

Ministry of Training,  
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June 27, 2012

I am writing to follow up on the meeting of June 27, 2012. At that meeting, we stated that we would begin to engage the postsecondary education sector in a transformation process. Our Putting Students First plan, along with the 2012 Ontario Budget, indicated that our government would work with the postsecondary education sector to find efficiencies and drive innovation to improve productivity.

This summer, our government will lead two milestone initiatives. First, we are entering into the process of establishing strategic mandate agreements with institutions. This collaborative process between your institution and the government will be based on your institution's key objectives and priorities. Second, the ministry is releasing a discussion paper that will launch a consultation process about sector transformation framed within our government's vision and guiding principles for the sector, which is attached.

#### **Strategic Mandate Agreements**

We recognize the significant changes the sector has experienced over the past seven years since the beginning of Reaching Higher – for example, increases in enrolment, graduate expansion, and increases in attainment and accessibility for under-represented groups. All institutions have played an important role in advancing Ontario's postsecondary sector during this period.

In order to gain a better understanding of key objectives and ongoing innovation activities in Ontario's postsecondary institutions, and to begin the process of developing mandate agreements, we are asking each college and university to provide a brief submission identifying a proposed mandate statement and your institution's three priority objectives. Your submission (maximum eight pages) should also include your institution's vision and demonstrate how it aligns with the proposed differentiated mandate statement. The ministry will be forwarding to you a response template in the coming days that will ask you to describe for each priority objective the following:

- a. How achievement of the objective will affect your total enrolment and enrolment mix.
- b. Any distinctive advantage, strength or characteristic of your institution that makes achievement of the objective credible, likely and desirable.

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- c. The timeframe for achieving the objective, resource allocations or redirections required, and metrics to be used to measure progress towards achieving the objective.
- d. Where applicable, the innovative initiatives that your institution is pursuing to improve productivity in administration, teaching and learning associated with the objective and any associated costs and resource implications.
- e. Any public policy tools that you need to achieve the objective.
- f. How this objective correlates to one or more of the principles presented in the attached document.

Many institutions have already engaged in strategic planning to identify and plan for their key objectives. Therefore, we would appreciate receiving your submissions by **September 30, 2012**.

**Consultations on Sector Transformation**

Throughout the summer the ministry will hold a series of consultations with the sector to identify innovations that will help transform it and further enhance learning outcomes, strengthen the student experience and improve productivity. Details about this consultation and feedback process are included in the discussion paper.

We will also be working closely with the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) to identify specific data elements that the ministry does not currently collect from institutions, but which are needed to improve the government's ability to make effective evidence-based decisions. I ask that your institution work with HEQCO to ensure the necessary data is provided in the appropriate format. A memo will be sent from the ministry and HEQCO in the next 30 days that will identify a set of metrics that will help us measure quality, productivity and innovation in the postsecondary education sector.

We appreciate the extraordinary work you do to ensure our postsecondary education sector is one of the best in the world and we look forward to receiving your submissions. We also recognize the extraordinary effort this work will entail over the next number of years. We are looking forward to working with our institutions to face this challenge together.

Sincerely,



Glen Murray  
Minister

Enclosure

c: Deborah Newman  
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Harvey Weingarten  
President, Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario

## **Ontario Government's Vision and Principles for Higher Education:**

### **Vision:**

*Ontario's colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge and community engagement through teaching and research. They will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality, and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's creative economy.*

### **Principle 1: Putting Students First**

Ontario's postsecondary education sector must continue to be student focused. Support for improvements to the quality and affordability of education, and the student learning experience, are key to expanding the choices students have in content, delivery and learning models.

#### Parameters:

- Focus on student choice; improve the quality, flexibility and affordability of postsecondary education.
- Increase student mobility through removing barriers to effective credit transfer within Ontario and ensuring the recognition of Ontario credentials abroad.
- Offer students better choices in the modalities and approaches to learning through adoption of new technology and approaches to learning, and flexible course and degree structures.

### **Principle 2: Meeting the Needs of the Creative Economy**

Transformation will require a redefinition of the role of higher education to serve the foundational needs of the new creative economy, and to ensure that Ontario's postsecondary education remains internationally competitive.

#### Parameters:

- Achieve Ontario's goal of a 70 percent postsecondary attainment rate and ensure relevance to the labour market, as well as recognize that many students will aspire to start businesses rather than become the employees of others.
- Ensure that graduates have the knowledge and competencies to succeed in the workforce and reinforce the value of undergraduate liberal arts and science education as a foundation of our civil society.
- Increase engagement and partnerships between institutions and the community and where appropriate develop programs that erase the wall between the classroom and the workplace.

### **Principle 3: Focusing on Productivity, Innovation and Sustainability**

Government policy will work better with institutional goals to further encourage the conditions under which universities and colleges can adopt modern and relevant curriculum, use innovation to achieve higher levels of productivity, and are financially sustainable to reflect new economic realities.

Parameters:

- Continue to give priority to differentiation by focusing on institutional strengths and areas of excellence, and the changing needs and demands of our society.
- Strategically managing enrolment and program growth, and exploring cost efficiencies through shared or integrated services.
- Develop strategies to improve productivity through innovation in teaching, technology, infrastructure, program and degree organization, partnerships with businesses and community, and in leveraging and pooling institutional resources.