

Report on Academic Colleagues' Annual Retreat

COU office, Toronto, August 28, 2008

Nine new academic colleagues (AC) were introduced at the start of the meeting. This was followed by four presentations, a briefing on the progress made by Quality Assurance Working Committee by the AC Co-Chairs and introduction from the President and CEO of COU, Paul Genes. The following are the highlights of the meeting:

1. **Barb Hauser**, Secretary & Policy Advisor to COU, gave an overview of the purpose and structure of the COU and the role of AC's terms of reference. She explained that self-management, advice to the government and advocacy are the three primary functions of the council. She described the structure and function of various standing committees, major affiliates, task force and working groups of the council.
2. **Jamie Mackay**, VP (Policy and Analysis), gave an update on COU Ontario University Application statistics as of June 5, 2008 that showed 3.5% increase from last year number (63,912 from 61,749). MTCU is consulting with the working group on university capacity to discuss the framework for funding policy review. Deputy Minister's departure to B.C. is a concern. Operating grants as the top advocacy agenda in light of significant increase in graduate and undergraduate enrolment. Current approach to graduate appraisal will be replaced by a new quality assurance body.
3. **Ken Norris** of HEQCO described the activities of HEQCO. It has a \$5 M annual budget of which 70% should be spent on research. It has undertaken a large number of research projects (50) with four major emphasis, i) participation, ii) education quality, iii) accountability, and iv) system design. AC expressed interest in research collaborating with HEQCO including some AC papers.

4. **John Logan** (Carleton University) introduced his AC draft paper on Accommodation of Learning Disabilities (LD) at Ontario universities. AC of all Ontario universities will provide input in the questionnaire and University Learning Assistance offices will be contacted for their inputs and comments on the draft.

5. **Marilyn Rose and Antony Lewkowicz**, the two co-chairs of the AC committee, briefed on the progress made so far on Quality Assurance Agency that will replace the OCGS. The task force met twice with representatives of OCGS and will make a presentation at the Executive Heads Council on September 15-16, 2008. The working committee has been considering various options of quality assurance at the university mostly focusing on the graduate programs and formulate a new system and appraisal body that should be an improvement over the previous system. Self assessment would be a large component in this system with Office of Quality Assurance at each university and province-wide review committees formed by selected graduate Deans and government officials. The structure and workings of the new Quality Assurance body would be circulated for comments by September 2009 and it will take effect by September 2010.

6. **Paul Genes**, President and CEO of COU, briefly described his previous work experience and structure of the COU. He expressed his keen desire to work together with AC and EH in the best interest of the universities by articulating their needs and aspirations. He will visit all university campuses in Ontario to get a good understanding of the system and prepare strong arguments.

The meeting ended shortly after 3 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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