

COU Update

As of November 22, 2013

COUNCIL OF
ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

CONSEIL DES
UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

COU Update – November 2013

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Note to user.....	4
Common Acronyms.....	4
Updated: Advocacy Initiatives	5
2013 Ontario Budget	7
Updated: Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs)	9
HEQCO Productivity Project	11
University Operating Funding.....	12
Planning and Funding of Enrolment (undergraduate and graduate)	14
Capital Funding and Planning	16
Deferred Maintenance.....	18
Condition of University Facilities	19
Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP)	19
Updated: Tuition Framework for 2013-14.....	20
Ontario Tuition Grants.....	22
Student Access Guarantee (SAG)	23
Updated: Ontario Education Number (OEN)	24
Updated: Teacher Education Funding and Proposed Restructuring	25
Applications for Fall 2013.....	26
Credit Transfer – Student Mobility and Pathways	27
Updated: Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)	28
Teaching and Learning.....	29
Updated: Ontario Universities Online	31
International	32
International Student Recovery	33
Efficiency targets.....	34
Updated: Quality Assurance.....	35
Updated: COU Reports and Symposia.....	36
Benchmarking Administrative Performance Indicators.....	37
Updated: Collaborative Procurement	38

Updated: Advocacy Initiatives – University Operations	39
Updated: University Pension Plans	41
Updated: OCUR – Research Matters	44
Updated: OCUR – High Performance Research Computing (HPRC)	45
Updated: Accessibility – AccessibleCampus.ca	47
Updated: Accessibility – EnAbling Change Partnership: Educators Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit.....	48
Updated: Accessibility – Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) Student Competition	50
Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.....	52
Accessibility-Related Amendments to the Ontario Building Code (OBC)	53
Accessibility – Design of Public Spaces Standard	54
Updated: Mental Health – Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health	55
Updated: Aboriginal Self-Identification Project	56
Updated: Aboriginal Education Council Gathering	58
Updated: Aboriginal Communications Campaign	59
Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Consortium (PHCNP)	60
Tri-partite Committee on College Stand-alone Nursing degrees	60
Updated: Preparing the Health Workforce to Care for the Aging Population.....	61
Updated: Clinical Education Crisis	61
Medical Trainee Days Data	62
Updated: Assisting Physicians in Life-Long Learning (APLL).....	63

Note to user

For quick access to a particular issue, you can click on a title in the Table of Contents and you will be immediately directed to the issue in question. There are four main sections within an issue: update, background, division and last updated. If “updated” is included in the title of an issue, it has been updated and there is new information. The “updated” section at the bottom will inform you of the last time the issue was updated.

Please note that the COU Update is intended for COU members and affiliates. The COU Update is not a public document and is not intended to be distributed outside the university sector.

Common Acronyms

BIU	Basic Income Unit
BOI	Basic Operating Income
CFI	Canada Foundation for Innovation
COFM	Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine
COUPN	Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing
CSAO	Council of Senior Administrative Officers
CUPA	Council on University Planning and Analysis
EDU	Ministry of Education
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEQCO	Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MGS	Ministry of Government Services
MoHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
MRI	Ministry of Research and Innovation
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
OADE	Ontario Association of Deans of Education
OCAV	Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents
ONCAT	Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer
OCUPRS	Ontario Council of University Programs in Rehabilitation Sciences
OCUR	Ontario Council on University Research
OEN	Ontario Education Number
OICAH	Ontario Interdisciplinary Council for Aging and Health
OSAP	Ontario Student Assistance Program
OUAC	Ontario Universities Application Centre
Quality Council	Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance
SMA	Strategic Mandate Agreement

Updated: Advocacy Initiatives

Update: The government has agreed to extend the temporary solvency exemption for university pensions plans, and efforts continue to secure changes that will address the reduction in teacher education funding and proposed changes in tuition administration.

COU organized a University Day at Queen's Park on November 19, where Executive Heads and their Board Chairs met with government officials to celebrate university successes and contributions. The theme of the day, *Ontario Universities: Fuelling Success*, allowed university representatives to discuss how universities contribute to the momentum of the province economically, culturally and socially. Representatives discussed how universities prepare students for success; boost economic growth through research, business partnerships, community revitalization and social innovation; and expand the talent pool by engaging under-represented groups, such as people with disabilities and Aboriginal students, as well as attracting top talent from around the world. A total of 27 meetings were organized throughout the day with cabinet ministers, opposition leaders, MPPs, deputy ministers, and chiefs of staff, with a reception held in the evening. [Photos from University Day can be viewed](#) on the COU website (at the hyperlink).

COU is preparing its annual provincial pre-budget submission, in which some of the same themes will appear.

In the run-up to a possible spring election, "jobs" has emerged as a prominent theme for all three political parties. Accordingly, COU is aligning its communications and government relations strategy towards this theme, with a focus on the employability of graduates.

Six communications vehicles have been identified to be deployed between November and the end of April, or sooner if Ontario goes to the polls before that time:

- The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' [annual survey of graduates' employment and earnings](#). (The [Media release of November 19, 2013](#) is available online.) Results of a Gandalf poll commissioned by COU on attitudes toward universities and satisfaction rates of graduates. (January 2014)
- Partnership with university career services on a survey that will promote the use of career services from first year to graduation, not just when exiting (February 2014)
- A COU report on Experiential Learning. (Late March 2014)
- Career success stories of recent graduates who have landed interesting jobs. (April 2014)
- Myth-busting information on employability of university graduates. We are in discussion with AUCC about options for sharing and promoting their research into jobs, skills and income for this purpose. (March/April 2014)

COU will be reaching out to universities for help identifying successful students and in cataloguing the many examples of experiential learning, internships and co-ops for the report.

Background: COU continues to work with the Conference Board of Canada on a report that it is producing on innovation, which reflects positively on the efforts of universities to develop skills in this area through courses, programs, competitions and incubators. The report also update the Innovation Skills Profile first produced in 2003. More details are provided under [COU Reports and Symposia](#).

Division: Communications and Public Affairs

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

2013 Ontario Budget

Background: On May 2, the government released the 2013 Ontario Budget entitled *A Prosperous & Fair Ontario*. The budget has four main themes: jobs and growth; fair society; fiscally responsible and accountable government; and Ontario's path to a balanced budget.

The showcase of the budget is the Youth Jobs Strategy, through which government will provide \$295 million over two years to create jobs and mentorship support opportunities for 30,000 youth, and promote entrepreneurship and innovations. An element of the Strategy that impacts universities directly is the Ontario Youth Innovation Fund, which will provide:

- \$20 million over two years for the On Campus Accelerator Centres that would facilitate development of entrepreneurial activity in Ontario's universities and colleges. This investment builds on existing centres like Ryerson's Digital Media Zone, Toronto's Impact Centre, Nipissing's Student Development Fund and the VeloCity Program at Waterloo.
- \$10 million over two years through Ontario Centres of Excellence to provide postdoctoral fellows to lead and manage industrial research, development and commercialization efforts.

Other budget measures impacting universities include:

- Confirmation that annual tuition-fee increases will be capped at an average of three per cent
- The government will introduce changes allowing the deferral of fees so students do not have to pay tuition before their OSAP arrives.
- Changes to the definition of a full university course load for determining tuition fees will be announced in the summer, following consultations with institutions and students.
- Total postsecondary and training sector funding is projected to increase by \$0.5 billion between 2012–13 and 2015–16; this will support enrolment growth as well as increased spending on student financial assistance, including the Ontario Tuition Grant, and other ministry programs.
- The government will require postsecondary institutions to better track outcomes for students over time and report on career success rates among graduates. This would build on existing reporting through the Multi-year Accountability Agreements.
- The government will be announcing an Advisory Panel to review compensation of senior executives in the Broader Public Sector.
- Compensation costs must be managed within Ontario's existing fiscal framework, which includes no funding for incremental compensation increases for new collective agreements.
- Over the next three years, the Province will provide more than \$800 million for infrastructure in colleges and universities, to fund 20 projects. This funding had been previously announced.

- The Province plans to make investments in research capacity at postsecondary institutions through the Research Infrastructure program of the Ontario Research Fund (CFI matching)
- Measures impacting university pensions:
 - The government remains committed to ensuring Single Employer Pension Plans (SEPPs) move to equal cost sharing for ongoing contributions within five years and exploring opportunities to support joint sponsorship as the model for pension plan governance and funding in the public sector.
 - The government plans to develop a framework to permit the transfer of assets from SEPPs to Joint Sponsored Pension Plans (JSPPs) and allow SEPPs to be converted to JSPPs if specified conditions are met.
 - The government will consider regulatory amendments that provide additional relief of solvency funding obligations, for public-sector SEPPs that have taken action to put their plan on a sustainable track, including movement to equal cost-sharing for ongoing contributions.
 - The government will explore whether further legislative amendments may be necessary to transform these plans.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs)

MTCU has initiated a process of discussion of universities' strategic mandates.

Update: In September 2013, MTCU released a discussion paper, *Ontario's Proposed Differentiation Policy Framework*. The paper outlines the government's priorities, a differentiation framework with eight components, and possible metrics for each component. The Ministry invited universities to submit comments and recommendations concerning the metrics to be used in the framework.

COU continues to seek clarification from the Ministry on: the purpose of the SMAs, the relationship between SMAs and "strategic enrolment planning" referred to in the differentiation framework, the process by which SMAs will be concluded and the basis for review in the future. Additionally, COU continues to urge the Ministry to provide the opportunity for universities to re-submit SMA proposals and/or provide additional information (once the purpose and process of SMAs has been confirmed).

Background: On June 27, 2012, the Minister wrote to Executive Heads of colleges and universities asking each institution to submit a proposed SMA by September 30, 2012. On August 7, 2012, MTCU released instructions and a template for mandate agreement submissions.

All universities submitted a proposed SMA to the ministry by October 5, 2012 (which was a short extension to the deadline provided by MTCU). All submissions, from both the university and college sectors can be found online on the [HEQCO website](#) (available at the hyperlink). The [university submissions](#) can be found on the COU website (available at the hyperlink).

The Minister 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." The panel members were:

Leslie Church, Global Communications and Public Affairs, Google Canada
John Davies, President Emeritus, Humber College
Richard DiCerni, Former Deputy Minister, Industry Canada
Cindy Hazell, Former VP Academic, Seneca College
Chaviva Hošek, Former President, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research
Gilles Patry, President & CEO, Canada Foundation for Innovation
Richard Rhoda, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Michael Stevenson, President Emeritus, Simon Fraser University
David Trick, President, David Trick & Associates
David Turpin, President, University of Victoria

The panel reviewed 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." The panel reviewed the SMAs through the following lenses: differentiation;

academic objectives (e.g. learning outcomes, program development); whether plans are “cutting-edge” in a global context; community and regional economic and social development; productivity and efficiency; and institutions’ ability to achieve priorities.

MTCU staff have indicated that the submission of the proposals will be the beginning of a process. It is anticipated that the ministry will engage institutions in discussions of the proposals, leading to completion of mandate agreements. There is no clear indication of the time by which the ministry expects that agreements will be concluded. MTCU has indicated that agreements are intended to be public documents.

COU has reviewed all of the SMAs and found many common themes. The SMAs reinforce universities’ commitment to innovation across many different aspects of their academic enterprises and operations. The university SMAs reinforce the university missions of teaching, research and community, but are highly differentiated in their approach to these missions. The university SMAs include good examples of productivity and of responsiveness to government priorities such as technology-enabled learning, experiential learning and broadening credential options.

The HEQCO review panel provided its [report on the SMAs](#) to government in March and the report was publicly released on April 4, 2013 (the report is available at the [hyperlink](#)). HEQCO’s review was intended to select “lead institutions” who “would be the first to receive funding to pursue their mandates starting as early as 2013-14.” However, HEQCO’s report did not assess individual SMAs; instead, the report set out a series of recommended policy directions for the province to pursue that would enhance the quality and competitiveness of the PSE sector in Ontario.

Executive Heads of universities met with Ministry representatives for a summer roundtable discussion of differentiation and SMAs on July 10, 2013. The Ministry appointed Paul Genest as Special Advisor on SMAs (Universities); his role is to negotiate the details of SMAs with institutions.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

HEQCO Productivity Project

Background: As part of the announcements concerning MTCU's launch of the mandate agreement process, former Minister Murray asked HEQCO to recommend data indicators measuring quality and productivity in the postsecondary sector. HEQCO has established a panel to advise on this initiative. University members of the panel were drawn from the data steering committee of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), which includes members of the Council on University Planning and Analysis (CUPA) and COU staff.

HEQCO published its first report on December 6, 2012. The report provides productivity indicators for colleges and universities in Ontario. The indicators for universities include historical analysis of enrolment, degrees awarded per faculty and funding per FTE student and per graduate from 2002-03 until 2009-10, as well as interprovincial comparisons of these data. In addition, the report includes interprovincial comparisons of tri-council research funding and an analysis of publication productivity (H-Index results).

The report concludes that Ontario universities are very productive: the province's universities are teaching and graduating more students with less revenue per student and fewer faculty resources than universities in all other provinces, and are leading the country in research output.

The report also contains information about faculty teaching loads. The data is from a pilot study by four Ontario universities – Guelph, Queen's, Wilfrid Laurier and York – and show that university full-time faculty members teach on average 3.4 courses per year. HEQCO commended the work of the four universities that conducted the pilot study, and stated "it seems reasonable to us that this reporting requirement be extended to all Ontario universities to ensure that we have a complete understanding and appreciation of these data."

To address the data gaps in faculty workload productivity identified in the report, Ontario universities have launched a new initiative to expand the pilot study to include additional institutions and collect information on other indicators of faculty workload, such as graduate student supervision, and other types of informal teaching and service.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: January 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

University Operating Funding

Background: The 2013 Ontario Budget included few new announcements regarding university operating funding. Ministry staff have provided updates on MTCU's forecasts for funding required for growth and its projected reductions from efficiency targets and the International Student Recovery in 2013-14 and future years.

The budget document indicates that expenditure in the postsecondary sector is expected to increase by \$0.5B between 2012-13 and 2015-16, mainly as a result of continued funding to support enrolment growth, student financial assistance (including the OTG), and other ministry programs. Increased transfers to universities and colleges provide only a part of the overall increases.

Overall funding impacts*	\$M		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Universities			
Total increases for enrolment	51.6	104.2	168.1
Total reductions in grants	(40.5)	(77.0)	(84.8)
Other base changes	1.1	2.9	2.9
Net increase	12.2	30.1	86.1

*Numbers may not add due to rounding

For more information on budget increases associated with enrolment, please see the [Planning and Funding of Enrolment \(undergraduate and graduate\) section](#).

The 2013 Ontario Budget confirmed reductions in universities' operating grants that had been announced in the 2012 Ontario Budget, and announced the elimination of nursing tuition waivers. The table below provides updated projections for the reductions:

Reductions – Universities	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	\$M		
Efficiency targets	(28.5)	(57.8)	(58.9)
International student recovery	(10.2)	(17.3)	(23.6)
Municipal tax grant – international students (except PhDs)	(1.8)	(1.8)	(1.8)
Elimination nursing tuition waivers	(0.0)	(0.1)	(0.5)
Total reductions	40.5	(77.0)	(84.8)

The 2012 Ontario Budget announced reductions to university operating grants, described as “policy levers” or efficiency targets. The reductions are **not increased** in 2015-16; the reduction will remain at the 2014-15 level of approximately 2 per cent of enrolment-based operating grants. There were no further details announced in the

budget or provided by ministry staff concerning the requirements for universities' reporting about how they have implemented the reductions.

The 2012 Ontario Budget also announced the International Student Recovery (ISR). MTCU intends to continue the implementation approach announced in the 2012 budget, adding cohorts of entering international students in subsequent years to the ISR. The budget indicates an ongoing assumption that the ISR will continue to be levied on new and continuing international students (excluding PhD students), and continue to grow.

Universities receive a grant for payment of municipal taxes based on an FTE count. As announced last year in the 2012 budget, MTCU will introduce changes to remove international students (except for international PhD students) from the FTE count for calculation of the grant, reducing universities' entitlement proportional to the number of non-PhD international students enrolled.

MTCU staff indicated that the funding to universities to cover the tuition costs of nursing faculty in colleges and universities seeking master's and doctoral level credentials in nursing will be eliminated. Students currently eligible for tuition waivers will continue to be funded but new students will not be added. Details on implementation will follow.

It should be noted that elimination of this program will not necessarily affect universities' revenue since it offset tuition fees. They can collect tuition fees from new PhD candidates.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Planning and Funding of Enrolment (undergraduate and graduate)

Funding for Enrolment Growth: The 2013 Ontario Budget did not provide multi-year allocations to fund the growth expected in postsecondary enrolment, but MTCU staff have indicated that the government remains committed to doing so. The 2012 budget confirmed the government's commitment to fund an increase of more than 60,000 new spaces in postsecondary education by 2017-18 (41,000 spaces for universities). The projection from the 2012 budget (showing increases incrementally from the previous year) is:

2012 enrolment projections	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Undergraduate	6,500	6,100	6,225
Graduate	600	600	900

MTCU has not yet provided an update to these enrolment estimates, but staff confirmed that the ministry's assumptions about undergraduate enrolment growth are substantially similar to the projections last year. An estimate of funding for enrolment growth for the next three years also was provided (it is traditional for the provincial budget to set out only three years of projected expenditure).

The dollar amounts in the table are incremental increases from the funding in the MTCU base allocation for 2012-13.

Funding for growth	\$M		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Undergraduate	38.4	74.7	116.7
Graduate	6.0	21.8	43.5
Post Graduate medical expansion	3.6	3.7	3.9
100 Medical spaces expansion	3.6	4.0	4.0
Total increase for growth	51.6	104.2	168.1

The revised multi-year funding projection for undergraduate growth is lower than COU's projections. After further analysis and discussion with MTCU, COU will provide an analysis of the adequacy of announced funding to support this growth and an explanation of the differences between the MTCU and COU projections.

COU has developed a position paper focused on mechanisms to support planning for enrolment changes and to provide operating funding in response to institutions' changes in enrolment – both increases and decreases in enrolment. The position paper proposes negotiation of multi-year agreements, with committed funding from MTCU but with funding flowing only to growth up to approved targets. The position paper was approved by Executive Heads in May 2010.

The full text of COU's proposal can be found at on [COU's website](#).

Graduate expansion: In May 2013, MTCU announced a graduate space allocation of 300 spaces for 2013-14.

- 200 spaces were allocated to universities that are close to their allocation targets (plus/minus five per cent of their targets and a gap of no more than 200 spaces).
- Universities significantly above their target allocation received a one-time-only funding equivalent to 100 spaces across these universities.
- Universities significantly below their targets received no additional space allocation.

In August 2013, MTCU held a roundtable discussion with university Executive Heads concerning graduate expansion. In preparation for the roundtable, COU developed a short paper on graduate education, reiterating the recommendations of the COU position paper concerning a multi-year approach to allocations and calling for increased investments in graduate education. The paper also recommended increased provincial support for the expansion of international graduate enrolment.

University participants at the roundtable recommended that the next round of allocation of graduate spaces should occur as part of or in connection with the negotiations over Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs) between the universities and the province. SMAs should address each university's priorities for program development, providing the context for graduate expansion. MTCU should clarify the evidence it seeks to support its decisions about graduate allocations and give each university an opportunity to provide information relevant to MTCU's consideration.

COU developed a [position paper on graduate education](#), which addresses principles for allocation of the new 6,000 spaces that the government has committed to fund by 2016 and sets out arguments to support further expansion of graduate spaces to support Ontario's future prosperity. The position paper was transmitted to the Minister and staff of MTCU.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Capital Funding and Planning

The Ontario government re-committed to development of a ten-year infrastructure plan, beginning in 2011. MTCU, with support from the Ministry of Infrastructure, is developing a long-term capital planning process to meet the province's infrastructure needs, including those in the postsecondary sector.

Background: The 2013 budget indicated that more than \$800M is allocated over the next three years to fund 20 projects in colleges and universities. This funding had already been allocated and announced. There is no new capital funding in the budget.

The 2012 budget announced that capital funding for college and university projects would be realigned with expected construction and completion dates. Ministry staff emphasized that all projects confirmed to be funded will continue to be funded in full. The announced savings of \$28.4 million reflect only cash flow savings from anticipated delays in implementation of approved projects.

From previous decisions concerning the government's long term capital plan, MTCU did have additional allocations in future years (2015-16 and beyond). This allocation was reduced in the budget. Ministry staff indicated that there may be some of the long-term plan allocation remaining for MTCU.

The Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) began roll-out of the government's ten-year capital plan between May 2011 and July 2011. The following table shows the summary of funding announcements by program:

	Universities	Colleges
Long term capital plan	\$344,000,000	\$161,100,000
Budget Announcements	\$39,400,000*	
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp.		\$4,500,000
TOTAL	\$383,400,000	\$165,600,000

* includes \$21M announcement over 3 years at Laurentian.

The government announced a total of \$549,000,000 in funding; the universities share is 69.8 per cent.

Also, the Liberal Party platform made a commitment to build three new undergraduate campuses. As yet, no information about the location or capital funding for those projects has been announced.

On June 24, 2011, MOI released its ten-year infrastructure plan, *Building Together: Jobs & Prosperity for all Ontarians*. The plan included a statement that "any university...seeking significant provincial capital funding will be required to publish a detailed public asset management plan (AMP)." MOI intends to consult with the affected sectors on asset management planning before finalizing the requirement. COU, through the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO), will continue to monitor this issue.

Previously, in the spring of 2010, to support the development of the Ontario ten-year infrastructure plan, MTCU sent a survey to all institutions inviting them to submit information on capital projects or initiatives, including projects related to satellite campuses that would be normally eligible for funding through MTCU's Major Capital Support Program. Institutions were asked by the Ministry to put forward projects which have already received the appropriate internal consideration, support institutional mission and academic priorities, and could proceed on a timely basis in the event that funding from the Ministry was to become available.

In August 2010, COU prepared a [submission to the Ministry of Infrastructure Consultations on the 10-year Infrastructure Plan](#) (available at the hyperlink). The submission addressed the key infrastructure priorities for the sector, trends that expected to impact the use of infrastructure in the sector, and investment priorities.

Division: Policy and Analysis/Corporate Services

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Deferred Maintenance

Background: COU is preparing an advocacy report on deferred maintenance to raise awareness about the growing problem of maintaining buildings on university campuses and the implications of deferring it. The report was undertaken at the request of the Task Force on Facilities Condition Assessment (chaired by Duncan Watt, Carleton University). It emphasizes the risks of continuing to defer maintenance and outlines steps universities have taken to address the problem.

The advocacy strategy outlined in the report, initially scheduled for publication in 2013, is being updated to reflect the evolving fiscal and political context in Ontario. It will then be finalized with input from the Task Force and the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO). COU's Communications department will craft the messaging and advise on timing for the advocacy strategy prior to the report's review by Executive Heads.

Executive Heads decided that further information ought to be collected about amounts committed by universities to deferred maintenance from their own budgets and practices in other jurisdictions. To determine current spending in the sector related to deferred maintenance, COU surveyed institutions. The data has now been analyzed and forms the basis for the report to government. COU has also surveyed other provinces with the assistance of the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) Facilities Management Committee to gather information on funding practices related to deferred maintenance in other jurisdictions.

As a related point of information, CAUBO has decided this year to update its 2000 report on deferred maintenance.

Division: Policy and Analysis/Corporate Services

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Condition of University Facilities

An adjustment to the Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) was announced in Budget 2012. Budget 2013 reconfirmed the lower amount.

Background: For 2013-14, funding for the Facilities Renewal Program will remain at \$17.3 million (reduced from \$26.7 million in 2009-10 and earlier years).

In contrast to this allocation, COU's 2010 report on facilities condition (see below) finds that, to maintain our campuses in their current condition, universities would require annual expenditures of \$380.8 million.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP)

The report of the Task Force of the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO) and the Ontario Association of Physical Plant Administrators (OAPPA) highlighted the sector's deferred maintenance backlog, which reached \$1.97 billion in 2010.

Background: The 2012 FCAP report will be published in winter 2014.

The FCAP 2010 report was presented to government in March 2011 (MTCU and the Ministry of Infrastructure). Government representatives at the meeting noted that while the data was impressive, the message and urgency related to the data may not be reaching high levels of government. It was recommended that if deferred maintenance is truly a priority for the sector, a higher level, more impactful, report should be developed which clearly highlights the risks of delaying further investment and the impact it is having on health and safety, student experience, and quality of education.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2012

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Tuition Framework for 2013-14

Update: On September 16, members of the COU Advisory Group met with MTCU staff to discuss concerns related to the report, *Moving Forward on Technical Issues related to Tuition Billing and Associated Fees*. Following this meeting, a letter was sent to Minister Duguid signed by Executive Heads outlining these concerns.

The letter sets out a position that the proposed new requirements for administration of tuition are too detailed, would require unnecessary standardization across universities in Ontario, and would result in significant and ongoing losses in revenue that supports students' programs. To support this position, COU collected data from COU member universities on the revenue implications of the proposed changes.

To date, no response has been received from the government.

Background: On March 28, MTCU announced a new tuition framework for four years, from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

The new framework (like the previous framework) addresses caps on the year-over-year percentage increases to tuition rates. It regulates tuition rate increases, and thus does not directly regulate tuition revenue.

The new framework will cap increases to tuition rates as follows:

Undergraduate Arts & Science and most other programs (Category 1):

Entering students	3%
All continuing students	3%

Professional and graduate programs (Category 2):

Entering students	5%
Students registered in 2012-13 and prior years, and continuing	4% (in 2013-14 and future years until they graduate)
Continuing students under the new framework (entering in 2013-14 and later years)	5%

Overall cap:

Cap on average increase to tuition rates	3%
--	----

The 2013 budget contained indications that the government intends to proceed with changes in tuition administration. The government announced that it will introduce a fairer approach to deferral fees, ensuring that students are not asked to pay for their tuition before their OSAP funding arrives. Changes to the use of program (or flat) fees for tuition (where students are charged tuition for a full course load past a threshold

number of courses) also will be announced after consultations with institutions over the summer.

In the fall of 2012, MTCU staff conducted consultations on technical issues focused on four areas:

- Tuition payments (the timing of tuition billing, processes for deferral of payments, and consequences of missing payment deadlines);
- Program fees (where institutions charge fees equivalent to a full-time course load above a threshold number of courses – MTCU also refers to these as “flat fees”);
- Tuition billing (potential integration of tuition billing with the Ontario Tuition Grant and other student financial assistance, so that students would be billed tuition fees net of financial assistance); and
- Ancillary fees.

The technical working group meetings were attended by a working group of stakeholders including representatives from the university sector and COU.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Ontario Tuition Grants

Background: The level of the Ontario Tuition Grant (OTG) for each eligible student will increase in 2013-14 by 3% to \$1,730 (consistent with the increase allowed by the tuition framework).

Through the Technical Working Group on Tuition consultations, MTCU has given strong signals that the government would like to implement a tuition-netting scheme in which the value of the OTG is deducted from each eligible student's tuition bill. Working group members have made MTCU staff aware that implementation would require significant resources, including programming changes and time, to be fully operational.

In January 2012, the government announced the establishment of the OTG program. University students who are four years or less out of high school with an annual family income of less than \$160,000 can receive a grant of \$800 per term, to a maximum of \$1,600 per year. (In 2012-13, the OTG increased to \$840 per term or \$1680 per year, and in 2013-14, the OTG will increase again, as per above.) Students who receive financial aid OSAP are considered automatically for OTG, while non-OSAP recipient students can apply online to MTCU.

The first phase for the 2011-12 year delivered a 50% benefit commencing in January 2012 (\$800 per eligible university student) and was administered almost entirely by MTCU. Full implementation of the program delivering 100% of the benefit began in 2012-13 and relies upon universities for additional support and administration.

MTCU consulted with colleges and universities on the design and implementation of the Ontario Tuition Grant program. COU has established a working group to address implementation issues with MTCU. The working group comprises representatives of the functional areas in universities that will be affected, including registrars, student financial assistance offices, finance and institutional planners.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Student Access Guarantee (SAG)

SAG requirements for 2013-14 and impact on the Tuition Set-Aside

Background: The Ministry held a consultation on the SAG guidelines for 2013-14 with COU and College Ontario representatives on May 10, 2013. The final guidelines were released on July 17.

The SAG guidelines require universities to provide assistance to students to cover their unmet need in the OSAP assessment attributable to tuition and book costs that exceed certain thresholds. For 2013-14, the threshold for calculating the tuition and compulsory fee shortfall is \$5524 (\$6534 for co-op programs) and for books the threshold is \$1122. The tuition threshold annual increase is indexed to the maximum allowable tuition increase rate for undergraduate Arts and Science programs, while the book shortfall threshold is indexed to the CPI.

This year's SAG guidelines provide additional direction regarding levels of non-repayable funding that should be provided to students attending second-entry programs. For second-entry programs, the revised Guidelines direct institutions to meet at least 20 per cent of tuition/book shortfalls of their second entry students through non-repayable aid. Most institutions will not be affected as their expenditures already exceed this target. On average, in 2012-13, universities met 34 per cent of the value of tuition/book shortfalls of second-entry students with non-repayable aid. Previously, the SAG guidelines provided no direction on the proportion of repayable (e.g. access to a student line of credit) vs non-repayable assistance for second-entry students, but universities had been required since 2011-12 to make formal arrangements with a lender if they intended to meet their SAG obligations through repayable assistance.

As of the 2010-11 OSAP year, institutions are required to automatically provide non-repayable assistance to undergraduate (first-entry) OSAP recipients with tuition/book shortfalls, i.e., the student does not have to make a separate application. The ministry is of the view that institutions generate sufficient funds through the Tuition Set-Aside to cover their SAG obligations.

Division: Office of the Secretary to Council

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Ontario Education Number (OEN)

MTCU is moving forward with the implementation of the OEN in the postsecondary sector.

Update: MTCU has responded to COU's series of questions of privacy concerns related to the proposed collection of additional identifying information in MTCU's enrolment data collection system (the Postsecondary Financial Information System – University Statistical Enrolment Report [PFIS-USER]). A small working group is reviewing possible responses to the Ministry's proposals, because of unanswered concerns about data minimization and informed consent.

Background: Ontario universities have made great progress implementing the OEN. In the last year, over 100,000 new OENs have been issued by Ontario universities. Many universities now have OENs for over 75% of their student body.

The OEN is a student identification number that is assigned by the Ministry of Education (EDU) to elementary and secondary students across the province. The number, which is unique to every student, is used as the key identifier on a student's school records, and follows the student through his or her elementary and secondary education (and upon implementation, postsecondary education too). The OEN is a randomly assigned number, tied to stable information about the student (name, gender, date of birth). The OEN facilitates reliable records on the movement and progress of individual students through elementary and secondary school, while also protecting their privacy through anonymity and encryption, and enables highly detailed research concerning student success.

An OEN Working Group comprising registrars, institutional planners and others has been established. The Working Group has been meeting with MTCU officials since April 2011. MTCU and EDU have been supportive and created some technological tools to improve the efficiency of implementation.

Recently, MTCU has proposed the collection of additional personal information through its enrolment reporting system. One rationale given for this request is to allow MTCU to validate OENs that are reported in the grant administration system for individual students.

COU sent MTCU a series of questions in June 2013 inquiring as to whether the potential blending of or data-sharing of personal information in MTCU's OEN system and its grant administration system is relevant to universities' authority to provide additional personal information, and/or creates obligations or risks that need to be assessed.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: 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.

Update: In October, Executive Heads of universities with teacher education programs wrote to Minister Duguid requesting revocation of the decision to reduce per-student funding for teacher education programs by one-third, starting in 2015-16. To date, no response has been received from the government.

Background: The Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) continues to work with staff of MTCU and the Ministry of Education (EDU), as well as the Council on University Planning and Analysis (CUPA), to plan the restructuring of teacher education programs.

Motivated by the current oversupply of teachers, two years ago MTCU announced a reduction in funding for teacher education spaces by approximately \$7.5 million. MTCU announced that funding adjustments would take place over two years with an initial \$5 million reduction in 2011-12 and the remaining \$2.5 million in 2012-13. This reduction has been implemented. The changes announced in June 2013 are in addition to these reductions.

EDU staff indicated that the province has revised its target date for implementation of the restructured Bachelor of Education program to September 2015 (formerly September 2014).

In June 2013, the provincial government announced publicly that it will require restructuring of Bachelor of Education programs to lengthen the program and further reduce the number of entering students. Also in June, MTCU wrote to universities indicating that it would reduce per-student grants for teacher education programs starting in 2015-16 – reducing the BIU weight for the teacher education program from 2.0 to 1.5 BIUs (which, when interacting with formula fees in the operating grants means a per-student funding reduction of approximately one-third).

COU has established a working group of deans of education and institutional planners that has met several times with MTCU to address funding and implementation issues.

MTCU is meeting bilaterally with each university with a faculty of education to discuss implementation issues and, potentially, strategies for mitigation of impacts.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Applications for Fall 2013

The Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) releases monthly statistics between January 2013 and September 2013 on applications to first year undergraduate programs.

Background: OUAC released the following preliminary secondary school application statistics to the public as of September 12, 2013:

Secondary School Applicants:	
Number of first choice applicants	93,392
% change since September 2012	1.9%
Number of applications	417,679
Number of applications	4.1%

Non- Secondary School Applicants:	
Number of first choice applicants	50,239
% change since September 2012	1.3%

The deadline for students currently enrolled in an Ontario secondary school, referred to as Secondary School applicants, was January 16, 2013. Historically, 98% of total secondary school applicants submit their applications by this date.

The second group of applicants, referred to as Non-Secondary School applicants, includes all other applicants (mature students, those taking a gap year(s), and those transferring from another institution or jurisdiction). The January 16 deadline does not apply to these students; most choose to apply later in the cycle (in particular, those transferring from college or another university).

Since 2000, the number of secondary school applications has increased by 56.3% and continues a rising trend that has not faltered, even after the double cohort when there were Ontario high school graduates from both Grades 12 and 13.

More details and regular updates can be found under the "Statistics" tab at www.ouac.on.ca.

Division: OUAC

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Credit Transfer – Student Mobility and Pathways

The provincial government is seeking improvement of student mobility and credit transfer pathways in the postsecondary sector.

Background: All publicly assisted Ontario universities are members of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT). There is a [separate update on ONCAT below](#).

COU's Credit Transfer Technical Working Group (with members drawn from the Council on University Planning and Analysis, registrars, and Ministry staff) has provided advice on data and accountability for credit transfer funding, and ONCAT is moving ahead with development of data and an accountability framework.

COU's Credit Transfer Resource Group continues to discuss ways to facilitate university-to-university credit transfer.

The COU Credit Transfer Technical Working Group provided recommendations to MTCU concerning the allocation of the institutional portion of the credit transfer allocation.

In February 2011, MTCU released a credit transfer policy statement and further information about funding to support credit transfer initiatives. The government also announced that it will establish a new coordinating body, ONCAT.

MTCU is providing \$73.7M over five years for various aspects of the credit transfer initiative:

- \$23.5M for an Innovation Fund (for projects to develop new pathways, much like the recent calls for proposals by the College University Consortium Council);
- \$10.6M for a new website and the ongoing operations of the new coordinating body (ONCAT); and
- \$39.6M for annual allocations to institutions to support credit transfer.

MTCU held a roundtable discussion with Executive Heads of colleges and universities in August 2013 concerning credit transfer. Executive Heads from both sectors expressed a strong consensus that the progress being made with the leadership of ONCAT is significant. The policy directions that ONCAT has developed and the projects it is funding are leading the sector in the right direction, and improvements to student mobility are gathering momentum. Participants at the roundtable urged the Ministry to continue its funding support for ONCAT and to continue to work with ONCAT to reach its policy objectives.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Updated: Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)

Universities are participating in a new coordinating body for credit transfer.

Update: In September, 2013, ONCAT released a consultation paper concerning its priorities and proposed activities over the coming months: *Forging new pathways to improve student mobility in the province of Ontario*. The consultation paper was sent to OCAV and the Credit Transfer Resource Group for review and comment.

Background: ONCAT has now been incorporated and a board has been elected. The university members of the board are: Dominic Giroux (Laurentian) as the university sector co-chair of the board, Peter Ricketts (Carleton) and Rhonda Lenton (York). The college members are: Don Lovisa (Durham College) as the college sector co-chair, Mary Freece (Sheridan College), and Lane Trotter (Fanshawe College). The board includes ex officio members from COU, Colleges Ontario, OUAC and the colleges' application centre. The board also includes student and external members. On October 22, 2012, Glenn Craney was announced as the Founding Executive Director of ONCAT.

ONCAT will advance implementation of a province-wide credit transfer system by:

- 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);
- Expanding and improving a web portal for information for students about credit transfer ([ONTransfer](#));
- Improving transparency and access to information about transfer pathways and credit transfer;
- Supporting student success for transfer students (for example, improving graduation rates of transfer students, increasing student support services); and
- Providing professional development and best practices forums.

A pilot project to build a database of course equivalences is underway.

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.

ONCAT's budget for operating expenses in 2012-13 is almost \$1 million. The allocation for project funds was \$5.4 million in 2011-12 and \$7.8 million in 2012-13.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Teaching and Learning

Ontario universities are collaborating to share ideas and information on teaching and learning innovations to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

Background: The Council of Ontario Educational Developers (COED) convened a summit on October 18, 2013 at McMaster University: “Faculty Engagement in Educational Development” (FEED). The aim of the summit was to bring together colleagues from across Ontario to explore various models of faculty engagement and to identify barriers and enablers.

The symposium entitled *Learning Outcomes Assessment, Practically Speaking* was held on April 22 and 23, 2013. Nearly 400 delegates attended more than fifty workshops and other sessions at the very successful event. The symposium offered interactive and hands-on workshops to guide participants through the “how to” of assessing learning outcomes. Delegates included senior administrators, faculty members, and educational developers from Ontario universities and colleges, provincial government staff from across Canada, and an international roster of guest speakers who led workshops on the assessment of learning outcomes in a range of disciplines

Co-sponsors for this event included the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), and the Canadian Publishers’ Council. For more information please visit the [*Learning Outcomes Assessment, Practically Speaking*](#) website.

The first Symposium on Learning Outcomes – co-sponsored by COU, HEQCO, and the Quality Council – was held April 12 to 13, 2012 in Toronto. The three hundred delegates included senior administrators, faculty members, educational developers from Ontario universities and colleges, provincial government staff from across Canada, and an international roster of guest speakers.

During the winter of 2011-12, many universities took part in the “Back to Class” initiative. In some cases, universities employed media relations strategies to promote stories about excellence in teaching at their universities through traditional and social media. In other cases, they invited politicians from all levels of government to participate in classrooms and labs, tours of teaching and learning centres, and demonstrations of effective teaching approaches. This initiative helped to celebrate success in this area and to build awareness from both institutional and public policy perspectives about innovations in the teaching and learning experience.

COU’s report, *Beyond the Sage on the Stage: Innovative and Effective Teaching and Learning at Ontario Universities* is intended to encourage a more accurate and positive perception of teaching on Ontario campuses. The report was launched with a well-attended “Toast to Teaching Excellence” reception on April 16, 2012 at Queen’s Park. The Minister, MPPs, government officials and staff from MTCU and other ministries, as

well as stakeholders from our sector, were invited to attend this celebration of how universities are finding new ways to engage students.

An earlier report titled *Ensuring the Value of University Degrees in Ontario: A Guide to Learning Outcomes, Degree Level Expectations and the Quality Assurance Process in Ontario* was released in November 2011. The report explains how Ontario universities ensure the value and quality of their degrees. The report was circulated to government and stakeholders, and received positive media attention.

COU is developing strategies to help universities take initiative to meet their teaching and learning objectives. A Teaching and Learning Task Force has been established under the aegis of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). The Task Force will address a range of teaching and learning issues, including recommending effective practices to improve instruction, student engagement, and learning outcomes. A communications strategy is being developed to showcase exemplary teaching and learning practices at Ontario universities.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Ontario Universities Online

Update: At the roundtable concerning online learning in July 2013, MTCU indicated that it sought the establishment of a centre of excellence to support online learning, and that it will allocate \$42M over three years to support this initiative. MTCU made clear that it expected colleges and universities to collaborate closely in the new centre and in initiatives supported by the investment. Colleges Ontario (CO) and COU have established a steering committee and have developed a joint proposal to MTCU.

The directions announced by MTCU at the July roundtable on online are both consistent with and potentially overlapping with the proposed mandate and functions of the OUO. COU will be working with CO, and with the OUO Steering Committee, to ensure appropriate alignment of these initiatives.

Background: In March 2010, the provincial government announced that an online institute for the postsecondary sector would be established.

In the absence of government action (before its announcements in the summer of 2013), Executive Heads directed COU to develop a business case and governance model for the establishment of a consortium of Ontario universities. On August 28, 2012, COU hosted a one-day intensive planning session that recommended early deliverables for an online entity.

COU has begun work leading to the establishment of a new consortium, tentatively called Ontario Universities Online (OUO). Seven universities have committed staff resources to a project team to develop the business case and implementation plan leading to a new entity under the COU corporate structure. A project advisory committee, comprising representatives of all interested universities, also will be established.

The OUO Steering Committee has taken steps toward the development of the consortium, including the establishment of six working groups to pursue specific OUO goals. Working groups have been focused on student mobility, program development, learning supports for students, development supports and quality standards, metrics/baseline data and portal, and technology. Based on recommendations of the working groups, the Steering Committee will develop an implementation plan, anticipated to be completed in the fall 2013. The project led by the Steering Committee will conclude with a formal invitation to all Ontario universities to join the consortium. The new entity will include universities willing to participate as members, but will remain open to new membership. As the consortium develops, there may be opportunities for inclusion of other partners.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

International

Background: COU continues to liaise between MTCU and member institutions regarding the process for universities to apply to become “designated institutions” under Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s International Student Program (ISP). Beginning in the spring of 2014, student visas will only be issued for students who have been offered admission to an institution which has been designated by a provincial or territorial government as eligible to enroll international students.

COU continues to facilitate international delegations as well as to act as a clearing house for information and opportunities for our members. The most recent delegation was led by the Hong Kong Secretary of Education, who asked university representatives to review and consider filling out a pro forma that advertises the requirements for Hong Kong students to study abroad. The Ontario representatives agreed to bring it forward to the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) for consideration.

This delegation represents one of many that COU has hosted since the former Premier announced his desire to expand international recruitment. Since then, the Ontario government has reduced its budget for international marketing efforts and implemented a fee on non-PhD international students (as per the [International Student Recovery](#) section).

Division: Communications and Public Affairs, Policy and Analysis

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

International Student Recovery

Background: In the March 2012 budget, the government announced that, beginning in 2013-14, MTCU will reduce transfer payments to each college and university to recover \$750 for every international student (excluding PhD students). The recovery would be phased in on a cohort basis with new entering students in 2013-14. In future years, entering students and returning students from the 2013-14 cohort onwards will be included in the count of students used to calculate the recovery.

MTCU consulted about implementation details with a COU working group, comprising Council on University Planning and Analysis (CUPA) and international office representatives. Consultations focused on technical elements of the recovery including count dates, the student counting metric (for example, full-time equivalents or headcounts), the treatment of part-time students and withdrawals, the treatment of 10- and 12-month programs at the Masters' level, and the revenue envelope from which the recovery will be made.

In April 2013, MTCU released guidelines for implementation of the International Student Recovery (ISR). As announced in the 2012 budget, MTCU will reduce transfer payments to each college and university to recover \$750 for every international student (excluding PhD students) who is entering a program in Ontario in 2013-14. The 2013 budget indicated an ongoing assumption that the ISR will continue to be levied on new and continuing international students (excluding PhD students) and continue to grow.

COU has written to MTCU requesting that the ISR be based on the government's fiscal objectives, and not strictly tied to the numbers of international students. The government should determine and announce its annual target for the recovery, and allocate it among universities proportional to each university's share of non-PhD international students.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Efficiency targets

Background: The 2012 Ontario Budget announced the government's intention to reduce the operating grants of colleges and universities beginning in 2013-14. At the time of the budget announcement, MTCU indicated that the university sector reduction would be \$28M in 2013-14 and \$55.5 Min 2014-15.

On April 12, 2013, MTCU released a memo that confirmed the reduction in operating grants for 2013-14 of \$28.6M, and also set out each institution's reduction. The memo indicated that the reduction in 2014-15 will use the same method, but with a doubling of the reduction (projected to total \$58M in 2014-15).

The reduction will be allocated to enrolment-based grants, which include: The Basic Operating Grant, Graduate Expansion Grant, Undergraduate Accessibility Grant, and the Nursing Grant. To implement efficiency targets, the Basic Operating Income per Basic Income Unit (BOI per BIU) rate will be reduced in 2013-14 by 0.7%. This will translate into 0.9% reduction in grants per BIU.

MTCU stated its policy intent that the reduction should not adversely affect students, and indicated that the ministry "will work with" institutions on implementation strategies, listing several examples (such as vacancy management and collaborative purchasing). There will be a requirement to report on how each university has implemented the reduction, but details about the required reporting have not yet been released. COU will continue to advocate that reporting be minimal, and in narrative rather than in detailed financial reporting.

Division: Policy and Analysis

Updated: May 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Quality Assurance

Transition to a new Quality Assurance Framework

Update: The Quality Council and its Appraisal Committee are meeting monthly to review and approve new program proposals. The first meeting of the Audit Committee occurred in late September to consider the first Audit Reports produced under the Quality Assurance Framework. Completed Audit Reports (and Associated Summary) for Brock University and the University of Ottawa were recommended to the Quality Council for approval. Both Audit Reports and associated Summaries were approved at the October meeting of the Quality Council. The Summary Reports are available on the [Quality Council Website](#) (at the hyperlink).

Audits are scheduled this academic year at Western (November), Queen's (February) and Carleton (March).

The Third Annual Report (2012-13) of the Quality Council will be released very shortly and distributed electronically. It also will be available on the Quality Council website.

A one-day meeting of university key contacts in Quality Assurance is being planned by the Quality Council for April 2014. This meeting follows on a successful breakfast meeting that was held for this group at the 2013 Learning Outcomes event. More details will be out soon.

The Quality Council is a partner again this year in planning for a third Learning Outcomes event – tentatively scheduled for October 2014.

Background: The Quality Council and its Appraisal Committee meet monthly to review new program proposals. The Quality Council website includes decisions on new program approvals along with a brief description of the programs approved.

The Quality Assurance Framework was approved by the Executive Heads of Ontario universities in April 2010. The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance was established shortly thereafter with its first meeting in July 2010. The quality assurance processes that fell under the mandate of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies and the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee were completed by the end of June 2011. The transition of quality assurance responsibilities to the Quality Council is now complete.

Division: Quality Assurance

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: COU Reports and Symposia

Conference Board of Canada research and report: COU has provided input to a report on innovation that will update their 2003 Innovation Skills Profile as well as reflecting on the role that postsecondary education is playing in developing innovation skills. A final report will be available this winter.

Entrepreneurship report: Building on the success of the report, *Entrepreneurship at Ontario Universities: Fuelling Success*, COU is preparing a report to showcase the applied learning opportunities that are positioning students for their careers.

Going Greener Report: In June 2013, COU published the **2012 Going Greener survey report** (available at the hyperlink). The 2013 edition – COU’s fifth annual Going Greener Report – is currently being developed.

Deferred Maintenance Report: COU is developing an advocacy report to raise awareness about the growing problem of maintaining buildings on university campuses and the implications of deferring it. The report will be published in 2014 following an update to reflect the current political and fiscal climate.

David Smith Dinner: The annual Award Dinner, honouring Dalton McGuinty for his leadership in education, hosted representatives of government, business and the higher education community on October 30. The event was a great success and the speech, video and photos can be **found here on the COU website**.

2013 Symposium of the Ontario Research Chairs in Public Policy: The health- and sustainability-focused events in the symposia series entitled “Tackling Ontario’s Challenges” were held on September 24 and October 17, respectively. The series was launched on May 23 at Glendon College, York University, with a symposium on education. For information about the symposia series, visit the **Tackling Ontario’s Challenges website** (at the hyperlink).

2013 Conference of Ontario University Board Members: Building on the successful Ontario University Board Member Orientation and Training Session of November 2012, the Council of Chairs of Ontario Universities (CCOU) hosted the 2013 Conference of Ontario University Board Members on November 8 and 9. Aimed at all members of the governing boards of Ontario universities, the Conference addressed the ongoing changes and challenges in the university sector and their effects on the fiduciary duties of board members. The Conference featured His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada as a keynote speaker. **The text of His Excellency’s keynote speech** is available on the Governor General’s website.

Division: Communications and Public Affairs/Corporate Services/Office of the Secretary to Council

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Benchmarking Administrative Performance Indicators

Background: This fall, the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO) Benchmark Working Group (BWG) met with leaders of CSAO affiliates (in the areas of finance, human resources, physical plant, computing, environmental health & safety, procurement and security) to review and refine a long list of indicators and discuss ways to collaborate on benchmarking. Affiliate leaders contributed their expertise and expressed support for the initiative. The Working Group plans to have a short list of indicators to recommend to CSAO in February 2014, following further discussions with affiliates, OCAV, CUPA, the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO), and other stakeholders.

Following a May 2012 performance measurement meeting with MTCU, CSAO established the BWG, chaired by Carol McAulay (Laurentian). The objectives of the BWG are to build on internal initiatives (e.g., the Financial Health Survey) and external best practices (financial and administrative benchmarking initiatives in the broader public sector) in order to develop recommended administrative benchmark indicators for CSAO to consider for implementation. The benchmark exercise will ultimately lead to a “dashboard” or “scorecard” report as well as the collection of select micro-level indicators for internal process improvement.

Division: Corporate Services

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Collaborative Procurement

Update: The Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO) Collaborative Procurement Steering Committee has established a sector-wide Collaborative Procurement (CP) baseline and a target to be achieved by 2015. CSAO has asked the Ontario University Procurement Management Association (OUPMA) to lead the development of an implementation and reporting plan. Implementation will involve increasing the number of collaborative (multi-university) bidding processes, increasing the use of flexible contracts that allow universities to join a group purchasing arrangement after the fact, reducing off-contract purchasing, and increasing the take-up of existing CP vehicles, such as the Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace.

In October, the Ministry of Government services (MGS) shared with the sector its findings from the Ernst & Young study of price comparisons in the university and college sector. At a recent CSAO meeting, MTCU representatives noted that they were encouraged by the results of the study and were satisfied with the university sector's progress on CP to date.

The CP initiative has highlighted the need for enabling technologies to fully realize the potential benefits of CP. A multi-institutional proposal under MTCU's Productivity and Innovation Fund for e-procurement software was not, however, successful. The Steering Committee will discuss next steps on technology when it reviews OUPMA's proposed implementation plan.

Background: MGS is leading an initiative to increase collaborative procurement in the broader public sector, with targets to be achieved by 2015. Increased collaboration is designed to increase the proportion of purchasing contracts negotiated with partners (other universities, cities, school boards, etc.), leading to lower per-unit prices and lower procurement processing costs. To meet MGS's objectives, CSAO struck a steering committee chaired by Don O'Leary (Guelph) and composed of three CSAO members and three university procurement directors. The group operates with the following objectives:

- to develop collaborative procurement participation targets;
- to increase coordination across the university sector in the areas of strategic sourcing, contract management and product/process standardization; and
- to expand existing collaborative procurement capacity.

The initiative aims to build on the ongoing work led by OUPMA, a CSAO affiliate, as well as local, regional, and national collaborative efforts.

Division: Corporate Services

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Advocacy Initiatives – University Operations

Update: On behalf of CSAO, there are five operational advocacy issues underway:

- **Liability for contractors/subcontractors' health and safety:** The Ministry of Labour has recently begun holding site owners liable for the health and safety of construction contractors (including subcontractors) working on their property. In the past, contractors were solely responsible for the health and safety of their employees. Recent prosecutions have indicated that the burden of accountability is shifting to the site owner. COU is working with CSAO affiliates the Ontario Association of Physical Plant Administrators (OAPPA) and the Council of Environmental Health and Safety Officers (CEHSO) to obtain legal advice and to address the implications of this shift, including its effects on the cost and scheduling of projects.
- **Energy and emissions regulations:** The university sector is regulated by and reports to the Ministry of Energy on its energy consumption/production levels and greenhouse gas emissions. The Ministry of the Environment has proposed new regulations that would overlap (and conflict) with the regulatory framework established by the Ministry of Energy. These regulations would also require universities to purchase emission credits – an expense that operating budgets are ill-equipped to absorb. Working in collaboration with OAPPA, COU is advocating that the sector remain accountable to only one Ministry on this issue.
- **Campus policing review:** The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is undertaking a review of policing services in the province. Many universities (and one college) use Special Constables who are granted authority to enforce certain Acts in local jurisdictions. COU is working with the Ontario Association of College and University Security Administrators (OACUSA), a CSAO affiliate, to influence the review to ensure that Special Constable Programs may continue to be used effectively by universities and colleges, given a framework for appropriate training, oversight, and delegated authorities – including at satellite campuses.
- **Unpaid internships and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage:** CSAO affiliate the Council of Environmental Health and Safety Officers (CEHSO) has been engaging with MTCU to establish clarity on the framework for WSIB coverage for students engaging in unpaid internships on and off campus. CEHSO has developed an advocacy letter and will now work with COU to engage with the Ministry. CEHSO has also developed a procedure and template for use by universities and will work with COU to have a legal review undertaken to ensure due diligence for the procedure and template.
- **Regulatory framework for the payment of contractors:** Bill 69 (*The Prompt Payment Act*) is a Private Member's Bill introduced by MPP Steven Del Duca that has passed second reading with all-party support and currently awaits a date to be set for Committee consideration. The bill would establish standards for payment

schedules in the construction industry, including timely progress payments and payment in full at the completion of the contract. It would give contractors/ subcontractors the right to suspend work or terminate a contract if they do not receive their progress payments. Since many university infrastructure projects are government-funded, and government can be slow in advancing payment even after agreements have been signed, this legislation could pose a challenge for universities in their dealings with contractors. The progress of the Bill is being monitored, and, if necessary, COU will advocate to secure an exemption for universities.

Background: The university sector is subject to regulation on a wide range of operational issues, including Broader Public Sector financial directives (e.g., procurement, travel expenses, salary disclosure), health and safety regulations for workers, environmental regulations, and building codes. These issues require that CSAO and its affiliates, and in some cases other affiliates of COU, liaise with multiple government organizations. Where possible, issues are addressed by CSAO affiliates (sometimes in partnership with their college counterparts), and they are brought to CSAO/COU for action when necessary.

Division: Corporate Services

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: University Pension Plans

Sustainability challenges, responding to the Government's agenda on pension reform

Update:

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	Status
50/50 cost-sharing of current service costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial progress has been made in increasing the level of employee contributions. Some plans have already achieved 50/50. COU (through Aon Hewitt) continues to track progress. Challenges: increases in employee contributions must be negotiated through collective bargaining.
Extension of Temporary Solvency Relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Finance announced an additional extension of temporary solvency relief on October 23, 2013. COU had advocated for the extension of relief for an additional three years.
Jointly-Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP) feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having completed a draft straw model for a sector JSPP, Aon Hewitt has prepared a costing of the JSPP for a sample of universities under a baseline set of assumptions. The costing information will aid in the analysis of the viability of this option. It is now beginning to examine transition issues in its feasibility work.
Pooled Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BPS Pensions Branch (Ministry of Finance) has established a technical Working Group on Pooled Asset Management to advise on the design, governance and transition issues associated with the implementation of a new pooled asset management entity for the BPS. Membership of the group includes representation from government (Ministry of Finance), Ontario Pension Board, WSIB, COU, University of Toronto Asset Management, Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One. John Ilkiw serves as COU's representative. Their first meeting was held in June, and a second meeting in November. The Working Group's Terms of Reference have been revised and the group will now provide an interim report in the winter with a final proposal to the Minister of Finance in spring 2014.

Overview of Pension Plan Sustainability Project Initiatives	
Initiative	Status
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) Pensions Research Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCUFA is launching a research project to analyze issues around existing plans and the regulatory regime and to review options for moving forward including, for example, a sector JSPP. The project is funded by MTCU. • The project scope covers communication with OCUFA's own members as well as the "University Pension Coalition" which includes all major bargaining groups within the sector. • OCUFA is focused on research analysis of university pension data collected by COU, and continues to be interested in the availability of the most up-to-date data possible. The Pension Task Force developed data-sharing protocols with OCUFA and has released to them the data package prepared by Aon Hewitt.
MTCU Joint Working Group (JWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forum for discussion and sharing of information initiated by MTCU. • Participants include: MTCU, Ministry of Finance, COU's University Pension Plans Sustainability Task Force and representatives from OCUFA. • A first meeting of the JWG was held in June 2013 to present the straw model of a JSPP. A second meeting in September discussed the costing of the JSPP model, as well as potential governance issues that would need to be addressed in moving to a JSPP. • A third meeting is scheduled for late November that will consist of a panel discussion with Harry Arthurs, Jim Leech and representatives from CAAT.

Background: The University Pensions Task Force completed its first major milestone on its feasibility study of a sector-wide Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP). Allan Shapira, technical advisor from Aon Hewitt, and members of the COU Task Force met with the Ministry of Finance Broader Public Sector (BPS) Pensions Branch and MTCU on April 18, 2013, to present an outline of a JSPP straw model and to articulate key issues that would need to be overcome to implement such a model within the sector. The discussion also touched on the option of one or more plans joining the CAAT Plan (college sector JSPP); however, analysis of this alternative is still in the early stages. The Council of Senior Administrative Offices (CSAO) Pensions Interest Group met in July to review the cost implications of the JSPP model and begin the discussion of governance issues that would need to be resolved in implementing a JSPP.

The Task Force is mapping a communications plan for the Pension Sustainability Project which includes:

- Identifying and prioritizing stakeholders;
- Developing key messages;
- Assessing stakeholder needs and tailoring content, timing and approach;
- Identifying initial as well as ongoing communication needs by stakeholders; and
- Monitoring of stakeholders' positions and media messaging by both COU and members.

In 2012-13, CSAO's Working Group on University Pension Plans' (WGUPP) mandate on pension sustainability reflected the direction outlined in the 2012 Ontario Budget which included the following initiatives:

- consolidation of assets for investment management purposes;
- 50/50 sharing of current service costs with plan members; and
- a sector-wide JSPP.

In the 2012 budget, the government had signaled its intent to introduce framework legislation that would pool the investment management of smaller public-sector pension plans. Under this framework, management of assets could be transferred to a new entity or to an existing large public-sector fund. The former Minister of Finance's Special Advisor – BPS Pension Efficiencies, William Morneau, developed a framework for this change in consultation with stakeholders, including representatives from the university sector. In the spring of 2013, the Ministry of Finance established a Pooled Asset Management Working Group (see above chart).

The 2012 budget also indicated that the government expects single-employer plans to move to 50/50 cost-sharing of contributions between employers and plan members within five years (by 2017). Temporary solvency relief measures are offered as an incentive and further incentives may be considered. The government has indicated its willingness to support efforts to convert single-employer plans to multi-employer JSPPs.

In 2010, the government introduced a two-stage Temporary Solvency Funding Relief program. Stage One effectively provides a four-year window during which employers are not required to fund solvency deficiencies. To access the package, universities had to submit a sustainability plan to the Ministry of Finance. At the end of Stage One, plans are assessed for sustainability. Those plans demonstrating "substantial progress" are eligible to enter Stage Two. In Stage Two, universities are permitted to amortize their solvency deficits over a period of up to 10 years (rather than five). Depending on the timing of individual plans' Stage Two valuation dates, the requirement to make solvency special payments for some institutions begins as early as December 31, 2013. The size of these payments could have serious implications for university operating budgets. Since December 2012, COU has been advocating with government on behalf of the sector for an extension on the temporary solvency relief measures.

Division: Office of the President

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: OCUR – Research Matters

Update: In October, Research Matters revealed its new slate of 25 Ontario university researchers, and launched its new website and year two of its public event series.

The second year of the public lecture series will have researchers answering the question “What matters now” and through voting technology at the events, will provide an opportunity for the Research Matters five target audiences (Civil Society, Government, Business, Academic, and Students) to listen, debate and have their say.

The first free public event took place in Hamilton, at the McMaster Innovation Park on November 4. Additional public events are scheduled for:

- London, November 26, 2013, London Children’s Museum;
- Thunder Bay, March 4, 2014, Fort William Historical Park;
- GTA, April 9, 2014, McMichael Art Gallery ; and
- Kingston, April 23, 2014, Thousand Islands Cruise.

In addition, Research Matters will be bringing its highly successful “Pop-up research park” to Queen’s Park and Parliament Hill. The Queen’s Park event will be on February 26, 2014 and a date for the Parliament Hill event is currently being negotiated.

Background: In 2010, OCUR identified the need for a new approach to ensure effective delivery of its research message to multiple audiences.

Research Matters is an integrated communications strategy that includes a website (www.yourontarioresearch.ca), public events, media relations, advertising and social media (Twitter: @OntarioResearch, Facebook: www.facebook.com/YourOntarioResearch).

The campaign is guided by three major principles:

- *Public accountability and transparency* – Research Matters aims to instill in its audiences a sense of ownership and pride in Ontario university research.
- *Public engagement with research* – Research Matters will help people think about Ontario university research in new ways by showing its impact where they live, work and play.
- *Long-term commitment* – The campaign is a long-term venture, involving sustained efforts to broaden and deepen the public’s understanding – and experience – of why research matters.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: OCUR – High Performance Research Computing (HPRC)

Update: On October 16, the Tri-Councils and Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) released their consultation document, entitled *Capitalizing on Big Data: Toward a Policy Framework for Advancing Digital Scholarship in Canada*. The Tri-Councils and CFI are proposing a collective realignment of funding policies that will help promote excellence in data-management practices in agency-funded projects.

Background: Over the past decade, research undertaken at our institutions and in commercial labs has become increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure.

Given the way in which this infrastructure was funded and developed over time, often based on regional or local need, Canada has created a diffuse digital infrastructure platform. In order to better understand the issue, OCUR and other partners, such as the Ontario government, have begun to turn their attention to Canada and Ontario's future digital infrastructure needs and building a more efficient and cohesive system from the various component parts that currently exist. The speed of change in this area makes this file complex and one that will require effective partnership, evidence-based policy development, and sustained, long-term advocacy efforts.

Provincial Activity: A significant amount of work has been undertaken on this file at the provincial level in the past year. Specifically, the province has:

- commissioned an asset mapping exercise that documents the high performance computing assets (including hardware, software, and staffing and financial information) in Ontario universities, hospitals, and health research institutes;
- worked with Western University (as the lead on the CFI Major Science Initiatives – MSI) to ensure that the first period of the MSI project is funded;
- convened a Strategic Advisory Committee of local and international experts to advise in the creation of a new organization that has provisionally been called High Performance Research Compute Ontario (HPRCO). The is beginning to set out the proposed parameters of the organization, which will include both compute and data in its mandate; and
- hired outside expertise to work with the Strategic Advisory Committee on the strategic framework and governance for HPRCO, as well as to complete the process for incorporation and budgeting. These consultants also conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and influencers.

Federal Activity: Interest in the digital infrastructure file has increased at the federal level. The federal Science, Technology, and Innovation Council (STIC) has established a working group to look at the issue; CFI has hired a consultant to pull together information on the current state of digital infrastructure in Canada; and Industry Canada has indicated that they are considering what work needs to be undertaken on this file. In addition, the granting councils have signaled their intention to come forward with a policy concerning data management that will be used in the awarding of all grants (the consultation process for a data management policy has begun, as per above).

In 2012, through the leadership of the Canadian University Council of Communication and Information Officers (CUCCIO), the Leadership Council for Digital Infrastructure was created. The Council comprises members of the research community, service providers, and funding agencies. It is co-chaired by Steven Liss, Vice-President Research at Queen's University, and Jay Black, Chief Information Officer at Simon Fraser University. Its objectives are to provide a national platform for discussions among all stakeholders toward a framework for digital infrastructure and to identify, discuss, and address issues associated with providing Canadian researchers access to the tools and resources that they require to enable research within and across a wide range of disciplines.

The Council met in June to consider next steps in the development of a national framework to ensure the sustainability of Canada's digital infrastructure. The creation of this framework will include:

- an environmental scan of the current state of digital infrastructure in Canada, as well as in other jurisdictions;
- a process to ensure community engagement in defining current and future priorities; and
- a roadmap to be used to ensure that future investments are both strategic and maximized.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Accessibility – AccessibleCampus.ca

Update: In October 2013, COU successfully launched a new, bilingual website, focused on providing tools to enhance accessibility and increase mental health awareness on our campuses. Accessible Campus is a rich, one-of-a-kind resource that is available at www.accessiblecampus.ca. In the first four weeks following the launch of the website, there were over 18,000 page views recorded.

Background: AccessibleCampus.ca offers over 100 pages of accessibility-related content, including a toolkit that addresses the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) clause-by-clause. The website also includes a reference library of tip sheets and quick guides to enhance everyday accessibility; resources to support educators in creating accessible teaching environments; a series of videos featuring university faculty, staff and students, designed to improve awareness and reduce stigma about mental health on campus; and a page that will highlight key accessibility-related news and events.

Since 2008, COU has worked on several projects that were funded through the EnAbling Change Programme to assist Ontario universities in meeting compliance requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These projects, amongst others, comprise the AccessibleCampus.ca website.

- Online Customer Service Training Tool – an online training tool to assist Ontario universities in meeting the training requirement under the Accessible Customer Service Standard.
- Accessibility Toolkit – an online toolkit of resources that assist Ontario universities in meeting compliance requirements with accessibility-related standards under the AODA.
- Educators' Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit – online resources designed to assist Ontario universities meet their obligations under Section 16 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR): Training to Educators, as well as mental health-focused resources. There is a [separate update on the EAR Kit](#) below.
- Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) Student Competition – an undergraduate student competition that encourages innovative, cost-effective and practical solutions to accessibility-related barriers. There is a [separate update on the IDeA competition](#) below.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Accessibility – EnAbling Change Partnership: Educators Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit

Update: COU has made significant progress developing the remaining elements of the EAR Kit. Work on this project has been divided into three phases.

Phase 1, “General Tools,” includes tip sheets on making classrooms more accessible, a project backgrounder, and links to external resources on accessible instruction. These tools are all available on the COU website, in both English and French.

Phase 2, “Specific Tools” is currently under development. Tip sheets on accessible teaching for students with diverse disabilities have been published on COU’s new accessibility website, www.accessiblecampus.ca. An article by Dr. Michael Prince, Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy at the University of Victoria, has also been published under the title, “Advancing Accessible Teaching and Learning Environments in Ontario Universities.” Covering the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the broader context of accessibility policy, and faculty responsibilities, this article addresses university concerns about implementing legislation in the classroom. A brief video on universities and the AODA will soon be released. In addition, this spring, COU will publish articles and quick reference resources on accessible laboratories and work spaces, online instruction and off-campus field work.

Phase 3, which focuses on mental health and anti-stigma deliverables, is also underway. COU has published a series of nine informational videos on campus mental health. The videos feature the Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), faculty, staff, administrators, and students discussing mental health challenges and solutions in university environments. Interested parties can also review a list of external mental health initiatives on the new accessibility site. In addition, COU will soon finalize the text of a mental health handbook for educators, based on a similar guide published by Cornell University. Ontario’s universities will be free to use or modify the text of this document to suit their needs.

As part of this project, COU is also building several mental health resources for administrators to share with students. Ontario’s universities will soon receive customizable materials to support mental health awareness events on their campuses. In October, COU launched a new competition, Mental Health 2.0, challenging students to submit ideas about using social media to enhance mental health awareness and self-care. In addition, in partnership with the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs (OCSA), COU is working to develop an online training module for student leaders.

Background: In partnership with the University of Guelph, the University of Toronto, and York University, COU is developing a toolkit to help educators create accessible learning environments for students with disabilities. In December 2012, COU worked with the Government of Ontario to add mental health awareness and anti-stigma deliverables to the EAR Kit. All of the products associated with this project will be completed by the end of April 2014.

The EAR Kit has been developed through a highly collaborative process. Faculty members, administrators, and other experts in student accessibility and learning have all contributed to the toolkit. So far, COU has received positive feedback from both university partners and external organizations.

The Mental Health Sub-Group operates as an advisory board for this project.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Accessibility – Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) Student Competition

Update: In October 2013, the third year of the IDeA Student Competition was officially launched. This year, the competition will feature a Bonus prize for the best parasport or active living IDeA, as Ontario will host the PanAmerican and ParaPanAmerican Games in 2015. More information on the competition can be found on the [IDeA website](#) (available at the hyperlink or at www.accessiblecampus.ca/idea). COU is also working on a sustainability plan for future years of the IDeA Student Competition.

Background: In June 2013, the second Annual IDeA Student Competition came to a successful close.

The IDeA celebration event was held on May 27, 2013 at the Ontario Centres of Excellence Discovery13 Conference. The top nine finalists were profiled in the COU booth on the showroom floor and their projects garnered much interest from conference participants, who included professionals from industry, government and academia, as well as a number of important guests. Premier Kathleen Wynne visited the booth during the afternoon to meet the students and to learn about their IDeAs, and the Honourable Lt. Gov. David C. Onley prepared a video message for COU to share with the students at the awards announcement, congratulating them on their innovative designs for accessibility. As part of this year's event, each student team had the opportunity to "pitch" their IDeAs to the audience at the theatre in which the awards were presented. The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, Hon. Eric Hoskins, announced the successful candidates of the competition to a crowd of over 100 attendees, awarding the three winners with their plaques.

The top three winners were:

- **1st Place = 3D Prosthetic Hand:** A low-cost mechanical hand developed with an inexpensive EMG control platform, designed to be produced on a 3D printer. Submitted by students at Carleton University.
- **2nd Place = Harambee Project:** A variety of mobility-centered, assistive devices developed for users in rural Uganda, in order to provide them with the mobility required to participate in small business. Submitted by students at Carleton University.
- **3rd Place = Dot Navigation System:** A navigation system designed to give users feedback on obstacles in their environment and provide location-based information on command via audio. Submitted by students at Carleton University.

The Reference Group on Accessibility proposed the idea of a student competition on accessible innovative designs to encourage accessibility in the early PSE education of students in engineering and design. As a result, COU, in partnership with Western University, developed a proposal for consideration by the Ontario government. This competition was a pilot project aimed at encouraging Ontario's engineering and design students, as well as others, to develop innovative, cost-effective, and practical solutions

to accessibility-related issues in the community. Working in teams, the students were encouraged to collaborate with industry, government and community partners (including members of the disability community) to identify an accessibility-related issue, to develop a plan to address the issue, and to implement a solution, with input and guidance from academic and industry experts.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

Background: On July 1, 2011, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) was enacted into law. Compliance dates of this Regulation are staggered and allow for a gradual implementation over several years. Implementation dates can be found on the [Accessible Campus website](#) (available at the hyperlink).

In September 2010, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) released the first draft of the Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR) for public review and comment. This new proposed Regulation combined the Accessible Information and Communications Standard, Accessible Employment Standard and the Accessible Transportation Standard into a single Regulation. As has been the practice with other Standards, COU requested comment from our sector and developed a document that consolidated this feedback for government.

In February 2011, MCSS released its final draft of the IAR for a forty-five day public review period. Similar to the previous draft of this standard, COU requested comments from our member institutions and developed a document that consolidated our sectors feedback for government. Additionally, COU will continue to work with MCSS's Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) to ensure that university concerns related to the proposed Regulation are addressed.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: January 2012

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Accessibility-Related Amendments to the Ontario Building Code (OBC)

Background: It is anticipated that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will release its amendments to the OBC in the near future.

On December 24, 2012 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing began a public consultation process on proposed accessibility-related amendments to the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The consultation focused on potential updates and changes in a number of key areas, including:

- renovations;
- barrier-free path of travel (common access and circulation);
- vertical access (elevators);
- visitable suites in multi-unit residential buildings;
- adaptable design and construction;
- visual fire alarms;
- washrooms; and
- use of guidelines and resource materials.

The Sub-Group on the Built Environment, chaired by Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President, Resources & Operations, Western University, provided consolidated feedback on behalf of the Ontario university sector on these proposed amendments. Key areas that were addressed in the submission are:

- a request that the implementation of rough-ins for power door operators and visual alarms be limited to only 15% of suites of residential occupancy, as opposed to 100% of suites;
- a request that the minimum number of adult changes tables in a building be limited to one per building, as opposed to one per floor;
- a lack of cohesion between provincial and national standards, which could create the need for a specialty product in Ontario, ultimately creating an inflated market for custom products and installation; and
- a request for further clarity on the definition of “extensive renovation”.

The feedback was submitted on March 1, 2013.

On May 26, 2010, the Accessible Built Environment-Standard Development Committee submitted the Proposed Final Accessible Built Environment Standard (PFABES) to the Minister of Community and Society Services, Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, for consideration. Given the size and importance of this Standard, COU’s Reference Group on Accessibility established a Built Environment Sub-Committee and made a submission to the Public Review process on May 4, 2010.

Many of the changes suggested by COU in our May 4, 2010 Public Review submission were integrated into the PFABES that was submitted to Minister Meilleur.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Accessibility – Design of Public Spaces Standard

Background: On December 17, 2012 the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) passed the Design of Public Spaces Standards into Regulation. These standards are focused on the removal of barriers in public spaces such as trails, beach access routes and exterior paths of travel. They do not include areas that are covered by the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

On August 15, 2012, MCSS released amendments to Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The amendments include the addition of Part IV.1, Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment).

These standards are focused on the removal barriers in public spaces such as trails and beach access routes and exterior paths of travel and do not encompass areas that are covered by the OBC. The process of incorporating elements of the Built Environment that relate to the OBC is being undertaken by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Sub-Group on the Built Environment, chaired by Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President, Resources & Operations, Western University, provided consolidated feedback on behalf of the Ontario university sector on these standards. Key areas that were highlighted for clarification in the submission are:

- the definition of “new and redeveloped” with a specific request for greater clarification on the scope of what is considered “significant or substantial changes;”
- requirements for consultation; and
- exemptions for “recreational trails.”

In addition, COU asked that the Standards be streamlined, be consistent in their language, and that templates for reporting be developed. COU further noted a number of areas where there was continued potential for overlap with the OBC, such as curb cuts, and asked that the Ontario government ensure these elements are harmonized to the greatest extent possible. Lastly, COU raised concerns about the obligation to provide 4% of the total number of new off-site parking spaces as accessible spaces.

The consolidated feedback was submitted on October 1, 2012.

On May 26, 2010, the Accessible Built Environment-Standard Development Committee submitted the Proposed Final Accessible Built Environment Standard (PFABES) to the Minister of Community and Society Services, Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, for consideration. Given the size and importance of this Standard, COU’s Reference Group on Accessibility established a Built Environment Sub-Committee and made a submission to the Public Review process on May 4, 2010.

Many of the changes suggested by COU in our May 4, 2010 Public Review submission were integrated into the PFABES that was submitted to Minister Meilleur.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2012

Updated: Mental Health – Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health

Update: On November 11, the Centre brought together all Mental Health Innovation Fund (MHIF) recipients, as well as institutions that did not receive MHIF funding for a full-day, knowledge exchange event. The purpose of the event was for recipients to share information about their projects, build partnerships and create a knowledge map of resources and best practices within the PSE sector.

Background: On June 22, 2011, the Ontario government released its Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In its strategy news release, Improving Mental Health Supports for Ontario Kids and Families, the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Education, and Children and Youth Services committed to “helping more than 16,000 youth transitioning from secondary to postsecondary school by adding more mental health workers on campuses in colleges and universities.”

In September 2012, MTCU put out a Call for Proposals for the MHIF. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU), Colleges Ontario (CO), the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) and the College Student Alliance (CSA), with support from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario, submitted a successful joint proposal for the creation of a Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (C4ICMH). The Centre is intended to serve as an innovation hub for addressing the needs of students with mental health and addictions issues at postsecondary institutions across Ontario.

As a focal point for postsecondary mental health, the Centre will have three primary functions:

- 1) support for a Community of Practice – a cross-sectoral model designed to unite providers from various disciplines (educators, health, counseling, disability services) in the postsecondary education sector to share best practices and work collaboratively to improve mental health service delivery within the postsecondary sector in Ontario;
- 2) creation of a change lab for mental health innovation on campus – a centralized space in which to identify, incubate, evaluate, and disseminate new ideas and innovations mental health on campus; and
- 3) coordination of community services and expert advisors – a point of access to mental health care experts to assist with challenging clinical issues.

A new Director for the Centre, Catherine Willinsky, was hired and began work on May 6, 2013. Catherine has worked in the field of mental health for almost 20 years, beginning at CMHA National. Two additional support staff were also hired over the summer. The Centre’s Executive and Advisory Committees have been established and have begun to meet.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Updated: Aboriginal Self-Identification Project

Update: The [final report of the Aboriginal Self-Identification Project](#) was submitted to the Ontario government in March 2013; it also is available on the COU website, at the hyperlink. COU will continue to work with the Working Group on Self-Identification and MTCU to consider next steps towards implementation of a Self-ID mechanism within Ontario universities.

Background: In February 2011, as a part of its commitment to forge a stronger, more positive relationship with Ontario's Aboriginal learners, MTCU released the *Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training (PSET) Policy Framework* for Aboriginal learners' that builds on the Aboriginal Education Strategy for the K-12 system, which was released in 2007. The focus of this policy framework is on two key challenges: improving Aboriginal learners' achievements in educational settings, and closing the educational attainment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the province.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the strategic directions of this policy framework, MTCU signaled its intent to develop a targeted Postsecondary Education Performance Measures Strategy. In particular, MTCU has indicated that student self-identification policies will be developed, analyzed and evaluated in partnership with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

In the spring of 2011, MTCU provided COU with funding to undertake the Aboriginal Self-Identification Project that resulted in the following:

1. a proposed common self-identification mechanism;
2. a report concerning universities' support for the approach; and
3. the development of communications tools to be used by university administrators in building broader Aboriginal student awareness of, comfort with, and participation in self-identification exercises.

To oversee the work related to this initiative, COU established a Working Group on Aboriginal Self- Identification. This Working Group was composed of members of the Council on University Planning and Analysis (CUPA) and of the COU Reference Group on Aboriginal Education.

The project was composed of three key phases of work: exploratory, community engagement, and development of the final report. The following provides an update on COU's activity in each area.

- **Exploratory:** An environmental scan of current self-identification practices at COU member institutions was undertaken. The environmental scan also included a review of experiences in other jurisdictions and sectors.
- **Community Engagement:** COU developed engagement strategies for both the university and Aboriginal communities. In total, 26 Aboriginal community

engagements with key stakeholders were completed across Ontario, involving 505 participants. Engagement with the Ontario university community was also critical to the project.

- Development of Final Report: A final report with recommendation on approaches and tools to support Aboriginal self-identification at COU member institutions was developed and submitted to MTCU in March 2013.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Aboriginal Education Council Gathering

Update: The **Aboriginal Education Council Gathering Summary Report** has been submitted to the Ontario government and shared widely; it also is available on the COU website at the hyperlink.

Background: On November 8 and 9, 2012, COU, Colleges Ontario and Brock University held a highly successful provincial Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) Gathering at Brock University. More than 180 participants, representing over 45 postsecondary institutions in Ontario, attended the Gathering. Participants included AEC representatives from colleges, universities and Aboriginal learning institutes.

The Gathering focused on identifying promising practices, approaches, and strategies in support of Aboriginal learner success.

In April 2012, as a part of its commitment to forge a stronger, more positive relationship with Ontario's Aboriginal learners, MTCU agreed to fund a provincial gathering of AECs within publicly funded postsecondary institutions in Ontario.

The objective of the AEC Gathering was to encourage dialogue among AECs and Ontario postsecondary educational institutions, in order to identify and share promising practices, approaches, and strategies in support of Aboriginal learner success.

The themes of the AEC Gathering were:

- AEC Leadership and Community Engagement;
- Attraction, Retention, and Completion;
- Facilitating Transitions in the Post Secondary Education Sector; and
- Accountability and Reporting.

To oversee the work related to this initiative, COU established an Aboriginal Education Council Gathering Committee. This committee was composed of members of the COU Reference Group on Aboriginal Education, Colleges Ontario, Brock University, and the Indigenous Peoples Education Council.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Updated: Aboriginal Communications Campaign

Background: In January 2012, MTCU)provided funding to the COU to conduct public opinion and key informant research on communicating Aboriginal learner success at our institutions. This research identified key target audiences for a communications campaign as well as effective methods in which to reach these audiences. Following the release of the research findings, MTCU provided COU with funding to undertake a strategic communications campaign to:

- promote awareness of the success of Aboriginal learners in Ontario to the broader Aboriginal community (including parents and learners), business/industry and government, and the academic community;
- improve Aboriginal learner attraction, retention, and completion at Ontario universities by demonstrating successful transition into and from the postsecondary education system; and
- promote a positive view of, and interest in, postsecondary education within the Aboriginal community.

To oversee the work related to this initiative, COU is in the process of establishing a Working Group on Aboriginal learner success. This Working Group will be composed of members of the COU Reference Group on Aboriginal Education, the Ontario Universities' Public Affairs Council (OUPAC), the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs (OCSA), and a member from the broader university community.

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Consortium (PHCNP)

PHCNP Provincial Office

Background: The PHCNP Program hosted a one-day Faculty Forum in February, 2013 in Toronto to prepare PHCNP faculty to make necessary curriculum changes to best educate NP students for safe and competent practice, in light of the new regulations under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Canada). The Forum featured guest speakers from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the Ontario College of Pharmacy and a panel of clinical experts. It is estimated that it will take the CNO at least two years to make changes to the *Nursing Act* to remove restrictions on NP authority to prescribe most controlled drugs. The Faculty Forum event provided educators with the opportunity to engage in a discourse with regulators and field experts about getting students ready for the future of NP practice in Ontario.

Division: PHNCP

Updated: March 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Tri-partite Committee on College Stand-alone Nursing degrees

Background: MTCU has hired consultants, with input from COU and Colleges Ontario, to analyze the results of the survey on collaboration and to conduct follow-up interviews with university and college collaborative partners to assess the implications of authorizing colleges to offer stand-alone nursing degrees. The consultants will finish their work in January 2014.

MTCU established a Tri-partite Committee, with representation from COU, Colleges Ontario, MTCU and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MoHLTC) to explore whether colleges and a greater number of universities should be allowed to offer stand-alone nursing degree programs. To date the Committee developed a comprehensive survey of collaborative partnerships in order to assess the current level and nature of collaboration between university and college partners.

Division: Office of Health Sciences

Updated: September 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Preparing the Health Workforce to Care for the Aging Population

Update: Representatives of COU affiliates and stakeholders have submitted a business case to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MoHLTC) regarding measures to help prepare the health and social workforce to care for the aging population. These affiliates include the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM), the Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing (COUPN), the Ontario Council of University Programs in Rehabilitation Sciences (OCUPRS), and the Ontario Interdisciplinary Council for Aging and Health (OICAH). The business case responds to recommendations from the Sinha Report, *Living Longer, Living Well*, which is informing the government's Seniors Strategy. It is anticipated that the COU-led proposal will form part of Ontario's Seniors Strategy.

Division: Office of Health Sciences

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Updated: Clinical Education Crisis

Update: COU submitted its position paper, [Integrating Clinical Education into Ontario's Changing Healthcare System](#), to MTCU and MoHLTC in July 2013 (available at the hyperlink). The paper argues that the clinical education system for nursing, rehabilitation science and other disciplines is in a crisis due to the changing healthcare system. Measures need to be put into place to mandate clinical education across the continuum of care, and to further support schools to provide quality clinical education placements for students. The Office of Health Sciences at COU has engaged in meetings with government and stakeholders to discuss the recommendations in the paper and seek endorsement. A survey of programs and placement agencies has been developed to further quantify the degree of the shortage.

Division: Office of Health Sciences

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)

Medical Trainee Days Data

In 2010, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MoHLTC) issued new standards for the collection and reporting of Medical Trainee Days (MTD) data.

Background: The MTD data standards were developed to ensure accuracy and increase quality in the final product. Both the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario (CAHO) and the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM) expressed serious concerns with the level of granularity of detail required by the new standards and the inefficiencies involved in collecting the data.

Given that the Faculties of Medicine are responsible for placing learners in training sites, and hospitals rely on accurate MTD data in securing appropriate funding to support clinical learning environments, both have a vested interest in ensuring there is rigor to the data quality.

To resolve the issues identified, COFM Deans, CAHO and MoHLTC established a working group in September 2010 to review concerns surrounding data quality and advise the Deans of Medicine and MoHLTC with recommendations to change the process. An implementation committee was established in early 2012.

Key elements of the MTD process include:

- Universities will provide the hospitals with the initial source data for MTDs;
- The medical school would help resolve any conflicts between hospitals in its region. A total of 6 reports would be created (one report by each medical school) which would then be forwarded to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care after consultation with hospitals.

As a result of this collaborative work, all six Faculties of Medicine are working with their hospitals to develop and implement MTD pilots with their hospitals.

The Faculties of Medicine are working with MoHLTC to proceed to full implementation of the MTD data collection and reporting initiative.

Division: Office of Health Sciences

Updated: January 2013

[Return to the table of contents.](#)

Updated: Assisting Physicians in Life-Long Learning (APLL)

Update: Following an evaluation of Phase I in early 2012, the APLL Project moved into Phase II which included the further development of both the physician participant and physician coach manuals; the creation of the coach training modules; the training of an initial roster of physician coach trainees; and the pilot testing of the coach training modules on an initial roster of physician participants. Results showed that a coaching model is beneficial; however, given that the needs of the participants are so varied, a blended model of coaching and mentorship has been suggested as an alternative. The results will be compiled in several resource documents including an academic paper and a toolkit.

Background: In collaboration with its partner organizations, Continuing Professional Development-Ontario (Physicians) (CPD-O(P)), a sub-group of the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine Continuing Professional Development Committee (CPD: COFM) is pursuing a province-wide strategy to support physician learning in practice.

The APLL Project was proposed in March 2011 and envisioned a phased approach to the development, implementation and evaluation of an individualized physician lifelong learning program. The central role of the physician coach and the need to identify the attributes and skills of an effective physician learning coach were identified as key factors. The goal of Phase I of APLL, which took place from June 2011 to January 2012, was the facilitation of a new and innovative approach to learning by physicians, addressing the need for a coach-centered approach to supporting physicians in making continuing professional development both integral and more meaningful to their daily professional practice. Resources including a Physician Participant Manual and a Physician Coach Manual have been developed.

Division: Office of Health Sciences

Updated: November 2013

[Return to the Table of Contents.](#)