

Council of Ontario Universities
Academic Colleagues Report
Meeting of Academic Colleagues December 6-7, 2016

Academic Colleagues met for a working dinner on Tuesday, December 6 at the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) offices in Toronto. Our guest speaker, Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education at the University of Toronto, provided an update on the COU Task Force for Quality Indicators and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) Experiential Learning Subgroup. A discussion of experiential learning and possible metrics for experiential learning ensued. There was general agreement that work-integrated learning is not the only form of experiential learning, and that we need a more accurate measure than the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to measure outcomes.

On Wednesday morning, December 7, Academic Colleagues held their business meeting in the COU Council Room. Peter Gooch (COU Senior Director) updated Colleagues on recent developments at COU and MAESD, including new information about the tuition framework proposal, funding formula review, strategic mandate agreements, highly skilled workforce report, OSAP and net-tuition billing. Most Ontario universities, including Lakehead, volunteered to pilot net-tuition billing for 2017-18. This initiative is good for students and the public perception of the cost of university education, and implementation of these changes is a high priority for the Ontario government.

Harvey Weingarten, President and CEO of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) joined Academic Colleagues to present an overview of HEQCO's work on learning outcomes. Employers want graduates who are literate, numerate, critical thinkers, problem solvers and adaptable. Universities must learn how to measure and credential these skills and competencies in a meaningful way that informs employers, students and the public.

David Lindsay, CEO of COU, updated Academic Colleagues on COU's strategic engagement campaign. In the first stage of the campaign, COU invited students and their parents to participate in a survey and preliminary results indicate some concern about the future. In the second stage COU will use a series of roundtables to engage employers and the public at large in a conversation about how universities can contribute to a better future. University Presidents are encouraged to build momentum for this conversation for a better future.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill
Academic Colleague for Lakehead University