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## **Council of Ontario Universities 295<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting**

**Meeting held on Thursday April 11, 2013 at University of Guelph**

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### **ACADEMIC COLLEAGUE’S REPORT TO SENATE**

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As usual, the overall meeting involved Executive Heads’ meetings, Academic Colleagues meetings, and the Council Meeting. Ontario Universities are, of course, dealing with many problems and the discussions at these meetings consequently covered a very large range of topics and only some of the main topics discussed will be reported on here.

#### **Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA’s)**

The Minister had directed HEQCO to establish a peer review panel and “identify a shortlist of colleges and universities whose submissions demonstrate the greatest ability to serve as lead institutions – models of advanced education in the 21st century”. This Panel has been established and HEQCO has indicated that “lead institutions selected through this exercise will be the first to receive funding to pursue their mandates starting as early as 2013-14.” The panel has reviewed the SMAs in terms of their “ability to achieve significant improvements in productivity, quality and affordability through both innovation and differentiation,” identifying those institutions whose SMAs “advance government policies, objectives and goals.” A Panel report entitled “**Quality: Shifting the Focus**” was released in early April. COU has also reviewed all of the SMAs and found many common themes. They found that the SMAs reinforce universities’ commitment to innovation across many different aspects of their academic enterprises and operations.

#### **Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)**

The Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) has now been incorporated and a board has been elected. ONCAT will advance implementation of a province-wide credit transfer system by: (a) Expanding and improving student transfer pathways that respond to student demand, through continuation of funding for pathways projects as under the College University Consortium Council (CUCC); (b) Expanding and improving a web portal for information for students about credit transfer ; (c) Improving transparency and access to information about transfer pathways and credit transfer;(c) Supporting student success for transfer students (for example, improving graduation rates of transfer students, increasing student support services); and (d) Providing professional development and best practices forums. Project funding will be available through the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund to support a variety of projects that will expand student

pathways, create more seamless educational experiences and increase collaboration throughout Ontario's postsecondary education system.

### **Relationships with Colleges**

A report from the COU Committee on Relationships with Other Post-Secondary Institutions and two other reports led to extensive discussions of the relationship between Ontario's universities and its colleges. The first of the latter two reports was the new Academic Colleagues Discussion Paper entitled "**CAAT Transfer Students in Ontario Universities: A Review of the Evidence**". This report looks at the performance of college students who transfer to universities in the province and concludes that (a) College students transferring to universities perform in terms of grades, on average, as well as direct entry high school students, (b) College transfer students are generally less successful in terms of drop-out rates. The second report that was extensively discussed was that prepared by the PC party and entitled "**Paths to Prosperity**". This report appears to recommend that more support should be directed to the colleges and away from the universities. COU is holding discussions with the party about the report.

### **Teacher Education Funding and Proposed Restructuring**

The provincial government has confirmed that it will require restructuring of Bachelor of Education programs to lengthen the program and further reduce the number of entering students. Ministry of Education staff have indicated that the province has revised its target date for implementation of the restructured Bachelor of Education program to September 2015 (formerly September 2014).

### **Auditor General of Ontario Audit of How University Teaching is Assessed Background:**

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (OAGO) has conducted a "value-for-money" audit of how faculty members' teaching is evaluated at Ontario universities. Three universities were selected to be visited by OAGO staff to review teaching evaluation policies and procedures, and to test compliance these universities being the University of Ontario Institute for Technology, the University of Toronto and Brock University. A report containing the Auditor General's findings was published in December 2012. The report contained several recommendations aimed at establishing a more robust and transparent processes for the evaluation of faculty teaching.

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