COU Update

As of February 2, 2015

COUNCIL OF
ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

CONSEIL DES
UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

COU Update – February 2015

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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
CESPA	Committee on Enrolment Statistics, Projections and Analysis
CFI	Canada Foundation for Innovation
COFM	Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine
COFO	Council of Ontario Finance Officers
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:

Communications: COU continues to implement a 12-month communications plan launched in May 2014 designed to promote the value of a university education at a time when the public and government are focused on jobs and the employment outcomes and earnings of graduates, and when government is reviewing whether its services to taxpayers are providing the best value for money and the best outcomes. The next 12-month plan is being developed and will be shared with OUPAC soon.

Initiatives have so far included:

- The launch of the annual **survey of graduate outcomes** commissioned by MTCU. An **online graphic** accompanied the survey.
- A new website, **www.mygradskills.ca**, which offers graduate students a set of free online professional skills training tools that will help them prepare for a career inside or outside of academia.
- A **fun online quiz** that reinforces positive messages about the success of our graduates, while busting the myths, called What's Your University Brain-Power?
- An **infographic on net tuition** and the amount of scholarships and bursaries available to students.
- A series of three student success videos in which graduates talk about how university has transformed their lives. The first video featured a **University of Toronto student**. The second video featured a student from **York University**, and a third video featured a student from **Trent.**
- An online graphic (and its individual components) that tells the story of how universities transform lives called **Ontario Universities: Transforming Ontario, Transforming Lives**.

Upcoming campaigns include:

- The launch of Change Agent, a province-wide report on how universities are transforming communities and their economies, is scheduled for release on February 12 at York University at 10:00 am. Speakers will include President Mamdouh Shoukri, the Hon. Reza Moridi, Minister of TCU, and COU President Bonnie Patterson.
- A series of third-party endorsements (op-eds) by influential Ontarians about the value of a university education to be launched in March.
- A series of "theme weeks," where all universities promote the same aspect of university value, including Global Entrepreneurship Week November 17 to 23, National co-op education week March 2 to 8, and National Volunteer Week April 13-19.
- COU's second annual University Works report, compiling data on employment outcomes from Statistics Canada and the Graduates Survey, likely in March.

- A report on the economic impact of universities next year, as the Treasury Board President reviews all government spending with a focus on “best value for money,” as the province tries to balance its budget.

COU will be asking universities to promote these sector-wide initiatives on their own campuses and their own communications channels as we attempt to co-ordinate messages.

COU has also been actively involved in the sexual violence on campus issue following a series of media reports suggesting students felt they had nowhere to turn. COU asked universities to review their policies and procedures and collected an inventory of what supports are available. As a result, COU was able to report to the media and government that while universities do not have a common policy, they each have a mechanism for complaints, response teams, access to counselling on campus and/or referrals to off-campus resources, support services and prevention education. Universities also prominently posted special web pages indicating the clearest path to assistance for anyone in distress. COU established a Reference Group on Sexual Violence. A conference on sexual violence is being convened at York University on February 20, organized by the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs (OCSA). Through the Reference Group, COU is also working closely with MTCU and Premier’s Office to help respond to the Premier’s call for an action plan on sexual violence spanning several ministries that will be announced by March 8, International Women’s Day.

Government Relations:

COU submitted its 2015 provincial pre-budget submission in January, which included the following recommendations:

1. Maintain funding for growth and maintain the current level of per student operating support for Ontario universities, until the province is able to achieve a balanced budget and begin to reinvest in universities at more sustainable levels.
2. Match federal funds for research and infrastructure to ensure Ontario maintains its competitive edge with other provinces and internationally.
3. Enhance the ability of universities to attract top international students so important to research and the economic growth of our province by providing flexibility for universities to use some graduate spaces for international students and by capping the International Student Recovery program.

COU continues to align its communications and government relations strategy towards the theme of graduate success, with a focus on the employability of graduates.

Following the provincial election, COU has sought meetings with new Ministers, political staff and civil servants in key ministries. Since the jobs agenda continues to be a primary focus for government, COU continues to use social media to promote positive aspects of university education including employment statistics, and efforts to prepare students for the workforce.

A government relations framework for 2014-15 was drafted for the consideration of Executive Heads. The framework, which reflected input from GR staff from our universities, will provide the umbrella for short term and long term strategies to advance university education.

COU is working on a number of legislative issues including anticipated legislation on student associations. COU, in consultation with universities, will suggest amendments. Advocacy efforts are focused on helping to government better understand the implications of the proposed bill. COU also is reviewing all bills that died on the order paper of the previous minority government for implications for the sector and evaluating their potential to go forward. This is being done in order to more closely monitor the government's legislative agenda, which is expected to be much busier than it was under the minority government.

Background: 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.

Division: Communications and Public Affairs

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Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs)

Background: COU continues to monitor the impact of the SMAs. It is expected that the SMAs will have an effect on university operations and programming as the provincial government relies on them for context to guide its decisions.

Particular attention is being given to the effects on program approval and/or college degree-granting. The recently released new Program Approval Guideline promises expedited approvals for programs that are aligned with a university's identified areas of strength and growth in its SMA (for more information, see the section on **Program Approvals**).

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 2013 and the report was publicly released in April 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 in July 2013. The Ministry appointed Paul Genest as Special Advisor on SMAs (Universities); his role was 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 were able to revise their SMA proposals prior 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 outlined data definitions and sources, and a Sector Workbook with all institutions’ data for each of the system-wide metrics. These documents were intended to support the SMA discussions with the Special Advisors.

On August 7, 2014, MTCU released the strategic mandate agreements. The term of the SMAs is from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2017.

The SMAs highlight individual universities’ strengths and unique attributes in in the areas of: teaching and learning, student population, unique educational and research programs, student mobility and collaborations with other institutions, and local and global impact.

Through the SMAs, the government has agreed to undergraduate growth projections for each university, and also made a multi-year allocation of funded graduate spaces (until 2016-2017).

The government is committed to review the metrics that are employed in the first round of SMAs, and also to add additional metrics in the areas of Jobs and Economic Development for the next round of SMA. COU will be coordinating sector participation in a Working Group with MTCU.

Division: Policy and Analysis **Updated:** November 2014

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Updated: Program Approvals

Update: Universities continue to be concerned about the onerousness of the Ministry's process and delays in the program approvals process – which significantly increases the Ministry's interventions in normal planning processes of universities.

COU is presently following two tracks of advocacy.

On a strategic level, COU is asking for a policy shift from the Ministry and, for this purpose, sent a letter to Deputy Minister Newman with three main recommendations:

- MTCU should focus on making the expedited program review process work effectively for programs aligned with SMAs.
- MTCU should engage the university sector in discussion of its proposed expansion of the scope of program approvals required – including certificates and modes of delivery.
- MTCU should recognize that current incentives are very strong for universities to develop in-demand and sustainable programs. Universities have rigorous internal review programs to address issues of unjustified duplication, student demand, societal need, and sustainability. MTCU should rely on the attestation of universities that criteria concerning demand and sustainability have been considered appropriately.

The second track of advocacy is at an operational level. COU's Working Group on Program Approvals is pursuing ongoing discussions with Ministry staff on some details, including:

- Potential expansion of the scope of programs or program changes requiring approval (for example: undergraduate certificates, or adding a co-op element to an existing program);
- The Ministry's heightened expectations that universities will consult with other potentially-affected institutions in advance of submitting proposals;
- OSAP eligibility for students in programs not approved for funding; and
- Other technical issues.

Background: On October 7, 2014, MTCU released a memo and accompanying guidelines articulating updates to the university program approvals process.

The Ministry has indicated that it will commit to target timelines for the completion of expedited reviews for non-contentious programs that are aligned with the program areas of growth or strength identified in a university's SMA. MTCU will determine and communicate whether a proposal will be expedited within 30 days of the submission deadline.

The new process also raises a number of issues including:

- Tuition levels: Universities will be required to identify tuition comparators and the Ministry will expect the applicant university to be consistent with other similar programs. COU's understanding is that this is an articulation of the Ministry's recent practice. The guideline also specifies that existing programs that are offered at new locations must have the same, or lower, funding and tuition than the original program.
- Expectations around reporting program changes: The new guideline stipulates that the Ministry is seeking to clarify its expectations with respect to the requirement to seek MTCU approval for a variety of changes including: adding a co-op component to an established program, the translation of English programs into French, and the creation of undergraduate certificate programs. The new guideline stipulates, in the interim, undergraduate certificate programs that have tuition or funding implications must be submitted for approval to the Ministry.
- The lack of timelines for non-expedited reviews.

The Program Approvals Working Group will be reviewing the memo and guidelines in detail to determine an appropriate response.

Additionally, given the information in the Program Approvals memo, COU expects that MTCU's consultation with the sector will focus on the following areas:

- A review of the list of core programs;
- Future program growth discussions; and
- The development of improved labour market information to support the Ministry's review of labour market demand for proposed programs.

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University Operating Funding

Background: 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.

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.

Overall funding impacts for university transfer payments*	$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.

Reductions – Universities*	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.

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

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

eliminate the ISR fee, the budget indicates an 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 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 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 indicates 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 are exempted from the FTE caps on teacher education programs. All students in concurrent education programs from 2013-14 and prior years will be funded.

The budget includes 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.

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

Update: For programs beginning in fall 2014, eligible full-time enrolment in undergraduate programs was 334,863 (head count), a modest decline of 369 from the fall 2013-14, but a larger decline than previous system-wide estimates through the SMAs (340,366) and the CESPA model (339,553).

Background:

Funding for enrolment growth: The Strategic Management Agreements (SMAs) included agreed-upon estimates of undergraduate enrolments and graduate allocations. It should be noted, however, that for strategic reasons the estimates in SMAs were at the higher range of possible growth. The estimates shown below also did not include growth from proposed new initiatives or programs.

Undergraduate expansion: The sum of universities' undergraduate projections through the SMAs is consistent with CESPA enrolment projections for 2014-15 and 2015-16. It diverges by 2,000 spaces for 2016-17.

Enrolment	Head Counts		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Undergraduate projections (SMAs)	340,366	344,075	350,212
CESPA projections	339,553	344,015	348,216

Graduate expansion: The SMA process allocated an additional 3,185.29 graduate spaces. The following table is an overview of new and reallocated graduate spaces, by envelope.

	Master's	PhD	Total
2013-14 graduate space targets	29,044.43	12,434.34	41,478.77
Adjustment to graduate space targets (pre 2015-16)	1,116.97	(284.38)	832.59
Graduate Allocation Envelopes			
General Allocation Envelope	1,444.16	530.00	1,974.16
Priorities Envelope	305.00	73.54	378.54
Graduate Spaces Allocated to 2016-17, over 2013-14	2,866.13	319.16	3,185.29
2016-17 Graduate Space Targets	31,910.56	12,753.50	44,664.06

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.

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.

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

Updated: Capital Funding and Planning

Update: MTCU staff has indicated that 19 full proposals for the Major Capacity Expansion (MCE) program were received. The Ministry reviewed these proposals against the MCE checklist and determined that 13 proposals will move to a full review and will be evaluated by an inter-ministerial committee comprising senior officials of MTCU, Treasury Board, ministries responsible for infrastructure, innovation and economic development, and HEQCO.

In terms of broader infrastructure planning, Bill 6, *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act*, received second reading in the Legislature on December 9, 2014. The bill is designed to introduce a principled and planned approach to infrastructure investment in Ontario's Broader Public Sector (BPS) by encouraging principled, evidence-based and strategic long-term infrastructure planning that supports jobs, training, growth, environmental protection and design excellence. Bill 6 would require universities and other BPS entities to do the following:

- take into account a set of principles when making infrastructure decisions;
- share information with the government that has implications for infrastructure planning; and
- use architects (or similar professional consultants) for projects over a certain threshold.

It establishes criteria that government will use in prioritizing infrastructure investments. Contrary to expectations, the bill does not appear to require universities to submit Long-Term Infrastructure Plans (as long as university assets are not considered "partly owned" by the government). The Act does, however, apply both to new buildings as well as maintenance funding and could therefore affect allocation under the Facilities Renewal Program. COU will monitor the progress of the bill.

Background: In the 2013 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.

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.

As of June 27, 2014, 27 notices of Intent for the province's Major Capacity Expansion program were submitted to the Ministry. Proposals were due on 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 2014 Budget, confirmed the government's intent to increase funding for renewal of buildings in future years; see the **Condition of University Facilities** section below.

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Updated: Deferred Maintenance

Update: It has been decided that COU will not proceed with a public campaign for increased Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) funding at this time; instead, universities and COU may use the report as background in their interactions with government (MTCU, Infrastructure, MRI, Treasury Board) in preparation for the time when there are funds available for new investments.

Background: COU's deferred maintenance (DM) advocacy report is intended to raise awareness about the growing challenge of maintaining buildings on university campuses and the implications of deferring maintenance. COU produced a DM advocacy report, entitled "Critical Condition," which was reviewed by Executive Heads in October 2014.

The updated report includes 2014 data from the **Facilities Condition Assessment Report** (see below) along with the forecast impact of three funding scenarios on the condition of university facilities over the next ten years. The report shows that the DM backlog has doubled over the past ten years and that current funding levels will result in continued deterioration of facilities. The report was informed by feedback from the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO) as well as the Task Force on Facilities Condition Assessment.

The Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) released their **national study on deferred maintenance** in August 2014.

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Condition of University Facilities

Background: 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, if MTCU retains the current allocation mechanism). The 2014 Budget confirmed this commitment.

Funding for the 2014-15 Facilities Renewal Program was announced on December 17, 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) highlights the sector's deferred maintenance backlog.

Update: The 2012 and 2014 FCAP reports will be posted shortly on the COU website. The results from the 2014 FCAP report have been incorporated into the Deferred Maintenance Advocacy report (see **Deferred Maintenance** section).

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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%

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.

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Ontario Tuition Grant

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 the grant, which initially was $800 per term, or $1,600 per year. (In each subsequent year of the program, the OTG increased at the same level as increases allowed by the tuition framework.) Students who receive 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 OTG 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.

In January 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 who are eligible for financial aid through OSAP will be eligible for the OTG.

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.

The level of the Ontario Tuition Grant (OTG) for each eligible university student is $1,780 per year in 2014-15, a 3% increase over 2013-14 (consistent with the increase allowed by the tuition framework).

Division: Policy and Analysis **Updated:** September 2014

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Student Access Guarantee (SAG)

SAG requirements and impact on the Tuition Set-Aside

Background: Because of the election call in spring 2014, the Ministry did not hold consultations with COU and Colleges Ontario on the SAG guidelines, as it had done in previous years. The 2014-15 SAG Guidelines were issued on June 27, 2014, and contained no significant policy changes. The Guidelines included the annual escalator to the thresholds for calculating tuition/book shortfalls, specifically, an increase to $5690 for tuition ($6730 for co-op programs) and $1136 for books. Consistent with direction taken by the Ministry last year, the Guidelines also set a requirement for universities to meet no less than 20 per cent of the aggregate value of tuition/book shortfalls of its second-entry students through non-repayable types of aid.

The SAG program requires 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, noted above. 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.

Since 2010-11, institutions have been 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 SAG guidelines also provide direction regarding levels of non-repayable assistance that should be provided to students attending second-entry programs. For second-entry programs, the new Guidelines require institutions to meet no less than 20 per cent of the aggregate value of tuition/book shortfalls of its second-entry students through non-repayable types of aid, a requirement that was signaled in last year's Guidelines. Most universities already exceed this requirement. Since 2011-12, universities have been required to make formal arrangements with a lender if they intend to meet a portion of their SAG obligations to second-entry students through repayable assistance.

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: September 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: Bill 10, *Childcare Modernization Act,* which proposed amendments to the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act* (and consequently the *Education Act*) has received Royal Assent. MTCU has agreed to develop a policy and process framework that will provide some clarity around how MTCU intends to use the OEN in research and analysis, and how it will operationalize its authority to collect personal information.

COU is also working with MTCU to develop a mechanism for universities and COU to gain access to de-personalized OEN data.

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, which has since been nullified because of the election call in spring 2014. As mentioned above, the amendments initially introduced in Bill 151 have been re-introduced in Bill 10. Bill 10 proposes to amend various acts including the 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 presently is 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:** February 2015

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Teacher Education Funding and Proposed Restructuring

Background: In 2011, motivated by the current oversupply of teachers, 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.

In June 2013, the provincial government announced its plan to require 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 comprising 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 mitigating the impacts of the changes.

In October 2013, Executive Heads of those universities with teacher education programs wrote to Minister Duguid requesting that the government reconsider its decision to reduce per-student funding for teacher education programs by one-third, starting in 2015-16. The Minister was unwilling to re-open the issue and indicated that the government would proceed with the reduction of funding in 2015-16.

In January 2014, COU wrote a letter to MTCU 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.

Following the June 2014 election, the returning government publicly announced its planned enhanced teacher education program, presenting significant operational and fiscal challenges to the province’s 13 universities offering Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs. The new program, to be implemented beginning in 2015-16, doubles the length of B.Ed. programs to four semesters, doubles the mandatory practicum time to 80 days, and enhances the curriculum to include enhanced training in teaching methodology, mental health, and accommodation. In addition, the government announced that it would also reduce the funding weight of each student from 2.0 to 1.5 BIUs (effectively reducing funding by one-third when formula fees are included). The lengthened program and reduced enrolment in 2015-16 (during transition to the new two-year program) means a substantial funding gap for programs in 2015-16 and will

bring operational challenges to those universities offering concurrent and consecutive B.Ed. programs.

Since May, universities have met individually with MTCU to negotiate their Program Change Agreements, which will include the level of 2015-16 transition funding awarded to each institution as well as the university's efforts to meet the new B.Ed. program requirements. Those universities for whom B.Ed. program makes up a large share of overall enrolment and revenue will see the BIU reductions phased-in over a three year period. COU has been working closely with Deans of Education and MTCU on this portfolio and will engage in discussion about the Ministry's plans for a stand-alone operating grant for education programs.

Universities and MTCU continue to discuss options for ameliorating the anticipated negative consequences of the new enhanced teacher education regulations on aboriginal and technological education programs. Students in technological education programs, for example, are typically mid-career individuals who have to exit the workforce to participate in the education program. There is concern that the new longer period of instruction will dissuade potential candidates from applying to programs, put financial strain on the institutions offering these programs, and ultimately reduce the number of qualified teachers in these fields.

Division: Policy and Analysis **Updated:** November 2014

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Updated: Applications for Fall 2015

The Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) releases monthly statistics between January 2015 and September 2015 on applications to first year undergraduate programs.

Background: The deadline for students currently enrolled in an Ontario secondary school, referred to as Secondary School applicants, to apply to university through OUAC was January 14, 2015. 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 14 deadline does not apply to these students; most choose to apply later in the cycle (in particular, those transferring from college or another university).

OUAC released the following secondary school application statistics to the public as of January 19, 2015:

Secondary School Applicants:	
Number of first choice applicants	87,639
% change compared to January 2014	-1.8%
Number of applications	404,714
% change compared to January 2014	-0.7%

Non- Secondary School Applicants:	
Number of first choice applicants	29,516
% change compared to September 2013	-0.6%

More details and regular updates can be found under the "Statistics" tab at **www.ouac.on.ca**.

Division: OUAC **Updated:** February 2015

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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 would 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 were 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,

group members participated in a consultation process with sector stakeholders (See **ONCAT update**, below).

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Updated: Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)

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

Update: In the spring and summer of 2014, ONCAT worked with institutions to conduct an environmental scan of existing policies and practices for credit transfer. The information collected was collated into FAQ-style institutional profiles and posted on **ONTransfer.ca**. This work provided detail into the varied operational contexts of institutions, and provided support for developing a set of general principles for credit transfer that could provide guidance in addressing the needs of students and institutions.

A working group of member representatives (from colleges, universities, and students) met throughout the summer of 2014 and collaboratively created a set of principles for best practice. A consultation paper ("Best Practices in Credit Transfer Policies and Procedures") was developed and circulated in fall 2014. The high level principles articulated in the document provide a set of goals for supporting student success. The statements of principle provide general guidance and allow for university autonomy in developing procedures that are aligned with institutional policies, resources, and student needs. Once the document has been reviewed and finalized, key points about how institutions meet the principles will be posted on the ONTransfer.ca website.

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 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 was 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:** February 2015

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Teaching and Learning

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

Background: 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.

A second symposium entitled *Learning Outcomes Assessment, Practically Speaking* was held in April 2013. Nearly 400 delegates attended more than fifty workshops and other sessions at the very successful event. Co-sponsors for this event included OCQAS, the Quality Council, 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.

In October 2014 a third learning outcomes symposium, Learning Outcomes: A Toolkit for Assessment, was held in Toronto. The event was a great success, bringing together more than 330 college and university senior administrators, faculty and teaching and learning staff. The conference featured over 34 sessions on topics ranging from course and program assessment techniques, curriculum development and mapping, metrics and data collection, graduate and undergraduate assessments, faculty engagement, student success, and credit transfer. The full program and workshop materials, including presentation slides and handouts, can be found on the **conference website**. The event was co-sponsored by 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).

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 in April 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:** November 2014

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Updated: Ontario Online

Update: On October 7, 2014, MTCU announced a second round of funding for Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities to support the development and redesign of high-quality online courses and modules (parts of courses). COU, under the direction of the University Online Steering Committee (established by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents [OCAV]), developed a set of guidelines to apply the Ministry's guidelines more specifically and clearly to the university sector.

As announced by the Ministry, and with the direction of the University Online Steering Committee, COU administered the call for proposals for the 2014-15 Shared Online Course Fund (ShOCF). In keeping with the Ministry's direction, the 2014-15 call gave higher priority to proposals that involve collaborations between, among or within institutions. All courses or modules approved for funding must be ready for delivery in 2015-16.

COU received almost 350 specific proposals for course and modules by the submission deadline. Panels of independent reviewers evaluated the proposals according to guidelines developed by the University Online Steering Committee and Online Reference Group. Following the review process, COU submitted a proposed list of funded courses and modules to MTCU. MTCU has confirmed funding for the recommended list.

The Ministry also continues to support the development and implementation of a centre of excellence in online and technology-enhanced learning. In September 2014, a joint Ontario Online Steering Committee (with membership from colleges, universities, Colleges Ontario, COU, ONCAT, and Contact North) developed a statement of mandate and purpose for the future consortium. On October 3, 2014, the Ontario Online Learning Consortium (Consortium ontarien pour apprentissage en ligne) was incorporated. The consortium will be a member-based organization. All publicly assisted colleges and universities have agreed to join the new consortium. At the first meeting of the new consortium in November 2014 board members were elected, including co-chairs from the college and university sectors. The Board has initiated a search for a chief operating executive.

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

MTCU's announcement was consistent with the directions discussed at the Ministry's July 2013 roundtable. The new initiative supports 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 to 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 was held by Wilfrid Laurier University on behalf of the university sector. Universities worked 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 (OUO). COU will be working with CO, and with the OUO Steering Committee, to ensure appropriate alignment of these initiatives.

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Updated: International

Update: COU coordinated a delegation of Executive Heads to meet with their counterparts in Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2014. The Hon. Reza Moridi, Minister of TCU, joined the delegation, which explored collaborations with Turkish universities to strengthen research ties for innovation-driven economic development.

COU is in the process of reaching out to participants to discuss next steps that would support the advancement of university relationships in Turkey and promote the partnerships developed.

COU's 2015 pre-budget submission recommends that government allow flexibility for universities to use some graduate spaces for international students and cap the International Student Recovery program.

Background: From November 17 to 21, COU hosted a group of Vice Presidents Research from China's Jiangsu province, who came to Ontario to meet with their Ontario university counterparts, share research strengths, explore partnership opportunities, and visit university labs and research facilities. COU worked with OCUR in preparation for this meeting. COU is now reaching out to OCUR to determine if any partnerships were developed as a result of the meetings, and to get more information about feasibility of managing delegations like this, since universities and the Jiangsu Provincial government are eager to pursue a visit to China from Ontario university presidents next year.

In January 2014, 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. A 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 forma.

This delegation represents one of many that COU has hosted since former Premier Dalton McGuinty 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: February 2015

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Updated: International Student Recovery (ISR)

Update: MTCU has recently shown some openness to discuss capping the ISR, though no commitments have been made. COU is presently studying alternative models to go forward in discussions with the Ministry.

Background: In the March 2012 budget, the government announced that, beginning in 2013-14, MTCU would 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 would 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 reduced transfer payments to each college and university to recover $750 for every international student (excluding PhD students) who entered 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.

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

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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 Appraisal Committee are meeting monthly to review new program proposals and reports. The Audit Committee met in November to review the first Institutional One-Year Follow-up responses received under the Quality Assurance Framework. These responses were received from the University of Ottawa and Brock University. The Quality Council approved the Brock University Institutional Response at its December meeting. This **response and the Auditors' Summary of the Scope and Adequacy of the Institution's response** are now posted on the Quality Council website. Review of the University of Ottawa Institutional response is not yet concluded.

The Quality Council audit team for the University of Windsor audit visited the campus for three days in late November. The Auditors have nearly completed their draft Audit Report. Auditors will visit RMC in February and Nipissing University in March to conduct quality assurance audits.

The Quality Council published its fourth Annual Report for 2013-2014 in the fall. The **Annual Report** can be found on the Quality Council's website.

Dr. Thomas Loebel, Associate Professor of English at York University, joined the Appraisal Committee in January 2015, replacing Dr. André Lapierre, University of Ottawa. Dr. Loebel has extensive experience in program development and review having served as Undergraduate Program Director, Graduate Program Director and Associate Dean, Academic in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at York.

In December, OCAV elected four new members for the Quality Council to replace members whose term ends on June 30, 2015. Retiring members include Sam Scully, Chair; Ron Bond, member with out of province quality assurance experience; David Wilkinson, OCAV representative from medical/doctoral university; and Bruce Tucker, OCAV representative from non-medical/doctoral university. Replacing these members respectively on July 1, 2015 are Paul Gooch (Victoria University), Denis Hurtubise, Laurentian University (experience with Quebec universities quality assurance agency); Sioban Nelson (Toronto); and John Shepherd (Carleton).

The date and location for the second meeting of the University Key Contacts in Quality Assurance has been confirmed for Friday, April 17, 2015 at Ryerson University. For more information, please contact Donna Woolcott.

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.

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Updated: COU Reports and Symposia

David C. Smith Dinner: This year's award dinner was held on October 8, 2014, and honoured Roberta Jamieson, President of Indspire, for her commitment to improving learning opportunities for Indigenous youth. Her speech, **Building Momentum in Indigenous Education: Renewing the Call to Action**, is available on the COU website.

2014 Learning Outcomes Symposium: The Symposium took place at the Eaton Chelsea Hotel in Toronto on October 16 and 17, 2014. Entitled, *Learning Outcomes: A Toolkit for Assessment*, the Symposium offered 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.

2014 Conference of Ontario University Board Members: The third annual Conference of Ontario University Board Members was held on November 7 and 8, 2014 in downtown Toronto. Members of the governing boards of Ontario universities, university presidents and university secretaries were invited to attend the conference, which focused on ongoing challenges and opportunities in the university sector and the role of boards in addressing them. The Hon. Lloyd Axworthy and Harvey Weingarten, President of HEQCO, delivered keynote addresses, and the Hon. Reza Moridi, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, gave opening remarks.

Faculty at Work: COU released results from the first major study in Canada of faculty work on the substantial contributions of university professors. **Faculty at Work: A Preliminary Report on Faculty Work at Ontario's Universities, 2010-2012**, was published in August 2014.

Going Greener Report: COU published **Growing Greener Campuses** in August 2014, COU's fifth annual Going Greener Report, which highlights the improvements in environmental sustainability across Ontario campuses. The next edition will feature a revamped survey with standardized energy, water and waste reporting as well as success stories. It will be released in spring 2015.

Annual Report: COU's **2012-13 Annual Report** celebrates the "greatest hits" of the year for the sector, including the success of graduates in the job market, the rise of entrepreneurship and experiential learning opportunities, and continuing commitment to create more accessible campuses and develop resources to support the mental health needs of students. This Report also captures the research efforts of universities, some of Ontario's award-winning scholars, and the ways universities are creating cleaner, greener campuses and supporting healthier communities.

Conference Board of Canada research and report: COU provided input to a report on innovation that updated their 2003 Innovation Skills Profile and reflected on the role that postsecondary education is playing in developing innovation skills. A **summary of**

the report is available on the Conference Board's website, which was published in May 2014 (account required to access the full report).

Experiential learning report: Building on the success of the report, *Entrepreneurship at Ontario Universities: Fuelling Success,* COU prepared **Bringing Life to Learning at Ontario Universities**, a report that showcases the applied learning opportunities that are positioning students for careers.

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 among government about the growing problem of maintaining buildings on university campuses and the implications of deferring it. For additional information, see the **deferred maintenance** section.

Economic Impact: In 2016, COU plans to release a report on the economic impact of universities on local communities, the province and the country. This report will measure the ripple effect of purchasing and spending spurred by universities, knowledge creation and entrepreneurship.

Division: Communications and Public Affairs/Corporate Services/Office of the Secretary to Council/Quality Assurance/Policy and Analysis

Updated: February 2015

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Updated: University Pension Plans

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

Update: The University Pensions Project (UPP) is continuing with the development of a draft JSPP framework for Ontario universities (See Background below for details on the project). On January 13, 2015, a Plenary Body meeting was held. Actuarial and legal experts presented a first draft of framework documents that laid out options and questions related to benefit design, actuarial assumptions and governance structures. This meeting offered an opportunity for participants to ask for clarification, and for the experts to receive direction and input. Plenary participants are asked to provide feedback on the framework documents in advance of the next Plenary meeting on February 23, when the second draft of documents will be presented and discussed.

On January 20, the Ministry of Finance issued draft "**Regulations to Facilitate the Merger of BPS SEPPs with Existing JSPPs or Conversion to new JSPPs**." The regulations will be posted for comment until February 27, 2015. Members of the UPP's project oversight committee will review the regulations and seek advice as it relates to the creation of the JSPP for this project.

Background: Discussions between OCUFA and COU, on behalf of their respective members, are continuing with a "University JSPP Plenary Body" struck to discuss and design a multi-employer Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP) for Ontario universities. The Body comprises interested representatives from OCUFA, COU, university administrations and unions. COU and OCUFA have received continued funding from MTCU for technical and project management support related to these joint discussions.

The objective of the Body over the next 12 months will be to create a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines a basic structure for a multi-employer JSPP consisting of four core areas: benefits and features, plan governance, actuarial and finance, and corporate structure. At the end of the project, it is anticipated that the MOU/draft plan would be shared with each participating member's institution for internal discussion and determination of support for the plan; this phase of the work does not entail any commitment to move to a JSPP, only to explore this as a possible option. At the conclusion of this phase of work, estimated to be June 2015, the Body would reassess whether any additional work needs to be undertaken.

The Plenary Body met on October 17, 2014 and the meeting provided an overview of the concept for a voluntary JSPP for the university sector and outlined the collaborative process established by COU and OCUFA. Presentations were made by legal and actuarial experts from Hicks Morley LLP, Koskie Minsky LLP, Eckler Ltd. and AON Hewitt, who will continue to provide advice to the project. There was a good discussion at the table and support to move forward to strike four sub-committees (whose members will be drawn from the Plenary Body and/or their designates) that will explore four key core areas noted above. The work of the sub-committees is expected to begin in November.

A highly successful Ontario Universities Pension Symposium, co-hosted by Wilfrid Laurier (WLU) and Aon Hewitt, was held on May 6, 2014 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.

The table that follows outlines the status of key initiatives that are part of the Pension Plan Sustainability Project.

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	**Status**
50/50 cost-sharing of current service costs	• Substantial progress has been made to increase 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. • 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.
Extension of Temporary Solvency Relief	• The Ministry of Finance announced an **additional extension of temporary solvency relief** in October 2013 for a number of universities. COU had advocated for the extension of relief for an additional three years. • The **final regulation for Stage 2 temporary solvency relief** was filed on May 8, 2014 for a number of universities.
Pooled Asset Management	• The BPS Pensions Branch (Ministry of Finance) 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. • The work shifted to focus on WSIB and the Ontario Pension Board (OPB) as the founding members of a new entity. The entity may be established to support the government's Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP). • The committee has finished its work and a report will be provided to the government shortly. Copies of the final report are not yet available. It is anticipated that the next Ontario budget will contain information about the establishment of the new entity, to be effective July 1, 2016.

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	**Status**
MTCU Joint Working Group (JWG)	• The Joint Working Group (JWG) is a forum initiated by MTCU for discussion and sharing of information, as part of the funding provided by MTCU to COU and OCUFA. • Participants include: MTCU, Ministry of Finance, COU's University Pensions Task Force and representatives from OCUFA. • The first meeting was held in June 2013 and will continue with periodic meetings in 2014-15. The group has reviewed straw models of a JSPP, discussed costing of that model and discussed potential governance issues. OCUFA also shared the outcome of their research project and straw model. • Since the signing of a new TPA in September 2015 to undertake work for the University Pensions Project, the JWG will continue to meet in 2015-16 to provide updates to government on the work of the UPP in the designing of the framework for a JSPP.

The University Pensions Task Force completed its first major milestone on its feasibility study of a sector-wide 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. COU had advocated with government on behalf of the sector for an extension on the temporary solvency relief measures since 2012.

Division: Office of the President **Updated:** February 2015

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Benchmarking Administrative Performance Indicators

Background: The Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO) benchmarking project has moved into a pilot-testing phase with data being collected from six universities (Laurentian, UOIT, Ottawa, Toronto, Western, and York) during late summer. On a longer trajectory, three CSAO affiliates (OACUSA – Security; ACSD/CUCCIO – IT; and the Committee on Space Standards) are also investigating the development of one new indicator each.

The chair of the Benchmarking Working Group (BWG), Carol McAulay (Laurentian), has commissioned the Education Advisory Board (EAB) to conduct the pilot. EAB's report will roll up and present indicator data (from existing sources) for the six universities and provide recommendations on data development for the indicators not yet available based on feedback provided by staff at the pilot universities.

In fall 2012, CSAO established the BWG whose objectives 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.

In February 2014, CSAO approved the short-list of indicators and directed the BWG to proceed with further development of data sources and definitions, data-sharing protocols, and pilot testing of indicators already being collected.

Division: Corporate Services **Updated:** September 2014

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Collaborative Procurement

Background: The Ministry of Government Services (MGS) is leading an initiative to increase collaborative procurement (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 the Ontario University Procurement Management Association (OUPMA), a CSAO affiliate, 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.

The first (2012-13) progress report for the CSAO CP project was submitted to 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.

OUPMA continues to lead on implementation of the CP initiative in support of the Steering Committee. The next annual report is due in March 2015.

Division: Corporate Services **Updated:** May 2014

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Communicating the Challenge of Financial Sustainability

Background: CSAO had undertaken a project to gather best practices for communicating the challenges of financial sustainability to internal and external stakeholder audiences. The committee has concluded that no further steps are required on this project as the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) has taken up the issue.

A CAUBO committee has commissioned Ken Snowdon to write a set of reports on the financial sustainability of Canadian universities. The first phase report will address the nature and scope of the financial sustainability challenge (Canada-wide) and the second report will be concerned with solutions. The CAUBO board will review the first report in December and it then will be shared with CSAO.

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.

In 2013-14, CSAO established a small working group to steer this project. This group worked with the Education Advisory Board (EAB), a US-based higher education research institute, to investigate best-practice financial communications tools used by North American universities. The tools were 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 other work underway in the sector, including pension plan reform, administrative benchmarking, and financial health analysis and reporting.

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.

Division: Corporate Services **Updated:** November 2014

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Advocacy Initiatives – University Operations

Background: On behalf of CSAO, the following operational advocacy issues are underway:

- **Bill 18 ("Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy")**: this bill classifies students on work placements as "workers" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. After an accelerated passage through the Legislature, Bill 18 passed third reading on November 6, 2014 without the changes/clarifications sought by COU. The Secretariat has been informed that there will be an opportunity to make its case once again at the regulation stage.

- **Ban on tobacco sales on campus and ban on smoking in/near playing fields:** Ontario Regulation 48/06 was amended on November 7, 2014, so that it now bans the sale of tobacco on campuses (including student union-owned buildings) and prohibits smoking in/near playing fields, stadiums and playgrounds, effective January 1, 2015. COU is advocating for an exemption for retail establishments leased out to private tenants by universities as these spaces are not controlled by university administrations or student unions.

- **Unpaid internships and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage:** A new guideline issued by MTCU in 2013 resulted in de facto changes in the scope of MTCU-funded WSIB coverage for students on work placements. Since then, universities have encountered gaps related to placements for students in continuing studies, cost-recovery programs, and courses offered as electives. These changes led COU to write to MTCU in August asking for clarification and a resumption of the previous scope of coverage. The Ministry acknowledged that further analysis and clarification of the impact of the new guideline were in order. COU will follow up to advocate for clarity and a return to the previous scope.

- **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. A federal reporting requirement was also recently announced by Statistics Canada. 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 in 2015.

The university sector is subject to regulation on a wide range of operational issues, including Broader Public Sector financial directives, health and safety regulations, 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, and they are brought to CSAO/COU for action when necessary.

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Updated: Research Matters

Update: The Research Matters Pop-Up Research Park was at Parliament Hill on January 28, 2015. Early career Canada Research Chairs (CRCs), along with their industry partners, popped up on Parliament Hill to showcase the relevance of their research to improving the lives of Canadians.

The Virtual Scavenger Hunt will run from February 17 to February 27. This is a contest designed to draw the attention of the general public, as well as university faculty, staff, and students, to the game-changing research happening at Ontario universities. The hunt will feature research undertaken at all of Ontario's 21 universities. All Ontarians are eligible for daily prizes and five cash prizes of $500 will be awarded to university students. New this year will be up to five special prizes for K-12 sector classes.

Background: Research Matters is an integrated communications strategy that includes a website (**www.yourontarioresearch.ca**), public events, media relations, advertising and social media (Twitter: @OntarioResearch, Facebook: **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.

Under the new theme of "Game Changing Research," year three activities have been designed to maintain continuity from previous years' activities while maintaining the campaign's energy and allowing it to evolve and stay fresh. Activities will include:

- a new Virtual Scavenger Hunt;
- Federal and Provincial Pop-up Research Parks;
- a refreshed **Curiosity Shop**;
- a Curiosity Cruiser summer tour;
- a creation of on an Ontario Research Week that will engage other partners and include a media blitz, as well as the Ontario Research Chairs Symposium;
- a partnership with Virtual Researcher on Call (VROC);
- continued academic outreach through a presence at CAURA Ontario and Congress; and
- a refreshed website.

Division: Strategic Initiatives **Updated:** February 2015

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Updated: Digital Infrastructure

Update: Following on the successful advocacy efforts of the Leadership Council on Digital Infrastructure (LCDI) and others from the Canadian university sector, the federal government, through its Science and Technology strategy, has recognized the importance of Digital Research Infrastructure. Specifically, it has committed to "working with partners to develop a digital research infrastructure strategy to create a world-leading research and innovation ecosystem in Canada. This will also serve to advance Digital Canada 150 by positioning Canada as a global leader in 'big data.' We will include new policies on research data management and storage, and a coordinated long-term approach to the funding and provision of high speed networking, high performance computing and software tools, to be developed by the Canada Foundation for Innovation, CANARIE and Compute Canada. Digital Canada 150 included a commitment of $50 million for the Canada Foundation for Innovation to invest in high performance computing and storage in support of these efforts."

As work on a national strategy for digital research infrastructure moves into its next phase, the LCDI has begun discussion on it might move to a more formalized structure.

Background: Over the past decade, research undertaken at our institutions and in commercial labs has become increasingly dependent on digital research 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 turned their attention to Canada and Ontario's future digital research infrastructure needs to build a more efficient and cohesive system from the various component parts that current exist. The speed of change in this area and its many component parts make this file complex and one that requires effective partnership, evidence-based policy development, and sustained, long-term advocacy efforts.

Federal Activity: Interest in the digital infrastructure file has increased at the federal level and a number of important developments have occurred.

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 research 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.

This past summer, AUCC struck a working group of Executive Heads with the objective of better understanding the issues relating to digital infrastructure and the impact on, or implications for, Canada's research community and, more broadly, for Canada's overall economic and social prosperity. This group is chaired by Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University and, through its deliberations, has expanded its scope to include all aspects of smart campuses.

CANARIE is currently seeking a mandate renewal from the federal government. This renewal will allow CANARIE to continue its key objectives of providing a sustainable and responsive advanced network, developing next generation technologies to support the effective and efficient use of Canada's advanced digital research infrastructure, and supporting opportunities to leverage private sector innovation in ICT and partnerships with universities. In addition, CANARIE has signaled its interest in building its critical leadership role in strengthening Canada's advanced digital research infrastructure system. CANARIE has not yet publicly announced the amount that it will seek from government. However, it has indicated that it would welcome a return to previous levels of investment, which were $120M over five years in 2007-2012.

Compute Canada has begun to develop a Sustainable Plan for Advanced Research Computing (SPARC) in order to forecast Canada's advanced research computing needs through 2022. Also, in response to the release of CFI's cyberinfrastructure call, Compute Canada issued their formal call for the Host Selection Process on October 20, 2014. Compute Ontario submitted their proposal in December 2014. Compute Canada is currently reviewing all proposals and is expected to submit its final proposal to CFI in April 2015.

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 2014.

The provincial government has confirmed its commitment to match the CFI's newly announced cyber-infrastructure round with provincial dollars. Compute Ontario is working through Compute Canada to ensure that the renewal of the Compute Canada platform reflects Ontario's computing needs. COU is working with MRI to ensure that Ontario's proposal for one of four data centres envisioned through the most recent call from Compute Canada is successful. COU is working with Compute Ontario to ensure that Ontario's interests are well-represented and strategically positioned within Compute Canada.

Division: Strategic Initiatives **Updated:** February 2015

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AccessibleCampus.ca

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**.

Since the launch of **AccessibleCampus.ca**, new resources have regularly been posted to the website. These 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, an article and resources on accessibility in online learning, an article and resources on accessible science labs, and the latest news on accessibility law, related events and conferences and other initiatives underway in the sector.

Upcoming resources to be posted to **www.accessiblecampus.ca** include a Mental Health Handbook and an article and checklist on accessible laboratories.

Since its launch, the website has received over 51,000 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.

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 **Updated:** September 2014

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EnAbling Change Partnership: Educators Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit

Background: COU 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. Over the summer, COU published resources on accessible laboratories, practical spaces and online learning. This fall, a Mental Health Handbook for educators was published.

The EAR Kit project was completed in fall 2014. Work on this project was divided into three phases.

Phase 1, "General Tools," included 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," included tip sheets on accessible teaching for students with diverse disabilities, an article by Dr. Michael Prince, Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy at the University of Victoria, a brief video on universities and the AODA, and quick reference resources on accessible laboratories and work spaces, online instruction and off-campus field work.

Phase 3 focused on mental health and anti-stigma deliverables. COU 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 publish a mental health handbook for educators, based on a similar guide published by Cornell University.

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.

As part of this project, COU also built 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 was 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.

Division: Strategic Initiatives **Updated:** September 2014

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Updated: Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) Student Competition

Update: On October 30, 2014, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) and COU signed a contract amendment to continue the IDeA Student Competition for a fourth year. The competition is funded through surplus funds from previous years. In December 2014, COU officially launched the competition with a few changes to this year's format.

The biggest change for year four is that the celebration event will take place at the People in Motion Conference on May 29 to 30, 2015. IDeA organizers needed to change the venue due to a conflict in dates with the OCE Discovery Conference, which is where the celebration event took place for the past three years.

Ontario's university undergraduate students may submit their IDeAs until April 19, 2015.

COU continues to work toward identification of a funder to ensure the continuation of the IDeA competition for future years. As part of this exercise, COU is also considering the possibility of expanding the competition to include a graduate stream.

More information on the competition can be found on the **IDeA website** (available at the hyperlink or at **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.

On May 13, 2014, the winners of the 3rd 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 the 2014 competition were:

- **1st 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
- **2nd 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
- **3rd 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
- **3rd 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 were:

- **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

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Updated: Proposed Amendments to the Accessible Customer Service Standard

Update: In fall 2014, the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council/Standard Development Committee (ASAC/SD) submitted its final recommendations to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Innovation on the proposed changes to the Accessible Customer Service Standard. Ontario universities remain concerned with the current proposed changes to the Standard that would give all regulated health professionals the ability to designate an animal as a service animal. While Ontario universities agree that there are regulated health professionals, other than a physician or nurse, who may be in a position to accurately confirm that a person requires a service animal for reasons related to a disability, they are concerned with the proposal to give this authority to all regulated health professionals. COU previously signaled this concern during the feedback process that took place in March 2014.

In December 2014, COU submitted a letter to the Minister reiterating this concern and suggested that, in order to ensure that the service animal designation is properly applied and its integrity maintained, only a few regulated professionals be permitted to provide a letter for a service animal. Specifically, Ontario universities suggested that the Ontario government limit the authorized regulated health professionals to those who would be in an appropriate position to assess and designate need. At a minimum, it was asked that the government apply the same type of analysis used to determine which professionals can confirm for vehicle parking permits.

COU will continue to monitor the developments on this issue.

Background: On March 3, 2014, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment (now Economic Development, Employment and Innovation) 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, 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 submitted feedback on behalf of the sector through the Reference Group on Accessibility. The ASAC/SD is currently reviewing all feedback that was received during the public consultation.

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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Updated: More Feet on the Ground

Update: On November 13, 2014, COU, in partnership with Brock University, the Ontario Committee of Student Affairs (OCSA) and the Ontario government, launched **More Feet on the Ground** – a bilingual educational website that focuses on helping people to recognize, respond and refer students experiencing mental health issues on campus.

More Feet on the Ground covers the following aspects of Mental Health:

- Mental health vs Mental Illness;
- Mental health as a continuum;
- Stigma;
- Recovery;
- Recognize, Respond, Refer;
- Factors that can affect mental health;
- Various mental illnesses; and
- Support resources (on- and off-campus).

Each institution is able to create its own branded version of the website with its own institutionally-specific support resources as well as an institutionally-unique URL that can be shared with potential "trainees." Users of the site can register by creating a log-in which allows them to complete the quizzes and receive a certificate of completion. Site administrators can track whether a user has completed the quizzes.

More information can be found by using the following link and then selecting an institution from the list: **https://morefeetontheground.ca/**.

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Updated: Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health

Update: The provincial government has indicated an interest in continuing the work of the Centre beyond its mandate. The partners have agreed to use this opportunity to review the Centre's progress towards its goals, identify its successes, and develop a plan for the future. Under the direction of the Centre's Executive Committee, Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario has hired two external consultants with postsecondary experience to carry out the review. Dr. Michael Cooke and Dr. Phil Wood will seek input from a range of college and university administrators, practitioners and student leaders, as well as external practitioners, to make recommendations on the future foci and goals.

Background: In spring 2014, the Centre launched its "Ask the Expert" Webinar series. Free webinars through which specialists share promising practices to address the needs of students with mental health concerns, as well strategies to promote a healthy campus, will be held on a regular basis.

To register for the webinars and for a full list of webinars please go to: **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/**.

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, received funding for the creation of a Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (C4ICMH) through MTCU's Mental Health Innovation Fund (MHIF). The Centre serves 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 has 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.

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Updated: Aboriginal Communications Campaign

Update: COU has moved into Phase 3 of the project, and the deliverables are to develop campaign concept and implementation, develop website concept and implementation, and organize launch events for website and campaign.

Based on the research completed by Gandalf Group in the winter of 2014, the Working Group tasked COU with developing a resource website. Aboriginal educators expressed the importance of an Aboriginal specific web-based resource to assist Aboriginal learners through the process of considering or transitioning to an Ontario university. Therefore, the website will serve as a resource for Aboriginal learners in transition to university, as well as for grade 8/9 students who are planning for their educational futures.

COU is hosting a teleconference with our Aboriginal Student Ambassadors on February 6 to discuss content for the resource website, naming the resource website, and collaborative projects.

Background: An Aboriginal Strategic Communications Campaign Working Group was established in March 2013 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), Ontario Committee on Student Affairs (OCSA), the Aboriginal Postsecondary Information Program 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.

The goals of the campaign are to:

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

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Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program

Background: Over the summer a community inquiry process for strategic planning took place where Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner (PHCNP) members held conversations with their colleagues and other stakeholders. The Program then hosted a one-day strategic planning summit in September 2014 to bring PHCNP's Strategy to Life. Deans and directors from the schools of nursing, a cross section of representatives from all of the nine sites, the ministry, and COU members attended. During the summit, members reviewed PHCNP's vision and mission and re-engaged with our strategic priorities to form concrete, implementable action plans.

Today there are more than 2,000 Nurse Practitioners (NPs) practicing in Ontario and over 70% of them graduated from Ontario's Primary Health Care (PHC) NP Program. The PHCNP Program educates and prepares nurses for advanced practice as NPs-PHC to deliver quality healthcare for Ontarians. The nine university site consortium is composed of the participating Schools of Nursing (Lakehead, Laurentian, McMaster, Ottawa, Queen's, Ryerson, Western, Windsor and York). As advanced practice nurses, NPs are educated to diagnose, order tests, and prescribe medications and treatments. NPs work directly with individuals, families, groups, and communities, and can admit and discharge patients to and from hospitals. NPs-PHC are nurse leaders who practice in communities to enhance wellness and prevent disease.

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Internationally Educated Nurses

Background: Due to regulatory changes to the entry-to-practice requirements for internationally educated nurses (IENs) that came into effect in 2013, many more IENs are approaching university schools of nursing to request education that will help bridge them into practice in Ontario. COU is working with university members and other stakeholders to explore potential options around expanding spaces and developing specialized courses to meet the needs of these IENs.

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Updated: Tri-partite Committee on College Stand-alone Nursing degrees

Update: MTCU has formally released to universities, colleges and stakeholders, the consultants' reports in response to the colleges' request to offer stand-alone nursing degrees. The reports identify the potential risks and benefits of stand-alone nursing degrees for colleges and a greater number of universities (i.e., more universities than currently offer a stand-alone nursing degree), and urge caution in moving forward. MTCU has indicated that its decision on the issue also will be informed by its credential review, which has not yet been completed.

Background: MTCU established a Tri-partite Committee, with representation from COU, Colleges Ontario, MTCU and MoHLTC to explore whether colleges should be allowed to offer stand-alone nursing degree programs. MTCU hired consultants, with input from COU and Colleges Ontario, to assess the current level and nature of collaboration between university and college partners, and the potential implications of authorizing more stand-alone nursing degrees.

The consultants presented their final report to the Tri-partite Committee on March 7, 2014.

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Updated: Clinical Education Crisis

Update: COU met with government officials in December to share new data on the issue of shortages in quality clinical placements for nursing and allied health science students, and to recommend that government work with universities, colleges, and placing agencies to identify solutions to the problem. Further discussions on the issue are occurring through the Joint Provincial Nursing Committee, a committee of key nursing stakeholders that advises government on policy issues from a nursing perspective.

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 provide more consistent incentives and recognition for healthcare professionals and organizations across the continuum of care who work with schools to provide clinical education opportunities for students. The Office of Health Sciences at COU has engaged in meetings with government and stakeholders to discuss the recommendations in the paper.

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Updated: Medical Trainee Days Data

In 2010, MoHLTC issued new standards for the collection and reporting of Medical Trainee Days (MTD) data. An implementation group was established in early 2012 to act on recommendations for improving data quality and accuracy, as well as efficiency of the data collection process.

Update: The new MTD data collection and reporting process has been implemented. Initial data (Q1) was submitted to the Ontario Physician Human Resource Data Centre (OPHRDC) on October 3, 2014. A rapid change process is being used to address data quality concerns and adjust processes. Lessons learned from the first submission will be applied prior to submission of further data.

Background: 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, therefore both have a vested interest in ensuring there is rigour to the data quality.

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