

COU Academic Colleagues Report  
For Lakehead University Senate Meeting on January 18, 2013

COU Academic Colleagues met in Toronto on December 6 and 7, 2012.

At the working dinner on December 6, Colleagues discussed teaching and research by faculty, particularly the balance between these activities and ways to protect this balance in the face of external pressure to increase “productivity.” Provincial funding incentives are based on students taught, not research. Will there be pressure to teach more at the expense of research in this environment of scarce government funding for universities? Is research valued as a “product” of universities? Colleagues are working on a Discussion Paper on this topic.

At the meeting on Friday morning, Colleagues were briefed on current COU and MTCU activities. There has been no clear message from government on tuition, efficiency targets for operating grants, the Strategic Mandate Agreements, program approvals and other issues. It is thought to be unlikely that any decisions will be made until there is a new premier and a new Minister. The recently released Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) report, *The Productivity of the Ontario Public Postsecondary System* was also discussed. It was suggested that this report is a milestone on the road to more differentiated faculty workloads in the university sector.

Colleagues were updated on the proposed Ontario Universities Online (OUO). COU will hire a coordinator/project leader to set up a consortium among Ontario universities. For now, the intent is to rely on existing online resources. OUO will facilitate online degrees offered by some universities but is not imagined as a degree-granting entity itself.

Academic Colleagues are working on a discussion paper, “CAAT Transfer Students in Ontario Universities: A Review of the Evidence,” to be presented to Council in April. A draft of this paper was reviewed and discussed.

The next meeting of Academic Colleagues is scheduled for January 31-February 1, 2013 in Toronto. The next Council meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2013 in Guelph.

Respectfully submitted,

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