

**Submission to the Postsecondary Review**

**By the**

**Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)**



**A Strategy for Quality Education**

**November 16, 2004**

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# **A Strategy for Quality Education**

## **Introduction**

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) welcomes the opportunity to present its views to the Post Secondary Education Review. We represent over 100,000 public sector workers and of these, approximately 16,000 are employed in the post-secondary education sector.

The post-secondary education system in Ontario is presently under great stress. Nowhere is this more evident than in the daily experiences of our members in the education sector who have witnessed first-hand the deterioration of colleges and universities. This includes faculty members and support staff throughout the 24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (including professors, counselors, librarians, secretaries, childcare workers, custodial workers, shipping and receiving workers, security guards and many others). These approximately 15,000 members make up the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) CAAT group. OPSEU also represents approximately 1,000 members who work mostly as support staff in several Ontario universities.

Side by side with the 15,000 members of OPSEU who work in the colleges, there are at least another 16,000 part-time faculty and support staff who work with our full-time members on a daily basis. These workers, however, are denied the right to bargain collectively under the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA) – a travesty in Canadian labour law today. Please refer to our separate brief to the Rae Review on the issue of part-time employees of Ontario community colleges.

The Rae Review Discussion Paper highlights the importance of Ontario's system of higher education to the individual, society and the economy. It raises a number of important issues relating to the funding and design of the system. However, OPSEU has a number of concerns we feel need to be addressed. Our comments will address the themes outlined in the Discussion Paper.

## **1. Identified Trends**

There are more students seeking higher education and at the same time the economy and society are demanding a more educated citizenry. How are colleges, universities and governments responding as a result? From our perspective, we see a downgrading of quality of education and service throughout the system. Excessive use of part-time employees is part of this downgrading of quality.

We see a deterioration of the physical infrastructure and even after the SuperBuild showpieces have been built, colleges will have an unaddressed deferred maintenance of \$317 million as of March 31, 2006, according to a

recent study.<sup>1</sup> The student-teacher-staff ratios are far too high for quality education to take place and as a result our youth are getting less than they deserve.

Accessibility has to be a priority but we seem to be moving backwards on this issue; the gap is widening in participation according to class and economic status. Accountability needs to be restored in the system as a whole; decisions must not be made without community and staff input.

Public funding must be restored. We do not agree with the attitude which permeates the Discussion paper – an attitude which suggests that public funding merely perpetuates the inequality of access – that at present, we are subsidizing those who can afford to pay. If public support for higher education mainly benefits the middle class, then the answer is to challenge accessibility, not to make it a “user pays” system. Federal cash transfers (adjusted for inflation and population growth) are 50% lower than they were 10 years ago. From 1990 – 2001 fees have risen almost 170%. Law, medicine and dentistry have risen 313%, 447% and 552% respectively.

The share of colleges operating costs paid by tuition increased from 13% in the mid-1970s to 30% today. In the university sector, the share increased from 15% to nearly 45%. The federal government and the provincial government should both be trying to find ways to properly fund the postsecondary education sector. The policy trend throughout Canada is similar – provincial spending has declined and responsibility for funding education has been offloaded onto students and their families.

Free public postsecondary education (as in Sweden and Cuba) is a better way to go than Income Contingent Loans Repayment Schemes (as in places like Australia). Some of these “trends” need to be turned around so that quality education prevails.

## **2. The Importance of Higher Education**

The public benefits of higher education are substantial – best estimates in the Discussion Paper point to a *social rate of return* at between 7 – 10 %. This appears to be a very good investment. Human Resources Development Canada forecasted that by this year, 2004, more than 70% of new jobs would require some form of postsecondary education. There are definitely private benefits to higher education for individuals, but “post tax, real private return” ultimately benefits society as well. We do not like the prevailing attitude that “if the individual benefits, then the individual should be prepared to pay”.

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<sup>1</sup> “Future College Capacity Issues Resulting from the Double Cohort and Other Demographic Considerations”, a report by KPMG to the Administrative Services Coordinating Committee of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, November, 2000

### **3. Accessibility**

Clearly, there is tremendous inequality of access to higher education in Ontario. The fact that students from low-income families are about half as likely to attend university as those from high-income families is an indictment of our system. Similarly, where only 7% of Aboriginal peoples between 25 and 64 report having a university degree and only 11% of persons with disabilities in Ontario have a university degree, there is much to be done to address the inequities in accessibility. Francophone students have special concerns – lack of programs in French, the expense of translated materials, and other concerns. Northern students want to make sure programs are provided in their communities; travel to other centres is prohibitive for many students.

As we have discussed, affordability has a major influence on access. So too, do issues such as proximity to your home and relevance to students' cultural heritage, especially for Aboriginal students. In our view, the issue of accessibility is crucial and we need an immediate strategy to increase participation of groups experiencing barriers to accessibility.

We join the Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliated unions in calling for the eventual elimination of tuition for all Ontario post-secondary students.

### **4. Quality**

#### **How do we measure quality?**

Jerry White, University of Western Ontario professor and author of "Voices from the Classroom"<sup>2</sup> has stated very clearly:

***"... the measurement of quality [of education] has been recognized as a very complex issue... To measure quality requires the use of impressions, understandings and observations of those who deliver the programs"***

He cites two previous studies (in 1985 and 1995) designed to determine the quality of education in the community college system. In 1985 the Instructional Assignment Review Committee heard from hundreds of randomly selected members from the Ontario college faculties. The Committee reported that the majority of college faculty felt the quality of education had declined between 1980 and 1985, for the following reasons:

- a) College enrolment had increased over the period of study, resulting in overcrowded classrooms;

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<sup>2</sup> (York University Centre for Research on Work and Society Working Paper Series No. 22), p.16

- b) To accommodate more students in the classroom, individuals required to operate technical equipment were not given appropriate training;
- c) Consultations between student and teacher were also limited, because faculty faced more students seeking assistance;
- d) Increased enrolment led to pressure to reduce the number of assignments and tests given, and faculty were also pressured to pursue multiple choice testing as opposed to essay formula. Faculty believed this would lead to a deficiency in communication skills.

College faculty therefore believed that the quality of education was already eroding by 1985.

In 1996, the Advisory Panel on the Future Directions for Postsecondary Education (Ministry of Education and Training), received public submissions and met with concerned groups throughout Ontario and confirmed the results of the previous study, reporting that,

***“...without significant change in the way the [postsecondary] sector was evolving and the way it is resourced, its quality and accessibility will be undermined.”***

Jerry White’s survey conducted among 532 faculty was even more rigorous. His findings are reflected in the charts below.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Percentage of responses</b>
Increase in class size	Over 78% reported that class sizes had increased 47.4 % reported an increase of more than 20%
Increase in number of students faculty teach	46.7% reported an increase of more than 20%
Changes in class size	85.9% reported declining quality due to increases in class sizes
Contact time with students outside classroom	56.5% experienced decreased contact time with students
Changes in the number of teaching weeks affecting quality of curriculum	71% of faculty thought quality negatively affected
Elimination of courses and effect on quality	Almost 73% of faculty found these changes in curriculum hurt programs
Effect of self-taught material on quality of program	Of those affected, 61% perceived the move to self-directed learning hurt quality of their program
Changes in workload in an average week	88% of faculty reported an increase in the workload of an average week
Level of stress	78% of faculty noted their level of stress had increased over last five years
Morale at college	Over 86% of faculty reported a decline in morale at their college over past five years
Fewer full-time faculty	Almost 81% of faculty reported employing fewer full-time faculty negatively affected quality of education at their college
Changes in quality of education	68.4% felt the overall quality of education declined over last five years

**How to improve the quality?**

When faculty were asked how could the quality of education be improved, the following responses were elicited:

- 91% of those

## **Quality and the colleges**

The past decade has seen a serious erosion of the quality of education delivered in Ontario's community colleges. Continued funding cuts have contributed to this erosion of quality and it has manifested itself in many ways.

### **Reductions in faculty and support staff**

From 1987 – 2002, faculty decreased by at least 23% while total student numbers went up by 43% (according to ACAATO)<sup>3</sup>. In OPSEU we actually believe these figures are low. As well, reductions in Counsellors and Librarians would increase the reductions in faculty.

Support staff increased by less than 1% while the number of students went up by 43% (1987 – 2002)

### **Fragmentation of work.**

There is an excessive use of part-time employees (including faculty and support staff). Numbers of part-time employees in colleges outnumber full-time workers. Current figures put the number at 16,000 part-time workers compared to 14,000 full-time employees of the colleges.

Part-time workers, partial load instructors and sessionals are doing the job of full-time faculty members. Compared to full-time faculty, some part-time faculty are paid about 25-30 cents on the dollar, they have no benefits and no job security. People who have not completed the necessary qualifications are teaching part-time. They are more vulnerable to human rights abuses and other forms of exploitation simply because they do not have the same bargaining rights as full-time employees. It is unfortunate that the perception in a major centre like Toronto, is as follows:

***“If you happen to be walking the halls of the college in early September, you are hired on the spot!”*** (Toronto professor)

Part-time workers excluded under the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA) do not have access to negotiated professional development, do not have a workload formula to protect against exploitation, and do not have space or time to assist students outside of the classroom. Part-time workers in support staff jobs (who work 24 hours or less) are similarly exploited. In recent weeks, at one college 20 full-time support staff positions were cut. How many part-time workers will be brought in to replace them?

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Recommendations in the HRDC sponsored study in 2000 (“Human Resource Requirements for Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology”)<sup>4</sup> included the commitment to, “...**support mentoring programs ... develop joint recruitment initiatives that... realize efficiencies... are based on a fair funding formula... consider non-traditional forms of advertising and recruitment strategies... support diversity in hiring practices...**” What happened to these recommendations?

### **Erosion of instructional hours**

The erosion of instructional hours in the college system has meant a 25% reduction in hours and a 12% reduction in weeks per semester. In many college programs, instructional hours have been reduced from 24 to 18 hours. In some it has been a reduction from 27 to 18 hours.

There has been a significant decrease in overall instructional hours. Except in programs like the Registered Nursing programs (and other programs which have external bodies determining the hours), most programs have faced a decline in total hours of about 25%. This is in addition to the 12% reduction in weeks. An overall increase in class sizes results in hands-on activities being replaced by lectures even when lectures are completely inappropriate to the content.

### **Increased student-teacher ratios.**

According to the HRDC /ACAATO Study on Human Resource Requirements for Ontario Colleges, 2001, the student-teacher ratio at that time was estimated at 1:22. We need to conduct more research into the student – teacher – staff ratio in the college system today. The consequence of a higher ratio is the inability to recognize retention concerns in time to address them. ESL/FSL students and students with special needs are particularly affected by increased ratios, as are students with disabilities, single parents and aboriginal students.

### **“Phantom hours”**

Students are paying for hours when they are not getting any instruction. No real instruction takes place and yet these are funded hours of instruction. This means that the dollars that the province invests in the classroom are not being spent in the classroom at all. Some examples include an increase in “independent learning” where students are paying for four hours, but only getting three hours of actual instruction. The “phantom hours” occur when students are required to meet together without an instructor or where there is only a lab monitor to supervise their activities in a lab or similar environment. There is a lot more practice time and unsupervised lab time. Work historically called “homework” is now placed on the timetable to mask the reduction in hours.

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<sup>4</sup> ACAATO and HRDC, 2000

## **Length of semester**

The amount of teaching provided to students has decreased as the length of the semester has been shortened and the number of instructional hours in a week has also declined.

The majority of programs have been reduced from 16 weeks to 14 weeks (a 12% reduction overall), making it extremely difficult for faculty to provide the same quality as before.

## **Reduction of hours**

In some crucial areas, such as English and French, hours per week have been reduced from 4 or 5 hours down to 2 or 3 hours. For example, English 101 at Fanshawe College has gone from 5 hours to 4 hours to 3 hours and is now down to 2 hours a week of class instruction and 1 hour on the computer.

## **Other shifts**

As class sizes have grown, there has been a movement away from applied education, the main reason why colleges have proven to be such a successful experiment in education.

There has been a transfer of work away from faculty and increased exploitation of support staff in many instances. Support staff have been assigned to labs and told very clearly they are not to be “teaching”, even though the situation often requires them to carry out exactly the same functions as the faculty members. In addition, they are not provided with any time for preparation and no access to Professional Development. This kind of situation does not foster collegial respect at all.

Inappropriate methods of evaluation are being encouraged in order to save money. In some instances, college management will say 40% of your evaluation should be done through multiple-choice testing – a decision which is financially driven instead of pedagogically driven.

## **Cuts to programs and services impact on both access and equity**

The quality of various programs has suffered as certain services, such as on-site child care, have been cancelled. Cancellation of on-site child care has adversely affected Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. The on-site centres serve as a valuable learning tool for ECE and provide highly desirable childcare for students and staff.

Arbitrary program decisions have been made because colleges are requiring extremely high contributions towards overhead. Despite value to the community

and the economy, some programs have been eliminated because they cannot meet the percentage of the contribution. Where once 5% was the goal for a contribution, now 20% or more is required. The consequence is the cancellation of programs that do not reach the goal, forcing students to either make less appropriate choices, travel to another college, or live away from home. Programs for the developmentally challenged, programs such as Women into Trades and Technology and Labour Studies are all worthwhile programs, but they have been eliminated because there are no profits to be made from those who take them.

The system has witnessed a decline in the number of counselors and librarians within the colleges, affecting services previously available to students throughout the system. We have seen an increase in special needs students in recent years as colleges have opened up opportunities for them, a very positive development. However, the colleges are now cutting back on counselling services at a time when they are needed more than ever. Each counsellor has to deal with a greater number of students than ever before.

Librarians have been cut and the result has been a decline in professional expertise to assist students and to purchase appropriate books for the college libraries. In some cases, the Registrar or some other staff member has become the person responsible for purchasing books for the library. Overall, the number of librarians in the college system has gone from 55 to 30 and some colleges have no professional librarians at all.

There appears to be a loss of mandate of the colleges. It should be remembered that the colleges were never intended to be a second tier of universities. They were set up as institutions of “applied” learning. When we face huge increases in the size of classes, for example, we lose the meaning of “applied” or hands-on learning.

### **Workload**

College full-time faculty are experiencing extremely heavy workloads at present. Many teachers are leaving the college system because it is being restructured to deliver courses in ways that they believe downgrade quality.

### **Quality and the universities**

Our members in the university sector are concentrated mostly among support staff. There is no separate mention of the importance of support staff to the running of universities. In the Overview of Postsecondary Education, there are projections of new faculty needed for Ontario’s universities in the next 6 years, but no mention of support staff at all. We call for the following:

1. Whenever administrators and faculty are hired, this must be matched by the hiring of support staff, including clerical support, technical support, custodial and maintenance.
2. In our view, this should be one to one when universities are hiring faculty and support. Every staffing group is as important to the running of a university and if there is not this kind of co-dependency and collaboration, quality suffers enormously.

Hiring more full-time support relieves pressure on existing full-time members. Members are having to work more overtime and are under greater stress when the university does not hire enough full-time staff. As well, more and more of the load is transferred from support onto academic staff.

Quality is our foremost concern. Funding alone will not guarantee quality; we must make sure the system is structured to ensure quality education in both the college system and the universities.

#### **5. Collaboration and integration between colleges and universities.**

The issues of specialization, coordination and collaboration within and between institutions needs to be looked at carefully. Combining some university and college programs may be beneficial to students. However, we want safeguards built in so that these combined programs don't simply become "cash cows" for the colleges and universities. For example, when the RN program went from 3 years to 4 years (2 years at college and 2 years at university) all four years were then charged at the level of university tuition. This has restricted access and excluded many women from attending RN programs.

The combined college/university degree programs have siphoned money away from other existing programs because the colleges have not received new money for the degree programs. CAAT Academic members are also concerned about the possibility of college teachers being forced out if they do not have PhDs or Masters Degrees.

If universities are encouraged to specialize, and become "differentiated", OPSEU has some concerns. If each university is specializing in certain areas, the union is concerned about limiting creativity and flexibility in being able to offer new, innovative programs. Already at Ryerson, certain programs have been "bled dry" (in the words of one member there) at the expense of others. For example, programs like Journalism, Radio Television Arts, etc which have been traditionally well-funded, have been cut back – and a great deal of support is being channeled into Business and Engineering at the expense of others.

#### **6. Government funding**

Specialized programs offered at only one or two universities mean more students have to live away from home, increasing the need for student assistance and creating more long term student debt.

To begin with, we are concerned about the following kinds of statements regarding government funding of higher education:

***“...the framework must achieve a fair and reasonable balance between public and private funding sources. Heavy reliance on public funding makes higher education vulnerable to funding downturns stemming from political changes and competing fiscal needs, such as health care”.***

***“Most provincial spending on higher education is in the form of operating grants to institutions that tend to benefit individuals from higher-income families the most since they are more likely to attend.”***

The Discussion Paper showed throughout how important education is to the economy, the society and the individual. In the above comments, there seems to be an attack on public support for public education.

First, we do not believe that because higher education is vulnerable to funding downturns due to political changes or competing fiscal needs that this is an excuse for any government to turn its back on its responsibility for public funding. Commitment to funding higher education is definitely a political decision and considering the crisis we are in at present, this government needs to significantly increase its share.

The second quote appears to blame unequal access to our postsecondary education system on public funding. Students from lower-income families would definitely be more likely to attend university or college if tuition was free.

This appears to be a deliberate attempt to steer citizens away from support for public funding for public education – and closer to a belief that individuals should pay or at least “pay their share”.

### **Colleges and funding**

Students are carrying the burden in Ontario right now. In 1991/2 tuition fees were at 22% of operating revenue and by 2000/01 it was 41% of operating revenue. Federal cash transfers have fallen by almost a third since 1994/5.

Provincial government grants are down to below 40% of total revenues for postsecondary education. ACAATO (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology) pointed to a shortfall of \$80 million in operating funds for Ontario in

2004/2005 and predicted an additional \$362 million in funding needed by 2007, starting with the 2005 provincial budget.<sup>5</sup>

### **Universities and funding**

Ontario university budgets suffered a cumulative loss of approximately \$1.8 billion under the Harris/Eves Ontario Conservative government.<sup>6</sup>

As the Discussion Paper points out, provincial grants are down, tuition fees are up. Tuition fees should not be the burden of the students who come to our institutions. This is where we differ from our university administrators who fought against the tuition freeze brought in by the Liberal government.

In the current financial climate, universities are becoming places for the elite to send their children. Working class families, families of colour, and poorer immigrant and refugee families do not have equal access to our postsecondary institutions under the current funding scheme.

### **Other “fees”**

It is crucial that this government puts a stop to the skyrocketing charges under “ancillary fees” (reportedly over \$950 per year in one institution). The freeze on tuition fees only opened the door for many institutions to increase ancillary and other fees.

Clearly, it is time for an injection of funds by this government to support our public postsecondary education and improve the quality, accessibility and accountability in the system. At the same time this government should continue the tuition freeze, regulate and reduce tuition and work towards eliminating tuition fees for Ontario students, as Sweden and Cuba have done.

## **7. Decline in Accountability**

No matter how much money is poured into the postsecondary education system today, unless our publicly funded institutions are held publicly accountable for their spending decisions, the system will fail to meet our expectations.

Although the Discussion paper refers to “a number of mechanisms intended to promote good governance and accountability”<sup>7</sup> in the Ontario postsecondary education system, we have some major concerns with the current system of accountability.

## **8. Accountability in the Colleges**

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<sup>5</sup> ACAATO News Release

<sup>6</sup> Ontario Federation of Labour submission to the Rae Review

<sup>7</sup> Discussion paper, p. 27

Autonomy has put more control in the hands of college presidents who are abusing this autonomy. College presidents have become the province's highest paid fundraisers. No longer do college presidents pursue excellence. As they pursue charitable dollars and government dollars, they have less and less time with students and no longer manage the college. The average wage for Presidents increased by 16% in 2003 and now stands at approximately \$195,000.<sup>8</sup>

Under the Ontario Conservatives, changes to the College Charter meant that although individual Boards were given more autonomy, the reality is that autonomy has instead been given to the CEOs, the college Presidents.

### **Boards of Governors**

Historically, in the Ontario community college system, each college had an appointed board and appointments were made by a provincial body known as the Council of Regents. After a report by Walter Pitman in 1986, the Peterson government added four governors to be elected internally at each college to the 12 external, appointed governors. The internal governors represented faculty, support staff, students and administrative staff. The president of the college, an ex-officio member of the Board, brought the total number of Board members to 17.

Once Boards of Governors exercised considerable control, their activity revolved around budgets and they were engaged in discussions of program review. All of this has changed and can be traced back to the following:

### **Guidelines for Governors**

Governors were assisted in the performance of their duties by a publication known as "Guidelines for Governors". The original edition in 1972 was later updated in 1983 and again in the early nineties. It was a collaborative publication of the Ministry of Education and Training, the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, and the Ontario Council of Regents.

### **The John Carver model**

In the mid-nineties many college Boards ceased to use the Guidelines in practice and adopted a model of governance based on the American author, John Carver. This has meant:

- A greater concentration of power in the hands of the college president.
- A filtering of information from within the college and from the community (e.g. Advisory Committee Reports) before it reaches Board members.

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<sup>8</sup> Public Disclosure Act, Ontario 2003

- Less budgetary scrutiny by the Board.
- Exorbitant pay raises for presidents and senior administrators.
- Less meaningful input to Board decisions by the community and from college staff.
- A more closed college system (e.g. the current president of Fanshawe College was given the job by the Board which never publicly advertised the job).

### **Community linkages**

Community was once seen as a source of information to guide the formation and revision of programs. They are now seen as a source of charitable dollars. Advisory committees once reported directly through the Board of Governors and now they report only to the administration – when they meet at all.

Similarly, equity and diversity concerns have been diminished. There has been little or no attention paid to hiring practices in general. Whereas once there had been strict guidelines for Board membership to ensure that members reflected the community served by the college, this concern is no longer addressed.

Where once all colleges had Labour Governors appointed through the Ontario Federation of Labour to each Board, this requirement was removed by the Ontario Conservatives.

### **Governance and financial decisions within the college system.**

Changes in the governance structure have determined a major shift in contribution to overhead. It is an expectation that each college program contributes to the general cost of administration or “overhead”. The expectation has shifted from what was 5 – 10% to 30 to 35% in most programs and talk of 45% in some. This shift has resulted in loss of quality.

Management has increased their own salaries at rates that far exceed the averages for the workplace or for managers in the civil service. They have increased their use of consultants and hired managers in higher proportion to front-line employee groups.

Internal members on the Boards of Governors have lost their ability to participate in the evaluation of presidents. We recommend changes to the governance structures to allow internal governors to play the full role granted them under the previous Liberal government.

The Guidelines for Governors must be updated and their use mandated to ensure a more open, accountable and community-based system of governance.

We have consistently called on Ontario governments for more funding to the colleges. However, what is crucial to note is that funding alone cannot fix the system. It has to be funding based on the principles of quality and accountability.

### **A Consultative model.**

It is time to return to a collegial model of operating within the postsecondary education system. For example, with past Liberal governments, the college unions were invited to participate in many program reviews, committees, and major visioning exercises, such as Vision 2000. The Ontario Conservatives cut themselves off from front-line workers and ignored their concerns, exacerbating an already strained relationship. There needs to be a commitment to increased participation at the provincial level for front-line workers in the college and university system.

### **9. Accountability in the Universities**

In 2001 the Provincial Auditor observed that funding for universities was not linked to specific government objectives for higher education.

On the question of accountability, what universities do with funding when they do get it is of great concern to our members. How universities spend their dollars should form part of the comprehensive review. For example, Ryerson University wants to have a Business building with an address on Bay Street, but one has to question whether this is the best use of a substantial amount of the university's money.

On the other hand, universities have been influenced by the direction of certain governments. In 2003, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives highlighted the way the Ontario Conservatives strove to align universities more closely with the government's economic development agenda.

***“The government has used the levers of targeted funding to steer the direction of university education towards a greater emphasis on vocational training and away from the concept of higher education providing students with the ability to think critically and acquire broad-based knowledge which has both social and economic value.”<sup>9</sup>***

Although the universities do have Boards of Governors responsible for governance and management, university funding tied too closely to corporate interests and “market influences” can distort educational aims and undermine academic freedom.

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<sup>9</sup> (“Missing Pieces IV” May, 2003, p. 61)

Decisions in recent years around university spending have also distorted the structures of the institutions. Fundraising has become almost like an institution within every institution. In order for universities to raise the funds they need to survive, they now have to set up a new infrastructure for that activity, a new bureaucracy to run their fundraising campaigns. As well, it influences the hiring process. When interviewing for Chairs of Programs, for instance, it is important to look at their connections to the corporate sector. The more effort that goes into this fundraising activity, the more it takes away from support for students.

Clearly we need to look at the question of governance and accountability throughout the system.

## **10. Other issues:**

### **Privatization threats**

Corporate influence is greater in colleges and universities as a result of a shortfall in the funding necessary to deliver quality education. On the one hand, throughout their history the colleges have relied on strong support from local corporations for the practical aspects of their programs. On the other hand, there have been moves towards greater private sector control in recent years. When the Ontario Conservatives brought in SuperBuild in 2000, it was designed to encourage greater reliance on private sector financing. The Ontario government committed just over \$981 million to infrastructure projects in Ontario's colleges and universities, but this was less than half of what was required for the SuperBuild projects to be completed. The program was designed as follows:

***“The Ontario SuperBuild Corporation works together with public and private sector partners to set priorities and create innovative capital investment, privatization, and commercialization proposals to respond to our province’s growing infrastructure needs.”<sup>10</sup>***

These infrastructure projects became another example of public-private partnerships (P3s), or as some might say, public subsidies for corporate profits.

Similarly, privatized food, bookstores, security guards and other contracted out services have replaced services previously in the hands of some colleges. Although some of the profits go back into college revenue, private corporations take away substantial profits from these operations.

There is also a major issue if government training money is channeled into private corporations and private trainers instead of the public system.

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<sup>10</sup> (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca//superbuild/english/background/index/html>)

## **Conclusion**

OPSEU is concerned that this government may decide to divest its responsibility for public postsecondary education; if you divest from education, quality declines. If you place the burden on students, this exacerbates equity issues. Who can afford the \$7,000 college dental hygiene program or the \$11,000 Sheridan College Animation program? Who can afford the exorbitant costs of a Law degree or MBA at the University of Toronto? Who can afford the “ancillary” fees and “additional materials” fees at various colleges and universities (e.g. at Fanshawe College where the first year Music Industry Arts program fees are \$3155, and the “additional materials” cost is \$2,723)? If you turn over education to the private sector, you have corporations determining the curriculum. Similarly, if you allow private colleges to spring up all over the province and divert public funds, you are undermining public post-secondary education.

Clearly we need solutions which are based on increased public funding of public education. This funding, however, must be tied to improving the quality of our postsecondary education system. Part of improving quality rests with correcting some of the injustices in the system, in particular the injustice faced by college part-time employees, currently denied the right to free collective bargaining in the province of Ontario. Funding must also be tied to accountability; how our public dollars are spent is an issue for all Ontarians, but in particular, front-line employees must be consulted.

Our members who work in the colleges and universities throughout this province are tremendously proud of the work they do on behalf of public education. We will continue to do our part in ensuring the viability of this system. The Ontario government must now commit to rebuilding an affordable, accessible and high quality postsecondary education system that benefits all Ontarians.

## **Summary of OPSEU Recommendations**

### **Quality:**

- Change the CCBA to allow part time and sessional employees collective bargaining rights.
- Restore the levels of staffing required to restore quality education in our universities and colleges – and this includes support staff as well as faculty.
- Restore the hours of instruction and establish a provincial standard.
- Restore remedial education services.
- Provide libraries with sufficient funds to develop collections and staffing levels appropriate to the programs offered in each college.
- Restore student: counselor ratios and ensure sufficient special needs counseling at every college.
- Require that the in-school portion of apprenticeship training take place in the colleges.
- Ensure the involvement of faculty selected representatives on all bodies that make academic decisions.

### **Accountability:**

- Make all financial records available to the public.
- Change the legislation to include universities under Freedom of Information legislation.
- Require the Provincial Auditor to conduct a “for value audit” annually.
- Establish a Post-Secondary Council modeled on the committee principles in the OHSA ensuring a balance of power between Colleges and universities and between workers and managers.

### **Funding:**

- Ensure sufficient funding to restore quality.
- Develop safeguards to restore the overhead contribution guidelines in colleges.
- Provide stable funding for apprenticeship, upgrading and literacy teaching.
- Establish corridor funding for rural and Francophone colleges.
- Provide sufficient funding to provide for necessary equipment renewal.
- Address the issue of deferred maintenance in universities and colleges.

### **Accessibility:**

- Create an institute with the mandate to assess college and universities equivalencies as well as international credentials.

- Build a quality system to ensure that the accessibility of designated groups is worth the additional sacrifices they must make.
- Reject the income contingent plans that are being considered.
- Recognize that the benefits of post-secondary education are greatest for the province and develop a loan grant system to reject this reality.
- Along with the Ontario Federation of Labour we support the eventual elimination of tuition.