

Report on Academic Colleagues meeting  
May 20-21, 2014, COU Office, Toronto

Working dinner discussion on May 20<sup>th</sup> was on Academic Dishonesty in online courses. Prior to the meeting three papers were circulated on the subject. They all were considered rather confrontational. Lively discussion ensued on the subject with diverse views immediately after the colleagues gathered some suggesting that online cheating is no different than offline courses. Some suggested that more efforts should be placed on prevention rather than catching and punishing. For some it works well by stating clearly and firmly in the introductory class that academic dishonesty will be caught and punished. Some professors make a contract by signing a form to the effect that the first offence will receive lower grade but if caught second time the grade for that particular part will be zero. Similar cautionary notes can be provided in introductory material for online courses. There are technological advancements in catching academic dishonesty such as “key stroke” identification. However, there is a cost associated with them. There is a wide variety of academic dishonesty and universities differ in their approach to penalize the offenders. It was generally agreed that the class teacher could do more in reducing the amount of dishonesty. However, it creates extra work for the faculty, and sessional faculty who often teach online courses are not compensated for the extra work. As it is online degrees are considered of lesser value than programs offered face to face. Academic dishonesty is an added concern for online courses and programs and one should bear that in mind in developing new online courses and programs advocated by the ministry. Intellectual property (IP) rights for online courses were discussed extensively and most colleagues agreed that it can make a subject of a colleagues’ paper or a discussion topic for a future meeting.

Colleague’s discussion on the second day was dominated by MTCU’s credential review on 3-year bachelor’s degrees at Ontario Colleges. It is not clear how many programs at Ontario Universities will be affected by this initiative. Some expressed concerns of financial loss, others were not worried stating that the quality of the college degree will not be the same as the university degree because the college faculties rarely have PhD and research experience. Some suggested that we should work with the colleges to improve their standard and help develop certain applied degree programs that have a high demand in the job market. Concerns were expressed on the issue that colleges want to have their own quality assurance mechanism rather than a mechanism common to universities and colleges.

Eighteen out of 20 SMAs (except Lakehead and Laurentian university) were signed by the ministry and they are unlikely to change based on the election outcome. Teacher education funding is uncertain, may be arbitrarily reduced. Existing programs may be safe but for four universities will phase in the reduction (25% in first year, 50% second year and 25% third year).

Volunteers were named to replace the out going sub-committee members. Patrick Oosthuizen was thanked for his many years of service as an Academic Colleague representing Queen's University. He served in many sub-committees over the years.

The next colleague's retreat will be some time in early August. The meeting ended at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

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