

Best wishes for a great summer

While you are enjoying some well-earned down-time and preparing for a new year of classes, your elected bargaining team is hard at work negotiating a new collective agreement.

Thanks for all of your support as they make sure we all get the best possible deal at the negotiating table. Be sure to continue using your solidarity sun-shades all through the summer months.

There will be continued communications from the bargaining team as negotiations progress. Look for bargaining bulletins in your email inbox. If you are not receiving your union emails telephone the OPSEU Resource Centre at 1-800-268-7376 and get yourself onto the email list.

Your CAAT-A Divisional Executive sends best wishes for a great summer.

Ontario Online, and why it matters to you

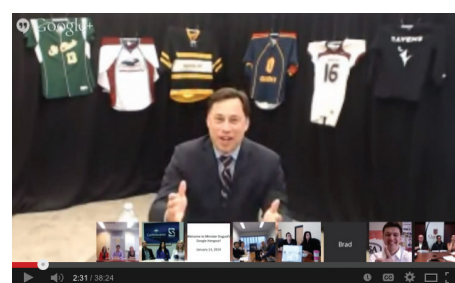
by Darryl Bedford and Jennifer Boswell, Local 110 (Fanshawe)

On January 13, 2014, Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Brad Duguid announced a new institution called Ontario Online. The announcement, moderated by a student from Carleton University, was live-streamed and posted on YouTube under the title "MTCU Google Hangout."

After a short speech by Duguid, one question each was posed from student panels at MacMaster, Confederation College, St. Clair College, Queens University and the University of Waterloo. Afterwards, questions from the media were allowed.

Who wasn't part of this announcement? Faculty. Neither college faculty with OPSEU nor university faculty with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) were involved.

This is not surprising since neither group was consulted on the plan.



Watch the MTCU Google Hangout recording on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OprAhtZo_o8

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What is Ontario Online?

Here are the basics:

- Dozens of Ontario post-secondary credits are to be centralized in one bureaucratic entity called Ontario Online
- \$42 million dollars is being dedicated over 3 years to launch the site
- The site is scheduled to go live for the 2014/2015 academic year, with growing postsecondary participation expected over time
- Students will be able to access Ontario Online to take online courses offered by a range of colleges and universities
- Students will immediately know which institutions will recognize the credit, so credit transferability is key to the plan
- This “collaborative center of excellence” aims to improve the learning experience and provide better access to high quality post-secondary education from anywhere in the province.

Besides what is in the YouTube announcement, OCUFA has published a leaked confidential memo from Deputy Minister Deb Newman with further details-- <http://ocufa.on.ca/wordpress/assets/Leaked-Memo-Online-learning.pdf>

The Newman memo promises that, over time, there will be “increased productivity gains through collaboration, and an enhanced national and international profile for Ontario in the online learning landscape.”

Near the end of the YouTube announcement, a reporter referenced how far online technology extends reach. Duguid answered that there is no reason why Ontario Online can’t be global.

Who developed this?

This is a program developed collaboratively by ‘representatives’—without faculty or other support staff—from Ontario’s colleges and universities. Discussions were held in the summer of 2013.

Duguid says that all Ontario colleges are on board, as they had already organized themselves in preparation for this initiative. Some universities are also ready to participate. It is expected that more universities may come on board as the program gets up and running.

Discussions in summer 2013 were so positive, in Duguid’s words, that the minister expects Ontario Online to be embraced by most if not all Ontario postsecondary institutions. Although Duguid says in the video that no institution will be forced to participate, one leaked document makes it clear that every college and university will be forced to accept each others’ courses for credit.

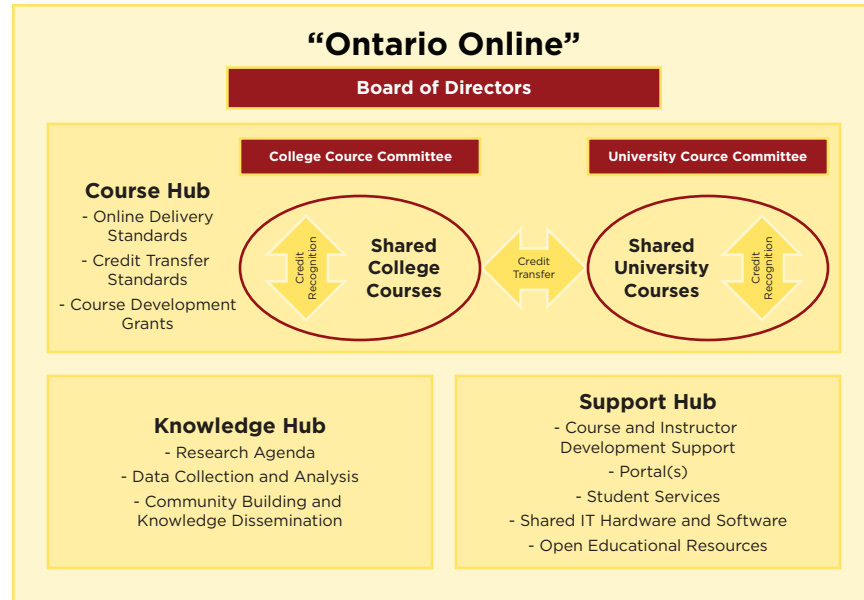
From the student perspective, improved and transparent credit transferability seems a significant improvement.

Structure of Ontario Online

From another leaked document, here is a visual depiction of Ontario Online:

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At the top of the chart sits a Board of Directors, and directly beneath the board are two committees. There aren't any college or university faculty on the Board of Directors, nor any indication that they may be on the Course Committees.

In his announcement Duguid explained that the Course Hub will coordinate shared courses. The central point is to "maximize scale in mutual recognition of academic credit."

The Knowledge Hub will develop and share best practices, research and data.

The Support Hub is the only place faculty are mentioned in the leaked document. In Duguid's presentation, he noted it will offer "centralized support for students, instructors and institutions while reducing costs through collaboration on tools, services and technology." This online portal will ensure one-stop access to courses, research and teaching resources. As online programs need to be accessible, this support structure will ensure that "students, instructors and institutions" can get to the available resources.

Where will the courses come from?

One of the colleges has disclosed that each college will be paid \$75,000 to develop each of two courses. Proposals have already been submitted, midterm reports are due to the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) by March 14, and all development activities will be complete by September 1, 2014.

Instead of college faculty making decisions as to which courses will go online, it is clear that the decisions are being made by the bureaucrats.

One college's administration has disclosed that their two courses will be electives. At first thought, perhaps a college offering two electives online is no big deal. However, consider that the other 23 colleges may do the same with their two course contributions. That would be 48 electives that each college may be required to recognize. What impact will 48 online electives have on a department such as Fanshawe's School of Language and Liberal Studies?

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Concerns

No faculty participation: A steering committee will have representatives from OntarioLearn, Ontario Universities Online, and Contact North. Again, there is no mention of college or university faculty.

Job security and/or job losses: What will happen to people employed across the post-secondary education sector? Duguid stated that Ontario Online will eliminate duplication in “developing material, learning techniques and technology.”

Duguid also mentioned “intellectual technology,” (whatever this means) noting that it will be shared in terms of costs, and “formulas will have to be worked out with the organization.”

Job losses seem an inevitable consequence of “reduced duplication” across institutions.

JP Hornick, OPSEU College Faculty Divisional Executive Chair expressed, “We are concerned that the Ontario Online initiative is primarily a cost-cutting venture intended to facilitate larger class sizes and increased hiring of part-time and contract teaching staff.”

Use of term ‘instructor’ rather than ‘faculty’ or ‘professor’: The teaching and subject expertise of college faculty is being undermined in our colleges, particularly through management intervention in areas that aren’t their purview. The persistent use of the term ‘instructors’ throughout Duguid’s presentation coupled with the absence of faculty participation exposes the continued undermining of faculty’s expertise and qualifications.

Education: What will happen to student success and retention? Actual learning? Actual education? St. Clair College asked a question prefaced by the statistics regarding low student completion rates (about 15%) for MOOCs

(massive open online courses). Given this grim statistic, the students asked, “how will quality and relevance be maintained?” The minister’s answer repeated previous assurances of quality and the mantra of “student choice.” The courses would be “implemented thoughtfully.” Duguid noted that research will be a part of this initiative also.

Intellectual property rights: If faculty members are asked to do this work, who will own the intellectual property rights? Will existing curriculum be uploaded to be used over and over again? Will faculty be properly compensated for its usage?

Business/customer-service model: The jargon of business and innovation-speak peppered Duguid’s talk: “excellence,” “innovation,” “high quality,” “globally competitive,” “maximizing scale,” becoming “leaders rather than followers”. There wasn’t one reference to educational principles or theory.

Duguid noted that he was previously the Minister for Economic Development and Innovation, and that Ontario Online offered great opportunities in these areas. The University of Waterloo panel noted that Waterloo was known for its expertise and entrepreneurship, and asked pointedly “how can entrepreneurs get involved?” Duguid was very enthusiastic. “We need you!”

Cost driven: Duguid asked the rhetorical question “do savings drive this?” No, he answered, “quality drives this,” but we can’t deny that “there will be savings to the system and we don’t shy away from that.”

Faculty are the experts

Online teaching can have its place. However, education will not be advanced through a centralized post-secondary credit-granting organization run by bureaucrats and accountants.

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College and university faculty who are “on the ground” in contact with the students and who have teaching and subject expertise should be assessing the learning needs. We are the experts.

OPSEU's CAAT Academics' Position

Our principles developed based on feedback from you, the college faculty:

- Online teaching is exactly that, teaching
- Online teaching where it occurs must be performed by faculty members, and not “facilitators”
- Faculty are the experts and must be given academic freedom including the ability to

select teaching methods that match their students' learning needs; these are not decisions to be made by the bureaucrats or accountants

- Online teaching must be credited as teaching and compensated appropriately through the workload formula
- Faculty need access to support, professional development opportunities, and a suitable infrastructure to teach effectively online
- With these principles and procedures firmly established to ensure quality education, online teaching can have its place in the college system

What's in a Name?

By Lynn Dee Eason

Over the years, many names have been given to those who teach, counsel, and, hmmm, library isn't a verb! Well, we know who we are – or do we?

Many of us started off as Teaching Masters who brought our expertise in the workplace into the college classroom to be shared with students; some may even remember the Senior College Master – a prestigious position bestowed by The Council on the recommendation of their college president. None exist in our system today.

Today, we are classified as Professors, Instructors, Counsellors, and Librarians (fondly referred to

as PICKL). We use the generic term “faculty” to include all of our classifications. Teacher is used in the CA to designate those who are in the classroom with students.

To add to the mix, we also have partial-load, full-time, part-time, and sessional faculty. These categories are broken down for teaching faculty on the basis of the number of teaching hours assigned to a professor/instructor. While the work in the classroom is the same, there are huge differences in the workload scope, limits and protections for those in each of the four categories.

To contact your College DivEx, please write to:
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Here's a visual:

Category	Unionized?	Hiring Criteria	SWF Protection
Part-Time	No	≤6 TCH per week; Paid for TCH only	No
Sessional	No	Less than 12 months service in 24; not to be abused by combining with partial-load within the 24 month time-frame to circumvent roll-over to full-time; no protections for workload assignments	No
Partial-Load	Yes	Perform both teaching and non-teaching duties; maximum workload of 44 hours total including factors for prep, eval, and student numbers; Benefits; Pension; Salary Grid; Seniority Rights	No
Full-Time	Yes	Perform both teaching and non-teaching duties; maximum workload of 44 hours total including factors for prep, eval, and student numbers; Benefits; Pension; Salary Grid; Seniority Rights	Yes

It requires constant vigilance by your union to ensure that faculty are hired appropriately. It is not the credentials or the abilities of new hires that is under scrutiny. All faculty are hired for their expertise; we all know the passion that faculty bring to their chosen profession. So why all these categories? Why are the teachers working side by side subjected to such different pay and work standards? Why are Partial-Load teachers paid only for teaching contact hours with no compensation for the other duties that must be performed in order to keep up with department changes, college policies, technology changes, and student needs? Why are Sessional teachers suddenly jettisoned from Partial-Load when assigned that thirteenth hour of teaching losing benefits, union representation, grid progression, and the limited job security held by Partial-Load faculty?

Why are Part-Time teachers worth so much less when teaching 6 hours versus the 7 hour marker

for Partial-Load status? Again, the benefits noted above for Partial-Load are not in place for Part-Time faculty. For counsellors and librarians, there really isn't a definition for less than full time - 35 hours per week is full-time - what's 34?

Perhaps the answer is simple for the teaching faculty. All teaching could be recorded on the SWF. In order to teach, we all develop curriculum, prepare materials for the students, and evaluate their work. We then evaluate our own work in order to improve our ability to meet the needs of our diverse student population.

What's in a name? Respect.

In solidarity,
Your College Faculty Divisional Executive
JP Hornick, Chair
Rod Bain
Lynn Dee Eason
Jacques O'Sullivan

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This publication is authorized for distribution by:
JP Hornick, College Faculty Divisional Executive Chair
Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, OPSEU

