

December 8, 2023

The Honourable Jill Dunlop
Minister of Colleges and Universities
5th Floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Re: Building a Strong Post-Secondary Education Sector in Ontario

Dear Minister Dunlop,

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of 60,000 businesses of all sizes across Ontario and 150+ local chambers and boards of trade. Post-secondary institutions are pillars in Ontario communities, playing a pivotal role as centres of research and development and preparing students for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) commends the Government of Ontario for appointing the Blue-Ribbon panel to highlight key issues facing the sector and develop recommendations.

I'm writing to express the OCC's support for the recommendations outlined in the recent report on *Ensuring financial sustainability for Ontario's postsecondary sector*. We hope that you can move expeditiously with the following measures, also outlined in more detail in our [submission to the Blue-Ribbon Panel](#), to enable a robust post-secondary institution system that safeguards Ontario's future and labour market needs, ensures student access, and supports the quality of the province's universities and colleges.

- Lift the cap on high-demand programs to allow more students to enroll in programs where there is a great demand for graduates in the labour market. This will help fuel the talent pipeline and meet growing demand from Ontario high school students.
- Assist Ontario post-secondary institutions in building a research and innovation support system for the development and commercialization of intellectual property, including better integration with Intellectual Property Ontario to grow ideas into market-ready products.
- Increase funding for northern grants that have not been adjusted to ensure a vibrant and financially viable post-secondary sector in northern Ontario.
- Remove the 10 percent tuition cut for all domestic students and the four-year tuition freeze for post-secondary institutions.
- Increase multi-year base operating funding and multi-year tuition flexibility to help facilitate long-term planning for post-secondary institutions to increase enrolment and meet labour market needs, foster ground-breaking research and development, and boost economic development throughout Ontario's communities.

- Develop a strategy, in consultation with the sector, to better leverage labour market information to help inform institutions' development of post-secondary programming to ensure it is aligned with market demands and rewarded for meeting those demands.
- Reassess the International Student Fee Recovery system to ensure institutions have adequate budgets to better provide tailored wrap around supports for international students.

We commend your government's efforts to make Ontario a better place to live and do business. To ensure the continued strength of Ontario's economy, concerted efforts are required to ensure our future talent pipeline is strong and well-trained.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce