

Academic Colleagues Report
Council of Ontario Universities
297th Meeting of Council

The Council of Ontario Universities met at Lakehead University on Thursday, April 3, 2014.

On April 2nd, the evening before the meeting, a reception and Council dinner were held at Bight Restaurant at the waterfront. President Brian Stevenson welcomed members of Council and COU staff to Thunder Bay, and entertainment was provided by the Lakehead University Chorus. After dinner, members of Council completing their terms were recognized and thanked for their years of service.

On the morning of April 3rd, Executive Heads met in the Senate Chambers and Academic Colleagues met separately in the boardroom on the 5th floor of ATAC. Academic Colleagues discussed the challenges and opportunities afforded by collaboration among Ontario universities in online education. Peter Gooch (COU) provided an update on recent activities of COU and MTCU. Work on the Strategic Mandate Agreements continues as the Ministry responds to each university with an agreement and metrics based on that university's submission. We also heard about the recent release of a call for proposals for capacity expansion; letters of intent will be followed by more detailed proposals in September. This capital is expected to be directed towards increasing capacity through satellite campuses in the GTA.

The Council Meeting brought Academic Colleagues and Executive Heads together for a working lunch. Council engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of collaboration in online education and the new Centre of Excellence for online education in Ontario. The Ontario Online initiative has been well funded, with university funding of \$4.65 million for course development, strategic project costs and administrative costs in 2013-14. The college sector received the same amount of funding for 2013-14. MTCU has indicated three years of funding for the Ontario Online initiative, with \$15 million anticipated in each of 2014-15 and 2015-16. COU President Bonnie Patterson and Paul Genest (MTCU) also addressed Council on the topic of Strategic Mandate Agreements.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill
COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University