



## College Quarterly

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### **A Discussion of Some Issues Pertaining to the Structure of Postsecondary Education in Ontario and Some Suggestions for Addressing Them**

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In the Postsecondary Review announced by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Mary Anne Chambers, on June 8, 2004, The Hon. Bob Rae, former Premier of Ontario, with the assistance of an Advisory Panel, has been asked by the Government of Ontario to examine the structure and funding of Ontario's postsecondary education system. Specifically, the mandate of the Review is to:

- Develop a more coordinated, collaborative and differentiated system; and
- Develop a more sustainable funding framework, including operating grants, tuition and student assistance, in support of the newly designed system.

A review of the structure of postsecondary education in Ontario, particularly in conjunction with a review of its funding framework, is both appropriate and long overdue. There has not been a significant examination of the suitability of the existing structure of Ontario's system of postsecondary education since that structure was established in the 1960s. This, in spite of the enormous changes in the provincial, national, and global social and economic environment of postsecondary education and in postsecondary education itself since the 1960s. At the highest level of generality, we may say that the effectiveness of a higher education system in meeting societal needs is a function of two distinct factors: (1) how effectively each higher education institution performs its role; and (2) how effectively the mix of different types of institutions, and their relationships with one another, conform to what is needed, i.e. whether we have the most efficient configuration of institutions of different types and appropriate relationships among them.<sup>1</sup> For the past few decades, particularly beginning in the 1990s, the major preoccupation of higher education policy in Ontario has been with the first of these factors. In that regard, we have witnessed major initiatives pertaining to institutional accountability and institutional performance assessment. Among other things, these initiatives have resulted in the documentation of the outstanding accomplishments of Ontario's postsecondary institutions. However, no matter how well each institution does its job, the net result will be less than socially optimal if the whole configuration of institutions is inappropriate. Some limited attempts to examine the structure of postsecondary in Ontario were made in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>2</sup> None involved substantial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system, and almost nothing from these exercises was implemented in regard to structural

reform. The concerns that gave rise to these earlier looks at the structure of postsecondary education in Ontario were similar to those that appear to have led to the current Postsecondary Review. In a nutshell, those concerns relate to the apparent gap between the amount of resources that we devote to the provision of postsecondary education and what is needed to fulfill our aspirations for the amount and kind of postsecondary education that we desire.

The crux of the problem, as identified in 1981 by the Committee on the Future Role of Universities in Ontario, was that the type of postsecondary education system that Ontario had created required substantially more funding than the Government was then providing. The Committee — known as the Fisher Committee, after its Chair, Harry Fisher, Deputy Minister of Education and Colleges and Universities — observed that there were only two ways out of this impasse: either the Government had to provide a massive increase in the level of public funding; or the structure of the system had to be altered to make it more economical. Shortly after the Government received the report, it appointed a Commission, headed by Edmund C. Bovey, which was asked to develop "an operational plan" for the university system that would provide for "more clearly defined, different and distinctive roles for the universities", in other words, a plan for restructuring the university system. However, the Bovey Commission largely ignored this request, and instead focused on funding arrangements within the existing structure.<sup>3</sup> In the twenty years since the Bovey Commission, the problematic situation as described by the Fisher Committee has persisted, with one exception. In the absence of a substantial increase in the level of public funding or significant changes in the structure of postsecondary education, the system has relied for its survival increasingly upon escalation of tuition fees. However, that could go on for only so long, and ultimately some fundamental questions have to be addressed.

### **The Structure of Postsecondary Education**

By the term, structure of postsecondary education, I mean the distribution of postsecondary institutions by type of institution and location, and their relationships with each other. Restructuring or redesigning a system of postsecondary education means altering the mix of different institutional types. There is a great variety of different ways that postsecondary institutions can be depicted or defined in regard to "type of institution". The Fisher Committee, which focused only upon the university sector, spoke of restructuring the universities into the following types: ... one comprehensive university capable of offering a very broad range of high-quality programs at all degree levels... not more than four full-service universities offering a more restricted range of high-quality programs at all degree levels ... not more than four or five special-purpose institutions, including some designed specifically to serve northern Ontario ... and the others ... would offer high-quality undergraduate instruction in arts and sciences and perhaps the early years of programs in high demand, such as engineering and business.<sup>4</sup> A widely used categorization of

institutional types is the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education which focuses on types of degrees and programs. The major institutional types in the Carnegie Classification are: Doctorate-granting Institutions, Master's Colleges and Universities, Baccalaureate Colleges, Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges, Associate's Colleges, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Specialized Institutions. The latter are defined primarily by concentration on a single field, like schools of art, theological institutions, or teachers colleges, or by area of application such as maritime academies or military institutes.<sup>5</sup> The magazine, **Maclean's**, developed a similar but simpler classification of Canadian universities which also focuses on degrees and programs: primarily undergraduate, comprehensive, and medical doctoral.<sup>6</sup>

The following discussion of some of the principal policy issues regarding the structure of postsecondary education that are facing Ontario is divided into four sections, the first three of which concern particular aspects of the structure of postsecondary education. The first deals with questions pertaining to the appropriate structure of Ontario's public university sector. It focuses particularly upon the mix of institutional types somewhat along the lines of the Carnegie and Maclean's classifications. The second section concerns the role of the community college in regard to the baccalaureate degree and offering courses for degree credit. The third section deals with the role of a heterogeneous group of institutions that I call alternative providers of postsecondary education, such as distance and open universities and corporate and proprietary colleges and universities. After discussing these three specific aspects of structure, the fourth section considers mechanisms for determining the appropriate structure for postsecondary education in Ontario.

## **Policy Issues**

### **Issue I: The Appropriate Structure for the Public University Sector**

In contrast to many other jurisdictions, one of the noteworthy features of the Ontario university sector is the relatively modest extent of mandated institutional differentiation. For example, all the universities are involved in graduate studies; none are specialized by field of study; and none have a distinctive educational philosophy, employ a distinctive approach to delivery of their programs, or concentrate upon serving a particular clientele.<sup>7</sup> A strength of having a relatively homogeneous set of universities broadly distributed across the Province is that it facilitates the provision of comparable educational opportunities to most residents of Ontario. However, one must ask whether this benefit has been purchased at too high a cost in terms of foregone academic and efficiency benefits that might result from greater institutional differentiation.<sup>8</sup> One of the aspects of institutional differentiation that often has been a particular subject of interest in the planning of higher education systems is that of the highest level of academic credentials that an institution is authorized

to award. For example, this is the focus of differentiation in the widely cited master plan for higher education in California that was first adopted in 1960 and has been revised periodically since then. In the California plan, the majority of students who go on from high school do their first two years of undergraduate study in a community college. Occupying the tier between the community colleges and the University of California is the California State University system which offers baccalaureate and master's programs.<sup>9</sup> The rationale for this design is to enable the state to provide mass higher education that includes some universities that are the most highly regarded in the United States, if not in the world, in an economical manner.

An assumption underlying models like that of the California higher education system is that cost per student is strongly correlated with the levels of degrees that institutions award. A major reason for expecting such a correlation is the expectation, in turn, of a correlation between the level of degrees that institutions may award and the amount of attention that they give to research relative to teaching. Thus, the phrases "primarily teaching" and "primarily undergraduate" are often used interchangeably to describe a university that has limited involvement in graduate programs.

However, the emphasis that an institution gives to research relative to teaching can be strongly influenced by other factors such as its culture and aspirations for the future, thus weakening the relationship between degree level and emphasis on research. For example, in Ontario, while Brock University is categorized by **Maclean's** as a "primarily undergraduate" university, the norm is for faculty to devote equal effort to research as to teaching, the same as the norm in a "medical doctoral" university like the University of Toronto.<sup>10</sup>

Although I was unable to find other policy statements as explicit as those for Brock and Toronto in a search of Ontario university web sites, my impression is that these statements reflect a common culture and idea of the university in Ontario, whatever the extent of graduate programs in the institution. Insofar as this perception is accurate, it suggests one of the reasons why there has been such a major concern about inadequate funding of postsecondary education in Ontario. Most jurisdictions that have a participation rate in university level study anywhere near the level of Ontario's utilize a variety of types of institutions to provide that study. These include: having a substantial proportion of undergraduate students do their first two years of study in a community college; having among the public baccalaureate granting institutions some primarily teaching institutions where faculty have less involvement in research than at a research university<sup>11</sup>; serving some students through an electronic distance or virtual university; and allowing private not-for-profit, proprietary, and corporate universities which take some of the pressure off the public universities, particularly for career-related education for working adults. Ontario is unique in having relied exclusively on a network of publicly funded research-oriented universities to meet the demand for

university level education. In this regard, our accomplishments have been extraordinary. Employing the highest cost model for providing university level education, we have managed to attain one of the highest university participation rates in the world. It is no wonder, though, that we have chronic complaints about inadequacy of funding!

It is also not surprising that from time to time the idea of fostering some shift toward greater emphasis on teaching relative to research for at least some of the universities surfaces. There was a spirited exchange on this idea in the mid-90s when the former Ontario Council on University Affairs released a discussion paper<sup>12</sup> that attempted to grapple with the same underfunding issue that the Fisher Committee had addressed. In a section of the document entitled, *The Interrelationships and Balance among Teaching, Research and Community Service*, it was noted that until the 1950s Ontario universities were "primarily teaching institutions, designed to transmit accumulated knowledge to successive generations." The report went on to say that since the 1960s, "a single paradigm of excellence has emerged, with research productivity at its pinnacle", and that with this change, universities shifted the balance in their resources between research and teaching.

The OCUA report surveyed the considerable empirical literature on the relationship between research and teaching. This survey showed that there is "little evidence of necessary links between effective undergraduate teaching and research", leading the report to conclude that research and undergraduate teaching are "at least independent and, perhaps, conflicting functions." Suggesting that for undergraduate teaching a primarily teaching institution is more economical than, and at least as effective for learners as, a research university, the document made the following statement: In responding to increased enrolment demand within the context of fiscal constraint, institutions may be asked to expand the teaching function with neither a requirement nor the resources to increase their activity in research and community service.<sup>13</sup>

Read literally, this statement would seem to raise the possibility that, out of financial necessity, universities may have to make an incremental shift in the balance of effort between teaching and research. Neither this statement nor any other statement in the document proposed restructuring the university system so that some institutions were given a primarily teaching mission. Yet, the document was widely perceived by the universities as calling for such a restructuring of the university system. One of the responses from the university community accused the Council and the Government of forcing onto the universities a tiered structure in which most universities would become largely teaching institutions and most faculty would be "forbidden" to do research.<sup>14</sup>

The vehemence of the universities' reaction to the statement cited above illustrates how strongly held is the commitment to give at

least as much attention to research as to teaching in the contemporary Ontario university. Given how strongly held this position is, it may be futile for Government to consider any attempt to shift the balance between teaching and research in the universities generally, or to try to shift any existing institution significantly in that direction.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, unpalatable as it might be, this is one of the few options available to achieve economies in the system. Besides its likely economic advantages, having some primarily teaching institutions could be beneficial for other reasons. A primarily teaching institution would likely be the first choice of many students because of the learning centered character that such institutions have. Also, many faculty might welcome the opportunity to work in a primarily teaching institution where they could concentrate on teaching, less burdened by the publish-or-perish ethos of the research university.<sup>16</sup> It is of interest that in grappling with similar issues, other jurisdictions are giving consideration to major changes in the structure of their higher education systems. An example is the state of Arizona. Of the four types of institutions referred to earlier that can provide university level education, Arizona presently relies mainly on only two (one more than Ontario) — research universities and community colleges.<sup>17</sup> The Arizona Board of Regents has been grappling with how to handle an anticipated 43 per cent increase in university enrolment over the next fifteen years. At its June, 2004 meeting, the Regents discussed a proposed redesign of the university system that would create a new statewide university with a "primarily teaching" mission. The new university would be formed through changing the mission of one of the existing universities and combining it with certain satellite campuses of the other two. The purported benefits of the new structure are said to be that it would be more "cost-effective" as a result of having a multi-campus institution that concentrated on undergraduate education. It is anticipated that, even though classes would be smaller than at the existing universities, tuition would be lower at the new university because "research wouldn't need to be subsidized".<sup>18</sup> At the June meeting, the Regents voted to have a feasibility and planning study of the proposed new structure undertaken. The working group that is undertaking this study is already listening to opposition to the plan and receiving alternative proposals. Interestingly, the President whose institution would be most affected by the Regents' proposal was quoted as saying that in other states too, "A lot of people are asking a lot of really hard questions about higher education, and we can't, in Arizona, say, 'Well, we're not going to ask those at all' ".

In suggesting that, like Arizona, Ontario ask really hard questions about higher education, I am not presupposing what the answers would be in regard to the structure of the university sector. Besides the benefits for learners that would result from greater institutional differentiation, a serious limitation of the present structure is its inherently high cost to maintain. Perhaps, though, the Government can be persuaded to provide the funds necessary to maintain the sector in its present configuration. Even if not, perhaps it is just not worth the turmoil to try to make any substantial changes in the existing structure. At the very least, however, efforts to modify the

structure could focus on the process for adding new university level institutions. It might be possible to get a consensus that any new public degree granting institutions in the foreseeable future should be those that have a mission that is quite distinct from the existing universities, and be limited to the provision of undergraduate programs. Or perhaps, converting a community college in an area of high demand for undergraduate education into a university college similar to those in British Columbia would be a more effective way to augment our capacity for baccalaureate provision than adding another university that is similar to the existing universities in Ontario. As will be discussed under Issue IV, there is no agency in Ontario whose responsibility it is to examine and provide public advice on such questions.

## **Issue II: The Role of the Community College in Regard to Baccalaureate**

### **Education**

The second way of diversifying the provision of baccalaureate education, beyond relying exclusively on research-oriented universities, is to ascribe a role in this area to the community college. In being heavily student-centered, and in its emphasis on learning, the community college has much in common with the primarily teaching institution that I have just been discussing. Indeed, some of Ontario's colleges are on the leading edge of the movement to make postsecondary institutions more learning centered.<sup>19</sup>

Ontario's colleges were established originally to offer a distinct alternative to the universities, and providing university transfer courses was not part of their original mandate. The separation of the colleges from the universities served a purpose in the colleges' formative years, enabling them to develop stronger career education programs than might have been the case otherwise. Moreover, the decision to concentrate on career education was forward looking, as evidenced by the fact this is now the major area of emphasis in community colleges almost everywhere. However, the real issue now is one of balance, and in that respect it is important to note that the original design decision to exclude transfer completely in Ontario was not carved in stone, and changes in the worlds of knowledge, work, and learning warrant a rethinking of decisions made forty years ago about the connection between colleges and universities.<sup>20</sup> The community college is a quite malleable institution that was intended to meet various societal needs associated with learning that were not met by other institutions. I have argued elsewhere that it is the meeting of societal needs that are within its realm of capability that defines the community college, rather than a particular set of programmatic activity that it may be engaged in at a particular time.<sup>21</sup>

In the context of the Postsecondary Education Review, the important question is whether it makes sense for the colleges to be contributing more toward meeting Ontario's needs for baccalaureate

education. Based upon what the colleges are already doing, to at least a limited extent, and practices in other jurisdictions, there are two main ways that the colleges could so contribute. One is by offering courses for which universities would grant credit toward the baccalaureate; the other is by offering whole baccalaureate programs in selected areas. In regard to the first of these, two distinctions are important to make. One is between transfer arrangements and joint programs. Transfer is sequential. A student undertakes study first in a college, typically for two years, then moves to a university to complete the remainder of the requirements for the degree. In a joint program, a student takes some courses in the college and some in the university, in some cases during the same term, in other cases alternating terms or years at each institution. Instructors also may move between the college and the university. Most of the agreements between colleges and universities that involve students taking courses in each sector are of the transfer variety. However, there are several joint program arrangements in Ontario too. Since the majority of arrangements for combining academic credit from the two types of institutions are of the transfer type, for convenience, I will use the term transfer in referring to all such arrangements for combining academic credit from a college and a university.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Junior College Function**

A more important distinction is between arts and science and career programs. College to university transfer began in the United States early in the twentieth century, with the establishment of junior colleges whose mission was to provide the first two years of arts and science courses after which students would complete the next two years in a university or degree granting college. These arts and science courses provided by colleges were intended to be the same as the courses provided in the first two years by universities. Many university leaders were advocates of junior colleges because that would allow the university to concentrate its resources on upper division courses which have more complementarity with graduate programs and research than do first and second year courses. Governments were attracted to this structure because it held the promise of lower costs and increased access.

When the founders of the Ontario CAAT system spoke of rejecting the American model of transfer, it was the junior college function, having colleges provide the first two years of arts and science courses, that they were rejecting. In the early 1960s, American colleges were still early in the process of developing career programs and over 80% of their enrolment was in arts and science. The career education programs were generally considered to be terminal educational programs, as the need and capability for transfer within the career education stream was not yet appreciated. Given the existence of Grade 13 in Ontario, which obviated the need for the first year of junior college<sup>23</sup>, and the broad distribution of universities across the province, there was no compelling reason for the new Ontario colleges to be given a junior college function. This was in



contrast to, for example, British Columbia, where there was no Grade 13, and the few universities were concentrated in one part of the province.

Over the years, some Ontario colleges have developed General Arts and Science Programs. These serve several purposes, such as providing useful foundation courses for students who are still deciding which career program to enter or waiting for space in the career program of their choice. One of the major functions of some of these programs, though, is to facilitate transfer to university. Students go into these programs in the colleges for a variety of reasons, including not having the grades or confidence or clarity of life goals out of high school to go directly to university. As with their other activities, the colleges that have mounted such initiatives have done so because there was a clearly identified need for such a program in their community. Moreover, many colleges have developed the capacity for providing high quality arts and science courses for their General Arts and Science Programs as an byproduct of having to develop such courses to support their career education programs.

On their limited scale, the current General Arts and Science Programs in the colleges play a valuable role in enabling many students to achieve a level of education and personal development that they might not have the opportunity for otherwise. The valuable role that such programs can play in certain circumstances should be affirmed. From the perspective of this review though, the more important question is whether a significant expansion of this role for the colleges should be encouraged.

The major reason for encouraging an expansion of this role for the community college would be to achieve economies by diversifying the mix of providers of baccalaureate education beyond the present exclusive reliance on research-oriented universities for that function.<sup>24</sup> However, as this would involve a major departure from past practice, the transition costs to make this change could be substantial. Also, it is not clear how many colleges would have the capability for (or interest in) assuming such a new or expanded role. Thus, it would probably not be prudent to consider such a change in the mandate of the colleges across the province. However, there may be instances where the expansion of the junior college function for particular colleges can meet an important need, for example, in an area that does not have a local university or in one where enrolment demand exceeds the capacity of the university. It would be in the public interest if there were a process for identifying such cases and supporting the corresponding college initiatives to expand access.

### **Enhancing Transfer Opportunities for Students in Career Programs**

Turning now to career education, it is noteworthy that Ontario's colleges offer two and three year certificate and diploma programs in a breathtakingly wide range of occupational fields. Some of these

programs are in fields where there are corresponding university programs, such as business administration, accounting, and social work. Other college programs are in specialized fields where there is no directly corresponding university program. Many if not most of the colleges' career programs are in areas where there has been continual change in the knowledge that practitioners need and considerable advance in technology. Many of the career fields for which colleges provide programs have reached a point where practitioners must have a pretty advanced and sophisticated understanding of the field. In conjunction with advances in these knowledge and skill requirements, many of the fields for which the colleges have provided graduates have recently begun to require a bachelor's degree for entry or advancement.

A good example of this process of simultaneous advance in knowledge and introduction of the requirement for a baccalaureate is nursing. Until recently, the great majority of nurses in Ontario were educated in the CAATs. However, the requirement of a baccalaureate for entry into the profession left the Province with the choice of shifting all nursing education to the universities, which did not seem feasible for many reasons, or working out arrangements in which colleges and universities collaborate in the education of nurses. The latter approach was adopted, and now a student who does some of his studies in a college and some in a university can complete a degree in nursing in the same time as one who does all of her studies in a university.<sup>25</sup> Prior to the reform of nursing education in Ontario, a graduate of a three-year college diploma program might have to spend as much as three more years in a university in order to obtain a degree. Students in most career programs in the colleges today face a situation like nursing students in the colleges faced prior to the reform of nursing education. They may need to obtain a degree in order to be fully accepted in their field of practice, but it may take them several additional years of study in an Ontario university — if they are admitted at all on the basis of their diploma — to obtain a degree. It seems quite a burden on the individual, and on an underfunded system of postsecondary education, to require students to spend six years to obtain a four-year degree. The question is whether this is avoidable.

In many cases, this scenario is not avoidable. Individuals often change their career and educational aspirations, and as a result require additional years of schooling. However, in a great many cases the student simply wants to advance her education within the same general area. The nursing example suggests that it is possible to relate a college program and a university program in a way that does not penalize the student who starts his postsecondary education in a college. Also, many Ontario CAAT graduates have found that universities outside Ontario will give them credit for most or all of the coursework that they did in a CAAT.

It is an interesting question as to why CAAT graduates can often find universities outside Ontario that will give them substantially more

credit toward a degree than will Ontario universities. I suggest that there are two main explanations for this: values and economics. Outside Ontario, particularly in the United States and Alberta and British Columbia, there is much greater diversity of institutional types than among Ontario universities. The population of degree-granting institutions outside Ontario includes technically oriented universities that place more value on applied learning than do Ontario universities, and thus have more affinity with the CAATs than do Ontario universities. It includes many institutions that are strongly committed to open door access that is reflected in flexible admissions policies. It includes also universities that exist within integrated systems of postsecondary education where student mobility between institutions is a core value of the postsecondary system.<sup>26</sup>

The other significant factor is that outside Ontario are universities that have more financial incentive to admit transfer students from the CAATs than do Ontario universities. Ontario universities have for some time been feeling that they are facing more demand from their traditional sources of students than they can handle given their limited resources. Developing articulation arrangements with colleges requires, as the reform of nursing education has brought home, additional resources and additional effort. Given the way the funding mechanism works, taking more transfer students from the CAATs may not bring them more revenue, it may just mean taking fewer students from other sources. In short, Ontario universities do not have any financial incentive to change their admission patterns in such a way as to be more accommodating to CAAT transfers. In contrast, often the universities outside Ontario that are especially accommodating to CAAT transfers are operating in a different financial context. They are not bursting at the seams from other sources of enrolment. For many of them, transfer students from community colleges in their own locale comprise a well-established and important enrolment stream. To serve this enrolment stream, these institutions have established a base of infrastructure that can readily be extended to CAAT transfers, and transfers from CAATs may constitute a significant source of additional revenue for the institution. Unlike the situation of Ontario universities, tuition fees of the universities in adjacent American states that CAAT graduates attend are not controlled by government, and typically they charge fees that are substantially higher than those of Ontario universities. But as the students are given so much more transfer credit, the students end up spending less on tuition to obtain a degree in an American university than they would have to pay in an Ontario one.<sup>27</sup> When one considers as well the savings in foregone earnings, the total savings for a student who goes out of province to complete a degree can be considerable even with the added travel costs. From a public policy perspective what we have here is a mismatch between the public interest and the institutional interest. It seems clearly to be in the interest of the CAATs, their students, employers, and the public in general if there were better opportunities for students to combine study in a career program in a CAAT with study in an Ontario university to obtain a degree in a more efficient manner. However,

under present funding arrangements, there is no financial incentive or benefit for the universities to work toward this reform. Though there have been some exceptions, in general Ontario universities do not attach a high intrinsic value to attracting transfer students from the CAATs. Thus, in the absence of some action by Government, a significant improvement in opportunities for transfer from college to university is not likely.

The means available to governments for influencing transfer opportunities include persuasion, provision of better information, establishment of coordinating mechanisms, financial incentive, and coercion. All these approaches have been employed to at least some extent over the past decade, and they have resulted in some modest but limited success. Some Ministers have publicly urged institutions to work together toward improved transfer arrangements; coercion was used in the reform of nursing education; the Government has taken the lead in establishing and has supported the College University Consortium Council (CUCC), whose mandate is to provide information, encouragement, and coordination in regard to collaboration between colleges and universities; and Government has provided capital funding for joint initiatives between colleges and universities, particularly through the Superbuild Fund.

While all of these strategies have yielded some returns, perhaps the greatest impact has come from Superbuild which enabled such outcomes as the University of Guelph-Humber initiative where students may earn simultaneously for all their courses degree credit from the University of Guelph and diploma credit from Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. This is as impressive an example of cooperation between postsecondary sectors as exists anywhere in the world.

In contrast, the attempt to improve transfer opportunities significantly across the province by establishing targets has produced quite limited results. In the winter of 1999, under the auspices of the CUCC, the two sectors negotiated an historic Accord at Port Hope, Ontario, which established targets for improving transfer arrangements. The targets included a template for the amount of credit in transfer from two- and three-year college programs to three- and four-year university programs, and a goal of having acceptable degree completion arrangements for 90% of college programs that have substantial academic affinity with a university program. Although there has not been a recent evaluation of progress made in regard to implementation of the Port Hope Accord, it is widely perceived in the colleges that the progress to date falls far short of what was hoped for when the Accord was adopted in 1999.<sup>28</sup> It is unlikely that there is a magic bullet solution to improving college to university transfer in Ontario. It is true that the provinces that have what appear to be pretty effective transfer arrangements, British Columbia and Alberta, both have a provincial council on admission and transfer, whose job it is to promote transfer.<sup>29</sup> However, these provinces also have a history and institutional culture that is more supportive of transfer than Ontario's. It

is not clear how, in the very different institutional culture in Ontario, an Alberta-like Council on Admissions and Transfer would achieve more in the promotion of transfer than the existing College University Consortium Council. Also, in a later section, I suggest the establishment of a postsecondary commission for planning and coordination, and it would seem impractical and impolitic to recommend two new provincial agencies for postsecondary education at the same time. A commission for planning and coordination in postsecondary education could have a broader impact on postsecondary education and could as well exert influence on the transfer problem too.

As regards the funding arrangements, a modification in the formula that provided direct incentive to the universities for admitting transfer students would no doubt make the recruitment of transfer students more attractive. However, this could also stigmatize transfer students, and it would be a bad precedent to give more funding for some students than for other students based upon their background. A better solution would be to modify the funding mechanism to make it more sensitive to enrolment change. Transfer students from community colleges appear to rank low among the pools from which Ontario universities can recruit students. So long as competition for students is dampened by a fixed-shares funding mechanism, universities are unlikely to be interested in recruiting from their lower priority pools. Changing the current funding arrangements by getting rid of the corridors would do more than anything else to improve opportunities for transfer from colleges to universities. Of course, such a change in the funding arrangements would have to be accompanied by increased levels of total operating funding, but increased funding by itself would not likely affect university policies toward transfer students.

The two component funding model that was proposed by OCUA in 1995 would provide a framework for blending enrolment sensitive funding with more stable infrastructure funding. That funding model might also make it possible gradually to increase institutional differentiation among the universities.<sup>30</sup> Even within the existing financial arrangements, it is theoretically possible for an institution to negotiate the opportunity for additional funding for enrolment expansion<sup>31</sup>; the problem is that in the absence of a plan or planning process for postsecondary education, there is really no framework for negotiating such changes. The establishment of a postsecondary education commission with a formal responsibility for planning could create such a framework through which institutions that wished to redefine their institutional missions and renegotiate their funding arrangements accordingly would have the opportunity to do so. In the course of differentiating themselves, universities that wished to make recruitment of transfer students a priority might be able to negotiate higher enrolment level targets to enable them to do so. They would not be getting greater funding per student for transfer students, but they would be enabled to fund an increased level of enrolment that could include more transfer students.

### The Community College Baccalaureate

Besides providing part of the coursework toward a degree that is awarded by a university, another way that a community college can contribute to baccalaureate education is to provide the whole baccalaureate program itself. While, traditionally, one of the distinguishing characteristics of a community college was that it did not grant bachelor's degrees, within the past decade there has been movement in both Canada and the United States in the direction of community colleges offering complete baccalaureate programs and granting degrees. Community colleges in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and several American states now have the authority to offer a limited number of baccalaureate programs in selected areas.<sup>32</sup> There are two rationales for community colleges to offer baccalaureate programs. One is to increase access to the baccalaureate for community college students who are unable to continue their studies in a university because they are unable to move due to work, family, or financial circumstances, or because there are no universities accessible to them that offer programs in their field or are amenable to accepting transfer students, or simply because there is insufficient access to university in their region. It was because of limited access to universities for people outside the lower mainland area that British Columbia transformed some of its community colleges into university colleges in the 1990s. The university colleges were mandated to offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs in addition to maintaining their community college programs. Access was also a key factor in decisions in Utah and Nevada to authorize community colleges to offer selected baccalaureate programs. However, improved access has been a motivating factor not just in cases where colleges are located in remote areas. One of the reasons why Florida authorized one of its large urban community colleges to grant baccalaureates was to enhance access to the baccalaureate, particularly for minorities.

The other rationale for the community college baccalaureate is to meet critical labour force needs. In the United States, some of the first baccalaureate programs that community colleges have been authorized to provide are in teacher education and nursing, areas of current or anticipated labour market shortages in many parts of the United States. There has also been a goal of producing graduates with a different type of baccalaureate education than is typically provided by universities, one that combines a more hands-on type of learning with academic study. Many observers have suggested that graduates of such workforce-oriented programs will be valuable to industry and consequently in high demand by employers. This type of baccalaureate degree has been called a workforce baccalaureate in the United States and an applied baccalaureate degree in Canada — though how it is actually differentiated from a conventional, or academic, baccalaureate has been difficult to explicate precisely. Alberta was the first jurisdiction in North America to authorize community colleges to award applied baccalaureate degrees.

Ontario colleges obtained the opportunity to offer applied baccalaureate programs under the **Postsecondary Education Choice and Excellence Act**, 2000. Following a review of proposed programs by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB), the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities may grant a college approval to offer a baccalaureate program of an applied nature. As of August, 2004, the PEQAB web site listed forty applied baccalaureate programs in seventeen colleges that had received Ministerial Consent.<sup>33</sup> The policy of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is to limit the number of baccalaureate degrees a college can offer to 5% of its activity, except for those colleges that have been given the designation of Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning or equivalent which can go up to 15%. This seems a reasonable limit on the number of college baccalaureate programs until there have been a few graduating classes and the labour market outcomes have been studied, and more importantly, until there is in place a process for the ongoing planning of the development of postsecondary education in Ontario. Regarding the offering of applied baccalaureate programs by the colleges, I would like to offer three points for consideration. First, the rationale for the applied degrees has emphasized labour market opportunity and outcomes rather than costs. It is pretty certain that the applied baccalaureate programs are more expensive to provide than diploma programs. At present, the colleges receive almost no additional funding for the applied degree programs. The funding for applied baccalaureate programs should certainly be reviewed.

The second point pertains to the opportunities within colleges and the college sector for students to transfer from diploma programs to applied baccalaureate programs. It would be an unfortunate irony if the colleges made it as difficult, or were required to make it as difficult, for diploma students to transfer to their applied degree programs as it is for their students to transfer to universities. The problem is that, if the colleges offer more generous transfer opportunities to students transferring into their baccalaureate programs than Ontario universities grant students transferring into theirs, this may make it more difficult for these new baccalaureate programs to gain respect from Ontario universities. There is no obvious solution to this problem — other than the universities becoming more flexible themselves on the issue of transfer credit.

The third point pertains to the relationship between college applied degrees and college to university transfer, that is how one might affect the other. An improvement of opportunities for transfer to university could possibly reduce the demand for the colleges' own degree programs. However, a significant reduction in the latter would seem unlikely so long as the college degree programs are highly differentiated from the kinds of programs offered by the universities. Increased recognition by the universities of college coursework associated with improved transfer arrangements could enhance the credibility of the colleges as institutions to offer applied degrees. Similarly, the fact that the Quality Assessment Panels, established by

the PEQAB, that have reviewed applied degree proposals from the colleges have consisted mainly of university professors, usually pretty senior and accomplished ones, and that these reviews have mostly been extremely positive, especially in regard to the degree-worthiness of the curriculum, should bolster the case for giving transfer credit for college studies.

Enabling colleges to offer baccalaureate programs in selected fields opens up whole new possibilities for colleges and universities to rationalize their relationships, for the benefit of students. An exemplary case of that occurred recently in southwestern Florida between Edison College and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). Through transfer programs and a University Centre on an Edison campus, Edison students have had good opportunities for degree completion at FGCU. Recently, officials of the two institutions agreed to transfer two of the University's baccalaureate programs to the College, the bachelor of applied science in computer technology and the bachelor's degree in public services management. The University agreed that with the heavy emphasis on workforce skills in these programs there would be a better fit at Edison College than at the University. In return, Edison agreed to open its Charlotte campus to FGCU as the University moves north.<sup>34</sup>

The issue that Edison College and Florida Gulf Coast University have addressed is part of a larger phenomenon, common to Canada as well Florida, that has been described as blurring of the boundaries between postsecondary sectors. Blurring of the boundaries is alleged to have resulted from two trends. On one side, as I noted earlier, advances in technology and the knowledge required of practitioners in fields where colleges have traditionally offered programs have led to increases in the complexity and sophistication of courses and programs in the colleges. On the other side, as universities have become more market-driven and commercially oriented, they have initiated programs and other activities of a quite applied nature.<sup>35</sup> In this connection, I have argued elsewhere that universities should welcome the offering of applied baccalaureate programs by colleges — as apparently the Florida university did in the example above — because it allows the universities to concentrate on doing, as Abraham Flexner expressed it, "supremely well what they almost alone can do."<sup>36</sup> Rather than competing with colleges to offer applied programs, the university can concentrate on its broader intellectual, critical, cultural, and civic purposes. In this case, the boundary between the university and the college is no longer defined by the generic name given to the academic credential that each awards, but by the substantive content, goals and learning outcomes of the educational experience.

### **Issue III: The Role for Alternative Providers of Degree Programs**

The remaining type of provider of degree education is what I have called alternative providers. This includes distance, open and virtual universities, private degree-granting institutions (both not-for-



profit and for-profit); corporate universities; educational brokering institutions; and national and transnational consortia of postsecondary institutions, or of postsecondary institutions and other organizations such as media, publishing, and software companies, or public and private sector employers. This has been a growing area of activity in recent years that has attracted considerable attention from educators in mainstream postsecondary institutions.

Recently, the term "borderless education" was coined to refer to a situation in which educational and related institutions and organizations that have the capability and the desire to provide various types of educational programs are no longer constrained by the traditional boundaries that defined their former sphere of activity. The elimination of the border that previously excluded community colleges from awarding baccalaureate degrees is an example of the erosion of such borders. The dimension of borderless education that has attracted the most attention is that in which the market for career-related degree education is invaded by new providers of higher education, crossing into what was formerly regarded as the preserve of public and private not-for-profit universities.<sup>37</sup> An indicator of the seriousness with which mainstream universities view these new developments is that the association of universities in the United Kingdom has established an Observatory on Borderless Higher Education<sup>38</sup>. There is, of course, a question of whether the newer forms of higher education described here will operate only on the periphery of higher education or become a substantial force. In response to this question, Middlehurst begins his discussion of these developments with the caution that "Overestimating change in the short term and underestimating it in the long term is a common phenomenon when revolutions are underway".<sup>39</sup>

These alternative providers can be a relatively small but valuable complement to the public universities and colleges. They can be particularly useful for meeting the career-related education needs of working adults who must tailor the scheduling of their studies around employment and family responsibilities. While uninformed commentators in Ontario have rejected the idea of private degree-granting institutions as elitist, these are anything but that. The private degree-granting institutions that we are likely to see in Ontario, besides religious institutions, are very small institutions that offer career education programs in specific areas of high demand, often related to emerging technologies. Their full-time students tend to be of limited financial means and eager to complete their studies and get back to the workforce as quickly as possible. These institutions often offer programs on a fast-track basis that enable students to complete them in a shorter time period than is typical in public sector colleges and universities. Thus, when foregone earnings are factored in, these programs may cost students less than programs of the publicly supported system. Many of the students who attend private career colleges find the small size and learner-centered orientation of these institutions more conducive to their academic success than larger, more impersonal institutions. The operation of such institutions in

Ontario was made possible in 2000 by the Postsecondary Education Choice and Excellence Act. The credibility of the institutions and the quality of their programs is assured by review by the PEQAB.

The number of students likely to be involved in degree programs in the whole category of alternative providers is relatively small, but it is a category well worth encouraging both because these programs serve the specific educational needs of many residents of Ontario, and because it takes some of the pressure of numbers off the research oriented universities. If the programs of these institutions weren't meeting a need, they wouldn't be getting enough students to operate.

Postsecondary education can be a life-changing experience. Short of that, it can considerably enrich a person's life and that of his or her community. We don't know exactly what specific program characteristics or learning environment will work best for any particular individual. That being the case, the wisest and most prudent public policy is to encourage the greatest possible diversity in the types of educational settings and opportunities that are available to residents of the Province, and to try to build the most effective pathways possible among the various educational settings.

One type of alternative provider of postsecondary education warrants particular mention here. That is the distance/open university. These institutions have state of the art infrastructure and professional expertise in the design and delivery of electronic distance education programs, and experience and expertise in serving students with an incredibly diverse array of educational backgrounds, including those with weak academic backgrounds. Many Ontario residents find that because of their work schedules and family responsibilities, their geographic locations, or past unsuccessful academic experiences, they are unable to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the existing colleges and universities. For these individuals, a distance/open university can play a valuable role in giving them a second chance or enabling them to complete a program of studies that otherwise they could not manage.

Several, if not all, of the existing universities offer some courses by electronic distance education, but none have sought to perform the role of an open university. The offering of distance education courses by existing universities is useful for their students, but it does not meet the broader need that in some other jurisdictions is met by a specialized distance/open university like the Open University in the United Kingdom. Great as this need is in Ontario, given the needs of existing postsecondary institutions, it would seem imprudent to mount the expense of trying to create a whole new institution of this type in Ontario. Fortunately, however, that is not necessary. Canada already possesses at least one of the foremost distance universities in the world, Athabasca University in Alberta.<sup>40</sup> For a country the size of Canada, there is no need for an additional specialized distance/open

university.

Athabasca University could make a substantial contribution to meeting the needs of adult learners in Ontario, complementing the opportunities provided by Ontario's universities and colleges.<sup>41</sup> There are a couple of different ways in which a role of this type for Athabasca in Ontario could be formalized and secured. One way would be for the provinces to agree to treat Athabasca, and perhaps the Tele-université in Quebec, as (a) national institution(s). Given that we have precious few if any national educational institutions in Canada, such an initiative could possibly be a useful unifying gesture for the country. Independently of such national recognition, Ontario could seek to enter into an agreement with Alberta under which, for example, in return for a modest financial commitment from Ontario, Athabasca would guarantee to serve at least a certain number of learners in Ontario. Further, to enhance the connection between Athabasca and Ontario, perhaps a seat on the Athabasca governing board could be given to an appointee of the Ontario universities.

These are just some of the variants that might be possible in a relationship between Athabasca and Ontario. The salient point is that Ontario learners could benefit significantly from access to a specialized distance/open university that has state of the art expertise and resources. Such an opportunity could possibly be provided at a modest cost if Ontario could work out an agreement for this with Alberta/Athabasca.

#### **Issue 4: A Postsecondary Education Commission for Planning and Coordination - and a Plan for Postsecondary Education**

There has not been a provincial vision or plan for postsecondary education, or even a serious public dialogue about what an appropriate vision or plan would be for Ontario since the 1960s. Ontario differs in this respect from many other jurisdictions, including almost all American states and the next largest Canadian provinces. Decisions about new institutions, mergers, closures, significant changes in institutional mission are made largely by individual institutions considering their own institutional interests. Insofar as the Province has been involved in some of these decisions, it has been on an ad hoc basis, uninformed by any vision or plan for the orderly development of postsecondary education in the Province.

By vision or plan, I mean a description of what types of postsecondary institutions we want to have in terms of their institutional missions and scope of activity, how many of the different types, where they should be located, and what the relationships among them should be. When a province is spending billions of dollars on postsecondary education, it would seem natural that it would want some kind of vision to guide its expenditure decisions.

Most jurisdictions, and most students of postsecondary education, believe that the structure of the system makes some

difference in regard to outcomes such as accessibility, student achievement, affordability, and efficiency. It is difficult to determine the consequences of different structures, but that is true of almost all questions of social policy. The choice is between making the wisest decisions that we can based upon the data that we can obtain and the existing state of knowledge, or simply giving up, and letting things be determined by political influence, defense of parochial interest, and caprice.

When the idea of having a provincial plan for postsecondary education has come up, one of the questions raised by those who oppose the idea is, "who would be responsible for producing the plan?" In most jurisdictions that have a plan, there is some sort of postsecondary commission or board that is charged with the responsibility for planning and coordination. Such agencies consult widely and then make the wisest, most informed decisions that they can. For example, in California, the Postsecondary Education Commission is required to "develop an ongoing statewide plan for the operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, innovative and coordinated system of postsecondary education."<sup>42</sup> In recent years, vision and planning type documents for Alberta and British Columbia have been produced directly by the ministries responsible for postsecondary education. In Ontario, over the years, numerous task forces, committees, and commissions have advocated the establishment of both a body to provide planning and coordination for the postsecondary education system and a plan, but governments have not responded.<sup>43</sup> One of the earliest such calls came from the Spinks Commission, established in 1965 to review graduate education and research, which observed that:

The most striking characteristic of higher — not only graduate — education in Ontario is the complete absence of a master plan, of an educational policy, and of a co-ordinating authority for the provincially-supported institutions.<sup>44</sup> Another issue that sometimes is raised is whether having a postsecondary education commission and plan for postsecondary education conflicts with institutional autonomy. Insofar as provincial plan for postsecondary education would require institutions to stay within their approved mandate, there would be a limitation on institutional autonomy. Indeed, the point of having a plan is to ensure that the pieces of the system fit together harmoniously, rather than just letting every institution do whatever it wants. It is important to emphasize, however, that a provincial plan for postsecondary education would not infringe upon how institutions or faculty conduct their activities.

In the literature on university-government relations, a distinction is made between procedural and substantive autonomy. Procedural autonomy refers to the power of institutions to decide how they will carry out their various activities. Substantive autonomy refers to an institution's power to decide on its own mandate and major goals. The development of a provincial plan for postsecondary education need not impact upon procedural autonomy at all. Plans and planning

commissions do impinge on the substantive autonomy of institutions. In most jurisdictions, it is accepted that the public, through an appropriately constituted agency, should have a say on how public enterprises which are dependent upon public funding are mandated. As scholar of university-government relations, Robert Berdahl, has expressed it, the public interest is best served if the state "yields the broadest array of procedural freedoms to the institution", while it still retains "a partnership role in the substantive goals" of the institution.<sup>45</sup>

Probably the best way for the Province to embody such a partnership, and to ensure that the public interest is best served by the postsecondary education system, would be to establish a postsecondary education commission, one of whose responsibilities would be to establish an ongoing province-wide plan for the development of postsecondary education in Ontario.

For those who are uncomfortable with the idea of province-wide planning for postsecondary education, there are only two alternatives. One is to continue to let things drift which, as I have argued, has been the predominant approach for past three decades. The other is to deregulate the system and let market forces determine the structure of postsecondary education. There are so many restrictions on market forces in higher education in Ontario, and so many advocates for the maintenance of every existing type of restriction, that it is doubtful that we could create a sufficiently competitive market for higher education to meet the minimum conditions for efficient outcomes. For example, competitive markets would require the complete deregulation of tuition fees, removal of controls on which institutions may offer which programs, and free entry of new institutions into degree granting. It would also mean leaving quality judgments to consumers. It is instructive that even in the United States, a jurisdiction that, in general, is far more enamoured with the market than Ontario, state-wide planning rather than the market is the means of choice for determining the structure of public postsecondary education systems. All three approaches to dealing with issues of structure — design, drift, and deregulation — have their downsides. Of the three, the downsides are least and the upsides are greatest for the first of these, conscious design, i.e., planning.

### **Summary of Policy Suggestions**

In the body of this paper, it was useful first to describe and discuss issues related to the structure of postsecondary education in Ontario, before raising the question of establishing a postsecondary education commission that could address those and other issues on an ongoing basis. However, in presenting a summary of suggestions for the Postsecondary Education Review to consider, it is appropriate to put the issue of a postsecondary education commission first. The reason is that in the absence of an agency like this that has a formally designated responsibility for province-wide planning for postsecondary education on an ongoing basis, it is hard to be optimistic that the structural issues identified will be addressed. At

least, such would be the lesson of the past three and a half decades.

If a postsecondary commission is to be established, it should have a precise mandate and terms of reference. One of the big questions in that regard is whether the commission should have any responsibility with respect to the allocation of funding for postsecondary education. While a postsecondary education commission should not be involved in operational matters, there is a sufficiently close connection between the design of the funding mechanism and the structure of postsecondary education that the commission should provide advice on the design of the funding mechanisms. Indeed, the chief means for implementing a province-wide plan for postsecondary education is through the funding mechanisms. Although it would be up to the Government to implement the plan for postsecondary education, it would be better to call the proposed new agency a postsecondary education commission than an advisory commission, as the latter title does not connote the stature that is needed in such an agency. The other suggestions in the list below pertain to particular elements of the structure of postsecondary education that would fall under the jurisdiction of a postsecondary education commission. Whether or not a commission of the type suggested here is established, a provincial postsecondary education policy should include explicit statements on these matters.

1. Postsecondary education commission. Because of the size and complexity of its postsecondary education system, Ontario needs a postsecondary education commission that would have jurisdiction over the whole of postsecondary education and whose primary responsibility would be to develop on an ongoing basis a province-wide plan for postsecondary education. Such a plan is necessary in order to ensure that efforts of individual institutions mesh together effectively and that the aggregate of all these individual efforts best serves the interests of the Province.
2. Differentiated missions among public postsecondary institutions. The issue, particularly among the degree granting institutions, is whether it would be more efficient and effective to have greater differentiation among institutions by mission and role. Clearly, it would. However, it would probably not be prudent to dictate changes in the missions of the existing, already chartered public universities, though as noted below, there are changes in the funding mechanism that could possibly contribute gradually to increased institutional differentiation. Apart from those, the main way to achieve differentiation of institutions within the degree-granting sector would be through the process of determining the missions of institutions that acquire various kinds of degree granting authority in the future. Using new types of institutions, such as undergraduate colleges with a primarily teaching mission, or university colleges, to meet a substantial portion of the future increase in demand for undergraduate education would be a

way of reducing the present exclusive reliance for this function upon the most expensive type of institution, the research oriented university.

3. **Role of Community Colleges in Degree Granting.** The way to obtain the new public institutions that can play a significant role in expanding undergraduate programming in an economical way is through various types of modification of some existing community colleges. These new forms of institutions could include polytechnics, university colleges, and colleges with a substantial junior college function. The question of institutional differentiation within the present college sector is largely a matter of differences in the nature and extent of an institution's involvement in the provision of degree credit courses and programs. One of the major responsibilities of the postsecondary education commission would be to consider the various innovative, creative possibilities for new institutional models in this area and determine the configuration of new forms of postsecondary institutions that would best meet Provincial needs.
4. **Improvements in University Transfer Opportunities for Students in College Career Education Programs.** Within the area of college-university relations, the most critical need is for significantly improved arrangements for graduates of career education programs in the colleges to be able to complete related bachelor's degrees in Ontario universities. This is also one of the most difficult types of reform to bring about. Probably, the most fruitful approach to enhancing transfer opportunities is through modifying the university sector funding mechanism to make funding more sensitive to enrolment change. Two specific things that should be considered in this regard are doing away with the corridors in the present funding arrangements, and adopting the two-component funding model that was recommended by OCUA in 1995. Both changes would be more effective if the Province provided an increased level of total operating funding. Of even more importance than their contribution to dealing with the transfer problem, these two changes, taken together, could contribute to increased differentiation among the universities with regard to the relative emphases on teaching and research.
5. **The Role of Alternative Providers of Postsecondary Education in Ontario.** One of the most significant developments in higher education worldwide in past decade has been the increased, though still relatively small overall, role in the provision of postsecondary education by institutions other than traditional public and private not-for-profit universities. These include virtual, open, and distance universities, proprietary institutions, brokering institutions, and corporate colleges and universities. The valuable role that such institutions can play, subject to appropriate screening for quality, in adding diversity and opportunity for the residents of Ontario, and in being a source of innovation in learning, should be affirmed.
6. **A Distance/Open University for Ontario.** Among alternative providers of postsecondary education, there would be

particular benefit for Ontario residents in having a specialized distance/open university that has state-of-the-art expertise, infrastructure, and practices in this realm of educational activity. Rather than establishing a new institution of this type in Ontario, it would make more sense to recognize that there is already such an institution in Canada that could address this need in Ontario. The suggestion is to explore the possibility of a collaborative arrangement between Ontario and Athabasca University under which Athabasca would serve as Ontario's open/distance university.

### Endnotes

1. I have developed this point in greater detail in M. L. Skolnik, "The Case for Giving Greater Attention to Structure in Higher Education Policy-making," in C. Beach, R. Broadway, and M. McInnis (eds.), *Higher Education in Canada*. (Kingston: John Deutsch Institute, Queen's University, 2004, forthcoming).
2. The document that first warned that the university system was at the brink of serious trouble if funding did not improve was Ontario Council on University Affairs, *System on the Brink: A Financial Analysis of the Ontario University System 1979* (Toronto: Council, 1979). The following year, OCUA issued a paper on the need for system rationalization in order to use the limited funds available for the universities more efficiently. Ontario Council on University Affairs, *System Rationalization: A Responsibility and an Opportunity* (Toronto: Council, 1980). The idea of system rationalization was expanded upon substantially by a Government appointed committee the next year. Committee on the Future Role of Universities in Ontario, *Report* (Toronto: Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1981). The 1981 Report led to the establishment of a commission that reported in 1984. Commission on the Future Role of Universities in Ontario, *Ontario Universities: Options and Futures* (Toronto: Commission, 1984). For the next several years there was a preoccupation with reform of the funding mechanism, and the next significant attempt to get back to restructuring was in 1992 when the Hon. Richard Allen, Minister of Colleges and Universities, established the University Restructuring Steering Committee. This committee, composed of stakeholder representatives, identified policy questions and areas for research, but failed to reach any consensus on recommendations for change. The following year, a subsequent Minister, the Hon. Dave Cooke, requested OCUA to undertake a comprehensive study of resource allocation for the university sector that included questions of restructuring and the relationship between the universities and the colleges. The Council issued a discussion paper, which I comment on later. Ontario Council on University Affairs, *Sustaining Quality in Changing Times. A Discussion Paper* (Toronto: Council, 1994).
3. In discussing the period of the 1970s to the 1990s, Jones describes the government policy toward the university sector as one of "managerialism at the margins" as opposed to structural change. G.



A. Jones, "Ontario," in G. A. Jones (ed.), *Higher Education in Canada: Different Systems, Different Perspectives* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), p. 149. Using that description, it would appear that since the mid-90s, the margins have shrunk!

4. Report of the Committee on the Future Role of Universities in Ontario, p. 43.

5. A description of the Carnegie Classification can be found at [www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000.htm](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000.htm).

6. An agency that has a vital interest in how to classify institutions of postsecondary education is Statistics Canada. For an excellent and timely discussion of this question, see the paper released late last year: L. Orton, *A New Understanding of Postsecondary Education in Canada: A Discussion Paper*. Catalog no. 81-595-MIE - No. 011 (Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 2003).

7. Even the newest university, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, within its first year of operation submitted a proposal to the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies to start a master's program. On the other hand, the UOIT does have a mission and an educational philosophy that is quite distinct from that of the other Ontario universities. The Ontario College of Art and Design is a single field institution, but is not a full member of the Council of Ontario Universities.

8. Getting the right balance between uniformity and diversity is a, perhaps the, major dilemma in designing higher education systems, and it has been a considerable source of concern in Canadian higher education. Peter Leslie observed that the dispersal of resources for graduate studies and research prevented Canada from developing the kind of great centres for advanced studies that some other countries have produced by being more willing to concentrate their resources. P. Leslie, *Canadian Universities 1980 and Beyond: Enrolment, Structural Change, and Finance*. AUCC Policy Study No. 3 (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1980), pp. 56-65. In a comparison of universities in Northern Ontario and Northern Sweden, Weller and Rosehart concluded that the Swedish universities were designed to fit their unique regional context, while the Ontario universities were designed to provide regional access points to the general Ontario university system. G. R. Weller and R. G. Rosehart, "Universities, Politics and Development in Northern Ontario and Northern Sweden: A Comparative Analysis," *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (1985), pp. 51-72. For an informative discussion of the issue of institutional differentiation in Canadian higher education, see G. A. Jones, "Diversity Within a Decentralized Higher Education System: The Case of Canada," in V.L. Meek, L. Goedegebuure, O. Kivinen, and R. Rinne (eds.), *The Mockers and the Mocked: Comparative Perspectives on Differentiation, Convergence, and Diversity in Higher Education* (Oxford: Pergamon/IAU Press, 1996), pp. 79-93.

9. Some California State University campuses offer doctoral programs in selected areas in collaboration with the University of California, but on the whole the intention of the master plan to limit doctoral study to the University of California has been maintained.

10. The 2003-2006 Collective Agreement between Brock University and the Brock University Faculty Association states that "The workload of faculty shall include teaching, research/scholarly/creative activities, and service to the University and to the Union. Normally, the proportionate distribution of time among those activities will be approximately 40%, 40%, and 20% respectively..." (p. 71). The faculty assessment policy at the University of Toronto states that normally the weight given to teaching and research will be approximately equal. Office of the Vice-President and Provost, University of Toronto, PTR/Merit Assessment and Salary Increase Instructions for 2003-2004, p. 4.

11. In the California State University System the average proportion of faculty time spent in research is 20%, compared to an average of 31% for all types of institutions in the United States. California State University, Comparable Faculty Workload Report (San Marcos, CA: The Social and Behavioral Research Institute, California State University San Marcos, January , 2003), p. 23.

12. Sustaining Quality in Changing Times: Funding Ontario Universities.

13. Sustaining Quality in Changing Times: Funding Ontario Universities, p. 36.

14. Cited in an analysis that I did of the briefs from the university community that were submitted in response to the OCUA Discussion Paper. M. L. Skolnik, "Upsetting the Balance: The Debate on Proposals for Radically Altering the Relationship between the Universities and Government in Ontario," Ontario Journal of Higher Education (1995), pp. 4-26. Note that in the California State University system, faculty spend on average 20% of their time in research.

15. In the advice that it gave Government arising from its resource allocation review, the Council made clear that it was in no way trying to "alter the interrelationship in universities among the activities, nor lead to a 'tiering' of institutions." However, it did propose splitting the funding mechanism into two main components, one to fund teaching and scholarship, the other to fund research infrastructure. The rationale given for this proposal was to make the funding of the balance between teaching and research "a matter of public policy", which would seem inconsistent with the disclaimer about not trying to alter the balance between teaching and research. Ontario Council on University Affairs, Advisory Memorandum 95-III, Resource Allocation for Ontario Universities (Toronto: Council, 1995).

16. Anecdotal evidence from a few small private undergraduate colleges in Canada that have a primarily teaching orientation indicates

that they have had no trouble at all recruiting faculty. I am told that they have received many applications from faculty in the public research universities who are attracted by the opportunity to work in an environment that emphasizes teaching.

17. Arizona has few private degree granting institutions. Apparently the University of Phoenix does most of its activity outside Arizona.

18. J. Slivka, "University aims for 2-tier system," The Arizona Republic (May 23, 2004), electronic edition  
<[www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic](http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic)>

19. For those who are not familiar with the Learning College Movement, a good place to start is with T. O'Banion, *A Learning College for the 21st Century* (Phoenix: The American Council on Education and the Oryx Press, 1997); and R. B. Barr and J. Tagg, "From Teaching to Learning - A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," *Change* (November/December, 1995), pp. 13-25. O'Banion is a former President of the League for Innovation in the Community College which has been the leader of the movement to make community colleges more learning centered. Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning was one of the twelve model colleges in the League's recent Vanguard Learning College Project and several other Ontario CAATs have been among the leaders in the community college sector in North America in implementing the principles of the Learning College.

20. There is no reason to believe that the founders of the college system intended the exclusion of transfer to be a once-for-all-time decision. The sentence in the Minister's Statement in the Legislature that says that transfer courses have not been included in the list of types of courses to be offered ends with the explanation, "because there is no need for such courses in Ontario at the present time". That paragraph ends by noting that the Department of Education would be studying the demands of the 1970s, and "If circumstances so require, we will naturally change or make adaptations to our present plans." However, after the 1960s, the Ontario Government (whatever the Party in power) lost the will to consciously shape its publicly funded postsecondary education system. The quotations are from The Hon. William G. Davis, "Statement by the Minister in the Legislature," 21 May 1965. Reprinted in *Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Basic Documents* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, June, 1966), pp. 5-16.

21. M. L. Skolnik, "The CAATs and change: Is there an essence that has remained constant? Does it matter?" The 2002 Sisco Address. Annual Conference of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, London, Ontario, February 18, 2002. Available on the ACAATO web site <[www.acaato.on.ca](http://www.acaato.on.ca)>.

22. Sometimes what I have referred to as joint programs are called collaborative programs. However, frequently colleges and universities collaborate in the development of transfer arrangements too, so I find

it more helpful to use the term collaborative, to refer to any situation where a college and a university work together to define the conditions for credit recognition. With the variety of configurations in existence now, the distinction between transfer and joint is becoming less precise. For example, there are hybrid cases where the transfer arrangements are augmented by the college students taking some courses in the university during the summer between years at the college.

23. Except for those high school students who didn't make it to Grade 13. This was a big exception, and a group whose subsequent need and suitability for attending university was long neglected in Ontario.

24. Some observers question whether the cost per student is actually lower in the colleges than in the universities because of the large class size and use of teaching assistants in many first year university courses. I don't know of any data or studies in Ontario that could resolve this question. It seems likely that if universities were providing courses in the way that was closer to their ideal, rather than in the way that they were forced to by financial exigency, their costs would be higher than the colleges' costs.

25. It is still problematic for nurses who graduated from a diploma program prior to the reform of nursing education to go back to school to obtain a degree in nursing. Many Ontario diploma graduates find that their opportunities for degree completion are better at institutions in adjacent American states.

26. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology is unique in Ontario in having as part of its legislated mandate the responsibility for facilitating degree completion for students from community colleges. However, operating within a provincial milieu that does not share this commitment may pose a challenge for the UOIT in regard to this aspect of its mandate.

27. I have interviewed a number of graduates of three year diploma programs in the CAATs who are attending universities in adjacent American states. Most of the students whom I interviewed regretted that they had to leave Ontario to earn a degree and couldn't understand why the Province didn't provide comparable opportunities. When told by Ontario universities that they would have to spend two or more additional years to obtain a degree, they felt insulted. Rather than appreciating the systemic forces at work here, they took the response that they got from Ontario universities personally, as a criticism of their intellectual, or some cases, personal, competence. Besides offering a more expedient path to a degree, being actively recruited by American universities repaired their self-esteem. Some said that as a result of employment contacts made through their university, they would likely stay in the United States.

28. As the person who served as facilitator at the meetings that produced the Accord, this is my perception too.

29. G. A. Jones, M. L. Skolnik, and B. Soren, "Arrangements for Coordination between University and College Sectors in Canadian Provinces: 1990-1996," *Higher Education Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1998), pp. 15-27.
30. I would like to thank my colleague, Professor Dan Lang of the Department of Theory and Policy Studies, OISE/UT, for bringing this point to my attention, though the responsibility for the recommendation related to this point is solely my own.
31. The Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual (Toronto: Universities Branch, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (July, 2002), p. 7.
32. The factors and circumstances that have led to this development, the experience of some of the first colleges to develop baccalaureate programs, and the controversy surrounding the community college baccalaureate are documented in D.L. Floyd, M. L. Skolnik, and K. P. Walker, *The Community College Baccalaureate: Emerging Trends and Policy Issues* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2004, forthcoming).
33. The PEQAB web site is <peqab.edu.gov.on.ca>
34. J. B. Reed, "Edison applies to transfer programs from FGCU," *The News-Press* (Southwestern Florida), (July 20, 2004). <www.news-press.com> The two institutions cannot implement this program transfer by themselves. They have applied to the Florida Board of Education for approval to do so.
35. Fisher and Rubenson were among the first to describe the trend toward blurring the sectoral boundaries in Canadian higher education. They voiced concern about what they viewed as the increasing vocational and utilitarian emphases in Canadian universities. D. Fisher and K. Rubenson, "The Changing Political Economy: the Private and Public Lives of Canadian Universities," in J. Currie and J. Newsom (eds.), *Universities and Globalization: Critical Perspectives* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 77-98.
36. Cited in M. L. Skolnik, "From the 1960s to the 2000s: Reflections on How the Balance and Structure of Higher Education May Change to Fit Different Economic Times," in G. A. Jones, P. L. McCarney, and M. L. Skolnik (eds.), *Creating Knowledge, Strengthening Nations: the Changing Role of Higher Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004, forthcoming).
37. The concept of borderless higher education appears to have originated in a document produced by the Australian Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. S. Cunningham, S. Tapsall, Y. Ryan, L. Stedman, K. Bagdon & T. Flew, *New Media and Borderless Education* (Canberra, ACT: Department of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs, 1998). The concept was elaborated in greater detail in subsequent documents produced by the Australian and UK

Governments. S. Cunningham, Y. Ryan, L. Stedman, S. Tapsall, K. Bagdon, T. Flew & P. Coaldrake, *The Business of Borderless Education* (Canberra, ACT: Department of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs, 2000); Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and Higher Education Funding Council for England, *The Business of Borderless Education: UK Perspectives* (London: CVCP and HEFCE, 2000). There does not seem to have been a Canadian document of this type yet.

38. The Observatory provides access to relevant national and international documents like those cited in the previous note, and presents information on new initiatives such as new partnerships between private companies and universities. The Observatory is operated by Universities UK, formerly the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of UK Universities. It can be accessed at <<http://www.obhe.ac.uk>>

39. R. Middlehurst, *The Developing World of Borderless Higher Education: Markets Providers, Quality Assurance and Qualifications*, A Paper Presented at the First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, UNESCO, Paris (October 17-18, 2002).

40. Another may be the Tele-universite in Quebec. I am just not as familiar with the Tele-universite as I am with Athabasca. I understand that the two institutions have an agreement to cooperate in some of their activities.

41. And complementing the opportunities provided by Contact North, with which, I understand, Athabasca also has an agreement for cooperation.

42. California Postsecondary Education Commission.  
<[www.cpec.ca.gov](http://www.cpec.ca.gov)>

43. D. Royce, *University System Coordination and Planning in Ontario, 1945-1996*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto (1997). This dissertation won the Dissertation of the Year Award of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education.

44. Report to the Committee on University Affairs and the Committee of Presidents of Provincially-assisted Universities of the Commission to Study the Development of Graduate Programs in Ontario Universities, J. W. T. Spinks, Chairman (Toronto: The Commission, 1966), pp. 77-78.

45. R. Berdahl, "The Quasi-Privatization of a Public Honors College: A Case Study of St. Mary's College in Maryland," unpublished manuscript, University of Maryland (n.d.), pp. 21-22. This paper was subsequently published as a chapter entitled "Balancing Freedom and Accountability: St. Mary's College, Maryland," in T. McTaggart (ed.), *Seeking Excellence through Independence: Liberating Colleges and Universities from Excessive Regulation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,

1998). Professor Berdahl was one of the two members of the Duff-Berdahl Commission which had a major influence on university governance in Canada. J. Duff and R. Berdahl, *University Governance in Canada. Report of a Commission sponsored by the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966).

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