

Academic Colleagues Report
Council of Ontario Universities
294th Meeting of Council

Council met for a working lunch at Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre on October 11, 2012. This was a new format for the meeting, scheduled in the middle of the day with separate Executive Heads and Academic Colleagues meetings during the morning prior to and in the afternoon after the working lunch. The goal is to improve attendance at Council meetings while keeping meetings short and focused.

The Executive Heads arrived a few minutes late after their morning meeting with Glen Murray, then Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Most of the Council meeting was dedicated to discussion of the Ministry's consultation paper and COU's response regarding transformation in the university sector. COU will establish an online consortium based on existing online courses, expertise and infrastructure, support "university innovations and acceleration", and share best practices in teaching. OPSEU, CUPE and OCUFA all expressed concern about chronic underfunding of universities and the consultation's failure to address this issue. AUCC President Paul Davidson saluted COU for navigating the current baffling and challenging policy regime in Ontario. COU Chair Alistair Summerlee, in closing, advised Council members to "buckle up for a bumpy ride."

Academic Colleagues also spent time in their meeting discussing the Minister's consultation paper. It is basically a call for universities to do more teaching with less funding. Academic Colleagues are currently working on two discussion papers. One is a look at how college transfers are doing in university. The other addresses the integration of teaching and research at universities. Colleagues will continue their discussion of these papers at their next meeting in Toronto December 6-7, 2012.

In the evening, all members of Council were invited to the presentation of the David C. Smith Award to Chaviv Hosek, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) President Emeritus, for her significant contributions to higher education.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill
COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University