



A RESPONSE TO THE POSTSECONDARY REVIEW

A Submission By George Brown, The Toronto City College, November, 2004

George Brown
The Toronto City College

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Mr. Bob Rae
Postsecondary Review Secretariat
2 Bloor St. West
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Toronto, Ontario M4W 3R1

Dear Mr. Rae and Advisory Panel –

George Brown – The Toronto City College is committed to helping create a post-secondary education system in Ontario that is second to none. This is a collective responsibility, and all parts of the system must be strong to achieve this goal. We hope our experience can offer insights and solutions that will enable the Review to reach an informed set of recommendations.

The attached reinforces the submission you've already received from ACAATO, but focuses on Access and System Design as key issues. We believe change in these areas will have the greatest positive impact on the overall system, and have recommended solutions based on knowledge of our market and environment. The stories in the attached have been developed from our own reality – many as expressed by our students.

Over the last four months, we've been engaged in an extensive consultation process of our own, to develop an academic strategy for the next three years. Our submission has been informed to a great extent by the input we received from over 900 students and staff who participated in that process. In addition, our Student Association has reviewed and discussed our submission, and have expressed their strong support.

We applaud the Review's mandate to seek sustainable solutions and have identified opportunities that match the identified issues. We believe our ideas will contribute to the affordability of the whole system and have suggested targeted funding initiatives in that spirit.

We hope this submission will contribute to a broad and deep understanding of the Ontario post-secondary education system. We also look forward to participating in the town hall meetings and round table discussions.

If you or the panel would like any further information about this submission, or if you wish to explore some of the recommendations further, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,



Anne Sado
President



Shirlee Sharkey
Board Chair

ACCESSIBILITY

The Review discussion paper asks the question: “How can we increase participation and success in higher education?”

The ACAATO submission, *Achieving High Expectations in Ontario's Post-secondary Education Sector: A Plan for Change*, recommends that Ontario set a post-secondary educational attainment goal for its workforce at a minimum of 70%. Given the complexity and breadth of Toronto's knowledge economy, this goal must be achieved if Toronto is to maintain its global competitiveness and prosperity.

In real terms, meeting this goal means a 15% increase in the post-secondary attainment level of Toronto's workforce – about 450,000 more workers with a diploma, degree or journey person credential. We believe this is an achievable goal. Some of this increase will be met by the continued influx of immigrants who already have a post-secondary education. But immigrants face significant barriers to securing employment that takes full advantage of their education, experience and potential. And the 45% currently in or entering the workforce without a post-secondary credential are at increasing risk of underemployment or no employment at all in a labour market that values employee knowledge as its primary resource.

Increased participation and student success hinge on the following key determinants:

- advisement services that are easy to access;
- standardized language assessment;
- programs and services tailored to meet the special need of immigrants;
- a flexible and easy-to-access apprenticeship system; and
- better financial support for all students, particularly those with special needs.

TORONTO'S ECONOMY

The Toronto city region is the essential engine that drives the Ontario economy. It generates 44% of Ontario's GDP and is Canada's fastest-growing economy. The Conference Board of Canada forecasts Toronto will continue to lead Canada's economic growth for the next four years.

Toronto's economy is strengthened by the breadth of its economic activity across several key sectors, including financial services, automotive, food and beverage, aerospace, clothing and apparel, business and professional services, biomedical and biotechnology, tourism, entertainment, arts and culture, information and communication.

TORONTO'S POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE

Toronto city region is home to over five million residents, and the region is North America's fifth largest in terms of population and population growth. Projections show that Toronto will account for 82% of all population growth in Ontario over the next 10 years.

The Toronto city region's labour force is comprised of 3 million workers. That number will increase by over 400,000 workers during the period 2000-2010. About 55% of the current labour force has a degree or diploma. Every year, over half of all immigrants who arrive in Canada settle in the Toronto region and immigration to Toronto is expected to grow dramatically over the next seven years. Government of Canada estimates show that immigration will account for all net labour force growth by 2011 and for all net population growth by 2031.

Barriers to Access for Immigrants

Toronto's population growth over the next decade will be driven by international migration, both from newly arrived immigrants and from the growth of immigrant families. As a leader in responding to immigrant needs, George Brown will be called upon to play a critical role in facilitating the seamless integration of the immigrant community into the social, educational and economic structures of the city.

Immigrants currently face a variety of barriers in accessing jobs that match their qualifications and skills. Our research shows the most common barriers are:

- insufficient knowledge of the Canadian labour market;
- insufficient English language skills (including sector-specific language skills);
- inability of employers to evaluate foreign academic credentials;
- undervaluing of foreign work experience by employers;
- immigrants lack of Canadian work experience
- a rigid regulatory requirement for regulated professions; and
- immigrants lack of a network to access the “hidden” job market.

At George Brown, our Immigrant Strategy addresses a number of these barriers.

1. Access to Advisement

- Advisement services provided by qualified, knowledgeable advisors are an essential service for immigrants. Many immigrants do not have an accurate understanding of what Canadian employers require as a pre-requisite to employment. Advisors help clients undertake an accurate assessment of their language skills, academic qualifications and work experience matched against their occupational goal. They assist clients in developing a realistic plan that includes clear direction about the type of post-secondary education and work experience that will be required to meet career goals.

ADVISEMENT AT GEORGE BROWN

In 2003, George Brown provided advisement services to over 2,000 clients who applied to the College but did not meet the academic pre-requisites for their program. College advisors met with clients, most of whom were immigrants, and assisted them in developing a realistic plan to access the education and training they would need to meet their career objectives. About 55% of the clients went on to further education within six months based on the plans developed with their advisor.

- Access to quality advisement services shortens the time and resources required by immigrants to reach their employment goal by ensuring, at the outset, that their plans are based on accurate information about Canada's labour market and education system. Advisement services help prevent immigrants from making costly mistakes in preparing for employment.
- At current levels of provincial funding, advisors are unable to meet the demand for service yet access to quality advisement ultimately reduces costs to government. Timely advisement ensures that resources are not wasted on education that doesn't match students' career goals, skills and abilities.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Increase the level of the operating grant per student to support increased access to advisement services.

CITY OF TORONTO RESIDENTS

- 50% are foreign born, of which 43% arrived in Canada within the last 10 years
- 43% are visible minorities
- 17% have some form of disability
- 44% of Toronto school-age children have a language other than English as their mother tongue or as the primary language spoken at home

2. Access to Language Training

- Many immigrants lack the English language proficiency and communication skills that employers require in the workplace. Some immigrants have the required level of proficiency in English but don't have the technical language and cultural context they need to succeed on the job.
- Immigrants need access to programs that provide them with the communication skills they will need in the workplace, to work individually and in teams. Curriculum designed for specific employment sectors is the most effective way of providing students with the language skills they will require. "Pre-programs" such as Pre-Business, Pre-Technology and Pre-Health incorporate the technical language students will use on the job and provide a cultural context for the sectors students have chosen for a career.
- Beyond meeting the published language prerequisites for a post-secondary program, many immigrants need additional support with language skills once their program begins. Access to foundation-level instruction must be available to second language students, in addition to their normal program hours, to assist them with the language demands of the curriculum.
- There is no standard English-language proficiency test used by all post-secondary institutions and by employers. Current language tests do not assess spoken language competency, a critical component for success in the classroom and the workplace.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Provide leadership in establishing a common tool for assessing language proficiency, such as the Canadian Language Benchmarks, as a standard for all post-secondary institutions.
- ▶ Fund research for the development of standard assessment tools for spoken language.
- ▶ Increase the operating grant per student to fund the cost of providing foundation-level English instruction needed by immigrants enrolled in post-secondary programs and to fund the development of new preprograms that integrate language and occupational skill development.

3. Access for Internationally Educated Professionals

George Brown is a lead college in the Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment project (CIITE). The College recently undertook pilot programs focused on improving the integration of internationally educated professionals into the IT sector. In addition to the advisement and language skills cited earlier, the results of our pilot project showed internationally educated professionals also need:

- increased exposure to employers as part of their training to build networks and better understand the requirements and culture of the Canadian workplace;
- a consistent process and common benchmarks for assessment of their academic credentials and work experience by colleges, universities and employers;
- access to modular learning to customize and accelerate the learning process through bridging programs.

INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS

Eduardo Escabol is a graduate of the Computer Programmer for Internationally-Educated Professionals at George Brown. Prior to his studies at the College, Eduardo was an insurance broker in his home country. After immigrating to Canada he was unemployed and having trouble in his search for a job in the IT field.

Through this program, Eduardo was able to learn and improve upon his technical skills in SDLC methodology, programming in SQL and MS Access. He also learned the soft skills he needed to land a job. Today, Eduardo is working as an IT project leader and business analyst at GE Capital IT Solutions, a global service provider of integrated IT solutions.

“My favourite part of studying at George Brown”, Eduardo says, “was working on projects with people from different cultures. There was such diversity in the class and the college as a whole. I learned about job search skills which reinforced the need to continue marketing oneself, even if one is already working. This was a great experience.”

The province’s support of projects such as CIITE is critical to the development of new models and strategies to accelerate the integration of internationally educated professionals into Toronto’s workforce. The Minister’s recent announcement of projects to enhance entry to practice for internationally educated engineers is another example of how government can influence the removal of barriers to access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Adopt the recommendations arising from the CIITE projects, including the development of common benchmarks for an assessment tool to evaluate academic credentials and work experience.
- ▶ Sponsor additional projects to accelerate entry to practice for internationally educated professionals in key sectors.

GEORGE BROWN STUDENTS

- 62% are female vs. 38% male
- the average age is 24.5 years
- 66% are from the City of Toronto
- 29% are members of a visible minority
- 10% are international students
- 30% have a first language other than English or French
- 12% already have a degree
- 69% are preparing for direct employment; 23% intend to continue their education
- 50% will graduate with student debt

4. Access to Apprenticeship

- A flexible, accessible and sustainable apprenticeship training system is a critical component of Ontario’s role as a learning province. Apprenticeship is the foundational training system for many industries, including construction, manufacturing, automotive and hospitality. Apprenticeship provides an excellent opportunity for people to acquire highly developed, employment related skills through a combination of supervised on-the-job training and applied knowledge acquired through an in-school component.
- Colleges are the backbone of the in-school component of apprenticeship training. They lead the development of a province-wide curriculum, deliver the in-school component of the required training, provide a range of services to apprentices and create innovative new models for apprenticeship delivery.

TORONTO'S SOCIAL NEEDS

Toronto's urban population density puts it at the forefront of social service needs. A recent report cites worsening poverty as one of the top five issues confronting the GTA. While poverty has declined in Canada as a whole, it has increased in Toronto, particularly among sole-parent families, half of its newcomers and 40% of visible minority families. Over the 1990s, median incomes in Toronto's twelve poorest neighbourhoods declined by 16%. The waiting list for social housing is about 91,000 households and 30,000 homeless people use the emergency shelter system each year.

- In most skilled occupations, a candidate for apprenticeship must first find an employer who is willing to hire and then register that candidate as an apprentice. For many young women and men seeking to enter a skilled trade directly from secondary school, finding an employer is a major barrier since they lack the industry contacts and the basic workplace skills most employers are looking for. Not surprisingly the average age for an apprentice in Ontario is currently 26.
- Colleges are piloting a new Co-op Diploma Apprenticeship model that allows students to enter directly into a post-secondary diploma program. It is designed to meet all the in-school curriculum components of the apprenticeship program as well as the college's diploma curriculum. Using a co-op model, students spend blocks of time throughout their program in the workplace, learning the on-the-job skills required in their trade. Upon graduation, students have completed their apprenticeship and post-secondary curriculum requirements, earned a Certificate of Apprenticeship and a college diploma, and their co-op work experience enables them to demonstrate the competencies required to qualify for their Certificate of Qualification as a journeyman. In college programs where there are linkages to a university program, apprentices can continue their education at the degree level if they so choose.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIP

Colleges are eager and qualified to play a leadership role in the Co-op Apprenticeship Diploma model. This requires the province to:

- ▶ move beyond the pilot phase in trades where an integrated apprenticeship/diploma level curriculum already exists and where colleges can demonstrate market demand;

- ▶ recognize existing college technician and technique-level programs as candidates for the Co-op Apprenticeship Diploma model without requiring a complete revision of program architecture, providing provincial standards are met;
- ▶ develop program standards for the co-op diploma model in each major industry sector that relies on skilled occupations; and these standards should be outcomes-based and should not prescribe delivery methods or teaching contact hours.

5. Access for Underrepresented Students

George Brown provides a variety of services and programs for underrepresented students, including:

- serving as the Toronto region centre for education and support services for the deaf and hard of hearing;
- maintaining a strong Special Needs department that supports students with physical or learning disabilities;
- providing educational counselling services to one of Canada's largest non-reserve aboriginal populations; and
- providing programs to bridge mental health survivors to employment.

ASSISTANT COOK EXTENDED TRAINING

In partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and with funding from the Ontario Disability Support Program, the George Brown Chef School has recently developed a new apprenticeship program, Assistant Cook Extended Training, for adults with addiction and mental health problems. The program provides skills training, work experience in the community and assistance with employment. Most important, it provides hope and helps restore the confidence of mental health survivors facing very difficult life challenges.

Walter Keating, a student in the ACET program, says, "My future appeared to me the same way it had for years – not exactly dark, certainly not bright – just uniformly grey. There was no suggestion or even a hint that a career was on the horizon. I had given up that dream years ago. That is no longer the case. I now believe there is a career in this profession for me, and I'm confident enough to suggest that it's going to be a damn good one; and that's just as true for my fellow students as well. We are all very good at what we do."

Up-front costs for access programs and services are considerably higher than most programs and are inadequately funded in the current system. However, an investment in access programs actually reduces overall costs to government by improving retention rates in the short term and through significant cost avoidance in the long term. Access graduates get good jobs and become net contributors instead of a net cost to the province.

SERVICES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

George Brown has been the centre for services to deaf and hard of hearing college students in the GTA since 1972. The College provides a range of services, including referral to diagnostic assessments, sign language interpreters, notetakers, scribes, tutors, specialized counselling and academic upgrading.

Financial support for our services to the deaf and hard of hearing community was originally provided through an annual grant from MTCU based on projected enrolment. In the last ten years demand for services from George Brown has quadrupled – from 27 students in 1993 to 113 students in 2003 – but financial support from government has remained frozen at 1993 levels. The College is now subsidizing this critical access program from its core operating grant.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Support the development of new programs to increase access for underrepresented groups with sustained, cost recovery funding.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY

As a result of public demand for increased access to equitable services, MTCU asked George Brown to develop, as soon as possible, a program to serve the needs of autistic children. In less than three months, the College developed a post-graduate, fast track program in Behavioral Science Technology for university graduates with degrees in psychology. Next summer 16 new graduates will enter the labour market to serve this important need.

6. Access to Counselling

- Retention initiatives that target students “at risk” of dropping out or failing require early identification and intervention. Faculty and counsellors can help students address the problems they are facing and help them develop a strategy for recovery.

- At the current level of provincial funding, George Brown has ten counsellors for 12,500 students and one counsellor assigned specifically to aboriginal students. Counsellors deal with a myriad of emotional, family, financial, career, and academic issues facing our students. There are currently not sufficient resources to intervene with “at risk” students.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Increase the operating grant per student to provide the funding necessary to identify and provide counselling support to students “at risk”.

OSAP

Jean is a sole support mother with six children. Under OSAP rules, Jean is eligible for a maximum of \$500 per week while she is attending school. Her costs to attend an eight-month program at George Brown are estimated at \$35,000, leaving a gap of \$15,000. With six kids at home, Jean can’t work part-time as well as care for her family. The College has worked with Jean to try to find alternate sources of funding to get her through this important year in her life.

7. Access to Financial Aid

- Studies show that 25% of students who were eligible to attend college but did not, cited lack of financial sources as their principal reason for declining admission.
- Our students tells us that financial pressures are a significant cause of attrition, particularly in the first year. The combined effect of changes to both welfare and OSAP under the previous government has reduced access to higher education for many lower-income families who surround George Brown’s city campuses.
- Current OSAP policies for income threshold, credit history and access to bursaries create barriers for many low- and middle-income students and families.
- Legitimate costs of education, such as laptops, are not recognized as allowable expenses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Remove existing barriers to OSAP for welfare recipients.
- ▶ Lower the income thresholds for middle-income families.
- ▶ Raise loan caps for low-income students.

ONTARIO WORKS

Under Ontario Works, students receiving welfare must move from welfare to OSAP when they enter college. For a single person living on his own that means graduating with about \$14,000 in OSAP debt after a two-year program or \$21,000 for a three-year program. Many low-income people, for a variety of good reasons, cannot or will not take on that kind of debt. Changes in OSAP eligibility rules also make it very difficult for someone with a negative credit history to receive financial aid. This affects many potential college students currently covered under Ontario Works.

ONTARIO WORKS TO OSAP

Ron is a recovering alcoholic on welfare. As part of his plan to get his life back on track, Ron enrolled in a Community Service Worker program. Under Ontario Works rules, Ron had to apply for OSAP to replace his weekly welfare payments once classes began. Ron's tuition fees were automatically deducted from his first block OSAP cheque, leaving him with only \$700 to last until January.

A George Brown counsellor needed to intervene to help Ron sort out his finances with bridge financing from the College. She also identified a learning disability that Ron was struggling with as well. A learning specialist and an adaptive technologist are now helping Ron learn in a way that accommodates his disability. Ron's financial situation continues to place him at risk.

- The Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Fund (OSOTF) program that began in 1996 has provided an exceptional opportunity for colleges to raise funds in support of financial assistance for students by creating a matching formula for donations from private donors. The College's Foundation has raised over \$3 million in aid for students through OSOTF and has the potential to raise \$7 million more.
- The Ontario government's July, 2004 announcement that it will only honour OSOTF pledges paid by March, 2005 rather than the previously announced deadline of March, 2007 has created a major problem for George Brown.

The College has entered into agreements with donors in good faith that span several years. These agreements must be honoured or we stand to lose not only much-needed financial aid for our students but confidence within the donor community regarding our ability to follow through on our commitments.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ **Extend the OSOTF donation deadline to the original deadline of March 31, 2007.**

8. Access to Distance Education

- Distance education is a critical tool for providing access to thousands of adults in Ontario who cannot or choose not to participate in post-secondary education in a classroom setting.
- Students learning by distance education don't incur the expenses normally associated with attending college, there is no draw on the financial aid system and, aside from the development and delivery costs, ongoing costs for colleges are less than for traditional programs.
- In high-skill, technical subjects, colleges need financial support to fund high front-end development costs and the broader bandwidth needed to support interactive video.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ **Provide competitive funding envelopes to encourage innovation in distance education and delivery.**

CD ROM ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN PROGRAM

In partnership with Prentice-Hall, George Brown developed a fully interactive program that allows students to earn a certificate as an electronics technician through home-based study. Students complete 23 learning modules delivered through text, video and 2D and 3D animations and hundreds of interactive laboratory projects.

Over 6,000 students are enrolled in this program, the most successful of its kind in North America. Students include employees of 200 major companies, such as General Motors, 3M, Chrysler, Hydro One and Boeing Aerospace. The program is now offered in the United States through partnerships with several colleges and universities, including Johnson and Wales University in Rhode Island, Hocking College in Ohio and Miracosta College in California.

9. Access through Internationalization

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN JAMAICA

Tavia Walker is a second-year student in the Early Childhood Education program. In February, Tavia completed her final four-week field placement at a Basic School in Jamaica. Under the supervision of George Brown faculty, Tavia and her classmates taught alongside their Jamaican counterparts, strengthening the knowledge and skills that will be important in working with Caribbean families when they return to Toronto. Says Tavia, "Having a placement in Jamaica has so far been the best experience of my life..."

- In September, 2003 George Brown approved an Internationalization Plan that will embed global and intercultural understanding more effectively in our curriculum and increase our students' opportunities to undertake field placements abroad.
- Students have completed field placements or participated in study tours in Mexico, Jamaica, El Salvador, Cambodia, Scotland and Cuba. Their international experience builds skills needed to work in Toronto's culturally diverse community.
- Many students cannot participate in international field placements because of the high costs of travel.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Establish an Ontario bursary program to provide financial assistance for students in financial need to study abroad.

10. Access to Research

- The province's ability to generate high-knowledge, high-paying jobs depends on a strong infrastructure in support of research and innovation.
- The Toronto City Summit Alliance recommends the creation of a Toronto Region Research Alliance that would place Toronto among the front ranks of the world's research centres. The Action Plan envisions colleges as an important member of an Alliance that includes universities, teaching hospitals, government laboratories, leading companies, venture capitalists and private research institutes.
- The Review discussion paper references only the role of universities in Ontario's research agenda. George Brown is engaged in research related to microelectronics assembly and packaging, interactive digital media, photonics, material engineering and advanced visualization. In addition, we are involved in research directly related to issues of access, including contingent workers, employability skills, early childhood development, children at risk and violence against women and children.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Support greater participation for colleges in applied research through dedicated competitive envelopes within existing research budgets.

CENTRE FOR MICROELECTRONICS ASSEMBLY AND PACKAGING

George Brown is the only college member of the Centre for Microelectronics Assembly and Packaging (CMAP). CMAP's mission is to advance international microelectronics assembly and packaging at Canadian institutions in partnerships with industry, through multidisciplinary, innovative research. CMAP's membership includes six advanced technology companies, four major universities, Materials Manufacturing Ontario, the Canadian Microelectronics Corporation and the National Electronics Manufacturing Initiative.

In the past two years, George Brown partnered with CMAP and Kester in the study of flip chip optimization and with Research in Motion to study solder voiding optimization.

SYSTEM DESIGN

The Review discussion paper asks “How can we make sure that our institutions constitute a coherent, coordinated system to meet Ontario’s goals for higher education?”

- The original vision of a separate and distinct post-secondary system to provide opportunities for non-university-bound high school students, for adults needing re-training, and for apprentices to learn a skilled trade, has long ago been realized. Colleges are now at the forefront of innovation in education and learning.
- Many high school students with the requisite credits needed for admission to university are now choosing an applied education at colleges over studies at university.
- One in four students who entered an Ontario college in 2003 intended to complete a degree after graduation and one in five had already attended university. Over half the students in George Brown’s post-diploma programs are actually degree graduates.

GEORGE BROWN AND THE INSTITUTE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

George Brown has joined forces with Bruce Mau Design, one of the world’s leading design houses, to create the Institute without Boundaries, a fully experiential post-graduate program that trains a new breed of designer. Each year a small group of post-graduate students, drawn from different disciplines – architecture, design, journalism – become part of an integrated design team that spends 10 months fully immersed in a real-time design project under the supervision of Bruce Mau and his designers. This year, students in the Institute were integral members of the design team for *Massive Change: The Future of Design Culture*, commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery to Bruce Mau Design. Students focused on the realization of a 20,000 square foot exhibition which opened at the Vancouver Art Gallery in May, 2004.

The Institute Without Boundaries represents an exceptional opportunity for innovation in applied learning to produce the kind of graduates Ontario needs to compete at a global level in the world of design.

1. College and School Collaboration

- Collaboration between colleges and high schools at the local level plays a critical role in improving access to college for high school graduates and those who are at risk of dropping out. Many teachers in the school system have little direct exposure to the opportunities colleges present for their students.

GEORGE BROWN AND THE TDSB

George Brown has developed a strong relationship with the Toronto District School Board that is focused on career advisement, clearer pathways for students and professional development for staff. The relationship includes:

- formal articulation agreements for advanced standing in specific programs;
- Exploring Technology days for grade 7 and 8 students at our technology centres;
- Tour of the Trades days for secondary school teachers and guidance counsellors focused on apprenticeships in hospitality and technology;
- Chef School “Discovery Days” held monthly;
- a “Technology in the City” day that features careers in construction, manufacturing, biotechnology and high-tech industries and student technology competitions; and
- a “summer institute” that will provide intensive skills training courses for secondary school students that help them bridge to apprenticeships.

- High school students at risk are more likely to stay in school if they can see the direct link between their high school curriculum, a college program and a good-paying job. They also learn best about career options through hands-on experience such as co-op.
- Two out of every four students entering George Brown programs with a high school diploma in September 2004 were identified as needing foundation-level English or math or both. They are faced with the challenge of upgrading basic skills at the same time that they must cope with their normal course load.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Encourage greater collaboration between colleges and school boards to improve pathways for students through funding support for the development of innovative models, particularly clear pathways to apprenticeship through the Co-op Diploma model.
- ▶ Develop, in collaboration with school boards and colleges, solutions that address the increasing requirements for foundation-level courses for high school graduates in English and mathematics.
- ▶ Support a model project between a faculty of education and its local college that provides first-hand experience for student teachers in the breadth and value of applied education, including apprenticeship.

2. College-to-College Collaboration

- There are many opportunities for collaboration between colleges that build on the strengths of different institutions to bring extraordinary learning opportunities to students.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Encourage innovation in the form of special programs and funding envelopes for collaboration tied to measurable and timely outcomes.

GEORGE BROWN AND NIAGARA COLLEGE

The Hospitality Operations Management bachelor's degree program is a unique partnership between Niagara College and George Brown, two of Canada's leading hospitality and culinary educators. The program features training in all aspects of hospitality management with an applied, hands-on focus. The program builds on the resources and networks of the two colleges and reflects the different strengths of two distinctly different tourism regions. Students take courses at both colleges during their four year program and can undertake co-op work placements in both regions.

3. College and University Collaboration

- An applied education combined with a degree credential is a strong formula for success in the workplace. The advent of applied degrees at colleges has addressed some of the increased demand for this combination. For many college students, however, a university degree is a requirement for advancement in the workplace or meets their personal goals. The process of achieving that credential is a cumbersome and costly one.
- The majority of college graduates from three-year programs require at least another two years of study for a university degree. For students, this means extra costs in tuition fees, living expenses and lost wages. For government, it means more pressure on operating grants and financial aid programs.
- Collaborative efforts between colleges and universities have been slow to produce tangible results due to differences in admission policies, academic pre-requisites, governance, funding mechanisms, tuition fees, pedagogy, scheduling, teaching costs, overhead costs, faculty credentials, student services and use of facilities. These issues vary by institution and by program, making resolution an extremely complex and resource-intensive process.

GEORGE BROWN, CENTENNIAL AND RYERSON UNIVERSITY

With the change in entry to practice in the nursing profession to the baccalaureate level, George Brown, Centennial and Ryerson developed a collaborative nursing degree program. Students have the option of applying directly to Ryerson for the full four years or completing their first two years at George Brown or Centennial, followed by two years at Ryerson while completing their clinical requirements throughout under the supervision of college faculty. All students graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Ryerson University.

Different levels of costs and funding among the three institutions were particularly challenging for the parties to sort out in the absence of existing models or precedents. Incremental costs for the colleges have turned out to be 20% higher than anticipated.

- Advanced standing policies at universities vary widely across the province. Colleges must negotiate with universities one by one, on a program-by-program basis. There continues to be a sense that Ontario universities are not doing enough to reach out to colleges and their graduates in support of innovative opportunities for degree completion. Increasing numbers of college graduates are turning to universities outside of Ontario to further their education.

GEORGE BROWN AND MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

College graduates from three-year technology programs in Ontario were having little success in getting advanced standing at Toronto-area universities that would allow them to graduate with a degree within a reasonable period of additional study. George Brown approached Minnesota State University who, after a full review of Ontario college technologist level curriculum, faculty credentials and venues, offered graduates direct entry to the fourth year of their Bachelor of Applied Science in Technology Management program. The program is fully accredited in the United States by the North Central Region Accreditation Council.

The George Brown/Minnesota State program is offered in Toronto, supported by two-way video conferencing, on-line learning and internet connection to MSU faculty. The program has been fully enrolled for six consecutive years.

GEORGE BROWN AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

George Brown and the University of Toronto are Ontario's leaders in dental education. Recognizing the critical need for greater access to dental hygienists trained to the baccalaureate level, the university's Faculty of Dentistry and the college's Centre for Health Sciences undertook to develop a collaborative Bachelor of Science degree program in Dental Hygiene.

While full agreement was reached on program design between the two institutions, MTCU rules regarding program weighting prevented the university from being able to financially support the collaborative program model.

Both U of T and George Brown regret that the first collaborative agreement between the two institutions was unable to go forward and continue to search for a solution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government needs to:

- ▶ articulate its goals for a more seamless system in higher education, supported by clear statements about the important role of applied education in Ontario;
- ▶ develop clear and equitable policies, within a provincial qualifications framework, on college degrees, transferability of credits and entry to graduate studies;
- ▶ create a more level playing field between the two higher education systems, with particular regard to the disparity in funding support;
- ▶ remove policy, funding or regulatory obstacles that impede collaboration;
- ▶ encourage innovation in the form of special programs and funding envelopes for collaboration tied to measurable and timely outcomes; and
- ▶ create an Admissions and Transfer Organization, as referenced in the ACAATO submission, with the mandate and resources to improve the transfer of credits between colleges and universities.

4. Apprenticeship Flexibility

- Apprenticeship in Ontario is already a well-coordinated training system for traditional workplaces and traditional learners. But several sectors and many employers have identified the need for more flexibility in the apprenticeship framework and delivery model. Apprentices want to be empowered to make key decisions affecting their apprenticeship program. They point to the need for greater flexibility in access to alternative delivery models, including e-learning, more part-time and front-end-loaded curriculum delivery and prior learning assessment to recognize previous work experience and training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With appropriate financial support, colleges can play a larger role in improving co-ordination and collaboration by:

- ▶ working with industry to develop new modular apprenticeship program models that meet curriculum standards but enable apprentices to undertake training when, how and where they require it;
- ▶ developing e-learning programs that can be delivered to apprentices and candidates for apprenticeship through various channels;
- ▶ developing models for prior learning assessment for apprenticeship candidates; and
- ▶ promoting apprenticeship as a genuine career option to all students interested in skilled occupations, including: recent immigrants, part-time students, secondary school applicants and employed workers.

APPRENTICESHIP ADMINISTRATION

Chris is a 31-year-old apprentice steamfitter. Now in the fifth and final year of his apprenticeship training, he has already completed the 7,500 hours of on-the-job training required to write the provincial examination that will qualify him as a licenced steamfitter. Chris should have finished the in-college requirements of his training program last year but because his notification from government to attend college was sent to the wrong address, Chris will not be eligible to write the provincial exam until next spring. The delay means Chris continues to earn only 85% of the hourly rate he should be making as a journeyman.

Chris is now commuting to George Brown every day from his home in Dundas, Ontario to complete his in-college program. While at college he receives \$351 a week through Employment Insurance compared to his normal take-home pay of \$842. Chris finds the loss in income a major hardship. He would much rather take the applied subjects on weekends and the theory subjects online so he can keep on working. He also wants to make his own arrangements to attend college, not have government make those decisions for him. Says Chris "There's got to be a better way."

5. Apprenticeship Administration

- Apprenticeship remains one of the last education and training programs coordinated and administered directly by the province. Government develops curriculum standards, determines labour market needs, determines new program requirements, markets apprenticeship to potential candidates and employers, sets and invigilates exams, schedules training and maintains the apprentice database.
- Much of what government does in apprenticeship is already part of the ongoing work of colleges, as part of their responsibilities in providing education and training programs that meet local labour market needs.

- Apprentices now expect more modular learning, flexible scheduling, modern equipment and facilities, open access computer labs, counselling services and support for internationally educated tradespeople.
- A new funding model for apprenticeship would enable colleges to meet the increased demands of apprentices and to play a much more proactive role in promoting and supporting apprenticeship as an important post-secondary option.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Undertake a full review of the respective roles of colleges and government in the administration of apprenticeship, so that government can focus on its responsibilities in setting and maintaining province-wide standards and colleges can assume greater responsibility for the management of in-school delivery.
- ▶ Develop a new funding model for apprenticeship that:
 - a. recognizes the significant investment required to maintain and expand apprenticeship training and to enable more autonomous planning and delivery;
 - b. provides for further infrastructure investment to support apprentices; and
 - c. encourages apprentices to assume more responsibility for their training and enables multi-year planning.

6. Higher Education Council

- George Brown supports, in principle, the creation of an independent Higher Education Council with a mandate that includes strategy, funding and policy issues in post-secondary education. We believe an independent council must be tasked with the responsibility to bring about significant improvements in credit transfer and collaboration between colleges and universities to increase access to a degree credential for Ontario's students.
- A Higher Education Council can also play a valuable role in identifying unmet needs that affect all post-secondary institutions. The need for inter-professional learning in the health sector is one such example. It is increasingly clear that the use of health care teams and a focus on collaborative, patient-centred care provides the most positive outcomes for patients and satisfaction for caregivers. The Romanow Commission report cites inter-professional education and collaboration as essential to achieving effective delivery of health care. Yet post-secondary institutions continue to educate health professionals – physicians, nurses, dentists, dental hygienists, health and wellness professionals – in discipline-specific silos. A Higher Education Council has the potential to encourage and support an inter-professional model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Create a Higher Education Council to undertake system-wide planning with a mandate that includes the authority and accountability to improve transferability, encourage greater college/university collaboration and expand options within the post-secondary system.
- ▶ Establish that the Council's membership should include equal representation from colleges and universities, as well as representation from employers of post-secondary graduates.
- ▶ Establish the Council as an advisory body to the Minister with operational responsibility limited to the establishment of a credit transfer system.
- ▶ Rationalize other agencies such as the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board and the College University Consortium Committee coincident with the establishment of the Council.

7. Costs of Change

We encourage government to use all the levers at its disposal to bring about the changes that are needed to build a more responsive, more accessible, more collaborative higher education system in Ontario.

Many of our recommendations require changes in policies, procedures and processes. Some recommendations, such as targeted funding for innovation and an increase to the operating grant, have cost implications for government. But we believe there are compensatory savings that will result from a number of other recommendations by:

- lessening the draw on operating grants and financial aid by shortening the time required for a college graduate to earn a university degree;
- shortening the time it takes for university graduates to acquire applied knowledge and skills
- reducing the social costs arising from high dropout rates in schools;
- accelerating the process to reach full employment for internationally educated professionals;
- improving retention rates for college students;
- lowering delivery costs through distance education;
- lessening social costs by helping people with special needs secure meaningful employment.

These are all real savings that can be achieved and, in the process, open up the additional places in our colleges and universities for those who are in greatest need of access. To meet this goal we echo ACAATO's advice to the Review that it be bold in its recommendations to government.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Access to Advisement

- ▶ Increase the level of the operating grant per student to support increased access to advisement services.

Access to Language Training

- ▶ Provide leadership in establishing a common tool for assessing language proficiency, such as the Canadian Language Benchmarks, as a standard for all post-secondary institutions.
- ▶ Fund research for the development of standard assessment tools for spoken language.
- ▶ Increase the operating grant per student to fund the cost of providing foundation-level English instruction needed by immigrants enrolled in post-secondary programs and to fund the development of new pre-programs that integrate language and occupational skill development.

Access for Internationally Educated Professionals

- ▶ Adopt the recommendations arising from the CIITE projects, including the development of common benchmarks for an assessment tool to evaluate academic credentials and work experience.
- ▶ Sponsor additional projects to accelerate entry to practice for internationally educated professionals in key sectors.

Access to Apprenticeship

Colleges are eager and qualified to play a leadership role in the Co-op Apprenticeship Diploma model. This requires the province to:

- ▶ move beyond the pilot phase in trades where an integrated apprenticeship/diploma level curriculum already exists and where colleges can demonstrate market demand;
- ▶ recognize existing college technician and technique-level programs as candidates for the Co-op Apprenticeship Diploma model without requiring a complete revision of program architecture, providing provincial standards are met;
- ▶ develop program standards for the co-op diploma model in each major industry sector that relies on skilled occupations; and these standards should be outcomes-based and should not prescribe delivery methods or teaching contact hours.

Access for Underrepresented Students

- ▶ Support the development of new programs to increase access for underrepresented groups with sustained, cost recovery funding.

Access to Counselling

- ▶ Increase the operating grant per student to provide the funding necessary to identify and provide counselling support to students “at risk”.

Access to Financial Aid

- ▶ Remove existing barriers to OSAP for welfare recipients.
- ▶ Lower the income thresholds for middle-income families.
- ▶ Raise loan caps for low-income students.
- ▶ Extend the OSOTF donation deadline to the original deadline of March 31, 2007.

Access to Distance Education

- ▶ Provide competitive funding envelopes to encourage innovation in distance education and delivery.

Access through Internationalization

- ▶ Establish an Ontario bursary program to provide financial assistance for students in financial need to study abroad.

Access to Research

- ▶ Support greater participation for colleges in applied research through dedicated competitive envelopes within existing research budgets.

College and School Collaboration

- ▶ Encourage greater collaboration between colleges and school boards to improve pathways for students through funding support for the development of innovative models, particularly clear pathways to apprenticeship through the Co-op Diploma model.
- ▶ Develop, in collaboration with school boards and colleges, solutions that address the increasing requirements for foundation-level courses for high school graduates in English and mathematics.
- ▶ Support a model project between a faculty of education and its local college that provides first-hand experience for student teachers in the breadth and value of applied education, including apprenticeship.

College-to-College Collaboration

- ▶ Encourage innovation in the form of special programs and funding envelopes for collaboration tied to measurable and timely outcomes.

College and University Collaboration

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Apprenticeship Administration

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GEORGE BROWN – THE TORONTO CITY COLLEGE

George Brown is defined by its community and, in many ways, is a reflection of the challenges and opportunities that a large, multicultural urban centre present. Founded in 1967 to serve the needs of the former City of Toronto, George Brown currently enrolls:

- 12,500 full-time students in 112 full-time diploma and 8 degree programs
- 2,000 full-time students in 29 apprenticeship, language and skills training programs
- 50,000 part-time learners in over 1,000 continuing education courses
- 3,000 employees in training programs and courses offered on the job



