

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

*Re-imagining the link between
learning and labour*

MaRS

OUSA

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance

ABOUT OUSA

OUSA represents the interests of over 140,000 professional and undergraduate, full-time and part-time university students at seven institutions across Ontario. Our vision is for an accessible, affordable, accountable and high quality post-secondary education in Ontario. To achieve this vision we've come together to develop solutions to challenges facing higher education, build broad consensus for our policy options, and lobby government to implement them.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Public concern over the employability of youth has reached pandemic levels. Over the last several years, whole storehouses of ink have been spilled exploring the challenges facing a “lost generation” of highly educated, jobless youth, struggling under the yoke of student debt and low wages. Over time, this public concern has given rise to public doubt over the value of sending a generation of youth to post-secondary education.

This narrative has had a significant impact on government policy. Facing an immediate reality of unhappy unemployed youth and their unhappy parents, the government took immediate action, committing \$295 million to a Youth Jobs Strategy. Students support this investment and believe it will help a number of young Ontarians find employment.

However, immediacy tends to limit the ability of public policy to get to the heart of a particular problem. Youth unemployment is a complex problem that calls for a complex solution. The employability of a person is impacted by many parts of their lived experience: education, previous work-experiences and expectations all play a role in determining whether someone gets a job. A holistic employment strategy will require interventions in all these areas.

With the government having taken an important first step in confronting youth unemployment, OUSA believes that the time is ripe for a discussion on what a holistic youth employment strategy might look like. Many challenges facing youth in the labour market have been growing for decades now and will not be solved overnight. This makes it more important than ever that long-term thinking on youth employment begin now. If students, governments and educators can decide what Ontario’s labour force should look like ten years from now, we can begin building that future.

Youth Employment: Re-imagining the link between learning and labour is OUSA’s vision for a long-term youth employment strategy. It reflects several fundamental beliefs shared by students:

- That the jobs of the future should be accessible to those from all socio-economic backgrounds;
- That students should graduate post-secondary education with some work experience, skills and the critical thinking and analytical ability to confront the challenges of the future;
- That students should be provided the opportunity and training to be entrepreneurial in their thinking, and;
- That employers must be prevented from taking advantage of student unemployment vis-à-vis the provision of unpaid work-experiences.

Enclosed are OUSA’s recommendations stemming from those beliefs. These recommendations are intended as a starting point to a deeper, more holistic discussion on issues facing today’s graduating youth.

Equalizing Access to University is Equalizing Access to Jobs

The link between educational attainment and employment outcomes is quite clear: in Ontario, the 16% youth unemployment rate drops to 10% when high school students and graduates are excluded, only 3% higher than the general rate of unemployment. It is also worth noting that Ontarians with more education have always had better employment outcomes, both in times of economic growth and also during recessions. In 2012, unemployment rates for those without a high school diploma were 10 per cent, while college graduates posted a 5.7 per cent unemployment rate, and university graduates a 5.3 per cent unemployment rate.

Of most concern is the clear relationship between unemployment rates and underrepresentation in postsecondary education. The Youth Jobs Strategy has rightly identified Aboriginal Ontarians, Ontarians with disabilities, and low-income Ontarians amongst those experiencing higher unemployment rates. These same groups have significantly lower university

participation rates than the general population

While it is true that colleges are doing better at attracting underrepresented groups than universities, this does not mean that further work on university access is unnecessary. Long-term employment outcomes are better and more stable for university graduates than college graduates, and as such, we must ensure that all Ontarians willing and qualified to access university-level education have the opportunity to do so.

RECOMMENDATION: INVEST IN EARLY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

- The Ontario government should recognize early outreach as a key component in a holistic access strategy for post-secondary education, and look to harmonize and expand efforts to achieve this end;
- The Ontario government should commit to giving every secondary school student the option of visiting a college or university campus as part of the grade 9 or 10 curriculum;
- The Ontario government should continue to increase funding for the Pathways to Education Canada program, with an eye to expanding it to other communities in the province;
- The Ontario government should work with colleges and universities to implement a broad range of community-based early outreach programs that provide exposure to post-secondary options and offer multifaceted support for youth from underrepresented groups.

Work-Integrated Learning is the Best Skills-Training Plan

Unemployment rates for youth and recent graduates have always been higher than for the general population. Furthermore, entry into the labour market has always been difficult for recent post-secondary graduates, but in recent years this

difficulty has increased. This is partially due to the fact that poor economic conditions have kept older workers in the workplace for longer, while the role of the employer in workplace training has shrunk dramatically over time.

Very few policy interventions adequately address these two challenges. In many ways, they represent a catch-22: youth need skills and experience to compete in a more experienced workforce, but they are also less likely to get that training from their employer. Almost by default, the expectation to train young workers has shifted to post-secondary institutions, including universities who have not previously considered “job-training” as part of their mission.

Work-integrated learning has the potential to have a positive impact on student employment outcomes post-graduation, as it has been demonstrated to have significant benefits to both students and employers alike. In Ontario, 82 per cent of employers who offered work-integrated learning offered postgraduate employment to a former co-op student or intern. Furthermore, students who had a work-integrated learning experience during their studies earned between \$2-3 more an hour than those who had not.

However, it also has benefits to post-secondary institutions. Work-integrated learning allows an institution to blend theory and practice, retaining their ability to teach in a manner consistent with their mission while simultaneously expanding that mission to encompass new experiences for students.

RECOMMENDATION: EXPAND WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

STRATEGY ONE: CREATE INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS TO HELP MORE OF THEM UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGY TWO: CREATE NEW FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO PROMPT GREATER EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

- Funding to enhance career skills training and job placement activities for all students;
- A fund for universities to subsidize co-op or paid internships in key growth areas;
- Funding to grow work-integrated opportunities in disciplines that do not traditionally offer it;
- Funding to expand undergraduate research assistantships and awards.

RECOMMENDATION: RE-LAUNCH AN EXPANDED AND ENHANCED WORK-STUDY PROGRAM, PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH PRACTICAL WORK-EXPERIENCE ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

The work-study program provided students with employment opportunities of the kind least likely to have a negative impact on their academic performance, while also providing them with experience that contributed to employability upon graduation. The government should re-introduce funds to expand work-study opportunities ON Ontario campuses.

RECOMMENDATION: EMPOWER STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO MAKE MORE INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Publish more detailed results from Ontario's Graduate Employment Survey, to help students and their families make decisions about post-secondary that address both their academic and employment interests.

Entrepreneurship Promotion in Higher Education is an Important Opportunity

As youth have found increasing difficulty accessing the labour market in recent years, there has been a

increased interest in entrepreneurship as a potential solution to part of the youth employment problem, as well as to boost Ontario's economic output as a whole. Often heard in these discussions is the desire for university graduates to be job creators, rather than job seekers, as well as for graduates to leave university with both a credential and a company. OUSA believes that expanding entrepreneurship should be part of the Youth Jobs Strategy. In particular, OUSA believes that Ontario lags other jurisdictions in terms of building a holistic approach that provides a broad number of students with opportunities to access entrepreneurship.

RECOMMENDATION: ONTARIO'S UNIVERSITIES SHOULD STRIVE TO INTRODUCE MORE STUDENTS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

RECOMMENDATION: THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE NEW INCENTIVES FOR UNIVERSITIES TO CREATE AN ECOSYSTEM OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES

RECOMMENDATION: THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE NEW SUPPORT-BASED INITIATIVES FOR STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS

High Youth Unemployment Must Give Rise to Protections for Young Workers

Increasing concern about the proliferation of unpaid internships has led to a dynamic where all internships are eyed with some suspicion. This is unfortunate, as a properly structured internship should have a positive impact on students' learning, as well as potentially their employment outcomes. Students have a number of concerns about the increase in unpaid internships.

The first concern is that unpaid internships run contrary to principles of good work-integrated learning. A high quality work-integrated learning experience is one where the student, the student's institution, and the internship placement site work together to ensure the experience balances student

learning and contribution to the workplace, and that the learning from the experience is sufficient to justify its value. Unfortunately for many students in Ontario, many internships fall significantly short of this balance.

The second concern is that unpaid internships disadvantage students from equity-seeking groups. In instances where internships may have become necessary to break into an industry, students from low-income groups may be shut out due to an inability to take unpaid work, or an unwillingness to go into debt to finance the opportunity.

To address student's concerns about unpaid internships, the government should:

RECOMMENDATION: AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT TO INCLUDE PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN WORK-EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

Strategy One: proactively enforce the Employment Standards Act, penalizing all employers offering illegal unpaid internships. The existing Employment Standards Act regulations provide a fairly clear definition of what constitutes paid work, and under which conditions someone in training can go unpaid. Better enforcement of the existing regulations should help to reverse the trend towards more unpaid internships.

Strategy Two: Amend the employment standards act to include protections for students in work-integrated learning environments. While students believe that there are certain circumstances where it is legitimate for training to go unpaid, the lack of protection for students under the employment standards act can lead to students carrying out long-term, full time work at the benefit of an employer without being paid. Students believe that the ESA should apply to postsecondary institutions, so that students doing work that should be paid are compensated.

INTRODUCTION

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Much has been made of the province's higher-than-usual youth unemployment rate. In its 2013 budget, the Government of Ontario rightly identified that youth unemployment reached historic levels in the recent recession, and committed \$295 million to help youth better integrate into the province's labour market.¹ Students strongly support this investment and believe that it will greatly help struggling youth in today's difficult economy. The Province's recent investment of \$195 million over two years in a wage subsidy for youth through the Employment Ontario offices is an excellent step in addressing the barriers faced by some youth in today's labour market. However, if the Province is truly serious about meaningfully reducing youth unemployment, the funds provided through the Youth Employment Strategy should not be the only steps taken.

Youth unemployment in Ontario is a complex problem with deep social and economic roots. As such, it will take more than just money to truly address the situation. There are many types of youth in Ontario who are unemployed for a variety of reasons. A recent university graduate will face very different challenges associated with unemployment than a student who did not complete high school. The supports a recent university graduate needs are highly different from that of a student without a high school diploma. OUSA believes that the Province must expand the scope of the Youth Employment Strategy beyond the boundaries provided by current funds and implement a more holistic plan.

High youth unemployment is a symptom of two separate, but related problems. The first relates to the alignment of our labour market needs and the skills of our graduates. While it used to be true that recent university graduates were virtually assured a job, this has not been true for quite some time, with recent post-secondary graduates still posting a 10.7 per cent unemployment rate.² The structure of our labour market has changed dramatically, and post-secondary graduates need more assistance than ever transitioning into it.

The second problem relates to the social inequities that manifest themselves in unemployment. Aboriginal Ontarians, recent immigrants, visible minorities and students with disabilities all have higher levels of unemployment than the provincial average. Educational attainment intersects this issue significantly; youth with less education post significantly higher unemployment rates. While more Ontarians are pursuing post-secondary education than ever before, this progress has not been reflected in the university access rates of marginalized communities. Increasing university participation rates for youth from marginalized backgrounds must be a cornerstone of any real plan to reduce youth unemployment.

OUSA strongly believes that care should be taken not to confuse these two problems. In many ways, separate strategies and tools will need to be developed to truly confront them.

It must also be recognized that unemployment is not the only problem faced by youth in the labour force. Youth entrepreneurship has been a growing area of interest for both universities and governments alike. Many youth with innovative ideas do not have ready access to the training and skills required to start businesses, making more government support of such initiatives important. While there is little evidence that entrepreneurship will meaningfully impact youth unemployment rates in the short term, a more entrepreneurial workforce has the potential to pay positive economic dividends in the future, making it an important piece of a holistic youth employment strategy.

Another problem faced by youth in the modern labour market is the ability of employers to hire students to unpaid, contract positions. This is a hugely troubling development for recent graduates, generating a considerable amount of media attention. Though very little is known about the problem, public anxiety over these positions demands an increased level of government attention. Care must be taken to both preserve opportunity for students and ensure that

workers are protected. A plan to address unpaid internships is also a necessary component of a youth unemployment strategy.

This submission outlines OUSA's vision for a holistic youth employment strategy; one that will confront the issue of youth unemployment, support youth entrepreneurs and protect students from unpaid internships. It will be divided into four chapters, with recommendations at the end of each.

CHAPTER 1: POOR ACCESSIBILITY TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

When employment is discussed in the media, it is usually questioned whether post-secondary institutions are doing enough to prepare young people for the demands of the 21st century workforce. It is often completely missed that youth unemployment is oftentimes the direct result of non-participation in post-secondary education. Ontario's 16 per cent youth unemployment rate drops to just over 10 per cent when high school students and graduates are excluded - just 3 per cent above the general Canadian rate of unemployment.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the relationship between educational attainment and youth unemployment has been remarkably consistent over time. In times of recession, unemployment for everyone rises; in times of economic growth, unemployment falls. However, those with more education have consistently had better employment outcomes.

Post-secondary education drastically improves labour market outcomes over the course of a graduate's lifetime. As evidenced in Figure 2, those who dropped out of high school faced a lifetime

unemployment rate of 10 per cent, while post-secondary graduates faced unemployment rates of roughly 5 per cent. Historical data shows that the tendency for post-secondary graduates to post lower rates of unemployment has remained remarkably consistent since 1990. In fact, the severe impact of the 2008 recession on low-skilled manufacturing and service jobs appears to have exacerbated this relationship.³

The recent Youth Employment Strategy, announced by the Wynne government in 2013, rightfully targeted funding to Ontario's marginalized communities, highlighting their higher rates of youth unemployment. However, evidence points to a glaring, obvious and inconvenient reality: the unemployment rates of marginalized youth are high precisely because these youth attend post-secondary at a reduced rate, and in particular university, which is becoming increasingly important in the modern labour market. Evidence demonstrates that the higher unemployment rates posted by Ontario's marginalized communities are directly correlated to lower rates of participation in post-secondary

FIGURE 1: ONTARIO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 1990-2012⁴

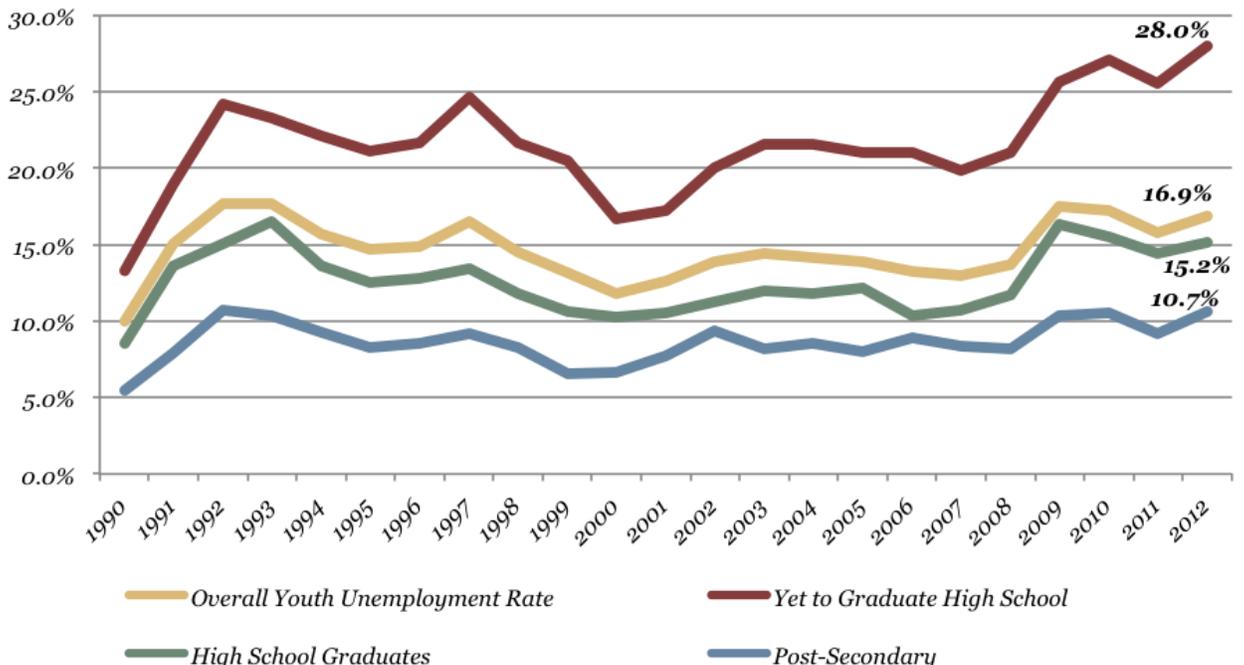


FIGURE 2: ONTARIO UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AGES 25 AND OVER, 2012⁵

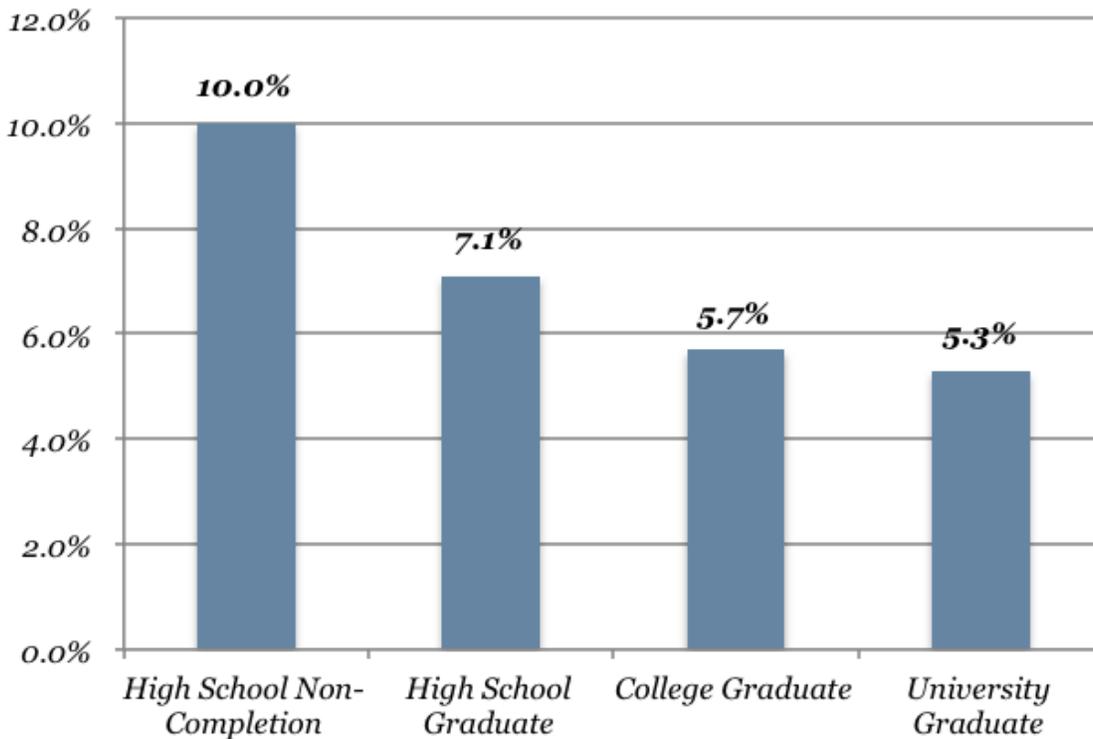
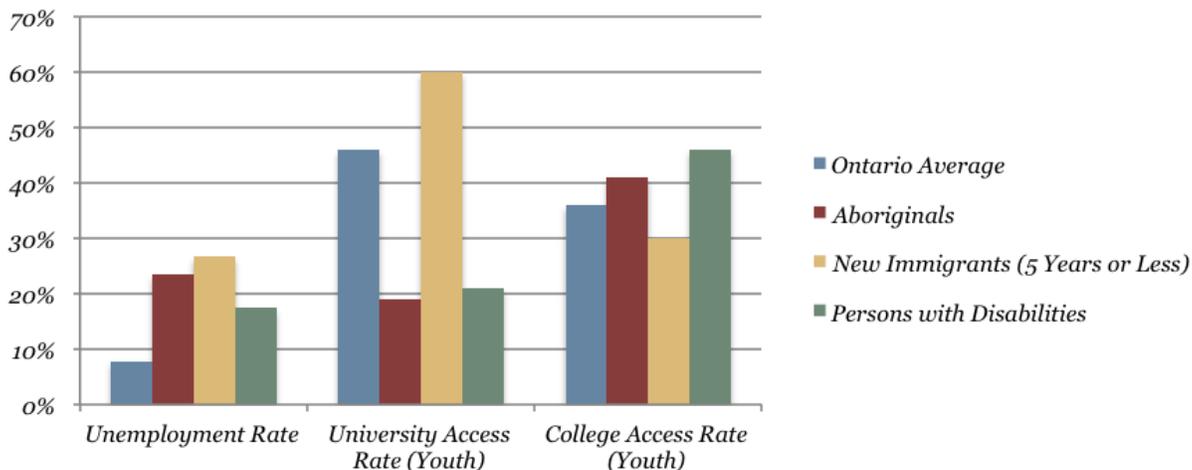


FIGURE 3: UNEMPLOYMENT AND POST-SECONDARY PARTICIPATION RATES FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES⁶



education. For example:

- Aboriginal youth attend university at less than half the general participation rate and post unemployment rates of 23.5 per cent;
- Ontarians with disabilities attend university at just over half of the general participation rate and post unemployment rates of 18 per cent; and
- University participation rates for those with family incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year are approximately 10 per cent lower than the regular Ontario rate.⁷

Comparing the unemployment rates, as well as youth participation rates from Statistics Canada’s Youth in Transition Survey (YITS), it becomes immediately obvious that colleges are doing a much better job of attracting students from under-represented backgrounds than universities. In fact, youth from underrepresented backgrounds attend colleges at rates slightly higher than the Ontario average. However, historical data provides reason to believe

that settling for a system where students from marginalized backgrounds attend college primarily will not boost the long-term employment prospects of these students.

This is because university degrees tend to provide better long-term labour market outcomes than college diplomas.

As can be seen in Figure 4, Ontarians with university degrees tend to be more employed than those with other educational attainments. However, those results refer to the overall population. When examining youth specifically (measured by the Labour Force Survey as between the ages of 15-24 with post-secondary credentials), graduates with less than a Bachelor’s degree tend to have a slightly higher employment rate. This trend has held mostly true over the long term, during the relative economic prosperity of the late 1990s and early 2000s, as well as during times of recession. On the surface, it would appear that youth graduates of college and other non-degree post-secondary programs do better at the outset of their working lives.

FIGURE 4: EMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ONTARIANS AGED 15-24

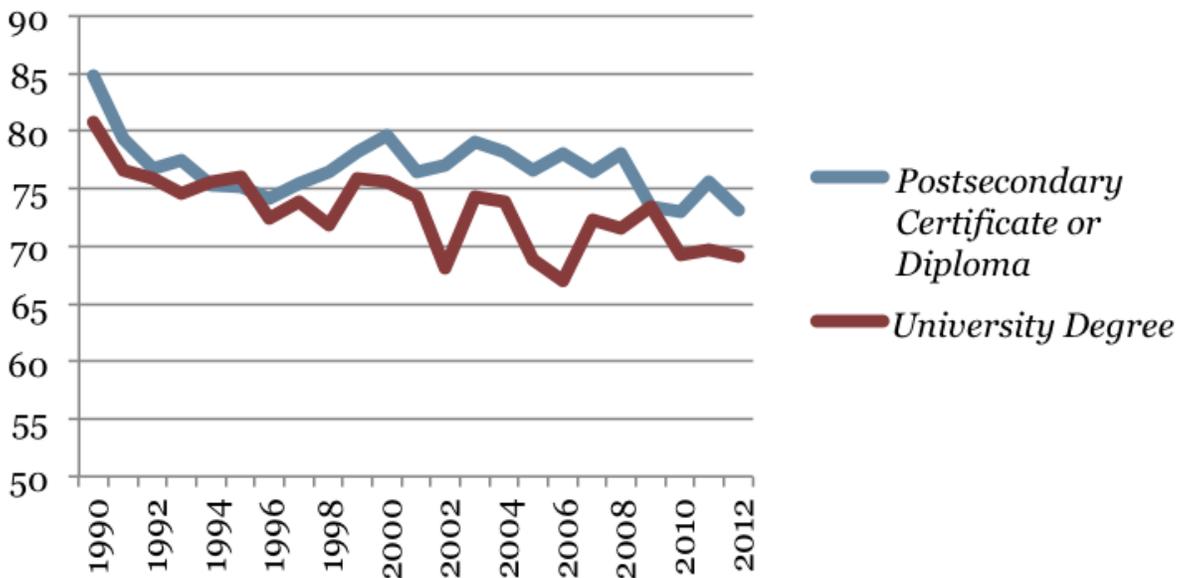
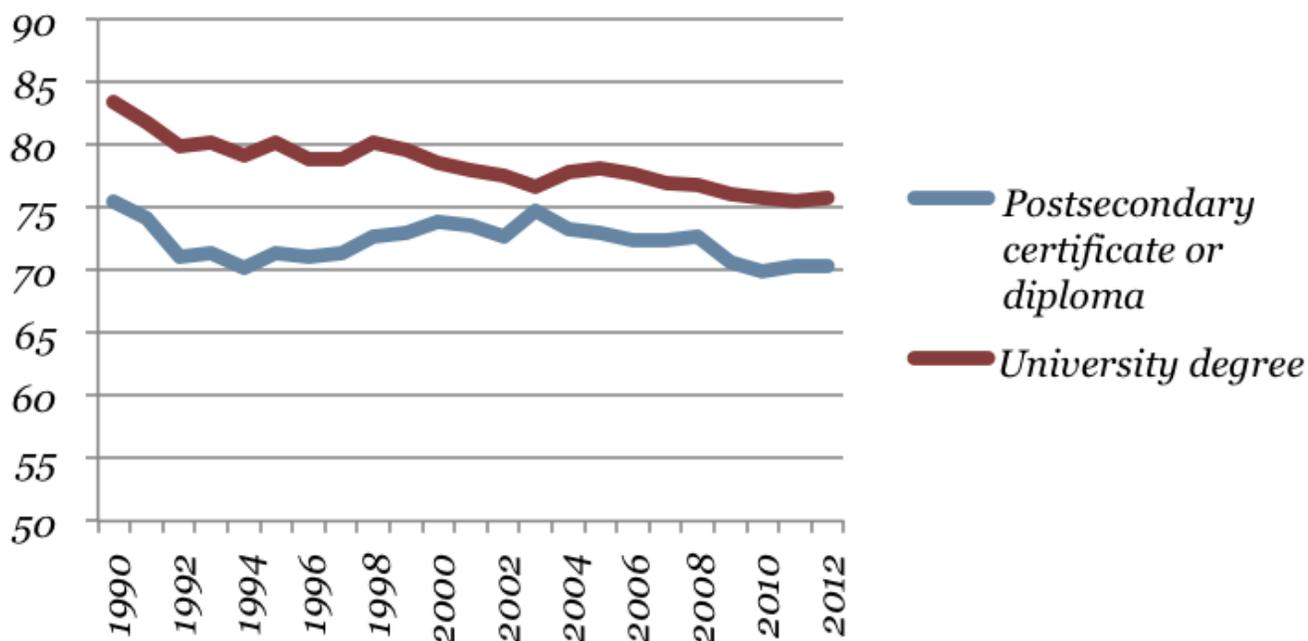


FIGURE 5: EMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 25 AND OVER



However, if one examines the non-youth population in the survey results, things look very different. Above the age of 25, those with a university degree consistently have both higher employment and lower unemployment rates than those with college. Clearly, the employment premium on a degree has held up over time, through both recessionary valleys and expansionary peaks in the economic cycle. Curiously, during times of economic hardship, the advantage provided to those with degrees appears to increase relative to those with a college diploma or certificate. In a recent study of precarious employment published by McMaster University and the United Way, those with university degrees were more likely to have stable and secure employment situations.⁸ The skills of a university graduate are valuable precisely because they are not tied to a specific industry; given the unpredictability of the current labour force, it is imperative that Ontario enhances access to university degree programs.

marginalized communities is not simply a way to boost employment prospects for groups that have been typically under-represented in Ontario’s labour force; it is a long-term solution tailored to the diverse needs of all Ontarians.

RECOMMENDATION: INVEST IN EARLY OUTREACH

Early outreach programs are one of the most valuable strategies for improving participation rates in post-secondary studies. Early outreach is the engagement of youth in a dialogue about the benefits and opportunities of higher education, and the provision of support for students to succeed in reaching and persisting through their program of study. The time at which support is provided is vital, given, as mentioned earlier, that nearly half of youth decide to attend PSE before grade nine.⁹ Moreover, factors that develop throughout childhood and adolescence, including grades, home environment, and career aspirations have a bearing on the decision to pursue higher education.¹⁰ Indeed, early deciders

Bolstering access to university for Ontario’s

are more likely to have savings for PSE and are less likely to drop out of post-secondary programs.¹¹ Early outreach can facilitate participation in PSE by encouraging good study habits, a positive attitude towards education, appropriate course selection, and essential information about programs and financial assistance.¹² Community- and school-based early outreach initiatives have both demonstrated recent success in increasing participation rates among many underrepresented groups.¹³

STRATEGY ONE: VISITS TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL

In general, there are two types of early outreach programs in Ontario. The first type consists of one-time events, usually designed to bring secondary school aged or younger students to university and college campuses, and enable them to gain early awareness and familiarity with the institutional environment. This can take the form of single day events, or longer visits to campus. These programs are valuable in that they increase awareness of post-secondary options, and help to disseminate information about student financial assistance, application processes, programs, and the benefits of post-secondary education. Evidence suggests that promotional events that bring students to campuses help them feel that PSE is a realistic goal and encourage them to spend more time thinking about their post-secondary aspirations.¹⁴ Many focus group participants, particularly those from rural and northern locations, cited an early campus visit as a key reason why they later chose to attend a particular post-secondary institution. A low-income student described her first time on a university campus as an “opening up of my whole world – it demystified the image I had in my head of university and made it seem possible.”¹⁵ As another rural student explained, “In grade seven I got to go to McMaster’s campus, and that’s why I came to McMaster, but only two people in my elementary school got to go.”¹⁶

While one-time initiatives seem to have some positive impacts on post-secondary participation, there are

some concerns regarding their implementation. Often participation in science fairs or competitions on university and college campuses is based on merit, and may attract students who already are planning to attend university. Opportunities to attend these events are limited, and again may be reserved for one or two students in a class, students that are already judged to have the greatest likelihood of attending post-secondary education.

Students believe that provisions should be made for every secondary school student to visit a college and a university campus in grade 9 or 10. While some students already visit post-secondary campuses, the opportunity to familiarize oneself with a post-secondary environment and receive information directly from post-secondary students and faculty should be made more broadly available. Ontario colleges and universities could create a day in which the institutions provide campus tours, classroom experiences, and information on application processes and financial assistance.

STRATEGY TWO: EXPAND COMMUNITY MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

A second type of early outreach involves long-term mentorship programs. In contrast to one-time events, these programs generally aim to remediate a perceived educational deficit, and thus specifically target educationally disadvantaged groups.¹⁷ These programs tend to include many different components intended to address multiple barriers that youth from low-income and first generation groups often face to accessing post-secondary education. This may include financial incentives to participate in the program, mentoring, tutoring, parental involvement and the opportunity to visit campuses.¹⁸ A key recommendation of the 2005 report on PSE by the Honourable Bob Rae was to increase the presence of early outreach in elementary schools in order to facilitate an early discussion of, and interest in higher education.¹⁹ As one rural student who did not benefit from early outreach stated, “I feel like the early outreach programs would be extremely beneficial for

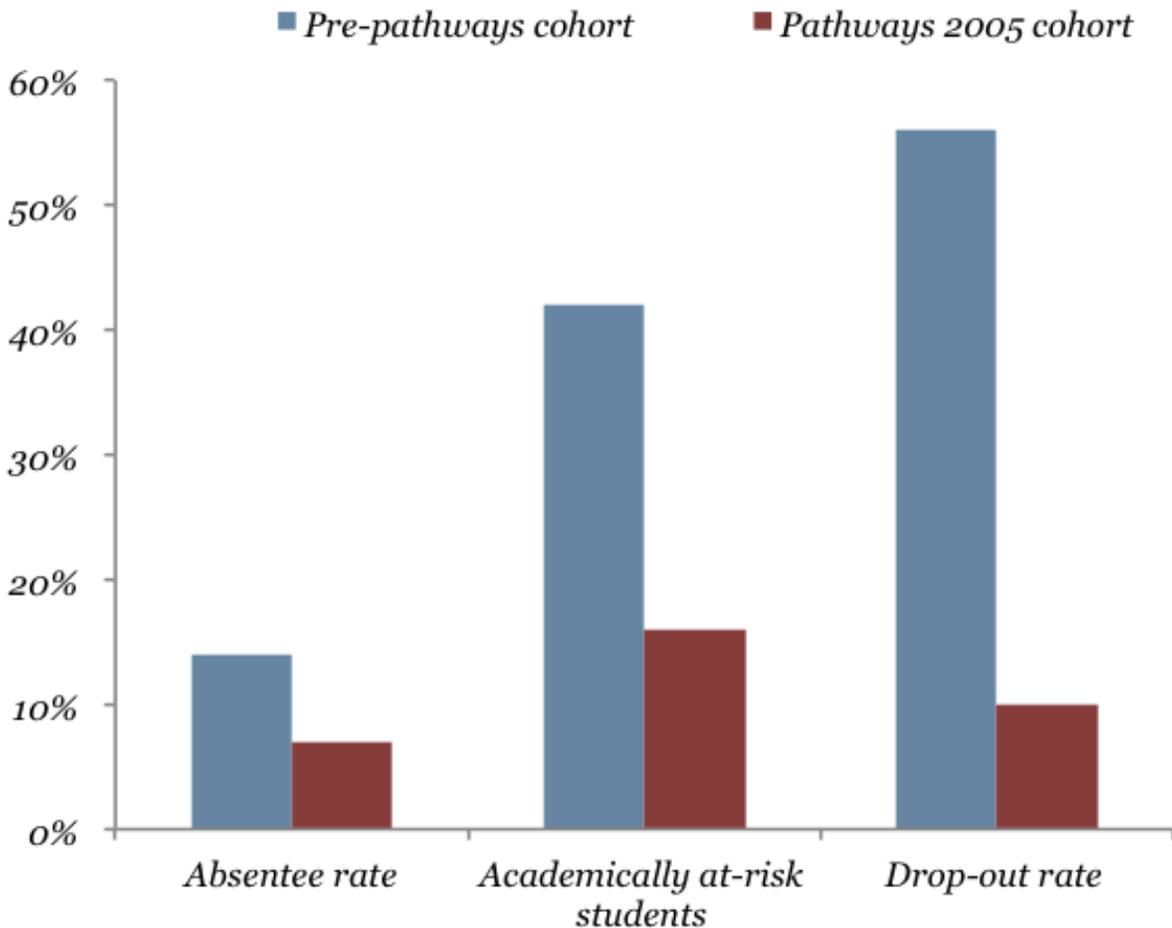
a lot of people...they were pushing career planning courses, but it was like we were supposed to jump straight from secondary school to a career, and they didn't give us a bridge."²⁰ Because these programs specifically target students who are considered at-risk of dropping out of school early or not continuing their education, and also because they involve a long-term, sustained support mechanism, they are considered one of the most effective ways to improve post-secondary participation rates.^{21,22}

In *Paving the Way to Understanding Education*, Patricia Gandara overviews early outreach initiatives in the United States, describing the components

present in the most successful programs as follows:²³

- A primary person who monitors and guides the student over time;
- Good instruction coupled with challenging curriculum that is carefully tailored to the students' learning needs;
- Longer term interventions, as the longer students participate in a program, the more benefits they report;
- Cultural awareness of students' backgrounds;
- Positive peer support, as students are more likely to succeed when a peer group provides academic, social and emotional support; and

FIGURE 6: PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION RESULTS IN REGENT'S PARK, 2005



- Financial assistance and incentives, since for many low-income students who identify post-secondary education as a goal, scholarships and grants may be essential to realizing that goal.

Probably the most well-known early outreach program in Ontario is the Pathways to Education Canada program, which started in the Regent Park area of Toronto. Thanks to funding from both the provincial and federal governments, the program has since spread to other neighbourhoods and cities across Ontario and Canada. The Pathways to Education model is based on four pillars: tutoring, mentoring, counselling, and financing. Participants receive immediate financing in the form of bus tickets and meal vouchers to encourage students to stay in school. In addition, students who advance through the program earn funds that can be put towards their post-secondary schooling. The program also partners with existing community organizations to strengthen and coordinate support for students.

Since the Regent Park program was implemented in 2001, it has reduced local secondary school dropout rates from 56 per cent to 10 per cent, and increased college or university enrolment of graduates four-fold.²⁴ Pathways has also decreased student absenteeism and the proportion of students deemed “at risk”²⁵ of dropping out, as shown in Figure 6.²⁶ In a third-party evaluation of the program, the Boston Consulting Group estimated that the Regent Park Pathways program provided:²⁷

- a return on investment of \$25 for every dollar invested;
- a net present value to society of \$50,000 for every student enrolled;
- a cumulative lifetime benefit to society of \$400,000 for each graduate.

Given the evidence of the tremendous success early outreach programs can have on PSE access, students ask that the provincial government provide funding and support for community-based early outreach initiatives across Ontario, either through

community organizations, such as Pathways to Education Canada, or public institutions. As a result of the considerable success of the Pathways to Education program, students recommend first that the provincial government prioritize the continued expansion of this specific program across Ontario and use its framework as an outline when developing a long-term approach to early outreach. Currently, in Ontario, Pathways exists only in Toronto, Kitchener, Hamilton and Ottawa. There are many other areas of the province that could benefit from the kinds of support that Pathways offers.

Students across Ontario were excited when it was announced that the Government of Ontario had taken the extraordinary step of ensuring that funding for its highly successful Pathways to Education Canada program is guaranteed on a permanent basis.²⁸ It must be recognized however, that early outreach must be expanded beyond the boundaries of the Pathways to Education program. Universities and colleges must engage in early outreach themselves. The government must expand the variety and reach of these programs by working with colleges and universities to implement a range of early outreach programs. A number of successful institutional programs already exist. For example, at York University, the Westview Partnership program partners students at schools in the Jane and Finch community from kindergarten to beyond grade 12 with university mentors. The aim of the partnership is to deliver knowledge about PSE, increase student confidence and motivation, and improve academic preparation for post-secondary studies. The partnership consists of 14 specific programs that are mostly run by student volunteers, in conjunction with funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the York Faculty of Education, and some community funding. The program has been credited with improving access to post-secondary education in an area of Toronto that has traditionally had lower participation rate.²⁹ For example, two years after the initiation of the University Path Program through the Westview Partnership, the number of graduating students from the Westview neighbourhood gaining

admittance to York University more than doubled.³⁰ One particularly valuable aspect of the partnership is that by channeling former high school students from the neighbourhood into mentor positions, it provides current students with a support network that is familiar with the very specific racial and socio-economic circumstances of the neighbourhood. One female black student-mentor who grew up in the Westview neighbourhood explained that students found her easier to relate to than teachers from outside the area, and consequently were more receptive to developing an open and honest relationship.³¹

Another example of a promising institutional-community partnership is the RBC-Lakehead University Joint Aboriginal Outreach Program; an outreach program geared towards increasing enrollment of Aboriginal youth at Lakehead University. Elements of the program include visits to campus for students from remote communities, a long-term mentorship program pairing third-year Aboriginal students at Lakehead with high school students, and an Aboriginal speaker series.³²

These successful programs should be funded by the government and expanded. In light of the success shown by initiatives offering a combination of academic and informational support services, financial incentives, parental involvement activities, mentoring, and personal and social enrichment activities, programs should be designed with the purpose of combining many or all of these elements and should be tailored to the specific needs of the target community.³³

Suggestions for the Expansion of Early Outreach Programs

• The Ontario government should recognize early outreach as a key component of a holistic access strategy for post-secondary education. An encouraging step towards this end was taken in the Ministry of Community and Youth Services' *Stepping Up* plan, where the Government of Ontario

reaffirmed support for several key efforts across government to support youth access and excel within post-secondary education.³⁴ *Stepping Up* highlighted many efforts the government makes, but students urge the government to work to both expand and harmonize these efforts with one-another;

- The Ontario government should commit to giving every secondary school student the option of visiting a college campus or a university campus as a part of the Grade 9 or 10 curriculum;
- The Ontario government should continue to increase funding for the Pathways to Education Canada program, with an eye to expanding it to other communities in the province;
- The Ontario government should work with colleges and universities to implement a broad range of community-based early outreach programs that provide exposure to post-secondary options and offer multifaceted support for youth from underrepresented groups.

CHAPTER 2: CONFRONTING STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Unemployment rates for youth – even recent graduates – are consistently higher than the unemployment rates for the general population.³⁵ Entry into the labour market from post-secondary has always been, to some extent, difficult for recent post-secondary students, but has become increasingly so in recent years. This is particularly true for university students, who often take longer to gain employment than their college counterparts.

CHALLENGE ONE: GROWTH IN POST-SECONDARY QUALIFICATIONS HAS OUTPACED GROWTH IN JOBS FOR POST-SECONDARY GRADUATES, IN MOST FIELDS.

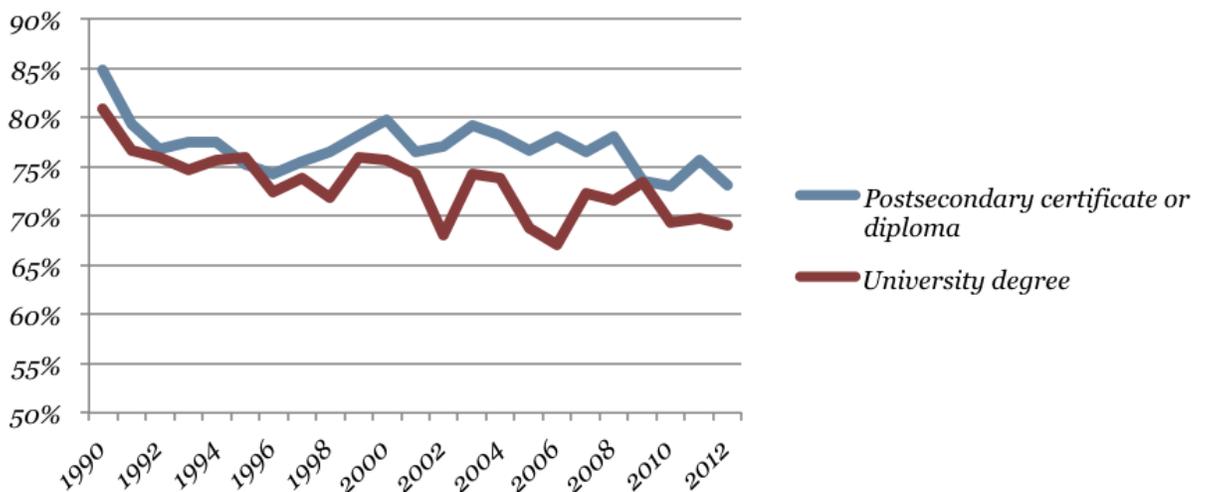
Canada’s employment and educational profile are a peculiarity in context of the broader OECD. According to a recent report, Canada posts one of the highest rates of educational attainment in the world, but has employment rates below the OECD average.³⁶ This problem is magnified in Ontario, which the highest rate of educational attainment in the country, yet our unemployment rate is between 7 and 8 per cent above Western provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan.³⁷

The relationship between educational attainment

and employment is an interesting one. In the previous chapter, it was established that post-secondary education greatly increases one’s employment prospects. On the whole however, employment rates have declined over the last two decades for post-secondary graduates. Most analysts agree that, for a variety of reasons, the supply of post-secondary graduates has been rising faster than the labour market’s ability to take them in. The proportion of youth with post-secondary credentials has increased from 48 per cent in 1981 to 69 per cent in 2011.³⁸ Many commentators cite “too many youth attending university” as a problem, with the implied solution being more restrictive university access policies. OUSA does not believe this is the right approach. It is important to remember that over 70 per cent of all new jobs will require some form of post-secondary education, a future we have prepared for by ensuring access to post-secondary education. The long-term reduction of employment rates may not be caused by an over-supply of post-secondary graduates; a variety of other explanations exist, including several serious recessions, the increasing average age of the work force and the growth of temporary employment.

Complicating matters further, these lower employment rates have been masking rising vacancies

FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AGE 15-24



in certain industries. In sum, approximately 21 per cent of Canadian employers currently face chronic skills shortages, though many more employers complain about the talent pool in the labour force.

In a recent study by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, 25 occupations that were showing signs of skills shortages were mostly those that would require an education in science, technology,

25 OCCUPATIONS SHOWING SIGNS OF SKILLS SHORTAGE

- Managers in Engineering, Architecture, Science and Info Systems
- Managers in Health, Education, Social and Community Services
- Managers in Construction and Transportation
- Auditors, Accountants and Investment Professionals
- Human Resources and Business Service Professionals
- Professional Occupations in Natural and Applied Sciences
- Physical Science Professionals
- Life Science Professionals
- Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Chemical Engineers
- Other Engineers
- Professional Occupations in Health
- Physicians, Dentists and Veterinarians
- Optometrists, Chiropractors and Other Health Diagnosing and Treating Professionals
- Pharmacists, Dietitians and Nutritionists
- Therapy and Assessment Professionals
- Nurse Supervisors and Registered Nurses
- Technical and Related Occupations in Health
- Medical Technologists and Technicians (except Dental Health)
- Technical Occupations in Dental Health Care
- Other Technical Occupations In Health Care (except Dental)
- Psychologists, Social Workers, Counsellors, Clergy and Probation Officers
- Supervisors, Mining, Oil and Gas
- Underground Miners, Oil and Gas Drillers and Related Workers
- Supervisors in Manufacturing
- Supervisors, Processing Occupations

20 OCCUPATIONS SHOWING SIGNS OF SKILLS SURPLUS

- Managers in Manufacturing and Utilities
- Clerical Supervisors
- Clerical Occupations
- Clerical Occupations, General Office Skills
- Office Equipment Operators
- Finance and Insurance Clerks
- Mail and Message Distribution Occupations
- Secondary & Elementary Teachers and Counsellors
- Sales and Service Supervisors
- Cashiers
- Occupations in Food and Beverage Services
- Tour and Recreational Guides and Amusement Occupations
- Other Attendants in Travel, Accommodation and Recreation
- Technical Occupations in Personal Service
- Other Occupations in Personal Service
- Butchers and Bakers
- Upholsterers, Tailors, Shoe Repairers, Jewellers and Related Occupations
- Fishing Vessel Masters and Skippers and Fishermen/Women
- Machine Operators and Related Workers in Metal and Mineral
- Products Processing
- Machine Operators & Related Workers in Pulp and Paper Production and Wood Processing

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, such as: Managers in Engineering, Architecture, Science & Info Systems, Managers in Construction and Transportation, Professional Occupations in Natural and Applied Sciences, etc.³⁹ It should be noted that the following list of occupations is a snapshot of the labour market as it currently stands. It should not be used to predict trends into the future.

Given that there are an abundance of post-secondary graduates in the labour force currently, as well as a rising vacancy rate, a narrative that post-secondary graduates are not gaining the necessary skills for employment has taken hold in the public discourse. Some evidence to back this narrative exists; a recent report indicated that the probability of being employed full-time, two years after graduation was higher for fields such as commerce, management, and business administration, physical and biological sciences, and engineering, computer sciences, and math.⁴⁰ It was concluded that the knowledge economy appears to favour graduates with applied and technical skills over those graduates with “soft” or generic skills. In fact, students who majored in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) were more likely to make their choice of major based on the prospect of finding work post-graduation.⁴¹

Though some evidence of labour force misalignment exists, the severity of the “people without jobs, jobs without people” problem should not be overestimated. According to Human Resources & Skills Development Canada’s labour projection system, only five occupations have projected, long-term shortages:

- Doctors and dentists;
- Managers in nursing;
- Managers of health, education and community services;
- Supervisors in natural resource development; and
- Human resource & business service professionals.⁴²

All of these fields require some degree-level education; most of them require some post-graduate professional certification as well. The determination that only 5 of 144 tracked occupations would experience chronic shortages should give pause to the notion that the Ontario’s educational output and labour-market needs are completely misaligned.

Further, many of the predictions of a looming labour-market crisis rely on problematic assumptions. For instance, the commonly reported shortfall of 21 million jobs predicted by the Rick Miner’s influential skills mismatch report relies on the assumption that older workers will transition out of the labour force at a steady rate. As briefly discussed previously, over the past two decades, labour force participation rates for older workers have crept steadily upwards. A higher proportion of older workers remaining in the economy would fill a substantial portion of the predicted shortfall, as will be explored below.

CHALLENGE TWO: POOR ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE CAUSED MANY OLDER, SKILLED WORKERS TO REMAIN IN THE WORKFORCE

The 2008 recession brought a new urgency to concern over youth unemployment. Research by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates that the net short-term job losses from 2008 to 2009 were substantial; Canada shed approximately 189,000 jobs over the course of one year. This 1.1 per cent reduction in overall employment levels was felt by youth particularly, with Ontario youth unemployment soaring to a historic all-time high of 17.5 per cent. However, a deeper analysis reveals that the recession did not negatively impact all sectors of employment equally.

A Contraction of Opportunity for those Without Post-Secondary Education

First of all, the reported net loss of 189,000 jobs masks a much bigger total job loss in the low-skilled manufacturing and goods producing sector. The manufacturing sector alone dropped by 176,800 jobs;

a 9.1 per cent drop. In sum, the goods-producing sector lost approximately 252,600 jobs. This massive loss was offset by a gain of over 63,600 new jobs in the services-producing sector. Most interestingly, many of these new jobs were likely to require post-secondary credentials. The biggest job gains were in educational fields, as well as scientific and technical fields. It is worth noting that not only do these fields tend to require post-secondary education, they tend to require university credentials.

The only services-producing sectors to lose jobs during the recession were transportation and warehousing, business, building and other support, accommodation and food, as well as public administration. Of these, the only industry that typically requires university-level education is public administration. All other fields that require a university degree seem to have expanded, rather

than contracted. Further, it is highly typical for public administration job offerings to shrink during recessionary times, in response to government deficits and cutbacks. The decline in public administration is likely not an indication that the skillset in this industry has declined in value.

Even three years after the recession, those without post-secondary have not made up for the low-skill job losses with employment rates still 1.8 per cent lower than they were previously. Those who do not complete high school are still 14.5 per cent behind their pre-recessionary levels.⁴³

The Recession Impacted Youth Particularly

The other unfortunate reality of the 2008 recession was, though there were new jobs created in the service industry, older workers were far more likely

JOB LOSSES AND GAINS BY SECTOR, 2008-2009

	<i>Change in Employment Between December 2008 and December 2009</i>	<i>Change in Employment Rate Between December 2008 and December 2009</i>
All Industries	-189,000	-1.1%
Goods-Producing Sector	-252,600	-6.4%
Agriculture	-5,100	-1.6%
Forestry, Fishing, Gas, Mining	-36,400	-10.6%
Utilities	-5,300	-3.5%
Construction	-29,000	-2.4%
Manufacturing	-176,800	-9.1%
Services-Producing Sector	63,600	0.5%
Retail and Wholesale Trade	3,700	0.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	-74,500	-8.6%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	29,100	2.7%
Professional, Scientific, Technical	41,000	3.4%
Business, Building and Other Support	-54,400	-8.1%
Educational	51,300	4.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	59,300	3.1%
Information, Culture and Recreation	10,300	1.3%
Accommodation and Food	-4,800	-0.5%
Other Services	23,300	3.1%
Public Administration	-20,500	-2.2%

to fill these positions. As will be explored later, the rising proportion of older workers remaining in labour force has a substantial impact on the future of youth unemployment in Canada. Over the past several years, the proportion of older workers remaining in the labour force has crept upwards at a steady state. The participation rate of older workers in the labour force has increased from approximately 26 per cent to over 37 per cent since 1993. While the negative impact of this change on youth unemployment has been partially off-set by the increasing likelihood that young people attend college and university, the drop in labour force participation of young people has been far eclipsed by the rising participation rates of older workers.

During the recession alone, the labour force participation rates of older workers increased by about 2 per cent, while declining 4 per cent for youth. For those youth participating in the labour force, unemployment rates increased about 4 per cent.

Historical data shows that recessions have always had the effect of causing older workers to remain in the labour force longer than they otherwise would. However, it must be recognized that the participation

rate for older workers is at a historic high. Moreover, the slow rate of job growth in all sectors of the economy has caused most economists to suspect that this growth rate will continue into the near future. Only a full recovery and subsequent period of growth may have the effect of bringing them down.

In sum, the recession appears to have had two effects: it made university-level post-secondary education more valuable than it has ever been. However, it has also further advantaged older workers, exacerbating an economy that has become increasingly competitive for new entrants to the labour force. This long-term economic problem requires attention in any holistic solution to rising youth unemployment.

CHALLENGE THREE: THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYER IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING HAS SHRUNK DRAMATICALLY OVER TIME

As discussed earlier, there are a number of studies highlighting that Ontario faces a looming skills crisis; that Ontario's educational output is leading to "people without jobs, jobs without people."⁴⁴ This narrative has elements of truth, but is often linked to an argument that post-secondary education should

FIGURE 8: CHANGE IN JOB OFFERINGS BETWEEN DECEMBER 2008 AND 2009, BY AGE CATEGORY

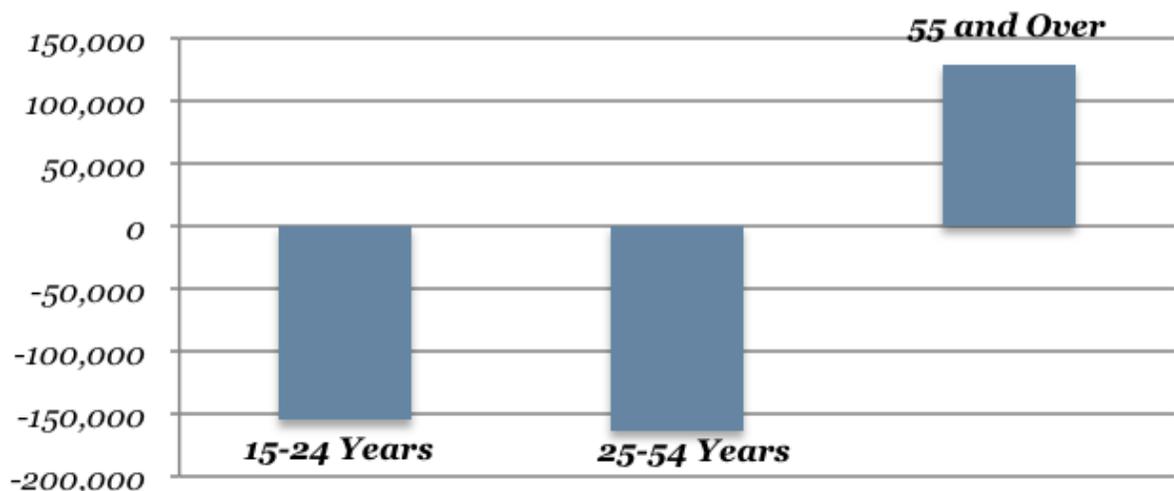
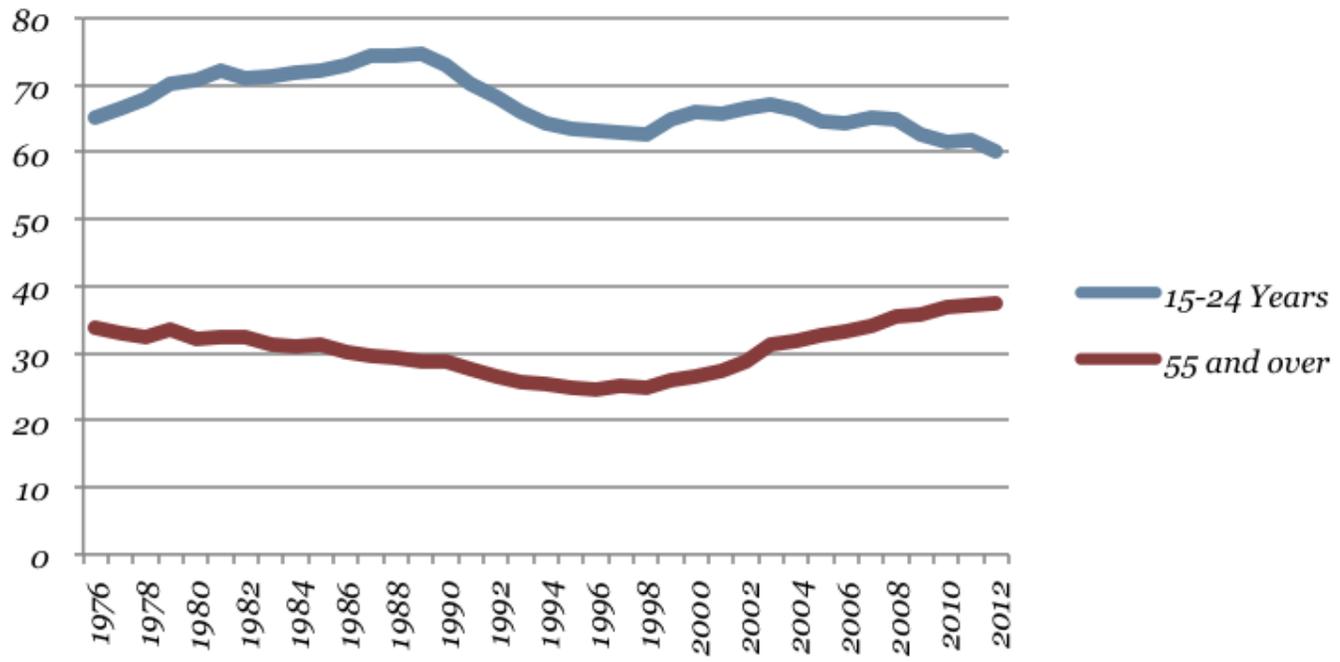


FIGURE 9: CHANGE IN LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY AGE



fundamentally change, in order to provide students with more job-ready skills. This is a problematic assumption, because it fundamentally ignores the traditional role employers have played in the training of new hires. An examination of available evidence indicates that employers have largely shrunk their investment in training responsibilities over the last several decades.

For instance, a recent report by the Conference Board of Canada highlighted that there has been a 40 per cent decline in employer-funded training over the past two decades, 13 per cent in recent years. While the post-secondary community and government have a role to play in combatting youth unemployment, students believe that employers must begin investing in new talent and training initiatives for youth unemployment to be meaningfully lowered.

One study by the McKinsey Center for Government found that today’s employers land in three prominent categories of job action: racer, neutral, and stalled.

The racer employers (31 per cent) were highly engaged with educational providers beyond basic recruitment and hiring efforts to include curriculum design and ensuring industry expertise in the classroom; in addition, these employers were most likely to train their new employees internally within their organization and externally.⁴⁵ Neutral employers (25 per cent) partner with one or more educational institutions for support with their recruiting and hiring efforts but these connections are usually infrequent as a result of employer apathy.⁴⁶ The stalled employers (44 per cent), describe employers who are less likely to train their employees, to pay for training when it is provided, and to connect with educational providers for the purposes of labour recruitment.⁴⁷

It is concerning that stalled employers, those not actively participating in skills development and connecting with education, represent the largest group of employers. The private sector benefits from the investment that individuals and the government

(through public funding) make in generating an educated workforce, yet it would appear that it is not an active partner in the development of skilled workers. Students believe that all those benefitting from a skilled workforce should be contributing towards its development.

RECOMMENDATION: EXPAND WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

It is widely agreed that work-integrated learning experiences are beneficial to students from both an educational and employability perspective. In a 2010 literature review conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HECQO), work-integrated learning is an umbrella term that can be used to describe any number of educational activities that integrate learning within an academic institution with practical application in a workplace setting. These activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Apprenticeships;
- Field experience;
- Mandatory professional practice;
- Co-operative placements;
- Internships and practicums;
- Applied research projects;
- Service-learning.⁴⁸

In an economy where employers are hesitant to make long-term investments in employee training and post-secondary institutions are increasingly pressured to produce labour-market ready graduates, OUSA believes that an expansion of well-designed work-integrated learning opportunities is an ideal solution for students, employers and the government.

Benefits of Work-Integrated Learning to the Student:

Despite the amount of controversy that exists on this subject, it is an indisputable fact that most students enroll in university in order to attain meaningful employment. Perhaps the most pronounced benefit

work-integrated learning provides to students is the increased likelihood that they will get hired post-graduation. According to survey results, 82 per cent of employers who offer work-integrated learning offered post-graduate employment to a former co-op student or intern who worked at their workplace.⁴⁹ Further, graduates of work-integrated learning opportunities tended to make about \$2-\$3 dollars more per-hour than students who had not experienced these opportunities. In nearly all cases, these students in work-integrated learning are receiving remuneration or working towards academic credit, making it a far better deal for students than toiling post-graduation in an unpaid internship.

In a study by the McKinsey Center for Government, students were vocal about using their education to build skills and secure a job, such that 60 per cent of respondents indicated that the most effective classroom techniques were those that featured on-the-job training skills and hands-on learning, despite the fact that less than half of those students were enrolled in classes that reflected this desired asset.⁵⁰ In focus groups, students also identified that work-integrated learning offered an opportunity to blend theory and practice, recover post-secondary costs and develop personally.⁵¹

Benefits of Work-Integrated Learning to Employers & Post-Secondary Institutions:

Employers face significant disincentives to invest heavily in employee training. With increased labour force mobility, companies run the constant risk of losing trained employees to other firms, negating the value of any investment in training made to that point. This is one of the main reasons why employer investment in training has declined so much over the past several decades. The expanded role of post-secondary education in training the labour force, increasing labour force mobility and job switching and the increasing role of technology in the work-place have all made training an increasingly difficult investment for a firm to make. Despite these barriers facing

HELPFUL TANGENT: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT NEGATIVELY IMPACTS ONTARIO'S PRODUCTIVITY

Declining economic productivity is an often-missed negative implication of Ontario's recent high rate of youth unemployment. A recent Conference Board of Canada study has estimated that Ontario's annual GDP growth will fall to 1.9 per cent annually after 2015, a historically low growth rate.⁵² The decline in potential economic growth is based on three principal factors: a decline in the proportion of the working-age population, a difficult environment for capital investment, and stagnant productivity growth. Over the longer term, our research indicates that aging demographics and slower labour force growth will reduce the province's economic growth prospects.

Why/How?

Not only do older age cohorts have lower participation rates, they are much more likely to work part-time hours—which further reduces potential labour supply. For example, the average employed male in the 55-to-64 age cohort worked an average of 36.8 hours per year in 2010. For an employed male in the 65-and-over cohort, that number falls to 30.6 hours. These two factors—lower participation and fewer hours worked—will be offset somewhat by continued declines in the natural rate of unemployment, driven by the increase in the average age of the labour force. Since older workers are not as likely to quit their jobs to look for other work, the average number of unemployed workers between jobs will decrease as the average age of the labour force rises. When combining these three factors, the increase in potential hours available for work in Ontario will slow from the 1.3 per cent per year that we've seen over the last 10 years to growth of just 0.8 per cent over the next 10 years, and to growth of just 0.6 per cent by fiscal year 2030–31.

An obvious remedy to this emerging issue is more efficient integration of Ontario university graduates into the workforce, the variety of recommendations in this submission cover some of the ways to ease transition.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, youth employment can create aftershocks for economies in the developed world for decades after its occurrence. Specifically, the lack of job opportunities for younger workers in Canada over the past few years may have long-term effects on their consumption patterns. Many of these workers are seeking their first opportunity not only to earn a living but also to learn useful skills. Long periods of unemployment are therefore impeding their skill development, which will make it more difficult for them to find work in the future. Long stretches of unemployment early in their work career can permanently impair young people's future consumption levels both because future earnings are constrained and because the experience of long-term unemployment can breed a more cautious attitude toward consumption. Young workers who have endured extended periods of unemployment may also tend to save rather than spend money even once they manage to find jobs because they may be less confident about staying employed.⁵³

Labour market economics research has also found longitudinal scars caused by youth unemployment. According to Greg and Tominey (2004) youth unemployment imposes a sizeable wage scar upon both males and females at age 23 followed by substantial recovery over the next ten years, but only if the individual can avoid further spells of unemployment after age 23. A modest residual wage scar (where "scar" in this context means a deterioration of labour market outcomes) of around 8 per cent persists up to twenty years later even for those who have no further unemployment experience.

Those with extensive youth unemployment are at higher risk of further unemployment through to age 33 and this inhibits wage recovery. In a case study from the United Kingdom, the analysis tested whether the cumulated unemployment experience up to the age of 23 drives unemployment in subsequent years. The National Child Development Survey provided a wealth of information on individuals and despite controlling for many observable personal characteristics of individuals, researchers identified persistent effects from youth unemployment throughout the working life via wage scarring and lower employment potential.⁵⁴

employers, continued disinvestment in training is not a sustainable path for Ontario to continue upon.

Fundamentally, OUSA believes that the responsibility for training the labour force of the future rests with both employers and the post-secondary education sector. Despite the increased difficulty faced by employers in the training sphere, they still have a responsibility to participate in labour force training. Post-secondary institutions, particularly universities, must balance a responsibility to provide a fulsome and multi-faceted educational experience with the responsibility the public invests in them to generate productive, hireable graduates.

Work-integrated learning is a partnership-based, holistic solution to all of these competing responsibilities and challenges. Work-integrated learning allows the employer to divest some training responsibility to a partnering post-secondary institution. However, they still must invest in an employment opportunity for a student, providing the student with some relevant work-experience. Most employers see this as a further benefit of participation in work-integrated learning. In a survey conducted by Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), 70.2 per cent of employers

offering work-integrated learning opportunities cited the opportunity to “pre-screen potential new hires” as one of the top reasons for offering work-integrated learning. Over 80 per cent of employers saw it as beneficial for developing skills in their industry.

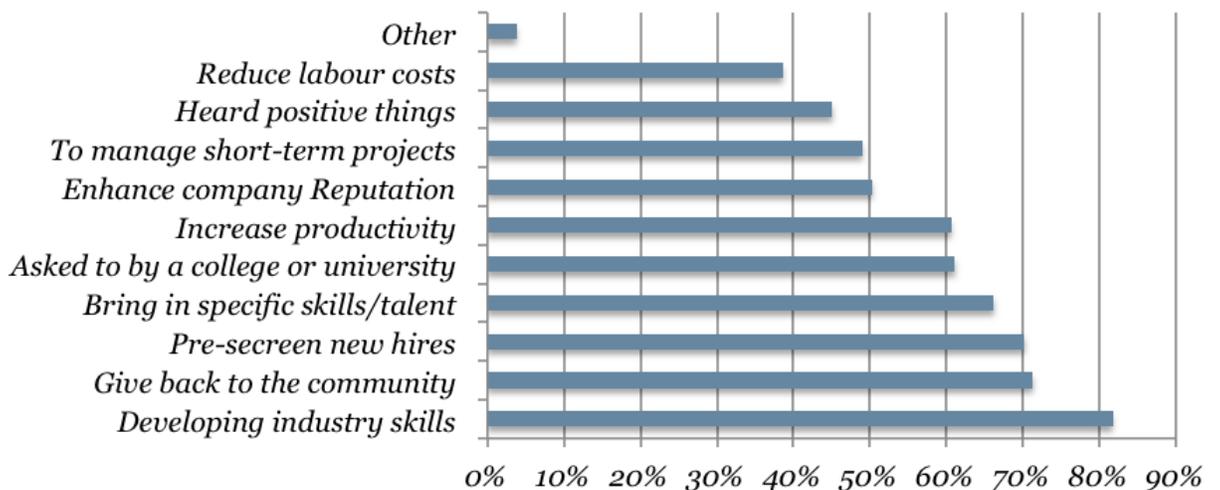
Other reasons cited indicated that hiring a student (and paying them in most cases) was an investment many employers saw great value in.

For post-secondary institutions, the benefits of work-integrated learning are very clear. First, most work-integrated experiences allow for a blend of traditional learning and experiential learning. For universities worried about their core mission of knowledge and discovery being overridden by economic pressures, work-integrated and blended learning allow for the traditional classroom space to be maintained, but complemented by workplace experience that the student will find valuable in the job market after graduation.

Work-integrated learning is an everybody-wins solution. So why isn't it happening more often?

Known Barriers to the Expansion of Work-Integrated Learning⁵⁵

FIGURE 10: REASONS EMPLOYERS PARTICIPATED IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING



Currently, most evidence points to a greater demand for work-integrated learning experiences than employers are currently supplying. HEQCO estimates that about 61 per cent of employers do not participate in work-integrated learning with a post-secondary institution. Of this group, 58 per cent are not planning on offering it in the future, while 11.7 per cent are unsure. This means that:

- 36 per cent of Ontario employers do not offer work-integrated learning, and are not planning on it;
- 7 per cent of Ontario employers do not offer it, and are not sure if they will offer it in the future;
- 18 per cent of Ontario employers do not participate, but would like to in future years.

In surveys from both the HEQCO and the Conference Board of Canada, a few key barriers to expansion of work-integrated learning partnerships emerged.

- *Staff time required to manage students:* Over 41 per cent of employers cited this as a barrier, with 10 per cent of those not planning on offering experiential opportunities citing it as their top disincentive to hiring more post-secondary students. It is certainly an understandable one; students often come into internships and practicums with little previous work experience. As such, training students is as much about mentorship as it is about skills, which is a time-consuming task requiring constant attention;
- *Awareness of opportunities:* While the majority of employers seem to be aware of the existence of work-integrated learning, fewer are aware of specific opportunities available to them. 25 per cent of employers were not aware of opportunities or their potential value, while 8.6 per cent of employers who did not plan to offer work-integrated learning listed it as their top barrier to hiring students;
- *Administration and paperwork:* Above the daily task of overseeing, mentoring and managing students, employers often noted that the administrative

burden of hiring students was a barrier. 35 per cent of employers cited this as a barrier, with 4.9 per cent listing it as the top disincentive. Given that this burden can often originate from the post-secondary institution, this is a key consideration when attempting to expand the scope of post-secondary linked experiential opportunities;

- *Financial barriers:* Finally, 25 per cent of employers cited financial costs as a barrier to implementing work-integrated learning, with 7.3 per cent of those not planning on offering experiential opportunities citing it as the top barrier.

The size of a company plays a large role in which of these barriers will end up being most prevalent. Smaller firms (those with 20 employees or less) were about twice as likely to cite “demands on staff time” as a challenge in offering work-integrated learning. It is likely that these companies, which often do not have ample resources to oversee student workers, require material support in addition to more informational resources.

It is also worth noting that work-integrated experiences are not equally distributed across educational sector or academic discipline. While 78 per cent of employers who offered work-integrated learning worked with colleges, just under 50 per cent worked with universities. Given that universities enroll the majority of Ontario’s post-secondary students, a valuable opportunity to provide youth with work experiences before graduation is being missed. Further, business and engineering programs were much more likely to have work-integrated experiences.⁵⁶ For instance, while 22.4 per cent of employers partnering with universities were linked to business programs, only 4.5 per cent were linked to science programs.

STRATEGY ONE: CREATE INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS TO HELP MORE UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Employers choose not to offer work-integrated learning for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons are insurmountable. For firms that have no suitable work for co-op students or interns, little can realistically be done to encourage the hiring of more current students. However, many of the concerns cited by employers came down to a perception of value. The fact that over 15 per cent of non-work-

integrated learning employers saw offering work-integrated learning as requiring “too much staff time” or “too much administration” highlights that some employers do not see it as a worthwhile use of staff resources. Another 9 per cent are not aware of any available programs to take advantage of student work.

FIGURE 11: REASONS CITED BY EMPLOYERS FOR NOT OFFERING EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

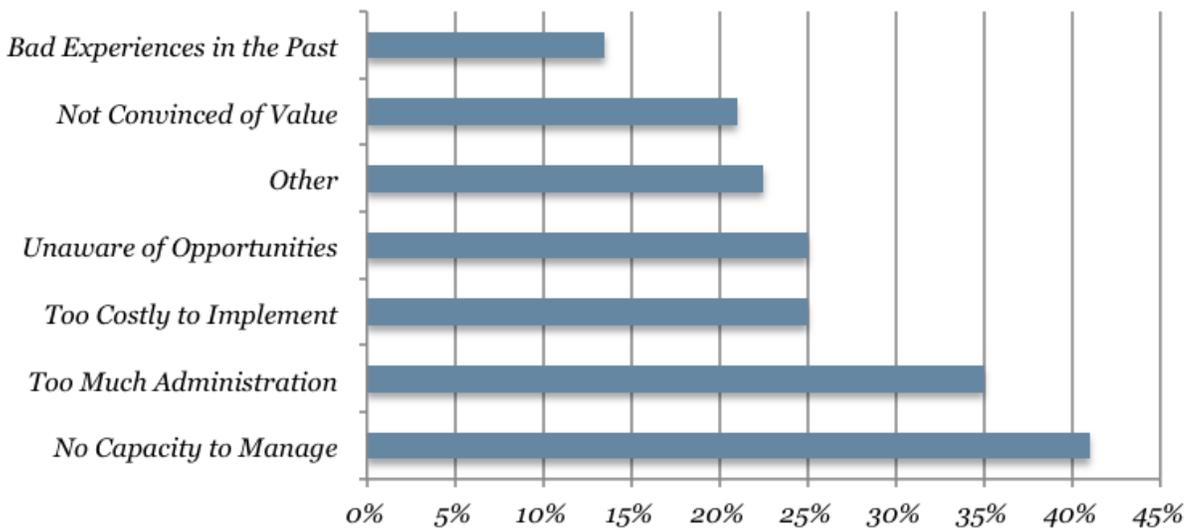
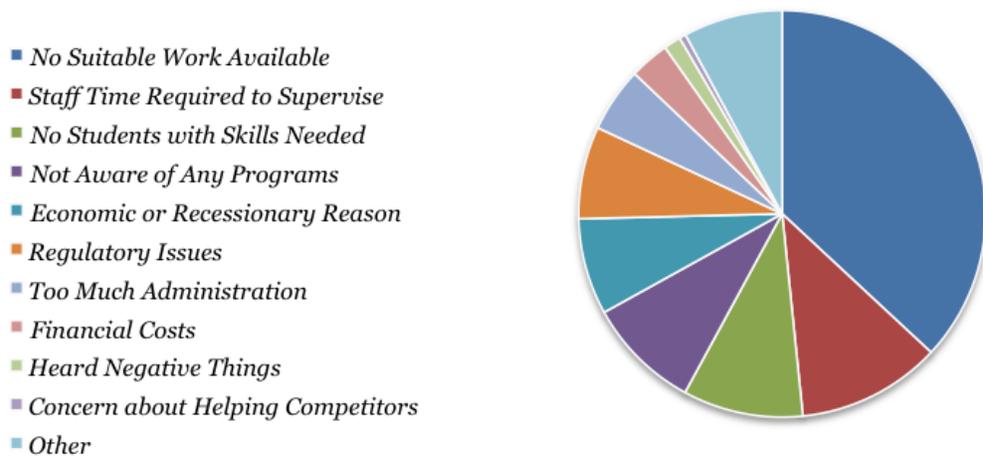


FIGURE 12: TOP REASON EMPLOYERS DID NOT OFFER EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES



All together, OUSA believes this represents a solid 24 per cent of employers who do not currently offer work-integrated learning that might be in need of better information regarding the benefits of partnering with post-secondary institutions. One wonders, for instance, whether employers who do not offer work-integrated positions understand the full range of benefits companies receive through these partnerships. It seems currently that many employers are making value judgments about participation in work-integrated learning without hearing a proper pitch. Universities and colleges form partnerships in an ad-hoc manner, but no centralized portal exists that would offer employers the information they need to make the decision that best works for their firm.

Ultimately, work-integrated learning is an investment made by an employer in a student. It would be unrealistic to expect employers to do this if work-integrated learning had no foreseeable return. However, it does. Early development of talent, the potential to pre-screen new employees before making a long-term commitment to them, as well as the opportunity to imbue Ontario's highly educated talent pool with the sorts of skills needed in the workforce should all be selling points to employers.

The need for greater promotional efforts does not simply apply to the work-opportunities themselves however; it is also badly needed to help properly advertise current government support, this is evidenced by inefficient employer use of currently available supports. Ontario already offers support to employers who engage in co-operative education, through the Ontario Co-Operative Education Tax Credit (CETC). The tax credit is essentially a refund on student wages, offering employers up to \$3,000 in return for hiring a co-op student in partnership with a post-secondary institution. Despite the fact that the benefit to the employer is material and requires very little administration and paperwork to access, over one quarter of eligible employers did not access the tax credit in 2011.

OUSA proposes that Ontario create a centralized, web-based resource for employers to explain the steps that must be undertaken to offer employment to current students in work-integrated learning streams, as well as a summation of the various economic benefits that come with doing so. Ideally, this resource should provide information on:

- The benefits of work-integrated learning;
- The steps employers must go through in order to take on a co-op student, intern, etc;
- Any supports provided to employers by either the government or post-secondary institutions in the provision of work-integrated learning.

Most encouragingly, when asked what support was most needed in the expansion of work-integrated learning, more information was more likely to be a top choice of employers who do not currently provide these opportunities. In other words, it will likely be crucial in any attempt to increase the number of work-integrated learning partnerships.

STRATEGY TWO: CREATE NEW FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO INCENTIVIZE GREATER EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

While some firms may simply need better information on work-integrated learning, it is indisputable that many employers need material support. For smaller enterprises, administration and management of student workers is a heavy burden. Combined with greater information on the benefits, many firms will likely only make the investment in work-integrated learning with some help from both the government and post-secondary institutions. In HEQCO's survey of employers, financial incentives were chosen as an important support by over 60 per cent of respondents. 25 per cent of employers chose it as their top response.

OUSA strongly supports any financial investments

that will help create more student jobs. Due to the fact that the \$195 million wage subsidy provided by the government's the Youth Employment Strategy will be geared at Employment Ontario users, it will primarily target youth already in the labour-force, rather than post-secondary students looking for work opportunities during study. If Ontario seeks to expand the amount of work-integrated learning opportunities available to students, it is likely that an additional investment will need to be made, particularly to address the needs of small-to-medium sized enterprises that were more likely to cite financial reasons for not offering work-integrated learning.⁵⁷

There are a number of different ways that increased funding could be used to better support work-integrated learning.

- *Job training & placement services:* Currently, universities offer a limited amount of training and job-placement services through career service and co-op centers. However, generic career centres are oftentimes ancillary operations to the academic mission of the university, while co-op centres are generally almost entirely funded through student fees. Universities often have substantial links to local economies and networks that could be better utilized to place students in jobs. Universities should be able to apply for funding to enhance both career skills training and job placement activities for all students;

- *A fund for universities to subsidize co-op or paid internships in key growth areas:* Canada currently faces skills shortages in a number of industries, in addition to a more general youth-employment problem. To address these challenges, Ontario should follow the lead of jurisdictions like Ohio and provide targeted funding to create student employment opportunities in industries requiring new talent. In Ohio, the State provides universities up to 50 per cent of student wages in specific industries, with the rest being made up through a mix of institutional and private support.⁵⁸ While this report also advocates for the creation of direct incentives to employers, more direct action should be taken in industries where

skilled employees are in short supply. Running the funding through institutions would ensure that these positions encourage bi-lateral communication between employers and universities;

- *Funding to grow work-integrated opportunities in disciplines that do not traditionally offer it:* While enthusiasm for work-integrated learning is high among all Ontario students, access to it is highly unequal across academic disciplines. Unsurprisingly, professionally oriented university programs tend to offer more work-integrated learning opportunities than general arts & science programs. For instance, of employers that offered work-integrated learning partnerships with universities, over 41.7 per cent offered it through a business or engineering program, while only 4.3 per cent partnered with a general sciences program and only 12 per cent with an arts, fine arts or social program.⁵⁹

Some universities have made considerable efforts to link non-traditional disciplines with work-integrated learning. For instance, McMaster's Faculty of Social Science offers an experiential education office, linking students with internships in the community and career placements.⁶⁰ Internships can be full or part-time, and can be run concurrently to the school year or during the summer. On a brief glance, McMaster Social Science's program appears to be relatively unique in Ontario's university sector. However, many other faculties at McMaster, including humanities and the general sciences appear to be following suit and expanding the amount of experiential education offered to their students.⁶¹ If the government were to make funding available to support experiential education initiatives, it would be well advised to prioritize institutional initiatives akin to McMaster.

- *Undergraduate Research Assistantships and Awards:* It is often forgotten that research is, in and of itself, a highly employable skill. Universities have been teaching and practicing research methods for centuries, but undergraduate students are oftentimes too far removed from the research mission of the school. Institutions interested in expanding their

undergraduate research activities through paid employment should be eligible for new funding.

STRATEGY THREE: RE-LAUNCH AN EXPANDED AND ENHANCED WORK-STUDY PROGRAM, PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH PRACTICAL WORK-EXPERIENCE ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES.

Funding from the Government of Ontario to post-secondary institutions to subsidize in-study employment opportunities was discontinued in early 2012 in order to help the government fund the new 30% Off Ontario Tuition Grant.⁶² While OUSA strongly supported this new program, the cancellation of work-study subsidies had the potential to negatively impact thousands of students across Ontario. While the impact of this funding cut is not fully known, OUSA reached out to work-study program service providers to better understand how their institutions' student employment opportunities were affected.

Interestingly, no university in Ontario has completely cut work-study offerings. However, most universities have been required to devote increasingly strained institutional resources to make up for the loss. In some cases, this has been accompanied by an opening up of work-study offerings to all students (whereas some were previously open only to students who qualified for OSAP).

In some cases, such as in the case of UOIT, institutions have had to make reductions in the maximum working hours or other small concessions in the quality of jobs. Previously, the provision of work-study was a joint investment by both universities and the province. While students understand that Ontario is attempting to balance a budget by 2017-2018, we believe that the work-study program should not have been a means by which to do so. Work-study represented the best type of in-study employment: the kind that is both educationally effective and respectful of a student's academic needs.

An enhanced comprehensive work-study program

would allow students to strike a healthy balance between employment and their academic workload.

The province's original investment in work-study came to approximately \$9.1 million.⁶³ At such a low system-wide cost, students believe the government should re-instate funding for the work-study system and use it to build on the existing capacity of the system. Rather than simply re-invest funds, students believe that the government should make a specific provision that the re-invested funds be used in the creation of new student employment opportunities, so that the provision of effective in-study employment is expanded, rather than kept level. In this way, the re-investment could be viewed as a portion of a broader youth employment strategy, and a renewed commitment on the part of the province to partner with universities to offer jobs.

Although some in-study programs should address the need for employment of all students, a portion of work-study opportunities should be dedicated to help those who are in most need. The needs-based aspect of certain work-study programs would take into account students who may have a greater financial burden during the school year. This ensures their ability to meet their financial burdens while succeeding academically at the same time.

The work-study bursary can also be tied to the student in need rather than the work position. For example, Queen's University rewards the student demonstrating financial need a Work Study entitlement, instead of allocating work-study funding to the employer. This way, employers are able to hire based on merit basis, and would get reimbursed if the student chosen for the job has a Work Study entitlement.⁶⁴

RECOMMENDATION: EMPOWER STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO MAKE MORE INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

When choosing a post-secondary institution, as well as an academic discipline or course of study,

students have few tools available to help them make an educated choice. It is well known that students go to university and college in order to be ready to excel in the labour market, yet very little information exists to help students beyond this point. For instance, if a student wanted to know the full-time employment rates of humanities graduates versus engineering graduates, they would not be able to readily find this information. Further, they would not be able to look at the employment outcomes for university students by discipline of study.

OUSA believes that when a student and their family are making decisions about their program of study, they should know what the employment outcomes by program are. Luckily, this data is already collected through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' Ontario Graduate Employment Survey, in addition to all the data mentioned above. While the employment rates of university graduates are publically available for each institution, this data is not broken down by discipline. Further, simply providing a blanket employment rate can mask important nuances like underemployment, relatedness of employment to a student's field of study and other factors.

Currently, the Ontario Graduate Employment Survey asks whether students are employed, whether employment is full or part time and whether employment relates to a student's chosen field of study. Answers to all of these questions, broken down by academic discipline, would help students and families understand how different post-secondary fields relate to the labour market.

Of course, students and parents would need this data to be contextualized, with input from faculty and post-secondary institutions. It would be important to ensure that the distribution of this information does not lead to an overly narrow viewpoint on post-secondary choices. It is OUSA's fundamental principle that students should choose the post-secondary pathway that aligns best with their interests and ambitions. However, students must also be able to

plan their post-secondary pathway in a manner that makes them flexible candidates in the labour market. Though a student may be interested in philosophy, knowledge that business graduates have excellent employment outcomes may inspire them to take some business courses. Further, any information could be put into the labour market projections that Human Resources and Skills Development Canada makes on an annual basis.

As many students have identified that they are pursuing a post-secondary education with the intention of finding a job, we believe they should be provided with as much information as possible to ensure that they can align their academic interests with their employment goals.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE WORK-STUDY SUBSIDY

Institution	Response to Work-Study Funding Cancellation
University of Ottawa	<i>“The University of Ottawa lost \$492 000 in government funding in 2012-13 for the work study program but has not reduced the number of work-study positions compare to the previous year. We provided internal funds to allow the number to be maintained.”</i>
OCAD University	<i>“Prior to the Ontario government’s cancellation of the Ontario Work-Study Program, we had an Institutional Work-Study Plan funded through the Tuition Set Aside fund, which mirrored the OWSP in terms of administration but was a bit more flexible in terms of student eligibility. Our portion of the OWSP was fairly small based on the government’s formula for institutional allocation of these funds, so the IWSP was always the much larger budget for work-study positions on campus at our institution – approximately 4 times the budget. OCAD University is extremely committed to providing work-study opportunities for its students. Following the cancellation of the OWSP, we increased our IWSP allocation to accommodate the previous OWSP budget amount and as well as increased demand for on campus employment opportunities.”</i>
Lakehead University	<i>“What I can say is that, by MTCU downloading yet another program on to the institutions, it does create an impact on our own funding. There was the work-study program along with the Ontario Special Bursary Program however, for us, that program was not utilized as much as the work-study. We did however, offer the same 75/25 cost sharing and used a budget similar to what the provincial government gave to us. Obviously, that is funding set aside that could help a student in dire straits at the end of the year.”</i>
Western University	<i>“At Western we are continuing our commitment to the Work-Study program despite the elimination of Ministry funding. There has been no negative impact to the number of positions available for students over the past year. There have been no changes to how the program is administered.”</i>
UOIT	<i>“With the reduction of government funding last year we reviewed our University Works program and decided it was important to maintain the number of students we employ on campus (roughly 150 from September to April). With the reduction of government funding having to be made up from our set aside dollars we examined how to make changes to our program to reduce costs that would have minimal impact on the students and the program. The changes we made were to reduce the maximum amount of working hours per week from 12 hours to 10 hours with a maximum of 260 hours over two semesters and to not approve students for further hours once they used their allotted 260 hours.”</i>

BEST PRACTICE: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Carleton University offers an undergraduate research opportunity under the name of I-CUREUS (Internship – Carleton University Research Experience for Undergraduate Students). The purpose of this program is to provide support for students who conduct research part-time during the fall or winter term under the direct supervision of a faculty supervisor. Carleton awards up to \$2250 to students interested in conducting undergraduate research. The faculty supervisor provides up to \$1125 of this funding, and the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) match this amount. Students are expected to work a minimum of eight weeks over the fall or winter semester. During their work term, students are expected to work 10-15 hours a week on their research project, to a maximum of 150 hours, with all work completed by the end of the winter term. Carleton provides five of their faculties with five internships each, distributed among qualified students. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in a full or part time undergraduate program at Carleton during the duration of their internship. Faculty sponsors must belong to an academic unit of the university, and hold a research grant at the time of application.

At Carleton, faculty are expected to identify potential applicants to the program. After having done so, they are required to discuss opportunities for the student to participate in their research, prepare a brief statement of the specific research the student will undertake, and outline the benefits of participation to the student. Faculty then co-sign the students' application.

According to the Carleton UROP website, applications to the program are assessed on:

- Appropriateness of the proposed research work;
- The level of supervision and mentorship;
- Potential output, such as research papers;
- Anticipated learning outcomes from the experience of working in the research environment.

In addition to providing research support to faculty, where applicable, students also have the opportunity to receive course credit by completing a major paper related to some aspect of the research they are undertaking. This is of particular interest, as OUSA believes that research provided in return for course credit alone allows universities to further their teaching and research missions at very low cost. However, the combination of funding and course credit makes Carleton's model an ideal to emulate.

OUSA believes that UROPs are currently an underutilized and highly effective mechanism to create a more innovative post-secondary education system. Undergraduate students have proven to be strong researchers given the appropriate conditions, but due to resource constriction at universities, very limited opportunities exist for an average student to explore research as a career option.

CHAPTER 3: PROMOTING ONTARIO YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

At a time when university education is being increasingly linked to labour market success, policymakers have lauded co-operative education, community-service learning and other work-integrated partnerships as a way to make sure that students graduating from universities have some work experience, making them more job ready. For example, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' 2012 discussion paper highlighted fostering entrepreneurship as a key goal of Ontario's post-secondary sector in the upcoming future.⁶⁵

Whether it is through the parsing of youth entrepreneurship success stories in North America or a realization that entrepreneurship ventures have a significant potential to boost the economic, innovation and labour outcomes of the Ontario economy it seems inevitable that the future of our universities will include a role supporting entrepreneurs. As universities chart this new territory for academia, OUSA has several principles, concerns and recommendations.

First, one needs to understand the current context of entrepreneurship in Ontario. OUSA believes Ontario has significant catching up to do when it comes to offering a comprehensive ecosystem that would support youth entrepreneurs. True support of entrepreneurship requires significant risk and investment, with startup companies needing workspace, mentorship, venture capital, commercialization support, legal support and more. Ontario has some infrastructure in this space, but it is not a cohesive ecosystem. For a university student with an idea, it can be difficult to know what one's point of entry to entrepreneurship should be.

Part of the reason for this is that, while nearly every Ontario university has a technology transfer office in place that links faculty with entrepreneurship opportunities, only a handful of universities currently have business incubators that openly encourage student involvement. Ryerson's Digital Media Zone (DMZ), Waterloo's VeloCity incubator and Brock's involvement in St. Catherine's nGen Centre are all

excellent examples of programs that attempt to capitalize on student entrepreneurship, but currently these programs are not widespread enough to meet the Ontario government's demand for increasing student entrepreneurship.⁶⁶

A more comprehensive tally of Ontario University offerings can be seen on the following pages.

Further, while many universities have some sort of entrepreneurship program, only a handful have what could be considered full-fledged incubators. For instance, York University currently has a research chair in international entrepreneurship and an advocacy group encouraging entrepreneurs to be environmentally efficient, but has no central area for students to go to develop their start-up ideas.⁶⁷ Trent University has a weeklong competition for entrepreneurs, but no incubator for them to work in year-round. All in all, just slightly over half of Ontario's universities offer full-fledged business incubators, based on an initial scan. While this is promising progress, it also highlights that the approach to entrepreneurship in the university sector is scattershot, with institutions supporting it in a wide variety of ways based on individual interest and mandate.

This stands in stark contrast to the approach of the European Union, which has outlined the fostering of entrepreneurship and innovation in post-secondary education as a key component of its Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment. Ontario universities have yet to make the fostering of entrepreneurship skills central to the academic mission of the university, even in business-related faculties. Even Ontario's most prominent student entrepreneurship programs, the Ryerson DMZ and Waterloo VeloCity, operate in parallel to an academic career, rather than as a central part of it. Institutions have made highly important commitments to entrepreneurship, but Ontario is still a long way off from true integration into the post-secondary curriculum.

For instance, Ryerson offers a digital specialization

program, which exposes students to the work going on in the DMZ, but the choice to engage in entrepreneurial activity is a process students must opt-into, rather than a part of the program

requirements.⁶⁸ The Ryerson DMZ Incubation Program is a semi-structured 4-month program (with an optional additional 8 months) where student startup ventures are provided space, mentorship,

EXAMPLES OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER OFFICES IN ONTARIO⁶⁹

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Technology Transfer Office</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Technology Transfer Office</i>
<i>Algoma</i>	<i>Essar Convergence Centre</i>	<i>Ryerson</i>	<i>MaRS, Centre for Urban Energy, OPIC (Lead Institution)</i>
<i>Brock</i>	<i>BioLinc</i>	<i>Toronto</i>	<i>MaRS, Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine</i>
<i>Carleton</i>	<i>Carleton Immersive Media Studio, Talent First Network</i>	<i>Trent</i>	<i>No specific office mentioned, but a member of OPIC</i>
<i>Guelph</i>	<i>Catalyst Centre – Industry Liason Program</i>	<i>Ottawa</i>	<i>Technology Transfer & Business Enterprise Office</i>
<i>Lakehead</i>	<i>The Innovation & Economic Development Office</i>	<i>UOIT</i>	<i>Office of Technology Transfer & Commercialization</i>
<i>Laurentian</i>	<i>Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation</i>	<i>Waterloo</i>	<i>Waterloo Commercialization Office (WatCo)</i>
<i>McMaster</i>	<i>Centre for Surgical Invention & Innovation, Centre for Probe Development, Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine, Xerox Centre for Engineering</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Centre for Imaging Technology Commercialization, BioIndustrial Innovation Centre, Western Research Development Office</i>
<i>Nipissing</i>	<i>Technology Transfer & Research Partnerships Office</i>	<i>Wilfrid Laurier</i>	<i>University-Industry Liaison Office</i>
<i>OCAD</i>	<i>Digital Media Research & Innovation Initiative, Mobile Experience and Innovation Centre</i>	<i>Windsor</i>	<i>Office of Research Services (Commercialization Services)</i>
<i>Queen's</i>	<i>Innovation Park at Queen's University, PARTEQ Innovations, GreenCentre Canada</i>	<i>York</i>	<i>Intellectual Property and Commercialization Office, MaRS, VentureLab</i>

funding and networking opportunities to develop their enterprise to the point where it can graduate out into the market. Interest has clearly been high in the program, with the institution expecting to achieve a 10 per cent participation rate in entrepreneurial activity. This is the only such goal in the province, meaning the penetration of entrepreneurship into the academic space could be much higher than it

currently is.

At most other universities with entrepreneurship spaces, the scope of the entrepreneurship activity is smaller. The focus of the programming implemented by other schools is often restricted to a more specialized and limited audience, usually with the intersection of one or two academic programs with

ONTARIO UNIVERSITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVES

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Entrepreneurship Program</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Entrepreneurship Program</i>
<i>Algoma</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Ryerson</i>	<i>Digital Media Zone, StartMeUp Ryerson</i>
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Blueprint, BioLink</i>	<i>Toronto</i>	<i>The Next 36, TechnoLABS</i>
<i>Carleton</i>	<i>Lead To Win, Nicol Internship Program, TIM Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Trent</i>	<i>Entrepreneurship Games</i>
<i>Guelph</i>	<i>Project SOY (Soybean Opportunities For Youth)</i>	<i>Ottawa</i>	<i>Start-up Garage, Entrepreneurship Mentorship Program, Entrepreneurship-in-Residence Program</i>
<i>Lakehead</i>	<i>Entrepreneur Certificate Program</i>	<i>UOIT</i>	<i>Ontario Global Edge, Gaming and Entrepreneurship Program</i>
<i>Laurentian</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Waterloo</i>	<i>VeloCity Residence, Garage & Campus, Conrad Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology Centre, Student Entrepreneurship Co-op (Masters Program associated).</i>
<i>McMaster</i>	<i>Xerox Centre for Engineering Entrepreneurship & Innovation, The Don Pether Incubation Centre</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>BizInc, Quantum Shift</i>
<i>Nipissing</i>	<i>The Nipissing University Student Development Fund</i>	<i>Wilfrid Laurier</i>	<i>Laurier LaunchPad</i>
<i>OCAD</i>	<i>Information Catalyst, Mobile Accelerator Program</i>	<i>Windsor</i>	<i>Youth Entrepreneurship Partnership</i>
<i>Queen's</i>	<i>Innovation Park</i>	<i>York</i>	<i>NetImpact</i>

a center for entrepreneurship appears to the case at Brock and McMaster.⁷⁰

With such a small portion of a university's activities centering on entrepreneurship, it is hard to accept that students "graduating with degrees as well as businesses" will soon become the norm. While operations like Ryerson's DMZ are producing promising results and valuable economic returns, they are still very much independent operations within the structures of universities. Furthermore, OUSA's conversations with facilitators of some Ontario entrepreneurship centres have highlighted that reconciling a university's educational demands with the life of an entrepreneur can be a difficult task for students, as well as faculty attempting to navigate both worlds. This implies that, despite an increasing focus on entrepreneurship within the ivory tower, a serious conversation about how entrepreneurship can be effectively leveraged into teaching and learning recognized by a university credit has yet to happen.

RECOMMENDATION: ONTARIO'S UNIVERSITIES SHOULD STRIVE TO INTRODUCE MORE STUDENTS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As highlighted earlier, while entrepreneurship in Canadian universities is only recently gaining momentum, a Kauffman Foundation research report authored in 2008 states that (entrepreneurship) "is one of the fastest growing subjects in today's undergraduate curricula."⁷¹ It states that in 1975, colleges and universities in the United States offered a hundred or so formal programs (majors, minors, and certificates) in entrepreneurship. The number had more than quadrupled by 2006, reaching more than 500. The number of entrepreneurship courses offered follows a similar trajectory; studies suggest that college campuses in the United States offered approximately 250 entrepreneurship courses in 1985. By 2008, more than 5,000 entrepreneurship courses were being offered in two-year and four-year institutions. Furthermore today, well over 400,000 students a year take courses in the subject, and

almost 9,000 faculty members teach it.⁷² Given our earlier sector scan, it is highly likely that American universities are offering a higher per capita suite of resources in this sector.

This is something the government should take note of not just from the perspective of post-secondary education, but also the overall economic prosperity of the province.

Many commentators on Ontario economic policy, including the Mowat Centre and Martin Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, have noted that Ontario currently lags behind the OECD in both productivity and innovation.⁷³ While these words are often overused, in this case they apply very specifically to the amount of Ontario's research and development that ends up in products and technologies being brought to market.⁷⁴ This phenomenon is often called Canada's "innovation gap," which is often misunderstood due to the rampant overuse of the word "innovation."

Two factors can lead to an innovation gap: an under-investment in research and development or a lack of willingness amongst individuals to take risks on business ventures. Though there is widespread concern that Canadian businesses under-invest in research and development, the federal government has more than doubled spending on research initiatives at Ontario universities, with particular emphasis on research in engineering and health technologies that could lead to major economic innovations.⁷⁵ In fact, many have pointed out that the level of research taking place at universities has increased dramatically in recent years.⁷⁶

According to commentators, the Canadian research environment is performing poorly on most innovation indexes relative to other industrialized countries. One of the main explanations for this is the high level of research output relative to the low level of commercialization in the sector. The low level of commercialization can be partially explained by a lack of entrepreneurship culture in Ontario's

public and private sector. Without entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and angel investors to help turn ideas into products, Ontario cannot unleash the economic potential of its research investment. While the government has made investments into services to help commercialize university research, these investments will not achieve their true potential if Ontario lacks for entrepreneurs willing to take a risk, make an investment, and create an idea out of that investment. For this reason, OUSA concurs with the recommendations of many other advocates of entrepreneurship that educational institutions must do more to expose students to the possibilities of entrepreneurship.

Some universities have already begun setting metrics and prioritized addressing this gap. For example, through the addition of entrepreneurship opportunities to students specializing in aerospace, design, health and social entrepreneurship, Ryerson is hoping to have 10 per cent of its student body involved in the development of some kind of product, service or company by the time they graduate.⁷⁷ This does not mean that 10 per cent of students will be starting businesses, but rather 10 per cent of students will have been exposed to entrepreneurship as a career option and life choice; 10 per cent of students will be able to assess whether entrepreneurship is right for them. Whether through government incentive or market pressure, more universities should encourage students to investigate entrepreneurship, and equip more students with the knowledge of how to turn an idea into a business or firm.

While no significant polling of Ontario students exists at this point, research has suggested that the recent economic downturn, subsequent rise in unemployment, and the perception of job insecurity, is enticing many incoming students to explore entrepreneurial ventures. Many young people saw their parents being laid off and their peers having trouble launching traditional careers. Partly out of necessity, today's students increasingly look to their own talents and "personal brands," as the basis for a sturdy future; conventional employment no longer

looks as secure as it once did, nor entrepreneurship as risky. Especially with the proliferation of social media profiles, more youth are realizing the importance of generating their personal brand and initiatives.⁷⁸

STRATEGY ONE: ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

One of the biggest challenges with entrepreneurship is that it is a very ambiguous concept to define and promote.

For entrepreneurship opportunities to be successful, institutions must interact with their communities, both within and outside the university in order to provide students with the unique mentorship and networking opportunities that cannot be replicated inside a classroom. To staff entrepreneurship programs, institutions cannot draw on a single specialized pool of credentialed academics, but instead must combine lessons from a wide variety of disciplines, from business to engineering to multimedia. Furthermore, entrepreneurship instructors are often not traditional academics, but instead peer mentors, former employers, and investors who hail from outside the academy altogether. Similarly, an entrepreneurship program that works for one campus cannot necessarily be mirrored and imported onto another; the student ecosystem must be taken into consideration amongst other things to calibrate the offerings. All of these challenges are uncharacteristic of traditional new program design in universities and, as such, require additional support.

The Kaufman Institute consequently suggests that institutions must then enhance programming from an ecosystem approach. "An ecosystem is a self-shaping system of intricately interrelating agents who respond to each other and to local conditions in a dynamic fashion. Rather than being able to "set it and forget it," the manager of an academic ecosystem needs to respond to a changing balance of forces: the mix of students and their aspirations, the needs of the community, the shape of the economy, and the

availability and nature of resources from inside and outside the institution. This is both an administrative challenge and a source of vitality and creativity.”⁷⁹

Some of the suggested building blocks of the ecosystem can be (but not limited to):

- Supervised coursework in the classroom at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As things currently stand, Ontario universities do not offer a full-fledged undergraduate degree program for entrepreneurship. Similarly, while some universities do offer courses focused on developing entrepreneurship skills, they tend to be limited to upper year courses within certain faculties with targeted enrollment (usually engineering and business). This creates an environment where students in other disciplines are indirectly dissuaded from pursuing a non-traditional outcome from their degree;
- Supervised “co-curricular” learning programs, such as internships, lectures, and clubs, based outside the classroom, with or without academic credit;
- Immersive programs, such as business incubators and accelerators, targeted to students who have exceptional interest in and prospects of establishing businesses. In Ontario currently, as listed in an earlier graph, many existing incubators are primarily focused on commercialization of high end academic research and are inaccessible to many disciplines and entrepreneurship ventures;
- Business plan competitions and idea-gathering events, designed to stimulate interest in entrepreneurship and publicize university programs;
- Networking and connecting programs designed to connect entrepreneurial students with mentors, team members, and potential investors;
- Internships and other experiential placements, bridging university life with the start of an outside career;

- Scholarships and other incentive programs to attract and identify entrepreneurial talent; and
- Venture capital funding sponsored directly through the institution, private or corporate grants to seed fund new ventures.

STRATEGY TWO: ENSURE THAT EACH STUDENT INTERACTS WITH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOME WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM THROUGHOUT THEIR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

One of the stated goals of the Youth Employment Strategy is to help foster a culture of entrepreneurship amongst Ontario youth. The Kaufman foundation has synthesized one way of achieving this through what is called the “funnel” or “pipeline” method, whereby through courses, extracurricular offerings and online platforms, a majority of students will receive some exposure to entrepreneurship. Understandably, not every student will pursue an entrepreneurial venture. However, even those that do not opt to pursue entrepreneurship will emerge from this program with a greater appreciation of the role of entrepreneurship in society and may even apply more entrepreneurial approaches to their chosen fields of employment. Furthermore, it might also spur a general culture of innovation and enhance productivity for those who end up working in traditional workplaces but still retain an element of entrepreneurial thinking.

Several universities in the United States have ventures that aim to expose more students to entrepreneurial activities that could be adapted to a Canadian post-secondary context.

- 1.) The University of Michigan holds a “Distinguished Innovator Seminar Series” introductory class for 900 to 1,000 students, half of them freshman, with many more participating via online video. In this program faculty members receive a \$5,000 scholarship to popularly disseminate the results of their research to a wider audience;⁸⁰
- 2.) University of North Carolina Chapel Hill hosts

HELPFUL TANGENT: HOW SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP⁸¹

Syracuse University in New York has implemented a wide variety of initiatives to help foster a culture of entrepreneurship in both the surrounding community and within the institution. What is most remarkable about these initiatives is how they have been implemented on every level of the university. SU boasts the following initiatives, which could all be taken as exemplars for Ontario in their own right, let alone as a cohesive working plan:

- *The Department of Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises, in the Whitman School of Management, is a formal academic department, offering undergraduate major and minor programs and masters and doctoral degrees;*
- *The Raymond von Dran Innovation and Disruptive Entrepreneurship Accelerator (RvD IDEA), is a partnership between the university and the Tech Garden in downtown Syracuse. Open to student entrepreneurs from colleges and universities in Upstate New York, it offers courses and workshops, support services, seed funding, a student group, and sandbox and incubator programs;*
- *Innovation in clean and renewable energy and the environment is supported by The Syracuse Center of Excellence, which provides space and funding for new ventures with green technologies that can be commercialized;*
- *Students in the New York State Science & Technology Law Center work on business plans for the protection and commercialization of intellectual property from new technologies created by startup and existing companies in New York State;*
- *The Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, working in conjunction with the Department of Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises, is the department's outreach arm and facilitates entrepreneurship both on campus and in the community. Its many activities include a business plan competition, three student entrepreneurship clubs, an entrepreneurship learning community, an internship program, and more;*
- *COLAB is an interdisciplinary initiative based in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Housed in the same downtown building as Syracuse's design department, it encourages students and faculty to work with outside groups and organizations to solve real-world problems;*
- *The School of Information Studies, Bandier Program in Music Industry, departments of sport management, industrial design, fashion design, and others infuse various courses with entrepreneurship. For instance, "Introduction to Information Technology" requires students to create a hypothetical venture and use IT tools in their business. "Spring Break in Silicon Valley" provides students with a one-week exposure to technology startups;*
- *The Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship, within the Newhouse School of Public Communications, offers a "home" for students starting new media ventures. The Center sponsors an annual business plan competition at the SXSW festival;*
- *Located in a former warehouse, the South Side Innovation Center is a business incubator offering space and equipment, coaching and consulting, and services to community entrepreneurs;*
- *The College of Engineering and Computer Science offer Specialized Startup Weekends, combining students with an industry partner;*
- *The Institute for Veterans and Military Families coordinates eight universities in offering an entrepreneurship bootcamp for veterans with disabilities. It also offers programs for family members of disabled veterans;*
- *The Near West Side Small Business Development Program provides a business association, micro-financing program, workshops, counselling services, and other programs to support community entrepreneurs.*

As curated above, Syracuse University provides an example of the range and diversity of programs that interact dynamically with each other, the university as a whole, and the larger community to form an ecosystem. As one university official writes, "The ecosystem is a free-forming, open environment with programs that can start or end as needed, not fixed like a fishbowl." More than 7,500 students a year take eighty-five or more different courses infused with entrepreneurship each semester. About 100 new student ventures are launched every year. The main takeaway here being that instead of one-off specialized programs or targeted programming, a wider net needs to be cast by universities to ensure a majority of students from various faculties can engage in entrepreneurial activities.

an annual “Carolina Pitch Challenge” which teams officially enter each January, and after entering gain access to a wide range of resources to help them learn how to turn their ideas into viable business plans. Activities span the academic year, beginning in the fall with recruitment and team-formation activities to attract the best ideas, as well as demonstrate the value of participating in and winning the competition. Finalists compete for top prizes by presenting their plans to a panel of judges made up of successful entrepreneurs, domain experts or industry professionals with at least five years of related work experience. This concept promotes a spirit of teamwork and self-development amongst students, staff and faculty often working on the same team. Up for grabs is over \$50,000 in seed funding;⁸²

3.) Washington University in St. Louis, through its Skandalaris Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, solicits student ideas for businesses and projects on its IdeaBounce® website, and lets users connect there with potential collaborators and mentors. The key distinction here is that apart from traditional science and tech ideas, the open ended nature of the website encourages students with social innovation pitches to also find potential team members;

4.) Stanford University runs Venture Lab, an online platform that lets students and community members watch online lectures and subsequently form teams and collaborate on projects—the result being that tens of thousands of students are given a taste of entrepreneurial concepts and experiences before they reach the classroom.

One particularly interesting aspect about all these universities was that entrepreneurial programming doesn’t exist in individual silos or vacuums; instead they are usually wrapped in an overall institutional strategy that targets the issue from several angles (the University of Syracuse, featured earlier, being a good example). Instead of being relegated as an ancillary function, entrepreneurship is something lauded as an institutional priority by senior leadership in the institution.

Entrepreneurship faces a wide variety of challenges in the post-secondary space however, making it a difficult proposition for traditional university governance and program design. For instance, it doesn’t fit neatly in the traditional model of education. Excellent entrepreneurial education is a combination of both theory and practice, which can sometimes be volatile and expose students to a certain degree of risk. An effective program design must encapsulate some elements of both, keeping a foot in each of two fast-changing worlds simultaneously. Moreover, it must impart of a wide range of skills, everything from strategic planning, design and elevator pitching, to patent law and technical skills. And it must accommodate students with all kinds of interests and ambitions, in fields ranging from software programming and multimedia to crafts and community service.⁸³

It is also important for programs to be promoted, in order for students to understand what entrepreneurship is, and overcome negative stereotypes. The Ryerson DMZ has done this well, and has brought its activities to a wide audience through an emphasis on promotion and education. In the past year, there have been approximately 430 tours to the DMZ to important audiences, including government ministers and financiers as well as leading business people and industry associations. There has also been substantial press coverage, with over 600 instances of positive media coverage locally, nationally, and internationally. High profile presentations have been made at the Toronto Economic Club and at conferences and events around the world including in India, Brazil, China and Russia.⁸⁴

It is also similarly important for universities to design effective pathways to link graduating students with the entrepreneurial space. This must be handled differently than the career services options available for the average student hoping to pursue further education or enter the traditional job market. Student entrepreneurs must receive support whether they are developing a new venture, or bringing an existing product out of the supportive university bubble.

One way to meet this necessity is to award academic credit for entrepreneurial activities. While this remains to be accomplished cohesively in Canada, many relevant examples from the US are available. At the Washington University of St Louis Skandalaris Centre, the university offers over 80 entrepreneurship courses in a variety of formats for a variety of students. Apart from an undergraduate specialization degree, it also offers multi level certificates and transcript citations.⁸⁵

At any university, there will be the two extremes of students; those casually interested in entrepreneurship who take a few elective courses and extracurricular events, and; those who drop out of university to pursue a venture full time. However OUSA believes that an ideal entrepreneurship program should also prioritize the interests of a large body of students somewhere in the middle of those two extremes, to allow them the option of completing their academic studies and transitioning to the job market as well.

Once a student entrepreneur graduates, they understandably lose an important support system that exists within a campus. OUSA suggests that it is imperative for the provincial government and local organizations to facilitate this transition and prioritize this support network. This could be realized by partnering with local incubators, business organizations, investor networks, and so on. The Ontario Networks of Excellence⁸⁶ is suggested as a cluster of institutions and incubators that can serve as anchors for student entrepreneurs in their vicinity.

OUSA would also caution against the desire to directly measure entrepreneurship programming and investments using a narrow set of metrics. The most obvious metrics that are often cited on the websites of university incubators is the number of startups, number of students involved and total sum of venture capital funding raised.⁸⁷ However, consider this scenario: What if a student starts multiple businesses that fail? What if this process taught these students several valuable learning outcomes, which they

then go on to use in a traditional job? What if many years into their traditional employment they decide to change directions and emerge as a successful entrepreneur?

Similarly difficult to measure the impact is the enhanced worker productivity or “intrapreneurship”, as it is called, that someone exposed to entrepreneurship might bring to a traditional organization. Lastly, while the most glamorous startup companies tend to be related to science and technology, many might opt to open a new NGO or restaurant, generating good earnings for themselves, jobs for several others, and a fulfilling lifestyle.

RECOMMENDATION: THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE NEW INCENTIVES FOR UNIVERSITIES TO CREATE AN ECOSYSTEM OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES

The Government of Ontario has articulated its intent to provide new and dedicated resources to support Ontario’s young entrepreneurs.⁸⁸ This is welcome news, as student entrepreneurs are more likely to carry and refine their business skills throughout the rest of their lives. Encouraging entrepreneurship is not as cut-and-dry an approach as might be initially conceived however. Typically, when the government expects an outcome of the university sector, they are simply able to launch targeted funding, create a report-back structure and report progress at the end of the fiscal calendar. As has been discussed, this is not always possible with entrepreneurship, particularly entrepreneurship that will boost local economies and help employ more Ontarians.

Risk-aversion has been cited as one of the hindrances to burgeoning entrepreneurship in Ontario. Even the most risk averse university will create its own VeloCity or DMZ if given the funds to do it, but the institutional commitment to making that centre a success - to risk its own resources on something that could succeed or fail - is the heart of entrepreneurship required to inspire students to create their own businesses. If institutions are simply allotted money and told what

to do with it, the investment would defy the very spirit of entrepreneurship it is intended to provoke.

OUSA recommends that the provincial government make new funds available to universities to help foster student entrepreneurship, but that the government require that universities make a concerted investment in their own ideas, quantifying results and committing to targets. Some ways that the government could structure the funds are as follows:

- Provide funding for entrepreneurship initiatives in the form of a mix of grants and interest-free loans. Providing interest-subsidized credits for entrepreneurs has been used as a tool by many jurisdictions to incentivize entrepreneurial activity.⁸⁹ Studies of the effectiveness of this type of policy have revealed that they can be effective at moving capital to targeted populations, but at the expense of non-targeted entities. Given that the funding would be open to all universities and colleges, and that universities and colleges are not an open market, this spin-off effect would not apply to the application of low-risk loans to institutions;
- Create a dedicated innovation fund, explicitly stating that funding for student entrepreneurship centres will not be added to base operating funding, as many expiring targeted funds are. This way, for entrepreneurship initiatives to add value to the university community long-term, they will have to attract investment either from the institution centrally or external investors;
- Require that institutions submit proposals for entrepreneurship centres that indicate how they will integrate with local economic clusters, the academic curriculum and differentiate themselves from the offering of other universities and colleges. Further, they should be required to indicate how they would add value to Ontario's economy, projecting jobs created, products brought to market, etc.

RECOMMENDATION: THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE NEW SUPPORT-

BASED INITIATIVES FOR STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS

A crucially important component of Ontario's support for post-secondary entrepreneurship should be direct support for student entrepreneurs. Already, student entrepreneurs in Ontario have attracted investments from the Toronto Star, GO Transit, all levels of government, venture capitalists and many others.⁹⁰ Ryerson University has even gone as far as to set up a dedicated network of angel investors to promote businesses started within the university, including those created by students. Furthermore, their DMZ Accelerator Program participants receive optional equity funding, giving the institution a direct stake in the success or failure of its businesses. The DMZ also has a liberal intellectual property regime where projects are considered independent entities with students retaining ownership of the products. As a result of these sorts of direct investments, entrepreneurship at Ryerson has flourished, with the DMZ creating over 650 new jobs.⁹¹

However helpful institutional idea accelerators have been, the fact remains that the financial realities of student entrepreneurs are not well known or well researched. Students who begin startups and businesses during school have to juggle their workplace costs with their tuition, ancillary fees and living expenses. For students who begin businesses after graduation and who utilized student loans to help pay for their education, they will be required to grapple with substantial student debt, limiting the amount they will be able to contribute to their entrepreneurial activities. The recent announcement by the Ontario government of a one year grace period on OSAP interest for entrepreneurs after graduation⁹² is a good first step in this direction but more can be done to alleviate risk aversion and financial burdens faced by young entrepreneurs.

Governments are accustomed to supporting students through the provision of integrated student loans, but this system is not always an easy fit with the realities of entrepreneurship. Student entrepreneurs face vastly different types of costs and assets than a

typical student. As such, new types of student support must be created in order to accommodate this new aspect of our post-secondary system.

OUSA's recommendation is that the provincial government merges the concepts of student financial assistance and entrepreneurship in the creation of a new type of grant program, accessible to student entrepreneurs at Ontario universities. This program should have a few key features:

- The fund would be a competitive application process, requiring that students develop business, development and marketing plans;
- The fund should take into account both academic and business costs associated with the university a student is working from;
- The fund should take the form of a grant, as opposed to a loan in order to ensure that the failure of the business does not prevent the student from rebounding and beginning new ventures;
- Some component of the fund should take the form of equity, giving the granting entity (the government or an arms-length foundation) a stake in the success or failure of the business;
- The fund should accommodate all different types of entrepreneurship, including technology and social entrepreneurship;
- It should also have differentially sized grant amounts, allowing businesses of all different sizes to be supported.

CHAPTER 4: REGULATING ONTARIO'S UNPAID WORK-EXPERIENCE MARKET

In many ways, the existence of unpaid internships has sullied the reputation and public perception of internships, which are supposed to be valuable, sought-after experiences. Internships are, by definition, a form of work integrated, experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. An internship can take many forms and can be for credit, not-for-credit, full-time, part-time, paid, unpaid, with faculty supervision, and without any university involvement. A quality internship for students, apart from being principally paid, should have a number of structural elements that facilitate high impact learning.

Unpaid Internships Run Contrary to the Principles of Good Work-Integrated Learning

In an ideal internship there should be a degree of qualified supervision and self-study that allows students to “learn by doing” and to reflect upon that learning in a way that achieves certain learning goals and objectives. Feedback for improvement and the development or refinement of learning goals is also essential. What distinguishes an intern from a volunteer is the deliberative form of learning that takes place. There must be a balance between learning and contributing. The student, the student's institution, and the internship placement site must share in the responsibility to ensure that the balance is appropriate and that the learning is of sufficiently high quality to warrant the effort, which might include academic credit. Ideally then, internships should be defined as “structured and career relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program.” When done well, internships provide students with high-impact educational experiences that result in many desirable learning and personal development outcomes. Part of the criteria for this is that an internship must adhere to the following principles of high-impact educational practices, which require that they:

1.) Are effortful;

- 2.) Help students build substantive relationships;
- 3.) Help students engage across differences;
- 4.) Provide students with rich feedback;
- 5.) Help students apply and test what they are learning in new situations; and
- 6.) Provide opportunities for students to reflect on the people they are becoming.

However, for many Ontario students, this is not what internships are. For students who have graduated from a university program, oftentimes with student debt, an unpaid internship is an uncertain, unpleasant door to a job they are not guaranteed to hold by the end of it. In today's labour market, many internships function more like employment than learning experiences. Some employers have become inclined to exploit the historically high supply of post-secondary graduates as an opportunity to provide unpaid internships, with estimates of unpaid internship positions in Canada ranging between 100,000 and 300,000.⁹³ In Ontario, as in most provinces, unpaid work violates labour laws unless it falls under a list of exemptions. Under those laws, interns are obligated to receive pay if their duties fall under the definition of “work,” which classifies them as employees. However, there is much ambiguity about how far the Employment Standards Act (ESA) goes to proactively enforce these standards and to what extent the government is policing this issue. Given the recent coverage in the media, many employers are being exposed on social media and are subsequently changing their practices, for example HootSuite recently discontinued their unpaid internship program after a public backlash.⁹⁴

Unpaid Internships Exacerbate Social Inequities

Even worse, unpaid internships can exacerbate the social inequalities that post-secondary education purports to eliminate in the first place. One can argue that an occupational inequality will be created by unpaid internships, since these positions enhance the effect of income inequality, social mobility, and the ability for youths from equity-seeking groups to enter various occupations. Often youths from lower

socio-economic backgrounds are less able to forego wages and use private savings or incur private debt to participate in unpaid labour, and must simply avoid these opportunities because the financial cost is too high. A prime example of this was discussed at the recent OCUFA 2013 World Views Conference where a panel of journalism school administrators and journalists admitted the almost compulsory nature of internships in order to gain a foothold in the industry and how their largely unpaid culture has the potential of excluding underrepresented groups from the field of journalism.⁹⁵

Similarly, the nature of unpaid internships can also be a major challenge for students with student debt or other post-secondary education related expenses. In a recent HEQCO survey, “not being paid at all” was identified as a major challenge by 24 per cent of university students who had engaged in work integrated learning, followed by insufficient pay and unexpected financial costs (major challenges for 14 per cent and 13 per cent of respondents respectively).⁹⁶ According to the recent Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) Project report,⁹⁷ there is also higher correlation for racialized minorities, new immigrants (by extrapolation we can assume this also might apply to international students) and youth to be susceptible to these conditions. Other drawbacks of unpaid internships include lack of job security, guaranteed work hours, employment benefits and general working conditions.

According to a comprehensive recent survey from the US, high-income students through their academic preferences, social networks and social capital, enjoy more opportunities at the largest companies, are more likely to be paid, and through these networks have access to a limited number of opportunities in organizations their peers compete fiercely to enter. The important correlation found was that large corporations are less likely to offer unpaid internships, and since low income students struggle to access opportunities in them, they are funneled down to smaller organizations and not-for-profits

that are unable or unwilling to offer paid internships. While such data doesn’t exist for Ontario, the important caveat with the report was that low income students were more likely to be in education, health, social sciences, and communications, and less likely to be in business, engineering, and agriculture & natural resources; this led to the self-actualizing cycle described above. The report also highlighted that women were overwhelmingly more likely to participate in unpaid internship opportunities. From a faculty perspective, business and engineering based employers were much less likely to offer unpaid internships than those in education, social sciences, humanities and health sciences.⁹⁸

RECOMMENDATION: AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT TO INCLUDE PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN WORK-EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

Ontario’s Employment Standards Act states that all employees must be paid at least the Ontario minimum wage (\$10.25 per hour for most employees). An “employee” includes a person who receives training from an employer. A person is not considered an employee if these six conditions are met:

- 1.) The training is similar to that which is given in a vocational school;
- 2.) The training is for the benefit of the individual;
- 3.) The person providing the training derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the individual while he or she is being trained;
- 4.) The individual does not displace employees of the person providing the training;
- 5.) The individual is not accorded a right to become an employee of the person providing the training;
- 6.) The individual is advised that he or she will receive no remuneration for the time that he or she spends in training.

A casual glance seems to suggest that many of the internships in the market could technically be considered illegal. Interpretations state that unless all six stipulations listed above are met the job would be deemed “employment” and as such would be

required to pay at least the \$10.25 minimum wage.

Further, any work experience approved by a college or university is exempted from the Employment Standards Act. In an ideal world, paid interns would be hired during the school year, summer and post graduation as a form of work-integrated learning, where the student receives hands on training and the employer has an opportunity to test the student's aptitude for relevant work. However, since the Employment Standards Act also does not apply to any workers enrolled in a program approved by a college or university, any student in a co-op, internship, practicum or placement is not guaranteed the right to be paid.

As a result of these exemptions, two separate but related issues exist in the context of Ontario's unpaid internship market:

- 1.) Due to either ignorance or poor enforcement of the Employment Standards Act, some employers are offering illegal unpaid internships outside the context of a post-secondary program;
- 2.) Some employers may be utilizing unpaid labour unfairly in partnership with a post-secondary institution.

STRATEGY ONE: PROACTIVELY ENFORCE THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT, PENALIZING ALL EMPLOYERS OFFERING ILLEGAL UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

From OUSA's standpoint, some employers are currently exploiting the law due to a lack of active monitoring and enforcement from the government, with the loophole permitting them to simply call people interns and thereby avoid the ESA regulations. This is a negative trend for the overall economy due to the potential for unpaid internships to replace paid work, or artificially create opportunity in industries that cannot support more employment. However, employers have shown reluctance in hiring young workers without job-specific skills, and arguably

some employers who would not otherwise provide workers with experience to develop skills might allow interns to gain low impact experience if they do not have to pay them. An ideal law therefore would be to balance out these forces.

While some employers may claim that their internships are a high-value educational experience, OUSA believes it would be difficult for a post-graduate, non-educational internship that involves a student doing any real work to meet all six requirements. Firstly, it is well known that many intern tasks involve the performance of administrative duties; one could suggest that these aren't tasks a "vocational" school would offer. Through points 2 & 3 of the Employment Standards Act, it can also be deduced that the work of an intern should not replace what was previously the responsibility of a paid employee. Looking at points 5 & 6 further reveals the ambiguity of many of the internships in the market, since they often lure applicants with the impression that they might be competing for a full-time job.

While not many legal cases exist, one recent example is the decision earlier this summer by the Ontario Labour Relations Board in *Sandhu v. Brar*, involving a claim for wages by an unpaid worker who worked for two weeks in a role as a computer technician. The unpaid worker installed software, answered the phone, and was taught how to build computers. It was understood that the employee (Brar) would not be paid (criterion 6), but based on the employer's evidence, Brar, a trained software engineer, answered the telephone and installed computer software. The directors acknowledged that they received the benefit of Brar's skills and charged their customers for his expertise. They argued that, in exchange, Brar received some training as a computer technician. However, the employer was unable to present any evidence that the training provided to Brar was comparable to the vocational school training to become a computer technician. Further, the employer provided no evidence as to what particular skills were taught to Brar or the number of hours of instruction. The case concluded in favor of the student over the

employer and it was ruled that there was appropriate benefit to the employer based on Brar's contributions.^{99,100}

The simplest solution to the existence of post-graduate unpaid internships is for the Ministry of Labour to aggressively enforce interpretations of the existing legislation, which would mean significant curtailing of unpaid internships. This is easier said than actually accomplished however, since unpaid interns face a heavy incentive not to report violations of the ESA to the Ministry of Labour. OUSA suggests that an anonymous reporting system, combined with more proactive efforts on the ministry to contact employers advertising unpaid internships, could help alleviate some of these concerns.

STRATEGY TWO: AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT TO INCLUDE PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Currently, the Ontario Employment Standards Act does not apply to individuals performing work in a work experience program authorized by a university. While students are not the only individuals not protected by the ESA, it is concerning that the aim of co-operative education is to provide students with real work experience, but not provide them with the same protections or recourse as their coworkers. Students are concerned that while on a co-operative education term, students may not be remitted pay, may be required to work on public holidays without adequate compensation, and may be required to work unreasonable hours of work, for example.

This appears to be a substantial problem. In a recent HEQCO survey, nearly 40 per cent of work-integrated learning opportunities available to students were unpaid. When asked for reasons why they did not pay interns, the most common reasons cited were that the program "did not require them to," or the students "received academic credit instead." Moreover, a third of co-op employers reported not paying their employees for these reasons, despite the fact that

co-op positions are typically full-time arrangements alternating with the academic year. It is perhaps unsurprising then, that the most commonly cited challenge cited by work-integrated learning students is not receiving pay for work.¹⁰¹

It must be recognized however, that not all unpaid work-integrated learning experiences are negative experiences for students. Some professional placements and field experiences run parallel to the academic year and offer students valuable learning experiences that will assist them post-graduation. Placements and clinical experiences in nursing and social work are sometimes unpaid, but are integral to professional practice. OUSA believes that some delineation must be made between work-experiences that are purpose built to train students for future work and those that utilize student labour to fulfill organizational ends. The first category of work-integrated learning should be allowed to remain unpaid, while the second should require compensation.

To fulfill these ends, OUSA would suggest that the Employment Standards Act be amended to encompass students in post-secondary programs. The Act currently contains an exemption allowing for unpaid opportunities that exist for the benefit of the student, which could be amended to apply to the wide range of practice in the work-integrated learning sphere. Without further legal analysis, it is unclear as to whether the current six provisions unpaid employment experiences must meet would fit the current post-secondary context. However, it is clear that the principles behind them apply well to the situation.

For instance, hospitals employing nursing students in part-time professional placement in partnership with professional schools could argue that the placements provide tangible vocational training, little benefit to the employer, certainly no chance of displacing current workers and enormous benefit to the student. In such a case, it seems reasonable that the exemptions in the ESA for training-based unpaid

work would apply to this situation, allowing it to remain unpaid.

However, these exemptions would not encompass unpaid full-time work for a major company, or an organization that did not actively construct an internship or work experience with the express intention of helping educate a student. From OUSA's perspective, this would be a positive development. Operationalizing this in such a way as to preserve valuable work-integrated learning opportunities will be challenging, but it is a necessary conversation for the post-secondary sector to undertake.

Further, while these proposals might seem a substantive shift from current market practices of unpaid internships, the experiences of universities like the University of Waterloo have demonstrated the success of a robust paid co-op program to both employers and students. While employers might be critical of the financial impact of exponentially increasing the number of paid opportunities, studies have shown tremendous overall economic benefit for organizations that have offered work-integrated learning like co-ops and internships. Included amongst a number of benefits are reduced recruitment costs, since these experiences serve as a good indicator for whether the student has the potential to be a good fit for full time employment after graduation. Employers are also able to aid in the productivity of existing workers through the addition of qualified, flexible and skilled workers who are very in tune with the sector. Furthermore, employers can also gain access to state-of-the-art technology, facilities, and knowledge available in the university sector for certain jobs when students undertake applied research projects in public private partnerships.

CONCLUSION

Youth unemployment is a complex issue that, unfortunately, does not lend itself to simple solutions. Ontario is still feeling the affects of macroeconomic pressures brought on by the recession, many of which are outside of the control of policymakers in Ontario. We must be cautious in considering calls for a significant long-term shift in how we allocate or prioritize funding in Ontario's post-secondary sectors based on pressures and demands of today's economy, recognizing we are educating for the economy of the future.

It is clear that university graduates are well positioned to enter and excel in the labour market in the long-term, even as the market's demands change. It is for this reason that we must fix the inequities that exist in Ontario's post-secondary system, to ensure that all Ontarians have equal opportunity to participate in Ontario's economy to the fullest extent. A renewed focus on increasing equity of access is necessary to build the fair society to which we aspire, as well as build the stronger economy we need.

There is, however, work to be done to help university graduates enter the labour market in the shorter term. For this reason, expanding experiential learning experiences that enhance both learning and employment outcomes must be a focus moving forward. This will require further cooperation between universities and employers, with government support to help address barriers to expansion of work-integrated learning.

The government must also ensure that students and recent graduates are not being taken advantage of by employers who, unwittingly or otherwise, provide unpaid positions where students are learning little to nothing and doing actual work. This trend is contributing to unemployment and underemployment of youth in the province, and enabling employers to further reduce their responsibility to train employees.

Finally, entrepreneurship can play a role in addressing youth unemployment, if more students

are exposed to it, and students with a willingness and aptitude for entrepreneurship are properly supported. More broadly, further entrepreneurship opportunities may help to close Ontario's innovation and productivity gap.

As the Youth Jobs Strategy continues to unfold OUSA looks forward to engaging on the issues raised in this submission with the government, our partners, and stakeholders from across the province. An underperforming labour market directly or indirectly affects all Ontarians, and will only be meaningfully addressed through a cross-government, cross-sector, long-term strategy.

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