM) is pursuing a province-wide strategy to support physician learning in practice.

The APLL Project was proposed in March 2011 and envisioned a phased approach to the development, implementation and evaluation of an individualized physician lifelong learning program. The central role of the physician coach and the need to identify the attributes and skills of an effective physician learning coach were identified as key factors. The goal of Phase I of APLL, which took place from June 2011 to January 2012, was the facilitation of a new and innovative approach to learning by physicians, addressing the need for a coach-centered approach to supporting physicians in making continuing professional development both integral and more meaningful to their daily professional practice. Resources including a Physician Participant Manual and a Physician Coach Manual have been developed.

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