

Council of Ontario Universities  
Academic Colleagues Report  
Meeting of Academic Colleagues February 18-19, 2016

Academic Colleagues met for a working dinner on Thursday, February 18 at the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) offices in Toronto. Our discussion topic was university-industry partnerships in support of experiential learning and our guest speaker was Sanjeev Gill, IBM National Leader for Research and Innovation Programs. Sanjeev spoke about the many intersections and alignments between IBM goals and Canadian universities, including support for university research, co-ops and internships, academic awards and hiring university graduates. He emphasized that IBM takes a long view in considering the pipeline of talent and also has programs for elementary and high school students.

On the morning of Friday, February 19, Academic Colleagues met again at the COU offices. Peter Gooch (COU) provided an update on COU and Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities activities. He gave a brief update on the Ministry's university funding review and also spoke about the Ministry's examination of OSAP records to see how well this has offset student tuition. He spoke about the Ministry's desire for more, better and trusted data about universities, and described three data projects underway at COU: a graduate programs outcome survey, a faculty at work survey and a teaching quality survey.

There was another guest speaker on the topic of university-community partnerships that support experiential learning. Lisa Chambers, Director of the Centre of Community Partnerships at University of Toronto spoke about the role of service learning in the community. Her centre is celebrating 10 years of success in facilitating "Community-Engaged Learning" opportunities in the city of Toronto.

Jenifer Grass (COU) joined the meeting to provide an update on some government initiatives and commented on the Premier's interest in talent and skills as a strategy in economic development. She also spoke about community hubs and the development of clusters that will be prioritized for economic development.

The next meeting of Council will be held at Ryerson University on April 6-7, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill, COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University