

Council of Ontario Universities  
Academic Colleagues Report  
September 2016

Academic Colleagues met on Thursday, May 19 for a working dinner in the newly renovated COU offices on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor of 180 Dundas Street West, Toronto. The discussion topic for the dinner was “Developing the next generation of talent”, a phrase that has come up lately in government and the media. The following morning, Friday, May 20, we met again for a COU update from Peter Gooch and other regular business. Julia Colyer (COU) provided an overview of draft recommendations from the eCampus Ontario Faculty Supports Project, a joint project for colleges and universities. The draft recommendations are to develop a resource hub, develop networking opportunities, and support innovation. David Lindsay joined the meeting to provide an update on COU’s Strategic Communications plan. The first phase of the plan, focused on listening to stakeholders, will be launched this fall. It is hoped that the communications plan will position universities as leaders in helping society move ahead with innovation and demonstrate how universities are partners in solving the acute societal anxieties about being left behind in an increasingly complex world.

Academic Colleagues met again at the COU offices on August 24 and 25. Several new Academic Colleagues were welcomed and introduced to COU. We learned that in June 2016 the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities was renamed the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). The appointment of Minister Deb Matthews, who is also the Deputy Premier, seems to signal the importance of higher education and skills development to the current government. Academic Colleagues were briefed by COU policy analysts on several files including Bill 132 (Sexual Violence Prevention), the funding formula review, the Graduate Programs Outcome Survey (GPOS), OSAP changes, “net-billing”, and the “Faculty at Work” project.

The next meeting of Council will be held in Toronto on October 13. The David C. Smith Award will be presented that evening to Bonnie Patterson for her longstanding commitment to Ontario universities.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill  
COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University