

Council of Ontario Universities
Academic Colleagues Report
Meeting of Academic Colleagues December 9-10, 2015

Academic Colleagues met for a working dinner on Wednesday, December 9 at the COU offices in Toronto. We had a guest presentation by Erika Kustra (Director of Teaching and Learning, University of Windsor) on supporting and engaging faculty in teaching and learning. Erika led a lively discussion during and after her presentation on topics such as enhancing a culture that values teaching and learning, and recognizing and measuring faculty engagement. There were also a few suggestions on what Presidents could do to support faculty engagement in teaching and learning, including building an infrastructure to support the effective delivery of programs, and making faculty engagement visible by reporting to the community on what has been achieved.

On Thursday morning, December 10 Academic Colleagues held their business meeting in the COU Council Room. Peter Gooch (COU Senior Director) updated Colleagues on recent developments at COU and MTCU. Sue Herbert's MTCU report on university funding model reform was released that day. The report summarizes what was heard during consultations with stakeholders and suggests strategic directions for MTCU. Some themes of the report are to focus on teaching and the quality of the undergraduate experience over research, to focus on student outcomes, to rely on high quality data, and to consider the particular needs for funding during a time of expected declines in enrolment.

Following the update, Catherine Newell Kelley (Executive Director for eCampus Ontario) made a presentation to update Academic Colleagues on the status of eCampus Ontario. The initiative is not a credential-granting institute and relies on courses developed by Ontario universities and colleges. All 45 Ontario universities and colleges are participating in the initiative and the website was launched with 13,000 online courses and 600 online programs currently available. These totals include courses that are fully online and asynchronous, fully online and synchronous, and mostly (more than 80%) online. The goal of eCampus Ontario is mobility and flexibility for students, and ONCAT equivalencies are integrated. Students will still need a letter of permission to have a course count toward graduation requirements at another institution.

COU began 2016 with a new President and CEO, David Lindsay. Similarly, MTCU has a new Deputy Minister, Sheldon Levy. Hopefully an era of cooperation and collaboration will ensue.

Respectfully submitted,

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Academic Colleague for Lakehead University