

2021 Update on Education in Ontario Colleges

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Section 1: Introduction

Context

The *2021 Update on Education in Ontario Colleges* is a follow-up to the *2014 Report on Education in Ontario Colleges*.¹ In the seven years since the first report was released there have been sweeping changes to the college system. These changes have occurred due to the 2017 faculty strike, a new Conservative provincial government, and the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to contextualize these significant events and to assess their impact on the faculty and student experience, the quality of college education, and the future of the entire system.

In addition, there is a need to document continued threats posed by a neoliberal vision of education that continues to inform provincial governments and college administrators. This vision is of a post-secondary sector characterized by underfunding, intense competition, privatization, internationalization, job-deskilling, online learning, rising tuitions, the unbundling of faculty work, and the casualization of labour. In contrast, the *2014 Report* articulated a vision in which faculty, administrators and the Province are equal partners in ensuring a high quality, publicly funded, equitable college system. This *Report* details both new and old challenges to realizing the faculty vision, and provides policy recommendations designed to overcome them.

Sponsor

This report has been sponsored by the Divisional Executive of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology – Academic (CAAT-A) members within the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). The *Update* is intended to support contract negotiations for Ontario college faculty in the summer of 2021.

Method

The *2021 Update* authors – Kevin Mackay and Martin Devitt, have both been members of the divisional leadership in CAAT-A, each serving two terms on the Divisional Executive, including one term as Vice Chair. Kevin MacKay was a member of the 2017 faculty bargaining team, as well as authoring the *2014 Report*. Both authors are also delegates to the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), representing the CAAT-A faculty in OPSEU. The authors bring their experience and provincial perspective to an analysis of college system statistics, provincial policy directives, and employer position papers. In addition, both authors have consulted with the local leadership in CAAT-A and with members of the broader provincial and national post-secondary sectors.

An Historic Victory

In December of 2017, Ontario College faculty concluded a five-week strike – the longest in the history of the college system. The contract arbitration and resulting Kaplan Award included significant gains on long-standing faculty issues.² After decades of organizing, college faculty finally gained academic freedom (AF), with their right to teach and speak freely now enshrined in the CAAT-A Collective Agreement (CA). Faculty also gained job security protection for contract faculty with the Partial Load Registry. This new language is a key step forward in an unfinished process of seeking equity for non-full-time faculty. Of critical importance, a moratorium on Article 2 of the CA was successfully lifted, allowing local unions to once more grieve for the hiring of full-time positions. Three important bargaining issues were addressed by the creation of a provincial task force, where full-time staff complements, shared governance, and intellectual property rights would be discussed with sector stakeholders and recommendations made to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). The need for counsellors to have an updated classification and workload formula was also acknowledged in a letter of understanding that committed the College Employer Council (CEC) and CAAT-A Divisional Executive to discussions at the Employee/Employer Relations Council (EERC). Finally, the system-wide application of *Provincial Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*³, was addressed in a letter of understanding. This process would have led to significant gains in wage equity for non-full-time college faculty.

New Challenges

Since the 2017 contract was signed, much has transpired in the Ontario college system and faculty have been met with unexpected challenges. First, with the change of government in 2018 and the election of Conservative Premier Doug Ford, government support for the provincial task force was eliminated. Task force committee meetings were halted, and the newly named Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) pronounced the process to be dead. The Ford government also overturned *Bill 148*, thus depriving contract faculty of much-needed pay equity.

With the provincial task force canceled, the last bargaining round has left serious faculty issues unresolved. First, the need for shared governance remains greater than ever, as faculty academic freedom in the classroom remains unmatched by an equal voice in setting academic policy within our institutions. By providing faculty and students meaningful input into academic decisions, shared governance leads to better pedagogy and research, while providing an important system of checks and balances that ensures the academic integrity of post-secondary education. Sheridan College remains the only one of Ontario's 24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology with a functioning, elected senate. This model of academic governance, proven at Sheridan and accepted as the standard in post-secondary institutions world-wide, needs to be extended to every college in Ontario.

High levels of non-full-time faculty is another pressing issue that continues to undermine the quality of college education. Skilled and committed contract faculty are not given the time they

need to prepare, deliver, and evaluate courses, nor are they given the time to participate in academic leadership. An appropriate complement of full-time faculty is critical to the consistency and quality of college programs and to the best possible student experience.

Insufficient faculty intellectual property (IP) protection continues to be a serious issue in the colleges, putting a chill on research and the creation of course materials. Strong IP rights enable institutions to attract and keep good faculty and students. They also lead to better pedagogy, as faculty are encouraged to bring the fullness of their academic expertise when developing course materials. Finally, the mandate to expand research at community colleges is seriously impaired when faculty researchers are not given the same level of IP protection as their university colleagues.

The declining number of librarians in the college system and the threat of contracting out facing counselling faculty continue to be major concerns. Several Ontario colleges currently have no librarians, even as the academic activities that most rely on their expertise – research and degree programs – are steadily increasing. Since the 2014 *Report*, the number of full-time counselling faculty has stagnated, and counselling work is under increasing threat – either by being unbundled and shifted to support staff, or by being contracted out to third-party providers. A system-wide lack of counselling staff is particularly concerning given the steady rise of students seeking academic accommodations, presenting with mental health challenges, and accessing counselling services. This disconnect between faculty complement and student need forbodes a crisis in college mental health.

The other significant event that has affected Ontario's College System is the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of 2020, colleges province-wide were forced to end on-campus instruction as a part of general pandemic-related lockdowns. A majority of businesses were closed from March through May of 2020, with provinces beginning to re-open in June. Colleges held some on-campus classes (labs, etc.) in the fall of 2020, but most instruction has remained online. The overwhelming bulk of instruction took place online in the Winter and Spring 2021 semesters. Faculty clearly understood and supported the emergency expansion of online learning; however, there have also been signals that administrators are seeing the forced move online as an "opportunity" to provide more "flexibility" in course delivery. The threat is that many institutions will try to keep instruction of general electives and other lecture-based courses online longer than is necessary to protect public health. Moving forward, a real danger is that college managers will embrace online teaching as "the new normal".

The massive shift to online delivery has had several other effects. Class sizes have been increased and workloads have intensified as online course delivery proves more time-consuming. There were also threats of full-time faculty layoffs due to reduced enrollment, but these seem to be largely avoided as enrollments did not drop as much as first predicted by college administrators. Despite the absence of full-time layoffs, several colleges put a freeze on faculty hires, further exacerbating the already high ratio of full-time to non-full-time professors. At the same time, colleges have continued to hire more administrators and expand the compensation of senior administrative staff.

Another issue that has re-emerged for college faculty is the return of public-private college partnerships (P3s). Agreements between Ontario community colleges and private career colleges had been operating on a small scale since 2005, when Cambrian College partnered with Hanson College to deliver programs at campuses in Brampton and North York. Other public colleges followed suit, opening private partnership campuses in the GTA. A legal challenge by OPSEU failed to halt the P3 campuses; however, after extensive lobbying, the provincial Liberal government ordered the partnerships terminated in 2018. Since the Ford government took power in 2018, P3 arrangements have once more been promoted by the province.⁴ A 2019 binding policy directive from the MCU specified that any new public college campuses had to be private partnerships. The directive also specified that new P3 campuses would host international students, with the goal of increasing enrollment in the private campus to two times the enrollment at the public college partner's home campuses.⁵ Since this directive, nine community colleges have now started P3 campuses in the GTA.

Despite several challenges remaining after the 2017 round of contract negotiations, the five-week strike saw a renewed level of faculty engagement and solidarity that echoed province-wide. When faced with a forced final offer from the employer on November 6, 86% of faculty voted the offer down. 95% of eligible faculty participated in the contract vote, showing the unity that existed among faculty even after four weeks on strike.⁶ The collective bargaining history of college faculty, updated as of the 2014 *Report*, is shown in Figure 1 below.

Collective Bargaining History

NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED	CONTRACT START DATE	CONTRACT END DATE	STRIKE VOTE	STRIKE
Sept. 6, 72 ₁	Sept. 6, 72	Aug. 31, 73	No	No
Sept. 11, 75	Sept. 1, 73	Aug 31, 75	-	-
Sept. 11, 75 ₂	Sept. 1, 75	Aug. 31, 76	Yes	No
Feb. 15, 77	Sept. 1, 76	Aug. 31, 77	Yes	No
Oct. 13, 78	Sept. 1, 77	Aug. 31, 79	Yes	No
May 1, 80	Sept. 1, 79	Aug. 31, 81	Yes	No
Oct. 8, 81 ₃	Sept. 1, 81	Aug. 31, 82	No	No
Feb. 25, 83	Sept. 1, 82	Aug. 31, 84	Yes	No
Arbitration Award ₄	Sept. 1, 84	Aug. 31, 85	Yes	Yes
May 22, 86	Sept. 1, 85	Aug. 31, 87	Yes	No
May 30, 88	Sept. 1, 87	Aug. 31, 89	Yes	No
Feb 27, 90	Sept. 1, 89	Aug. 31, 91	Yes	Yes
Nov. 9, 92	Sept. 1, 91	Aug. 31, 94 ₅	No	No
Nov. 12, 98	Sept. 1, 96	Aug. 31, 01	Yes	No
Oct. 24, 01	Sept. 1, 01	Aug. 31, 03	No	No
April 21, 04	Sept. 1, 03	Aug. 31, 05	Yes	No
July 7, 06	Sept. 1, 05	Aug. 31, 09	Yes	Yes
Feb 24, 10 ₆	Sept. 1, 09	Aug. 31, 2012	Yes	No
Sept. 7, 2012	Sept. 12, 2012	Aug 31, 2014	No	No
Sept. 23, 2014	Sept. 1, 2014	Sept. 30, 2017	No	No
Dec. 20, 2017	Oct. 1, 2017	Sept. 30, 2021	Yes	Yes

Fig. 1

Section 2: Current Political and Economic Context

National Overview and COVID-19 Impact

In 2019 the Canadian economy grew by 1.7% and unemployment continued to decline, reaching 5.7% at year end. These promising economic trends were expected to continue, and in October of 2019, the Bank of Canada projected another 1.7% of growth in 2020.⁷ However, in the space of a few months the entire picture changed, as country-wide lockdowns in response to COVID-19 led to a 6.6% reduction in GDP in 2020.⁸ In March and April of 2020 alone, over 3 million jobs were lost. At the end of April the unemployment rate reached a record 13.7%.⁹

Government support programs throughout the 2020-2021 pandemic helped cushion some of the blow of mass unemployment and business insolvency. These programs, coupled with reduced government revenues, led to massive budget deficits. In the October 2020 throne speech, the Trudeau government projected a federal budget deficit of \$381.6 billion for the year. By then jobs had partially recovered, with approximately 80% of jobs lost through COVID being recouped and unemployment falling to 8.9%. Despite this modest come-back, in January of 2021 the budget deficit was predicted to grow between \$388.8 billion and \$398.7 billion at end of year. This would lead to a projected national debt of \$1.4 trillion.¹⁰

As the first wave of COVID-19 hit in March and April 2020, post-secondary institutions across Canada were forced to halt in-class instruction. The financial and operational impacts of the pandemic varied across the country. Many colleges and universities saw significant declines in enrollment and budget shortfalls, while other institutions managed to maintain revenue and student levels.

Federal Support of Post Secondary Education

The Canadian Post-Secondary Education (PSE) sector saw little change in levels of federal funding when the current Trudeau government took power. Since the 2008-09 academic year, federal cash transfers have remained within a percentage point of 0.20% of GDP. This is down from a high of 0.49% of GDP in 1984-85. Federal funding declined under the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, and dropped even more steeply under the Liberal governments of Jean Chretien and Paul Martin – reaching a low of 0.14% of GDP in 2006-07.¹¹ Canada continues to lag behind its comparator countries concerning government funding for PSE. It ranks 27th on the list of OECD countries based on the percentage of public vs. private funding of PSE.¹²

Provincial Overview and COVID-19 Impact

Ontario experienced severe economic effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 provincial budget was delayed until November, when it was announced with \$187 billion in spending and a projected deficit of \$38.5 billion – the largest in the province's history.¹³

Provincial GDP fell by 6.5% in 2020, slightly less than the national average. Over 355,000 jobs were lost, hiking unemployment to 9.1%, significantly higher than the pre-pandemic rate of 5.5%. In addition to job losses, over 765,000 Ontarians saw their work hours reduced.¹⁴

The Ontario education sector was particularly impacted by COVID-19. In March of 2020, K to 12 schools across the province closed down their in-person classes and moved to fully online teaching. Colleges and Universities followed suit, with a limited number of programs with intensive, hands-on requirements continuing modified face to face instruction. K to 12 schools briefly re-opened from September to December of 2020, before closing again under a province-wide lockdown in January 2021.¹⁵ In February of 2021, K-12 schools once more re-opened in much of the province. The issue of in-class teaching during the pandemic has been a constant source of conflict between front-line education workers, the province, and school administrators. These conflicts have focused on safe class sizes, distancing and PPE protocols during face-to-face instruction, and appropriate building ventilation.¹⁶

Overall, the Ford government's COVID response has been subject to harsh criticism, revealing the corrosive impact of neoliberal policies on public health. Devastating mortality rates in provincial long-term-care facilities were linked to Ford's 2018 decision to cut mandatory Resident Quality Inspections (RQI) at each care home.¹⁷ In addition, the Province was slow to spend federal COVID assistance funds, having yet to allocate \$6.4 billion in federal assistance as of February, 2021.¹⁸ The lack of investment in protecting long-term care homes and front line workers was noted in a damning report produced by a Provincial Commission struck to investigate COVID-related deaths. The Commission noted that homes suffered from insufficient staffing, not enough PPE, and poor COVID testing and infection prevention protocols.¹⁹ Finally, economic decisions by the Conservatives, such as cancelling the planned \$15 minimum wage, eliminating paid sick days, and cutting funding to public health directly exacerbated the pandemic's impact on Ontario's most vulnerable citizens.²⁰

Attack on Public Sector Bargaining Rights

Apart from the pandemic, a significant challenge facing the Ontario education sector is a political climate in which the provincial government is repeatedly willing to disrupt the collective bargaining process and to use legislation to enforce contract terms. These interventions, by both Liberal and Conservative governments, violate rights to collective bargaining enshrined in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In 2012, the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty intervened in the collective bargaining of Ontario teachers. Provincial *Bill 115 – Putting Students First Act* banned wage increases for two years and outlawed strikes. If contracts could not be negotiated by a certain date, the *Bill* also allowed the province to force teachers' unions to accept a government-determined contract.²¹ In 2015, Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government interfered again in teacher negotiations, legislating striking teachers back to work in three school boards.²² In April of 2016, the Canadian Supreme Court upheld the right to collectively bargain and ruled *Bill 115* to be a violation of the

Charter. The Ontario government ended up having to pay \$100 million in compensation to Ontario teachers' unions.²³

Despite a court ruling indicating that back to work and wage-freeze legislation violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provincial governments have continued to interfere in education-sector contract negotiations. In June of 2019, the Ford government passed legislation to suppress wages for all government workers. Provincial *Bill 124 – Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*, holds wage and benefits increases for public sector workers to 1% for a period of three years.²⁴ A coalition of over 40 unions immediately launched a legal challenge against Bill 124, arguing that it violates Charter-protected rights to collective bargaining.²⁵ OPSEU has also launched two Charter challenges against provincial interference in the 2017 bargaining process. On November 19, 2017, after five weeks on strike, the Wynne government legislated college faculty back to work through *Bill 178* and directed all remaining bargaining issues to a process of binding arbitration. OPSEU is arguing that the back to work legislation violates its charter rights to collectively bargain.²⁶ The other Charter challenge is being directed against the Ford government for cancelling the *Ontario Public Colleges: The Next 50 Years* province-wide task force. The task force was constituted through collective bargaining and written into the CA. Given this, OPSEU argues that its unilateral cancellation by the province is once more a violation of the right to collectively bargain.²⁷

Education Sector Bargaining During COVID-19

Ontario teachers were once more in bargaining when the global pandemic hit in February of 2020. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation (OSSTF) and Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) had been coordinating rolling job actions at schools province-wide, as critical issues of class size, forced online learning, part-time worker seniority and full-time employment remained in contention, issues that—in addition to chronic underfunding of the K-12 system, bear striking overlap with college faculty concerns.²⁸ In March, the Province settled with OECTA, signing an agreement with concessions around seniority, increased class sizes, and the introduction of two mandatory online classes.²⁹ In April, similar agreements were reached with ETFO and OSSTF. The agreements saw teachers get a 1% per year pay increase and a 4% yearly increase in benefits. The Province also committed \$85 million to a “support for students” fund that would hire hundreds of new educational specialists to support special needs students.³⁰

The Ontario University sector has seen successful organizing drives and contract negotiations since the start of the pandemic. In March of 2020, faculty at Renison University College (associated with the University of Waterloo) voted to certify the Renison Association of Academic Staff (RAAS).³¹ After 45 bargaining sessions, RAAS negotiated a first collective agreement in February of 2021.³² In July of 2020, faculty at King's University College at the University of Western Ontario also certified the Kings University College Faculty Association (KUCFA).³³ In September of 2020, KUCFA negotiated a two-year collective agreement.³⁴

Two established university faculty bargaining units also managed to ratify agreements, with the faculty association at Brescia University College in London, Ontario winning significant gains around contracting out of academic work and right of first refusal in teaching assignments for contract faculty.³⁵ In June of 2020, the Brock University Faculty Association (BUFA) concluded negotiations on an agreement that saw significant gains. As monetary items were off the table due to Bill 124, BUFA faculty decided to pursue important non-monetary priorities like collegial governance, scheduling, and Indigenization. The new collective agreement secures substantial rights for Indigenous faculty members, increases consultation with Indigenous members of the university community when making Indigenous-focused appointments, and ensures that Indigenous knowledge and experience are recognized in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions for both faculty and academic librarians. The agreement also provides for greater scheduling flexibility, creates a guaranteed bank of course releases to compensate for extraordinary levels of research output, and allows academic librarians to be recognized for research outside the field of library science. Finally, the memorandum of settlement commits the university to preserving open search provisions for senior academic administrative positions that report to the president, a vice-president, or the university librarian.³⁶

The Renisson, Kings, Brescia and Brock faculty associations all noted the difficulties inherent in organizing, mobilizing and negotiating in a virtual environment. However, despite this major logistical challenge, the associations were able to use creative methods of member outreach and effective communication strategies to win important gains for their members.

Section 3: Ontario College System

Despite the operational and financial challenges imposed by the global pandemic, Ontario Colleges appear to have weathered the storm relatively unscathed. The dire economic impact of COVID-19, coupled with its foreseeable end as rates of vaccination accelerate nation-wide, portends a strong economic rebound in the second half of 2021. This has led government and industry analysts to highlight the importance of community colleges in providing the training to fuel a boom in employment.³⁷ However, there is a stark difference between how the Province, the CEC and college faculty perceive the role of public community colleges in Ontario's recovery. Policy directives from the Ford government have prioritized system austerity, privatization, increased international student enrollments, and enforced competition. The CEC continues to undermine the unionization of contract faculty and to push shorter-duration "micro-credentials" for job training, as opposed to existing career diplomas, degrees and certificates. In contrast, faculty continue to advocate for the vision of a strong, sustainable college system laid out in the 2014 *Report on Education in Ontario Colleges*. This is a publicly-funded, student and faculty-centered college system that is responsive to community needs and committed to creating good jobs, not precarious jobs.

College System Funding

When the colleges were first established in 1967, approximately 75% of their operating funding came from provincial government grants via the MCU, and the Ministry of Skills Development (MSD). The next greatest sources of revenue came from federal government purchases of apprenticeship program seats, and from tuition. Tuitions originally accounted for between 10 and 15% of operating revenues³⁸. Since this time, a continuing trend has seen a decline in government funding and an increase in student tuitions. In 2015-2016, government grants made up 46.3% of college operating revenues and tuition made up 45%.³⁹ By the 2018-2019 academic year, government grants had fallen to 37% of overall college revenues – a drop of 25%. In the same year, tuitions had grown to 45% of overall revenue, an increase of 27%.⁴⁰ The rise in tuitions as a percentage in overall revenue is even more alarming when considering that in 1988-1989, tuition accounted for only 10% of total revenue.⁴¹ This amounts to a 450% increase in 20 years.

More recently, in 2019-20 federal government transfers dropped to 10% while at the same time the Ontario government cut domestic tuition by 10% as well. Government funding now accounts for only 30% and tuition accounts for a massive 53% of operating funding (the remaining 17% is made up from alternate sources the colleges each generate)⁴². Ontario continues to be the worst province in Canada in terms of post-secondary funding, contributing \$9,600 per domestic full-time equivalent student. In contrast, Saskatchewan, the best-funded province, spends 80% more per student.⁴⁰

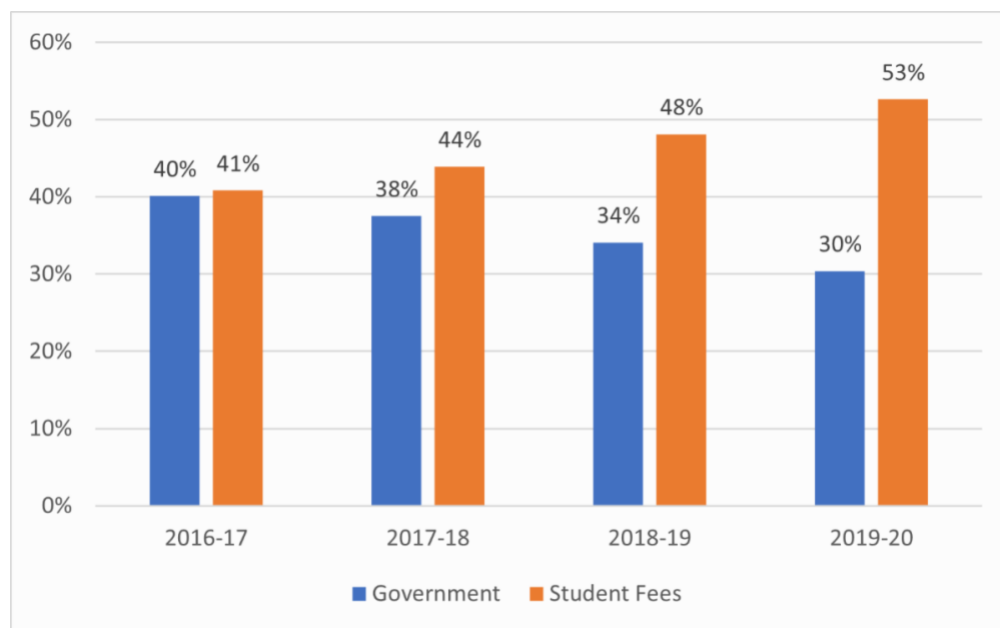


Fig. 2. – Ontario College revenues from selected sources.⁴²

Strategic Mandate Agreements

In 2012, the Provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) published *Strengthening Ontario’s Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge*, a policy paper on the post-secondary sector. In the paper, the MTCU argued that post-secondary needed to acclimatize to a permanently reduced level of government funding, an increasingly high-technology learning environment, and a globally competitive education marketplace. A process of institutional “differentiation” was advocated, in which each college and university would submit a Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) to indicate their area of “specialization”. This was intended to reduce “duplication” of programs at different institutions.⁴³

The 2012 paper clearly embraces a neoliberal paradigm in which colleges and universities are starved for public funding and forced to adapt to an increasingly competitive environment. To survive, institutions will have to rely on “innovation” to make up budget shortfalls – online learning, increased tuition, and increased class sizes. Another significant change advocated by the MTCU was a move from stable, enrollment-based funding toward a performance-based funding model. This would see a steadily increasing portion of institutional funding being tied to “performance metrics” based on their area of specialization.⁴⁴

Upon its release, the 2012 MTCU paper was met with intense, broad-based criticism from post-secondary institutions and from faculty and student organizations. It was seen as a way to justify the long-standing government retreat from education funding, to increase the privatization of education and research, to reduce the quality of education delivered, and to discipline academic workers. The CAAT-A division in OPSEU made it clear that the proposed SMA process threatened the core vision and mandate of public community colleges. They

warned that austerity, competition and “differentiation” would have a Darwinian effect in which serving the diverse social and economic needs of local communities would give way to the delivery of specialized programs with appeal to an international student population and large profit-margins.⁴⁴

The first stage of the SMA process, from 2014 to 2017, required colleges to indicate their institutional specialization, their plan to reduce duplication of programs between schools, and the performance metrics they will use to measure achievement of SMA goals. The second SMA phase, from 2017 to 2020, introduced ten global performance metrics and asked colleges to report on their identified performance metrics and on their financial sustainability. SMA2 also began the movement toward performance-based funding, starting with 1.2% of overall funding being tied to institutional metrics. In the SMA3 phase, from 2020 to 2025, the Ford government has introduced a “made in Ontario” funding model, in which 60% of institutional funding will be tied to performance metrics.⁴⁵ However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the provincial MCU postponed the implementation of performance-based funding until the 2022-2023 school year.⁴⁶

Despite a temporary reprieve from the full implementation of performance-based funding, its imminent threat is already forcing small and medium-sized colleges to rationalize their program offerings and cancel smaller programs. Over time, this trend will reward the big-ticket, high-profit programs and can actually encourage homogeneity of offerings across the community colleges. Diverse programs that serve diverse communities are less likely to be high-profit and more likely to be on the chopping block. This creates a growing contradiction within the public college system, in which colleges avail themselves of local benefits – in terms of tax breaks and access to land, while giving less and less back to local communities and local economies.

Apart from its impact on the diversity of college program and course offerings, performance-based funding is simply flawed by design and will have an effect opposite to that claimed by the Province – hurting under-performing institutions as opposed to helping them and encouraging excellence. If an institution is under-performing, then by definition it needs *assistance* and *stability*, not further hardship. Instead, struggling institutions will be penalized with reduced funding, a situation that can disproportionately affect colleges that are smaller or that deal with difficult local economies or populations.

College Management Priorities – Austerity, “Nimbleness” and Micro-credentials

Immediately after the faculty strike in 2017, the CEC commissioned corporate legal firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) to produce a report on the financial sustainability of the Ontario College System. The report predicted dire budget shortfalls in most colleges by 2024, thus creating a scarcity and austerity context for the next bargaining round.⁴⁷ Despite the PWC report’s prediction, most Ontario colleges went on to bank record budget surpluses in the 2018-19 fiscal year and to increase already sizeable capital funds. Over the past five years, the Ontario college system has generated close to \$1.5 billion in budget surpluses. Figure 3, below, shows the yearly budget surpluses of Ontario’s 24 public colleges from 2015 to 2020.

Ontario Community Colleges Yearly Budget Surplus/Deficit						
College	Yearly Budget Surplus/(Deficit)					5 Year Total
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
Algonquin	\$11,715,792	\$5,579,000	\$13,514,863	\$14,960,326	\$14,740,035	\$60,510,016
Boréal	\$103,285	\$20,082	\$305,515	\$5,554,793	\$964,114	\$6,947,789
Cambrian	\$1,843,320	\$1,976,709	\$8,309,911	\$7,368,559	\$9,183,303	\$28,681,802
Canadore	\$331,349	(\$626,784)	\$2,283,499	\$7,899,800	\$816,863	\$10,704,727
Centennial*	\$9,946,301	\$16,435,207	\$4,740,461	\$59,565,700	\$28,549,502	\$119,237,171
Conestoga	\$3,981,833	\$6,165,795	\$19,342,990	\$39,236,329	\$32,165,638	\$100,892,585
Confederation	\$981,260	\$914,795	\$1,422,836	\$17,782,747	\$4,821,764	\$25,923,402
Durham	\$5,791,500	\$6,946,094	\$7,303,871	\$17,429,337	\$2,014,453	\$39,485,255
Fanshawe	\$3,667,363	\$7,917,309	\$22,874,260	\$30,373,423	\$26,780,735	\$91,613,090
Fleming	\$2,742,453	\$4,763,735	\$7,813,033	\$13,478,379	\$2,180,950	\$30,978,550
George Brown	\$8,311,530	\$14,940,591	\$24,004,000	\$31,254,000	\$14,935,000	\$93,445,121
Georgian	\$152,685	\$3,012,914	\$1,694,449	\$16,754,849	\$5,161,548	\$26,776,445
Humber	\$29,668,874	\$23,291,492	\$32,518,037	\$32,134,321	\$25,564,876	\$143,177,600
La Cité	\$2,237,280	\$1,357,746	\$3,519,672	\$11,372,995	\$3,779,489	\$22,267,182
Lambton	\$5,206,283	\$10,973,052	\$21,915,900	\$15,247,057	\$25,170,613	\$78,512,905
Loyalist	\$1,412,096	\$2,417,510	\$3,111,337	\$9,154,470	\$6,862,394	\$22,957,807
Mohawk	\$6,348,549	\$23,308,655	\$12,470,590	\$21,643,090	\$6,298,147	\$70,069,031
Niagara	\$2,174,078	\$3,465,452	\$13,954,096	\$32,371,955	\$17,782,389	\$69,747,970
Northern	\$337,394	\$2,693,140	\$10,711,619	\$14,843,608	\$18,588,025	\$47,173,786
St. Clair	\$1,048,214	\$7,877,057	\$13,305,511	\$40,237,770	\$31,083,010	\$93,551,562
St. Lawrence	\$3,426,731	\$6,391,342	\$11,607,078	\$13,237,764	\$7,804,866	\$42,467,781
Sault	\$324,845	\$595,446	\$2,216,844	\$10,740,656	\$7,340,726	\$21,218,517
Seneca	\$19,065,596	\$16,945,657	\$18,115,621	\$22,891,354	\$21,263,419	\$98,281,647
Sheridan	\$15,744,293	\$21,323,213	\$33,185,274	\$48,010,208	\$28,720,402	\$146,983,390
TOTAL Ontario College System 5 Year Surplus						\$1,491,605,131

* Centennial College 2017/18 budget surplus is estimated, actuals unavailable

Fig. 3 – data from college audited financial statements

Apart from preaching austerity while simultaneously recording record budget surpluses, college management have been consistent in other messaging. In 2020 Colleges Ontario, the lobby group representing the Province’s colleges, commissioned a report titled *The Future of Ontario’s Workers*.⁴⁸ This report argued that the post-COVID economy will need to be more “nimble” and “flexible” and that much of the workforce will need to be constantly re-training in order to fill shifting employment niches. The report leverages the COVID-19 pandemic and massive unemployment to renew calls for policy positions it has long held. Management require more authority and less faculty and government oversight, the faculty CA will require

changes to facilitate greater casualization and increased workloads, and more learning needs to take place online.

Given these policy prescriptions, Ontario colleges are instructed to embrace “micro-credentials” which are “heavily market/society driven”. The prioritization of micro-credentials over the diplomas, degrees, and post graduate certificates already offered by colleges represents the unbundling of education, a parallel process to the unbundling of academic work. Instead of focusing on robust, widely respected credentials that prepare students for a career, Colleges Ontario envisions a wholly market-driven post-secondary system that prepares students for precarious, low-wage work. Micro-credentials also download the cost burden of education more directly to students, while simultaneously requiring learners to predict the vagaries of future labour markets in order to determine which skills will be required. These changes can have serious implications for public safety and student debt burdens.

Weelahan and Moodie (2019) note that micro-credentials fail to give students the same benefit from college education that more traditional qualifications do. They note that post-secondary education needs to prepare students for employment, but it also needs to prepare them for further study and for active participation as a citizen. Micro-credentials falter in each of these areas, first because employers still value traditional credentials and qualifications that indicate a student has a breadth of skills and industry knowledge. Second, micro-credentials don’t provide the same platform from which further study can be launched that diplomas and degrees do. Finally, replacing diplomas and degrees with a portfolio of “stackable” micro-credentials does away with the general education requirements that traditional qualifications include. Education is made more modular, more specific, and less holistic. For students, it means a move away from the breadth of traditional occupational and career education, and toward a grab-bag of employer-identified micro-skills. These negative effects will also be more likely visited on disadvantaged students and workers, thus increasing the disparate access to education and socioeconomic advancement.⁴⁹

The Ford government has already used its legislative power to enact the Colleges Ontario vision and break down traditional qualifications. Changes to the second career program are an example, as now this valuable means for workers to retrain and move into new occupations has been limited to programs one year in duration or less.⁵⁰

International Students

The 2014 *Report on Education* noted increasing international student enrollments as a trend within the entire Canadian post-secondary sector. Ontario colleges are no different, and between 2009 and 2019, full-time international enrollment in Ontario colleges grew by an incredible 860%.^{51,52} In 2018, over 22% of college students were international.^{53,54}

Since the 2015-2016 academic year, overall enrollment in the colleges has decreased by 3% (see Fig. 4).

Academic Year	Full-Time Student Enrollment
2015-2016	223,782
2016-2017	218,721
2017-2018	216,488
2018-2019	217,242

Fig. 4 – data from Colleges Ontario Environmental Scans^{52,53,55,56}

As tuition has become an ever-larger share of college operating revenues, and as domestic enrollment has declined, growing international enrollment has become a concerted strategy pursued by provincial governments and college administrations. International student tuition is unregulated by the provincial government. As such, colleges can charge a premium to international students over and above domestic fees. Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) notes that in 2021 average tuition for domestic college students is:

- \$2,400/year for diploma programs
- \$3,600/year for graduate certificate programs
- \$6,100/year for bachelor's degree programs
- \$5,500/year for collaborative programs (such as BScN Nursing)⁵⁷

In addition to these fees, International students pay a per-semester premium that can easily triple the amount paid. While OCAS notes that in 2021, average international student tuition is \$14,000 per year, it can be much higher for degree and collaborative programs.⁵⁸

The funding possibilities and resulting problems of internationalization do not stop at our borders. Ontario Colleges partner with institutions throughout the world to profit from international markets, but not without risk. Niagara College was under risk of censure from CAUT for its partnership with Saudi Arabia's College System in 2017.⁵⁹

Changes to the composition of the college student body have also begun to impact the teaching/learning relationship. International students make up a growing number of most classes and in some programs can be the overwhelming majority. Helping international students acclimatize to the culture, language, learning style and standards of Canadian colleges takes additional time that is not accounted for in faculty workload, yet is a vital part of the

faculty role. With faculty workloads already maximized, the learning of international students needs to be further supported if the students, and the programs and departments that have been built up around their enrollment, are to be successful.

Public-Private Partnerships

Exploiting the international student market is easier for colleges in the large cities where international students prefer to live and study. It is much more challenging for smaller, rural colleges to make the same financial gains based on attracting international students, which has spurred them to create partnerships with private colleges that operate in larger cities. These public-private campuses can charge even higher international tuition than our public colleges do, while offering little access to the supports and services that public college students receive. In this contracting out to a private partner college, the curriculum of our public college programs is delivered under standards and conditions unlike those in Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT). In addition, the working conditions are far below public standards in terms of pay, benefits and rights. Upon finishing their program, the international students who have paid more and received less are then invited to the 'host' college to walk across the stage, to convocate and receive the same qualification as students who have completed programs with all the advantages and rigour of the public CAAT system. The Wynne Liberal government put a stop to these private college partnerships in 2018, deeming the relationships too risky to the brand of an Ontario post-secondary education. In contrast, the Ford Conservatives immediately lifted any such limitations and instead encouraged the rapid expansion of these P3s.

In another example of the Ford government enabling the privatization agenda of college management, a 2018 Binding Policy Directive from the MTCU establishes P3s for any new campuses developed by Ontario's community colleges. Numerous P3 campuses are once again being opened in the GTA, specifically to target international students. There is a requirement in the policy directive for enrollment at the P3 campuses to grow to the point where it is double the level of international student enrollment at the home campus.⁵ The clear intent is to privatize the bulk of new growth in international student enrollment. In February of 2021, Mohawk College announced a partnership with triOS – a private college.⁶⁰ Cambrian College has renewed its previous partnership with Hanson College⁶¹, while Niagara College has just announced a partnership with the Toronto School of Management.⁶²

Contract Faculty Unionization

When the College Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA) was drafted in 1975, updating the previous Public Services Act and Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, part-time and sessional workers were left out of the faculty bargaining unit. Part time faculty teach between 1 and 6 hours per week, while sessional positions are full-time contract positions in which faculty teach 13 hours per week or more. When the CCBA was re-opened in 2008, the provision excluding part time and sessional faculty from unionization was removed. Since this time, OPSEU has launched two separate organizing drives. The first drive was launched in 2008 and led to a

certification vote in early 2009. After the vote, the CEC used every legal means available to thwart the counting of ballots, leading the drive to stall short of certification.⁶³

The second drive started in 2016, and in 2018, was successful at signing sufficient cards to force a certification vote. The CEC again launched legal challenges to every ballot cast, obstructing the certification process and miring it in court. The ballot boxes from the certification vote have yet to be opened and counted, but the OPSEU legal team and organizing unit continue to resolve the outstanding issues. OPSEU is committed to fighting this legal battle to the end and ensuring the certification of over 10,000 contract faculty.⁶⁴

Increased Executive Complement and Compensation

A decade ago, the steep rise in salaries of Ontario college presidents was a national story. MacLeans reported that compensation for some College presidents was beginning to overtake that of presidents at Ontario universities.⁶⁵ Seneca and Conestoga College presidents were making more than their presidential colleagues at the University of Toronto and Wilfred Laurier University (\$406 thousand and \$387 thousand, vs \$380 thousand and \$362 thousand respectively). If the story a decade ago was about college presidential compensation, then the story today is about college executive bloat. This phenomenon sees not only an expansion of well established, recognizable administrative departments such as Registrar's, International, Academic Schools and Deans, Research, and Human Resources, but now includes a host of new and semi-opaque areas such as "Strategic deployment", "Academic excellence", and "Learner Services", to name just a few.

College executive compensation is a pyramid structure based on an organizational chart that bloats executive positions - adding new management layers at the top of the pyramid and expanding the complement of same-rank managers, like Deans and Vice Presidents. This is a trend that gets curiously scant attention in an age of scarce funding, austerity, and institutional cost-cutting. Thus, while there are rationalizations and efficiencies to be made in front line positions such as teaching and support staff, or in building maintenance, there are few to no perceived redundancies in mid to higher administrator positions. From the perspective of resource-allocation, the staffing pyramid has become inverted, with expanding positions and salaries at the top end and less money flowing to the front-line workers doing the actual work of education.

College	2009 # of Execs	2009 total compensation	2019 # of Execs	2019 total compensation	2009-2019 Change	% Change
Algonquin	60	\$8,074,841	126	\$16,594,966	\$ 8,520,125	106%
Boréal	15	\$2,099,326	29	\$4,051,534	\$ 1,952,208	93%
Cambrian	21	\$2,659,805	43	\$5,809,543	\$ 3,149,738	118%
Canadore	15	\$2,008,061	24	\$3,190,752	\$ 1,182,691	59%
Centennial	56	\$7,263,410	104	\$14,631,288	\$ 7,367,878	101%
Conestoga	40	\$5,483,165	78	\$11,174,863	\$ 5,691,698	104%
Confederation	23	\$3,203,867	28	\$3,841,507	\$ 637,640	20%
Durham	36	\$4,888,698	80	\$11,183,674	\$ 6,294,976	129%
Fanshawe	37	\$4,752,066	75	\$10,113,051	\$ 5,360,985	113%
Fleming	27	\$3,817,772	48	\$6,420,662	\$ 2,602,890	68%
George Brown	62	\$8,174,518	130	\$17,656,352	\$ 9,481,834	116%
Georgian	44	\$5,550,825	58	\$8,388,443	\$ 2,837,618	51%
Humber	83	\$11,621,369	63	\$23,362,658	\$ 11,741,289	101%
La Cité	26	\$3,676,620	37	\$5,017,411	\$ 1,340,791	36%
Lambton	17	\$2,273,195	31	\$4,224,591	\$ 1,951,396	86%
Loyalist	18	\$2,362,850	26	\$3,643,519	\$ 1,280,669	54%
Mohawk	45	\$5,898,417	88	\$12,118,506	\$ 6,220,089	105%
Niagara	30	\$4,077,834	72	\$9,897,831	\$ 5,819,997	143%
Northern	13	\$1,772,132	15	\$2,175,186	\$ 403,054	23%
St. Clair	17	\$2,353,971	32	\$4,570,000	\$ 2,216,029	94%
St. Lawrence	20	\$2,729,345	48	\$6,775,189	\$ 4,045,844	148%
Sault	13	\$1,795,049	22	\$3,108,297	\$ 1,313,248	73%
Seneca	77	\$10,441,670	138	\$19,125,913	\$ 8,684,243	83%
Sheridan	56	\$7,755,413	148	\$21,320,651	\$ 13,565,238	175%
Totals	851	\$114,734,219	1543	\$228,396,387	\$ 113,662,168	Avg 92%

Fig. 5 – data from 2009-2019 Sunshine Lists

The information in the chart above comes from Ontario’s Sunshine List and shows the increase from 2009 to 2019 in college executives (Presidents, Chairs, Associate Deans, Deans, Directors, Registrars, Managers, and Vice-Presidents) making more than \$100,000.⁶⁶ Only positions that were clearly identifiable as executives were chosen.

The expansion in executives at Sheridan, for instance, is from 5 to 12 Vice Presidents (VPs) and Associate Vice Presidents (AVPs), from 13 to 23 Associate Deans (ADs), from 11 to 54 Managers, and from 13 to 34 Directors. This is not only the case at large colleges. At St. Lawrence College, VPs have increased from 3 to 6, while Directors have increased from 7 to 21. Overall, the executive ranks of those earning over \$100,000 per year have almost doubled from 2009 to 2019, accounting for a system wide increase in compensation of over 92%. It becomes clear that resources are being directed to executive compensation rather than front line education.

The Top 1%

While pensions aren't part of the bargaining process and indeed support staff, faculty and managers all belong to the same pension plan, it is worth noting that there exists a special part of the CAAT pension plan called the Retirement Compensation Arrangement (RCA). The Canadian Income Tax Agreement (ITA) limits maximums on pensions, stating that "earnings in excess of \$183, 838 could result in a pension that exceed the maximum"⁶⁷. The RCA was created to pay that difference. The RCA is run from Employer contributions but obviously only benefits those at the absolute top of the salary range. Back in 2009, only 72 executives would have qualified at that level. Just 10 years on, 157 executives can now access that expanded compensation arrangement.⁶⁶ Clearly, the top 1% of college executives not only look after their salaries, they have set a separate scheme to top up their pensions too.

Section 4: Threats to Quality Education

Several issues have been identified by college faculty since the 2017 CA was signed. Many of these are unresolved items that were supposed to be dealt with in the provincial taskforce, while others have emerged from the 2021 demand setting process, in which each union local holds a general membership meeting and generates demands for collective bargaining. Despite these meetings happening in a virtual environment, locals across the province noted record levels of faculty attendance and engagement in the demand setting meetings and lead up activities. Issues raised during the demand setting process highlight threats to faculty workload, job security, academic decision-making and IP protection, equity issues, and workplace bullying and harassment.

Workload

Faculty workload has been a source of contention since the colleges' founding. Overwhelming workloads triggered the 1984 faculty strike, and led to an arbitrated implementation of the workload formula and the standard workload form (SWF). These provisions created a more equitable distribution of workloads, and enabled a more accurate reflection of the actual work that faculty do. Despite improvements brought by the SWF, the general faculty perception after its implementation was that it still does not account for the actual time being spent by professors both in and out of the classroom (e.g., on preparation, evaluation, student support, administrative work). As system funding has continued to decline, and as the technological complexity of the educational environment has increased, the discrepancy between actual hours worked and those captured by the workload formula has grown. In addition, there are no workload protections for contract faculty, who are paid solely for their hours spent teaching during the semester, and not for any of the required associated preparation and evaluation, for work beyond the end of the semester, or for additional student support (e.g., outside of class assistance, reference letters, etc.). It is important to note that over 70% of the faculty teaching students are on short-term contracts.

Course Evaluation and Preparation

Evaluation factors are assigned to every course taught by faculty, and they vary based on the time-intensiveness of evaluation methods, ranging from written and project assignments, multiple choice tests, and in-class evaluations. Based on the type of evaluation used in a class, additional time is allocated for marking. Weekly marking allowances are 1.8 minutes per student for essay or project evaluations, 54 seconds per student for multiple choice evaluations, and 33 seconds per student for in-class evaluation.⁶⁸ An example of how time allocated for marking changes based on the evaluation type can be seen in a typical 50 student class. If this class had essay evaluations, there would be 1.5 hours per week given to faculty for marking. If the class had multiple choice evaluations, marking time would be 45 minutes per week, and if evaluation was in-class, 27.5 minutes would be allocated.

Given the current workload formula, courses with essay and project-based evaluations are more labour intensive and more costly. In addition, courses requiring facility in more than one language, or where evaluation involves reviewing student recordings, such as American Sign Language programs, are not covered under current evaluation allotments. As a result, managers seeking to cut the cost of course delivery have an incentive to encourage less time-consuming evaluation methods, or to simply allocate lower factors to more intensive evaluations. This has led to particular concerns about the loss of written assignments in many courses, even though written communication is one of the key employment skills that cuts across all college programs.

On their SWFs, faculty are also given time for preparation for each course they teach, shown in Figure 6 below. This course preparation factor is based on whether the course is being taught by a faculty member for the first time, and whether multiple sections of the same course are taught in a single semester. If a course is being taught by a faculty member for the first time, it is awarded the highest preparation factor of “New”. If a course has been taught before, but not within the past 3 years, it is awarded a factor of “Established A”. If it has been taught within the past 3 years, it is classified as “Established B”. The classification of “Repeat A” is designated by a repeat section of a course that is being delivered to a different student group, while “Repeat B” refers to repeat sections of a course taught to the same program or year of study. A final “Special” category is for atypical courses, and can receive values for either Established A, or Established B. For each designation in the CA there is time allotted for preparing course materials, specified as a ratio of each teaching contact hour (TCH).⁶⁸

TYPE OF COURSE	RATIO OF ASSIGNED TEACHING HOURS TO ATTRIBUTED HOURS FOR PREPARATION
New	1:1.10
Established A	1:0.85
Established B	1:0.60
Repeat A	1:0.45
Repeat B	1:0.35

Fig. 6

An example of preparation values in practice is that for the first section of a course with 3 TCHs that has never been taught before, faculty receive 3.3 hours of preparation time per week. For the next section taught during the same semester, but to a different program, the faculty member would receive 1.35 hours of preparation time. For another section of the same course taught to students in the same program, 1.05 hours of preparation would be allotted.

The 2014 *Report on Education* detailed the pressures exerted by college administrators to maximize the SWF, to increase overtime, and to use evaluation methods that are less time consuming and costly. The maximum limit of 44 hours per week and 47 for overtime, was originally implemented in 1985 as part of the comprehensive workload formula. This high upper limit was intended to give colleges the flexibility to address extenuating staffing circumstances

that might arise from time to time and was not meant to be used as a typical or recurring workload. Over time this has changed, especially in the last decade. Maximizing workloads at 44 hours per week now reflects what middle managers aspire to and are evaluated by.

At present, the pressure to have lower evaluation factors continues, along with maximizing section sizes by topping up classes and reducing the number of different courses faculty teach. By teaching repeat sections of the same course managers can not only increase SWF maxima, they can also try out “new deliveries”. These includes collapsed sections where a number of classes are combined together to form one very large class, with only the lecture part delivered by the faculty. Any practical, integrated, hands on demonstration of the theory is split out from the class and divided into “breakout” classes or labs and delivered by instructors or technicians – breaking up the teaching and learning and unbundling the work of faculty to other categories of workers in the college.

Student Accommodations

Counselling faculty do the vital work of supporting a growing number of college students that receive academic accommodations. In 2005, 10% of community college students reported use of special needs/disability services.⁴¹ In 2018, this number had increased to over 15%.⁵² In 2016, to be in compliance with the Human Rights Code, the Ontario Human Rights Commission wrote to each college that students no longer need to disclose their diagnosis for mental health conditions to receive the supports and accommodations they need to succeed at college.⁶⁹ This led to an increase in the number of students seeking support from College accessibility services.

The process of student accommodations involves different departments outside the classroom, including counselling, assessing, and testing centres. Accessibility counselling faculty are the lynchpin of this process, responsible for reviewing student medical documentation, counselling students in distress, and working with teaching faculty to determine appropriate accommodations. With the increase in students seeking accommodations, accessibility counsellors have seen ballooning caseloads, in which it is not uncommon for one counsellor to be responsible for 500 or more students. Workloads for teaching faculty have also been affected, as it is up to them to ensure that students who have differing individual accommodations have those needs met in the classroom. This work often requires liaising with counsellors, training in new technology, and providing more time for individual student support. It is all an increase in work, for both professors and counsellors, that is not reflected in the SWF or in the existing counsellor class definition, yet that has a profound impact on student learning.

Learning Management Systems and Electronic Communication

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are the online presence of all courses, whether delivered in-class, hybrid, or online. They have become a standard part of faculty work but are not specifically addressed in our workload formula or CA. Each course has a site hosted on a central network and these sites must be designed, populated and maintained by faculty. The degree of

technical support available varies greatly across the colleges, but the work itself ultimately falls upon the faculty. The LMS adds hours per week for preparation and maintenance, and this additional time was not factored into the original workload formula enacted in 1985⁷⁰. The SWF assigns each teaching faculty 2 hours per week for 'normal administrative duties', which once meant going to meetings, filing, office work, and more lately email communications. With today's high-tech learning environment, faculty's normal administrative duties have now expanded to include posting and maintaining online assignments, setting up interactive activities like virtual discussion forums, recording videos, updating hyperlinks, and troubleshooting issues of internet bandwidth, network outages, incompatible file formats and a host of other student technical concerns. When combined, these tasks far exceed the 'administrative duties' of a pre-technological teaching past, and today 2 hours is never enough.

The 4 hours per week assigned for 'routine out of class assistance' has also been greatly affected by LMS and the requirement for all courses to have an online presence. In the past, many faculty would set weekly office hours to be available for student questions. However, the norm has now shifted to email as the standard of communication, and the expectation is for rapid turnaround. The shift to electronic communication has led to an exponential increase in the amount of email messages that most faculty receive each week; however, it has also led to less efficient communication. In person communication, and especially in class communication, allows for immediate and multiple student questions and faculty feedback from which many can benefit. In this regard the proliferation of email has not just exceeded faculty time restraints, it has changed the work of teaching and learning from that of a group - where all members of a group benefit, learning from each other's questions, mistakes and insights, creating peer groups and in-person communication skills - to the linear one-on-one written question and answer. On the surface, having personal one-on-one email contact of students emailing professors might seem like an advantage. In reality, the questions are repetitive, as students often ask the same questions. It is also incomplete, as the back and forth of email doesn't allow for the fullness, depth and breadth of spoken conversation. In terms of workload, the linear nature of written emails stretches out the time for both faculty and students and doesn't benefit as many in the same amount of time.

Full Year Teaching and Loss of Time for Course Renewal and Development

Most Colleges have now moved to a 7-1-7 semester timetable. Rather than two 15-week semesters and a shorter six-week spring semester, the 7-1-7 semester forms a continuous seven weeks teaching, one reading week, seven weeks teaching cycle that goes on year round and maximizes the number of teaching weeks that faculty can work in an academic year. In addition, course outcomes are compressed into less time for students. But with every SWF maximized for contact teaching and every semester maximized with 7-1-7, there is no longer a dedicated period each year for curriculum development, which is a separate function from day to day course preparation. Previously, faculty would teach two semesters and then have a half semester (either May-June or July-August) "non-contact period" free from teaching. This period was for developing new courses, holding academic meetings, and updating existing course materials. With this period gone, faculty now have to struggle with their supervisors to have

development time added to their SWF – an uneven, contentious process that often sees needed development not getting done, or faculty doing development work for free.

The 7-1-7 model has clear corporate benefits in terms of efficiency, and ostensibly allows for a ‘consistent student experience’; however it does not factor in that students still follow the academic year and need to find employment, or work placement as part of their studies during the spring/summer semester. In addition, full-time faculty are now spread out teaching non-typical loads in order to fill their workload SWFs and maximize teaching. This leaves no assigned SWF time for curriculum development, updating, and training in new pedagogical approaches such as universal design in learning that benefit all students.

New course development / course renewal is a major part of what keeps curriculum current and connected to the myriad fields of study represented by the colleges. Instead, curriculum development is being excluded from faculty workload, unbundled, and shifted to other areas within, or even outside, the college. Colleges have created departments such as centres for academic excellence, which gather, house, and focus on curriculum – in many cases without involving full-time faculty. Curriculum development can now be seen assigned to a contract faculty member, then ‘handed off’ to another faculty to deliver. In certain cases, development can be completely outsourced to instructional design corporations, such as what Centennial College did in order to quickly transition courses online during the pandemic. All of this not only weakens the overall quality and delivery of courses, it de-professionalizes the faculty. In the end, this rationalization and de-skilling proves self-defeating, as the quality within the classroom, program quality, and the overall quality and reputation of the college system suffers.

Contract Faculty

The decline in overall government funding for post-secondary education has meant that colleges have had to turn to other income sources – international tuition and P3s. Another way in which colleges have responded to government austerity is by altering the faculty workforce itself. The complement of college academic staff has shifted overwhelmingly to non-full-time faculty. In the past decade, the growth in full-time college faculty has been much lower when compared to the corresponding growth in college administrators and in the student population. To make up for the lack of full-time faculty, colleges are increasingly relying on a precarious, flexible, casual workforce that is cheaper to employ and easier to dispose of at will.

A myth the colleges perpetuate is that contract faculty are precarious by choice – either because they work part-time in industry or because they simply don’t want full-time employment. A major report in 2018 by CAUT found this not to be the case. Of more than 2600 post-secondary contract academic faculty, more than half (53%) are seeking a full-time job and only 25% unequivocally stating they do not want a full-time job, the remaining being undecided.⁷¹ The major findings were that women and racialized persons make up the bulk of contract faculty, that they work more and were paid less, and that 87% of contract academic

staff (CAS) believe that their mental health is negatively impacted by the status of their employment. “These survey results challenge the stereotype of CAS as happy moonlighters.”⁷¹

One of the major issues in the 2017 round of bargaining and the historic strike was the status of precarious contract faculty in the colleges who only have one term contracts and will go from unionized partial load (PL) faculty (7-12 hrs per week) to non-unionized part time status (6 hours and below per week) and sessional (more than 12 hours per week). OPSEU CAAT-A division represents close to 17,000 contract faculty in a year as members move in and out of unionized PL status. This is in comparison to the approximately 7,800 full-time faculty.

Partial load faculty played a major part in the 2017 strike, both on the line and as part of the bargaining process, and partial load faculty saw some benefit come out of its settlement. It was the first time that there was a Bargaining Advisory Committee (BAC) and by design, the BAC included a diversity of PL voices. New language in the CA resulted in a PL Registry meant to address work assignment by seniority – important new language that will be improved upon in rounds to come. The new contract also included an acceleration of seniority, with the monthly rate at which PL seniority is accrued now being doubled.

Ontario College Staffing Levels

Year	FT Academic	PT Academic	FT Admin	PT Admin
2015-16	7,667	15,423	2,915	N/A ³⁹
2016-17	7,569	N/A	N/A	N/A ⁷²
2017-18	7,624	16,237	3,015	N/A ⁷³
2018-19	7,806	16,548	3,174	N/A ⁴⁰

Source:

Percentage Changes Over Time

- Full-Time faculty – 1.8% increase from 2015-16 to 2018-19
- Part-Time faculty – 7.2% increase from 2015-16 to 2018-19
- Full-Time admin – 8.8% increase from 2015-16 to 2018-19

Online Teaching

Regardless of delivery method, all college classes today have an online presence through an LMS, and as previously mentioned, faculty have an increased workload associated with the creation and constant maintenance of their LMS. Courses taught fully online are no longer just options for students who can’t come to campus, but are now mandated for all students. Courses are also being assigned as a combination of online and traditional classroom delivery. This delivery model is referred to as *hybrid* or *blended*. The form of online teaching contact can be either synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous delivery refers to the use of online

technology where faculty present live instruction to students at a set time. Asynchronous delivery uses online technology so that the material is presented and then can be accessed by students on their own schedule. Across the college system, there has been an increase in the assignment of online and hybrid class delivery. The financial incentive for this change has been clear. It frees up scarce classroom and lab space, which on many campuses is a growing concern. In addition, it allows administrators to further casualize the academic workforce and to rationalize and maximize faculty workloads.

A distinction needs to be made between the long-standing shift to online teaching and the emergency response the COVID pandemic. Online teaching at its best is based on a well-researched and developed curriculum where faculty and students have time and appropriate class sizes to adopt new technologies in virtual learning environments. In contrast, the response to the COVID pandemic was, and in many cases continues, to be a situation of emergency remote teaching. Faculty understood the need for this decision. However, the lack of appropriate preparation and curriculum development at the initial stages has made the delivery of virtual teaching more akin to distance education, rather than true online teaching.⁷⁴

eCampus Ontario

Over the past decade, distance education, continuing education, and non-credit community-based courses (such as picture framing) have all declined at the colleges, being replaced with online credit-based offerings. Individual colleges offer those online courses through eCampus Ontario which acts as a consortium, gathering all 24 college online offerings and then acting as a 25th 'shadow' college. eCampus Ontario was established by the Ontario Government in 2015 by committing \$72 million over 5 years to amalgamate all post-secondary online offerings.⁷⁵ eCampus boasts over 13,700 college courses and more than 560 college programs. It has a board of directors, a mandate, and a mission but is really only comprised of courses skimmed from the online sites of all 24 colleges. These courses are often built from the work of faculty teaching in the continuing education departments of host colleges, thus using part time faculty outside of the provisions of the CA.⁷⁶

COVID Pandemic shift to Online

With the onset of the COVID pandemic in March of 2020, faculty were given a week to transition courses to online delivery in order to finish the winter term. Faculty were given time during the spring and summer semesters to transition their courses online, but the amount varied considerably between institutions and even between different departments within the same college. What quickly became apparent in the fall term was that the time assigned was insufficient compared to the time needed to adopt new technologies, adapt material, and problem solve the many student issues that arose. What also became clear is that the pandemic response became an opportunity for college management to seek workload efficiencies. Class size is normally limited to the physical classrooms assigned, but as there are no such limits online, classes were significantly increased without considering if the course content actually suits larger classes. Communications professors at several colleges reported class sizes going

from 35 to 50 when shifted online, regardless of content or evaluation methods. Without faculty involvement in academic decision making, college managers are able to unilaterally dictate the size of classes, regardless of the subject curriculum.

Increased Precarity and Workload of Contract Faculty

The situation with increasing class sizes is especially dire for contract faculty, as they have no SWF and therefore no limitations whatsoever to online class size. If a contract faculty member is assigned multiple sections of a course, the manager can collapse the sections together into one large course and so reduce the total number of courses the contract faculty member teaches – without a physical classroom to teach in, there are no barriers as to the size of the class. Instead of teaching 3 or 4 classes, some of which would be repeat sections of the same class, now contract faculty teach one or two huge classes. As a result, contract faculty who would normally be classified as PL (teaching 7 to 12 hours per week) can more easily be reduced to part-time (teaching up to 6 hours per week). This change has profound implications, as PL faculty are members of the union, covered by the CA, and entitled to seniority, healthcare, pension, and other benefits. In contrast, part-time faculty are excluded from union membership and benefits. Most importantly, the loss of PL status means that faculty cannot make use of the seniority rights gained in the historic strike of 2017 which saw the initiation of a PL Registry based on seniority. Under the guise of the pandemic response, colleges have increased the workload of contract faculty and furthered their precarity.

The Student Experience Online

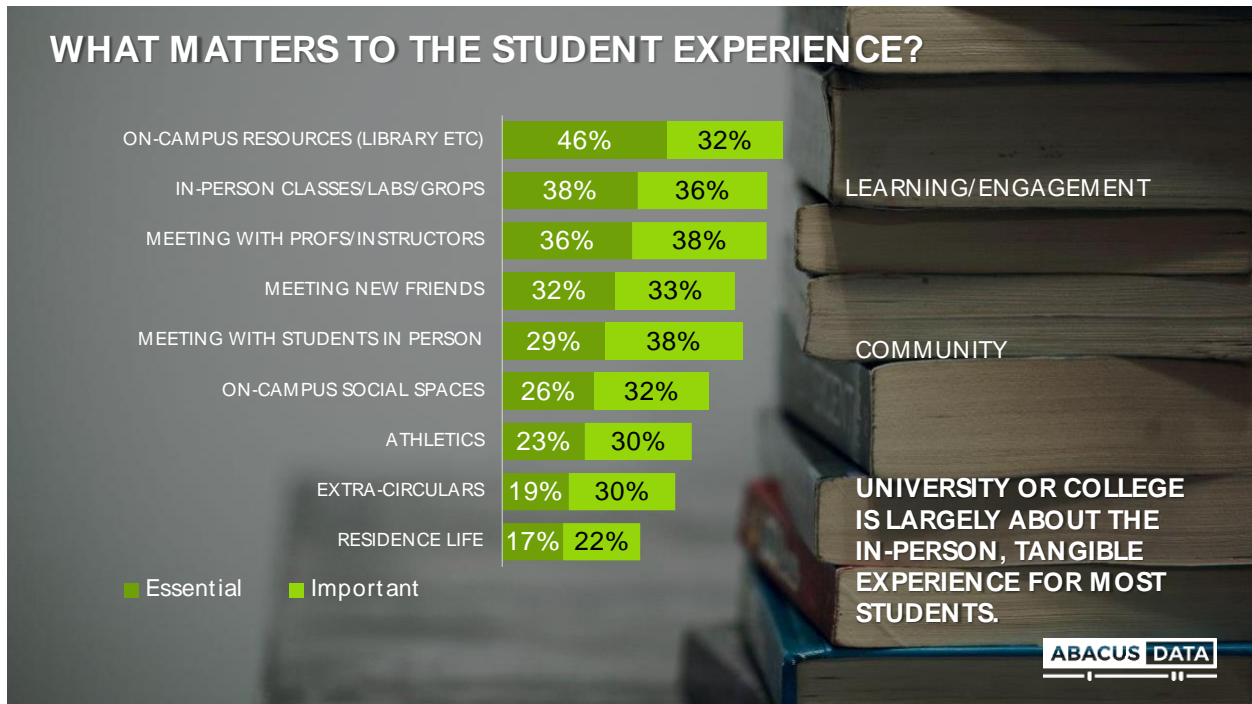


Fig. 7 – Abacus Data online learning poll

When classes first shifted to online learning in the spring of 2020, a national poll of post-secondary students conducted by CAUT saw 56% of students reporting that remote learning was worse than in-class teaching and learning.⁷⁷ The poll further revealed that it is not just in-person classes that students value, but also on-campus resources, meeting with faculty, and the social aspects of meeting other students and making new friends. The continued effects of the pandemic have shown that the massive shift to online education has had a negative impact on the quality of post-secondary education in Ontario. In November 2020, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) commissioned a poll of faculty and students concerning their experiences with online learning. Based on the poll responses, OCUFA recommended three key changes for the post-secondary system after COVID⁷⁸:

1. More system resources and support
2. A recognition of increased faculty workload
3. Smaller class sizes and more faculty

The OCUFA poll also concluded that 62% of students and 76 % of Ontario post-secondary faculty believed that the shift to online teaching had a negative impact to the overall quality of education.⁷⁹ The stress of financial demands from a majority contingent workforce, work-life balance in such changed work conditions, and heightened care-giving demands all have impacted faculty and students alike. Management have not created conditions that improve these factors. Instead, course sizes are generally larger, contracts have been reduced, and the supports are not in place.

Online Testing

Colleges have employed online testing and proctoring services mainly for high stakes exams with external governing bodies such as nursing and engineering. They have done so via their association with eCampus Ontario and with a private, for profit, US based companies like *Proctortrack* and *Respondus*. However, using such methods raises numerous concerns. First, there are questions about privacy and a corporation's use and safe storage of individual's unique biometric data. The testing software records student's individual faces, keystrokes, voice and other unique identifying movements. Second, proctoring software has students reporting higher levels of stress and anxiety than is already normally associated with testing, affecting both the wellbeing of students and testing validity. Finally, using such technology raises equity concerns. Students must have access to devices that meet the specifications required by the software, housing situations that permit learning with cameras on, and hi-speed internet, all of which disproportionately impact low-income students.⁸⁰

Software and testing methods that put privacy, well-being and equity at risk are not the solution. If colleges continue to rely on *Proctortrack* and *Respondus*, there will continue to be concerns surrounding academic integrity and online testing, especially with the rise of 'note sharing' websites that compromise a course's online tests and assessments. However, alternatives already exist. Faculty can be given additional time to prepare alternative evaluations. Once the pandemic is over and it is safe to be on campus again, online students

can be required to attend a physical location for testing. Instead of expanding class sizes now that there are no physical limits to the classroom, online class sizes can be kept reasonable so that there is not a reliance on multiple choice testing. Realizing these alternatives requires college administrators to support academic integrity by committing additional resources to the classroom. As professor Bonnie Stewart, Assistant Professor of Online Pedagogy & Workplace Learning, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor writes: “Academic integrity matters. But integrity works both ways.”⁸¹

Contracting Out of Faculty Work

Librarians

Librarians and counsellors each represent a much smaller proportion of faculty than do professors; however, their respective roles within the college system are no less critical. Librarians speak of the same workload issues faced by professors. Not only are faculty librarians responsible for supporting many hundreds of students in dozens of programs, they are also teaching and providing ‘bibliographic instruction’ in the classroom. What is different is that while librarians and counsellors are in the bargaining unit with faculty, they do not have a SWF, instead having a 35-hour work week. Librarians note that if you were to include their teaching in the same formula as faculty, their weekly workload would far exceed the 44 hour maximum that caps teaching faculty workloads.

While student numbers have continued to grow and the demands on librarians have become more technological, with more focus on databases, the number of full-time librarians has flat-lined over the last 5 years.⁸² College management has dealt with this disparity between staffing capacity and workload in the same way as with teaching faculty and counsellors. For some of the work they have hired part-time librarians. However, wherever possible, they have “contracted in”. This means dividing up the work that is assigned to a full-time librarian and ‘unbundling’ the work in various pieces to library technicians in the support staff bargaining unit, or to third parties outside of our bargaining unit. Eleven of the 24 Colleges now have no position of faculty librarian at all. Furthermore, there are currently 16 colleges that are offering 146 different Bachelor or Bachelor Honours Degrees.⁸³ This degree granting capability is regulated by the government under the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB). Five of the 16 colleges that offer these higher degrees, have no faculty librarian at their college.

College	Degrees	Librarians
Algonquin College	11	3
Canadore College	1	0*
Centennial College	2	8
Conestoga College	16	0*
Durham College	4	2
Fanshawe College	8	2
George Brown	12	8
Georgian College	8	2
Humber College	30	9
Collège La Cité	1	1
Mohawk College	1	4
Niagara College	3	0*
Seneca College	18	11
Sheridan College	27	12
St Clair College	2	0*
St. Lawrence College	2	0*
Total	146	62

Fig. 8 – taken from the College Employer Council 2017-18 staffing data⁸⁴

Figure 8 shows the chronic understaffing of full-time librarians in Ontario colleges, even though these faculty are part of the front line of transitioning to digital learning. Instead of increasing full-time staffing, the changeover from physical collections to digital collections has been used to unbundle librarian work and contract it out to support and administrative staff. While the dramatic change of library resources of stacks of books to digital search engines has been significant, the change in physical space has been equally dramatic – from the confines of rows of books to the open learning commons. These new spaces for gathering and learning, which are so necessary for students to access WiFi, complete individual work and meet in groups, are now also managed by librarians, adding to the variety of their duties. This work is set to become central to the future of digital learning, whether it is online or in the classroom. Given this, the massive understaffing of faculty librarians does not serve the evolving needs of students or provide the quality of education that a high-tech post-secondary system needs.

Counsellors

For counsellors, the primary shifts in their work have come from reduced staffing, expanding scopes of practice, and increased workload. The most current reports from the CEC has the number of full-time counsellors in the entire college system decreasing from 250 in 2012-13 to 243 in 2017-18, a 2.8% drop.⁸⁴ The number of students of the same time span grew by 2.1 %, resulting in an increased student/counsellor ratio in the midst of what many are calling a

mental health crisis in post-secondary education.⁸⁵ In addition, the complexity of student issues, along with the higher reliance on mental health resources from the colleges, mean that the demand for counselling often outweighs the availability of counsellors. Instead of providing sufficient numbers of skilled counselling faculty, many colleges have used this as an excuse to restructure and unbundle the work of counsellors. This work is then contracted into other categories of staff or, in some cases, contracted out to private providers while laying off existing in-house counsellors. Collège La Cité is an example of the latter, having shut down their entire counselling department in favour of contracting to an external provider.⁸⁶ Subtler forms of outsourcing include directing students to community providers of mental health. The risks here are not just one of downloading costs to the communities but also of overburdening the local systems resulting in longer wait times and higher risks to already vulnerable students.

College administrators have also used the same casualization playbook used with librarians and teaching faculty – more work is assigned to part-time counsellors, which then further unbundles the work of those counsellors. A typical counsellor should look at the whole student and consider mental health and learning as it affects all aspects of a student's life. Unbundling, however, separates those aspects into discrete silos that restrict the ability of a student to receive 360 degree supports. Accessibility, Indigenous, peer tutoring, educational planning, financial crisis, and substance abuse are increasingly discrete counselling areas which must liaise with a patchwork of other college services around each student. At present, most full-time counsellors at mid-to-large colleges only perform core mental health counselling, and students are left with a menu-style approach with different people providing different services.

Unbundling of Faculty Work

Prior to COVID, colleges were already making increased use of other categories of employees to deliver what is traditionally the role of professors. Technologists, facilitators, tutors, and instructors - many of whom are employed on a contract-to-contract basis - now deliver different parts of a full-time professor's role. Curriculum developers in a 'centre for teaching excellence', often with few full-time faculty, design course material in isolation and aid in the gathering, archiving, and monitoring of other faculty curriculum. Technologists can perform lab instruction and template marking under supervision of a professor, which has encouraged the sub-dividing of classes into lecture/lab or lecture/seminar simply to realize the financial savings associated with lower-paid staff. However, having two or three professors, instructors or technologists delivering different sections of a course means that students are not always receiving the best or most appropriate form of teaching. A single professor being responsible for all aspects of course delivery arguably leads to a more cohesive and integrated educational experience.

Outsourcing assessment to markers, assessment centers, and publisher-owned evaluation tools that accompany textbooks are other prevalent ways of unbundling faculty work. This fracturing of assessment does not serve students in their learning, nor does the proliferation of academic advisors – another site of unbundling. By removing the role of advising from professors and outsourcing it to lower paid support or administrative workers, this creates a disconnect in the

teacher student relationship. Professors know their students' academic strengths and challenges and have spent enough time with students to be able to advise them best and help them navigate their academic pathways. Instead, today's college students go to a proliferation of 'service providers', where in the past the professor was the unified centre of advice. A student may have an academic advisor, facilitator/tutor, instructor, placement coordinator, and lab technologist – all in replacement of faculty work.

Unbundling has now become standard operating procedure for corporate college boards tasked with generating profit. However, education is still a non-profit sector, where colleges are in a secure funding position, having banked budget surpluses for years. In this light, fiscal austerity is not enough to explain the administrative proclivity for unbundling - it is clearly also about control. As responsibilities are transferred to lower paid, precarious workers, or even outsourced to third party contractors and private partners, colleges can grant credentials while having more say over grades, academic advising, curriculum, and the day-to-day activities of what was once the role of full-time faculty members. Unbundling ultimately concentrates even more academic decision making into the hands of the upper administration of colleges with no meaningful faculty, let alone student, input. Make no mistake about it – unbundling is *not* student-centred learning.

Workplace Bullying / Psychological Health and Safety

Many faculty describe their relationship with college management both before, and especially after, the 2017 strike as having an ongoing negative impact on their psychological health and safety. This corresponds to the pressure to maximize overall workloads and increase class sizes, the increased precarity of contract faculty, and the unbundling of faculty work. The overall corporatization of our academic institutions has not only created a de-professionalized and fragmented workplace, it has also created the conditions for increased psychosocial hazards. Without support, trust, respect, security, and recognition of faculty expertise, a culture of conflict, insecurity and bullying can set in. Increasingly, faculty speak of being cogs in “the business of education”, and perceive that administrators are attempting to deliberately de-skill and demoralize professors, counsellors, and librarians. Unsurprisingly, this leads to increased complaints and instances of physical and psychological stress, bullying, and harassment.

Academic Decision Making and Quality Assurance

Intellectual Property

The intellectual property (IP) of post-secondary faculty has long been protected in academic CAs in Canada and around the world. The right of faculty to retain their IP promotes free and innovative thinking in research and teaching and ends up enriching social, economic, and political life far beyond our institutions.⁸⁷

Since their creation, Ontario Colleges have maintained a corporate model of IP based on Canadian copyright law. In this framework, the employer retains all IP rights for any work conducted as part of an employee's normal duties. With regards to curriculum, college management views it simply as work product and claims total ownership. This has enabled Ontario Colleges to enter into private partnerships by licencing and selling off faculty created curriculum - the very courses and programs that are now being offered by private colleges. For college faculty, it is not simply a matter of financial compensation that is of concern, rather it is the control and academic decision making around the use of what they create.

Intellectual Property concerns have come into focus during the pandemic, where the massive transition to emergency online teaching has required faculty to post all lectures and course materials onto the College LMS. Those materials are stored, shared, and delivered on the LMS, which leads to a host of IP and job security implications. First, it violates faculty AF by facilitating the 'passing off' of courses without the creator's consent. For example, college managers regularly share curriculum material on the LMS with precarious contract faculty hired at the last minute. Faculty have also been directed to create stand-alone courses without any active teaching, despite their pedagogical objections. These self-taught modules or 'courses in a box' either wholly or partly divorce teaching from credit hours. If faculty retained their IP rights, as is the case throughout the academic landscape in Canada, then students would be better served. When faculty have the security to bring their full subject matter expertise to course curriculum, the student learning experience can't help but be enriched.

Federal copyright law recognizes the IP challenges presented by online education. When faculty develop online lectures, they typically incorporate other material into their lectures that is copyrighted. That material is typically from academic sources, media, or other previously copyrighted material and used either under licence, or under the fair dealing clause of the Canada Copyright Act, which permits limited use of copyright material for academic purposes.⁸⁸ When these elements are combined into a lecture by faculty, the result becomes a new copyrightable creation. However, the fair dealing clause requires that a lecture containing copyright material be taken down from the LMS within 30 days after the end of the course.⁸⁹ Copyright law thus suggests that Colleges can't continue using the same posted lectures term after term. There are further concerns if synchronous classes with students participating are recorded and are being stored and shared. These examples show how insufficient College IP policies are likely already in violation of federal copyright law - further indication that the policies need to be updated and enforced in clear CA language.

The issue of IP is also closely connected to both shared governance and AF. Together these principles form a collective basis for quality education, and this is why all three are protected by CAs at colleges and universities across Canada. The freedom to share and develop academic curriculum and research for educational purposes means that AF goes hand in hand with IP. The ability to have a voice in making academic decisions about curriculum and research means that faculty also need to be involved in shared governance, along with students and administrators. Without this tripartite foundation, the privatization of faculty IP and the unilateral decision making of corporate boards of governance will continue to move Ontario colleges further away

from a model that strives for innovation and for the highest quality student learning experience. In the landmark case of Bryson in BC we can see this connection. Professor Bryson was directed to transfer her rights to her ESL course to the administration, but she refused. The resulting arbitration not only upheld her right to refuse, but moreover found that her ownership of the copyright was based in her production as an academic, not just as an employee. In other words, academic ownership goes beyond copyright and “is important to support, foster, and preserve academic freedom”.⁹⁰

Shared Governance

This report has pointed out the issues of unbundling faculty work and its negative effect on student learning. From the corporate boardroom the expansion of online teaching facilitates yet more unbundling and the assertion of corporate IP rights. In contrast, a system of shared governance, along with AF and academic IP, can protect program integrity and the academic standards that students demand and deserve.

Shared governance is a system of academic decision making at post-secondary institutions that has developed across the Western world over centuries. It involves having faculty, students and administrators making academic decisions together. In a shared governance model, all three groups determine issues such as curriculum, program outcomes, textbooks, grade appeals, and hiring committees, among others. If faculty and students are involved in the academic decisions of colleges, in how courses and programs are designed, then the quality of education not only improves, it becomes more responsive to the needs of students and employers. It is more creative and diverse and leads to increased opportunities for all to shape the development of post-secondary education.

Ontario colleges remain the only system of post-secondary institutions in Canada without shared governance. CAUT notes that “Adopting structures from the corporate world is contrary to the rich tradition of Canadian collegial governance.”⁹¹ Despite this, 23 out of 24 colleges currently have a corporate governance system that reflect the financial and corporate values and effectively silence the voices of faculty. The lone exception is Sheridan College, which is not only financially successful, it is also the only College in the Forbes top 50 Employers in Canada, ranked number fourteen in 2021.⁹²

Shared governance came out of the 2017 strike as an item to be settled at the provincial college taskforce which the Ford government unceremoniously cancelled on their first day in office. In the aftermath of that cancellation, the Colleges have proposed even more unilateral powers. In Colleges Ontario’s report, *The Future of Ontario’s Workers*, they argue that administrators need greater autocratic power over faculty, students and even government in determining programming without consent from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Shared governance would provide the checks and balances necessary to correct such overreach.

Ultimately, along with AF, which is now enshrined in our CA, and IP, which is an issue at the bargaining table, shared governance is what makes advanced learning just that, *advanced*. It is

the hallmark of Western colleges and universities and the very heart of the ability to create education based on the learning and experience of expert educators. Faculty's AF to express and inquire must be coupled with their right to control and develop their intellectual ideas. AF and IP create a foundation where faculty, students and managers can then come together (shared governance) and make academic decisions in the best interest of quality education.

Section 5: Toward a Public, Equitable, High Quality College System

The 2014 *Report on Education in Ontario Colleges* was written while celebrations were being planned for the 50th anniversary of the college system. At this point, faculty perceived that long-standing issues associated with a failed neoliberal model of education and an outmoded, autocratic management style were reaching a critical point. A clear choice was before the system – slip further down the slope of austerity, privatization, precarity and reduced quality, or move towards a publicly-funded, student and faculty-centered, high-quality model of education. Seven years later, and with the fallout of a global pandemic in-between, the choice before Ontario Colleges remains the same. The following recommendations can help guide us in the right direction.

Rejecting Neoliberalism and Increasing Public Support

Recommendation Number 1 – *Increase federal cash transfers for post-secondary education to 1992 levels, or 0.4% of GDP. Increase provincial government grants to Ontario Colleges to 50% of operating revenue.*

It is incumbent on provincial and federal governments to restore a sustainable level of funding to the post-secondary sector in general, and to Ontario colleges specifically. The future of our workforce and our citizenry requires the education, training, and skills-development provided by high-quality post-secondary institutions. It also requires the research and innovation that universities and colleges provide. We can no longer pretend that turning the post-secondary landscape into a Darwinian “war of all against all” leads to better educational outcomes or greater social good. The evidence instead suggests that it leads to bloated administrations, the exploitation of growing numbers of international students, an increasingly precarious workforce, and an impoverished educational experience for students.

Recommendation Number 2 – *End Performance-Based Funding*

The Ford government doubled down on an already bad idea by moving toward 60% of college and university funding being tied to performance metrics. This kind of competitive funding model needs to be scrapped, and funding should return to an enrollment-based model balanced against the needs of the communities the college serves. Formulas based on growth, or that unduly rely on international student recruitment, tuition fees, and private investment leave the system vulnerable to external forces and fail to recognize public post-secondary education as a long-term investment in the province’s economy.

Recommendation Number 3 – *Put an end to public-private campuses that exploit International students.*

Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government did the right thing by cancelling public-private campuses in 2018. P3 campuses offer a degraded educational experience to international students and work to bleed resources from the public college system to the private career colleges. P3 campuses also suffer from issues of education quality and a precarious, low-wage workforce.

Recommendation Number 4 – *Increase the Affordability of Education by Reducing Student Tuition and Student Debt*

There are a number of changes needed to reduce the financial burden of a post-secondary education and to improve access to disadvantaged students. First, as endorsed by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario (CFS-O), college tuition fees should be reduced to 1992 levels. Second, as also endorsed by the CFS and CFS-O, the federal government needs to enact a program of student loan reduction such that the overall debt load of Canadian students is cut in half. Finally, the federal and provincial governments should combine to create a comprehensive, need-based tuition grant program.¹

Creating Good Jobs, Not Gig Jobs

Recommendation Number 5 – *Union Membership for Part-Time and Sessional Faculty*

The Province needs to immediately allow the ballots cast by thousands of contract college faculty to be counted. The College Employer Council's legal delay tactics are a violation of the rights of precarious college faculty to union representation.

Recommendation Number 6 – *Increase the Full-Time Faculty Complement with attention to equity*

An adequate number of full-time faculty are critical to maintaining the quality of college education and providing the best possible student experience. Colleges need to maintain a minimum 70:30 ratio in numbers of full-time to non-full-time faculty. Conversion language for non-full-time faculty needs to be added to the CA to provide regular pathways to full-time employment. In addition, language to address structural racism in hiring, retention, and professional development must be added.

Recommendation Number 7 – *Improve Pay Equity, Seniority and Workload Protection for Contract Faculty*

The advancements in seniority for PL faculty gained in the 2017 strike need to be strengthened. The provisions of the Wynne government's *Bill 148 – the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act* – need to be implemented concerning contract college faculty. Contract faculty should be paid for all the work they do, including preparation, evaluation, administration and student and departmental meetings. Contract faculty should have access to the same workload protections as full-time faculty.

Recommendation Number 8 – *End Contracting-Out of Counselling Faculty and Address Counselling Workload*

Every college needs a full complement of counselling faculty in order to service the growing mental health needs of our students. In addition, a workload formula similar to the SWF needs to be developed for counselling faculty in order to limit caseloads and provide adequate time for case notes and other administrative and reporting tasks required by professional licensing bodies.

Recommendation Number 9 – *Ensure Every College Has Enough Librarians*

Every college must have at least one librarian, and a formula for the required complement of librarians at each college should be established, relating the number of degree programs offered and size of institutional research portfolio to the number of librarian faculty.

Recommendation Number 10 – *Ensure Sustainable Workloads*

Article 11 of the CA needs to be modified to more accurately reflect the extra time involved in electronic communication, LMS use, and online teaching. The Spring / Summer course development / course renewal period needs to be reinstated for all teaching faculty, ensuring that programs, courses, and materials are kept fully updated. The unbundling of full-time faculty, counsellor and librarian work has to stop. This unbundling has led to increased contract work within our system and to contracting out to the private sector.

Recommendation Number 11 – *Promote Access and Quality, Not Micro-credentials*

The Province and the Colleges need to re-invest in foundational programs and tuition supports intended to improve access to college education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and for workers in need of retraining. Second-career programs need to be expanded to include multi-year diplomas and degrees.

Recommendation Number 12 – *Reconnect Colleges with Communities*

As the colleges have responded to austerity by chasing international money, they have steadily lost touch with their original mandate as institutions deeply embedded in local communities and local economies. It is imperative that we reinvigorate the connection between the college and the community and revisit the original idea of the college system. This means focusing on providing educational opportunities, facilitating good jobs, helping local economies, and partnering with local businesses and community organizations.

Strengthening Academic Quality

Recommendation Number 13 - *Institute a System of Shared Governance in the Colleges*

College boards of governors are modeled on a business corporation. This is why we are seeing increased corporatization in all aspects of College education: the abuse of precarious contract workers, the unbundling of academic work that disadvantages students and faculty alike, the commodification of curriculum and asserting of corporate IP, and the P3 campuses that disadvantage students and undermine education quality. Decades of neoliberal policies have by now shown that post-secondary education, and especially publicly funded post-secondary education, is not best governed by corporate interests. All too often, board meetings are closed, and the proceedings are removed from the input and oversight of those directly affected by their decisions: the faculty, staff and students. Teaching and learning must have stakeholders involved in a meaningful way and that is why across Canada, the United States, and Europe, the tradition of shared governance exists as a successful means of governing educational institutions. These systems of collegial governance are unlike corporate structures that reflect the interests of only one group. Shared governance is instead a stakeholder assembly, with representatives from faculty, students and administration all democratically elected. A diversity of interests is thus included and focused on the matter of education, not just on the bottom line. Decades of austerity have created a situation in which the drive to cut costs continually supersedes the quality of education. However, the twin necessities of fiscal responsibility and academic quality do not need to be in opposition. The model of shared governance allows these priorities to work in concert so that all voices can be heard, and the best decisions can be made.

Recommendation Number 14 – *Strengthen Faculty Intellectual Property Rights*

In conjunction with shared governance and academic freedom, faculty must retain their IP in order to produce innovative research and create and develop cutting-edge curriculum. If, unlike all other post-secondary systems, we continue to have a corporate style of IP, then the corporatization of faculty curriculum and the privatization of public education will only intensify. This is not a condition conducive to high-quality education and is why faculty IP rights must be strengthened and enshrined in the CA.

Recommendation Number 15 – *Affirm the Centrality of In-person classroom Instruction and Acknowledge Faculty Responsibility to Determine Teaching Methodologies*

The massive shift to online during the pandemic, while understandable in the short-term, has impacted both the precarity and quality of college education. In addition, feedback from students and parents across Ontario clearly indicates that online learning is simply not a substitute for in-person education. Once the pandemic is over and it is safe for students and employees to return to campuses, colleges must re-commit to the centrality of in-person classroom instruction and to recognize its importance for the stability of our system and the

confidence of students, their families, and employers. In addition, faculty must be given the ability to determine the teaching methodology that best works for their courses – whether in-person, online, or hybrid.

Recommendation Number 16 – *Re-Establish Provincial Taskforces*

Coming out of the historic five-week 2017 strike, a provincial taskforce was put into place with working tables on staffing, governance and IP, mental health and access, and flexibility. Re-establishing the taskforce would be a concrete way forward to address many of the outstanding issues identified in this report and to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure Ontario has a world-class public college system.

Recommendation Number 17 – *Create Ombudsperson Positions at Each College*

The creation of independent ombudspersons at both the college and ministry level would help to ensure our institutions have better whistleblower protection. This will further enhance the ability of all employees to ensure that college policies and procedures are transparent, fair, and accountable.

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