

Council of Ontario Universities  
Academic Colleagues Report  
Meeting of Academic Colleagues on May 25-26, 2017

Academic Colleagues met at the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) offices in Toronto for a working dinner on May 25 and a regular business meeting on May 26. At our dinner meeting, Julia Colyer (COU) provided an overview on a project being undertaken by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV)/Reference Group on Aboriginal Education (RGAE) Joint Working Group. The Working Group formed in 2015 to explore best practices for supporting and retaining Aboriginal faculty, particularly those seeking tenure and promotion. Academic Colleagues discussed some of the challenges associated with the project and made a few suggestions.

Our meeting the next morning opened with an update on COU's Strategic Engagement Campaign. Tomas Hachard (COU) summarized the activities and findings of the "Discover" phase of the campaign and outlined plans for the "Distil" phase set to commence this summer. Themes that emerged from the Discover phase include jobs, skills and the economy; technology and optimism about the future; concern about the environment; concern about social supports and inequality, particularly with respect to Aboriginal communities; healthcare and supports needed for an aging population; and community development. The campaign is looking for examples of university programs or initiatives that respond to or overlap with concerns raised in the Discover phase.

Eilis Karry (COU) provided an overview of COU's Reference Group on Aboriginal Education. The Reference Group was organized in 2009 and includes representatives from each Ontario university. The original focus of RGAE was to ensure that Aboriginal students are provided opportunities to succeed. In 2013-14, there were 6500 self-identified Indigenous learners enrolled at Ontario universities. RGAE created the Ontario Universities' Aboriginal Student Resource Portal on COU's website, featuring a photo of a Lakehead University student.

My term as Lakehead University's Academic Colleague ends with this report. It has been a privilege and an honour to represent Lakehead on the Council of Ontario Universities for the past five years. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill  
Academic Colleague for Lakehead University

Academic Colleague's Report  
18 September 2017

The Academic Colleagues met in the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) offices in Toronto for a working dinner the evening of August 23 and a regular business meeting the morning of August 24.

After dinner on August 23, the outgoing President of University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT), Dr. Tim McTiernan, provided a wide-ranging and informal discussion on the issue of managing change in postsecondary education in which he provided insights from his experience as President of UOIT, and other administrative roles, and as a bureaucrat in the governments of Yukon and Ontario. After speaking for an hour he generously engaged in a discussion with the Academic Colleagues for another hour. In his comments, Dr. McTiernan sketched the complicated environment in which Ontario universities must operate and emphasized the erosion of university autonomy due to what he described as the provincial government's command and control approach to the postsecondary sector.

In the regular meeting on August 24, Academic Colleagues were informed of the following:

- A final report on the Engagement Campaign is in the final stages of being drafted. The report is concerned with how universities can be more engaged with the public and can meet public concerns.
- The Quality Council has an Interim Executive Director, Dr. Alan Harrison (former Provost at Queen's). The planned review of the Quality Assurance Framework and the Quality Council scheduled for this year will be delayed a year.
- The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) will announce an internationalization strategy in the fall.
- As a result of Bill 132, which enacted the Premier's Sexual Violence Action Plan, as of this fall postsecondary institutions will be required to report the number of formal sexual violence complaints filed. In addition, a campus climate survey is being developed and will be administered in February 2018.
- The implementation of the public sector executive compensation framework is in process, with universities being required to submit draft compensation programs by the end of this month.
- COU conducted a cost analysis of the proposed Bill 148 (which would, among other changes, raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour and introduce equal pay for equal work provisions), which suggested that the proposals would cost universities more than \$175 million per year. COU is seeking clarification as to the interpretation of the proposals and asking the government to provide funding to offset the increased costs.

- The provincial government has identified experiential learning and the production of a Highly Skilled Workforce (HSW) as a priority. The COU HSW Steering Committee has worked to ensure that a broad definition of experiential learning is used, rather than one focused on work-integrated learning. The Steering Committee is also developing recommendations on how to expand experiential learning capacity in Ontario.
- MAESD has announced a Career Ready Fund that will provide \$68 million to universities and colleges over three years. Specific details of the program and the definition of experiential learning are expected soon.
- The HSW Steering Committee is organizing an Experiential Learning Best Practices Exchange on November 17 in Toronto.

After much discussion, the Academic Colleagues chose to present the topic of Managing Mandated Change for discussion at the full COU meeting on October 19.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Douglas Ivison  
COU Academic Colleague (Alternate)