

Academic Colleagues Report
Council of Ontario Universities
296th Meeting of Council
October 31, 2013

On the evening of October 30, members of Council were invited to the St. Andrew's Club in Toronto for dinner and presentation of the David C. Smith Award to Dalton McGuinty. After dinner Mr. McGuinty gave an address on the importance of teaching entrepreneurship in Ontario universities.

Council met in the St. Andrew's Club for a working lunch on October 31. Paul Genest (Special Advisor, Strategic Mandate Agreements (Universities), Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) provided an update on progress to date and the process he is pursuing to negotiate SMA agreements by March 31, 2014. He spoke of the need for financial sustainability in the system as costs are rising faster than revenue. He indicated that a final version of the SMA framework for universities would be distributed to universities in mid-November with a request for universities to "refresh" their SMAs in light of a clearer framework. After his presentation, Executive Heads and Academic Colleagues expressed their concerns and asked questions about the process. Everyone agreed that the timeline for responding to the updated framework sounded too short for meaningful dialogue within universities. This would make it very difficult to seek input from Senates and other stakeholders. Mr. Genest explained that the Ministry needed time to review the responses before the March deadline.

COU staff informed Council about the COU Communications Plan "Perceptions of Ontario Universities" and about a new website Accessiblecampus.ca with resources for educators and administrators. Paul Davidson, President and CEO of AUCC, told Council about AUCC's pre-budget report "Partners for Prosperity – Canadian Universities" available on the AUCC website. Council ratified the Academic-Integrity Council of Ontario (AICO) as an affiliate of Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV).

Academic Colleagues met as a group both before and after the Council meeting. They planned a presentation to Council on "Perspectives on Differentiation: Why Research Matters at All Universities." They heard about progress on the process of prioritization at Guelph, Wilfred Laurier, and York Universities. Discussion of the Strategic Mandate Agreements and the process of prioritization will be continued at the next meeting of Academic Colleagues on December 12-13 in Toronto.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for April 3, 2014 at Lakehead University.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill
COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University