

Council of Ontario Universities
**A Tuition Framework to Support Access,
Quality and Sustainability**

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**COUNCIL OF
ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES**

**CONSEIL DES
UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Getting tuition policy right is essential for PSE transformation to be successful. A new multi-year tuition framework should balance affordability for students and families with institutional revenue needs, and recognize the public and private benefits of higher education.”

Strengthening Ontario's Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge: A discussion paper on innovation to make our university and college system stronger, June 2012

This paper sets out the principles that the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) believes should guide decisions about the new tuition framework for 2013-2014 and future years, and evidence to support our recommendation.

The cost of attending university should be affordable for students and families.

- Because of financial supports from government and universities, tuition is affordable for all students.
- Students who receive financial assistance pay *net tuition* (tuition less student financial support) that is significantly less than the full fees. On average, students eligible for financial assistance under the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) pay about half of the “sticker price” of tuition, due to both OSAP grants and universities’ additional supports.
- The Ontario Tuition Grant, introduced in 2011, further offsets tuition costs for thousands of Ontario students.
- Research shows that, due to financial supports from the province and universities, financial need is not a barrier to access to a university education in Ontario.

The tuition framework should reflect a balance between public and private good of a university education.

- The current tuition policy reflects a balance between the public good of university education and its private benefits to graduates.
- University graduates have better employment rates and significantly higher lifetime earnings, in comparison to others in the workforce. Students gain a significant rate of return on their investments in tuition.
- A university education is one of the best investments an individual can make.
- Ontario gains many social, civil and economic benefits from its university graduates, justifying the government’s investment in universities. Yet Ontario’s public investments in universities have not kept pace with its investments in elementary and secondary education, colleges, or the health sector.

Students should have reasonable certainty and predictability about tuition.

- Students have ready access to detailed information about tuition to inform their choices about university programs.
- The current tuition framework provides certainty to students by capping the annual rate of tuition increase for continuing students.

To ensure student success and protect quality, universities need stable, predictable and adequate revenue.

- Like all organizations, universities face pressures every year from growing costs. Ontario's operating grants to universities have not been increased on a per-student basis, to reflect changing cost pressures in the sector.
- Ontario universities have the lowest level of operating revenue per student in Canada, from both provincial grants and tuition.
- Tuition increases in past years have helped universities maintain the quality of programs and provide significant supports to students.
- To ensure student success and protect quality, universities need stable, predictable and adequate revenue either from provincial grants or tuition.

RECOMMENDATION

Ontario's current fiscal pressures limit its ability to provide adequate revenue to ensure student success and the sustainability of universities. Ontario universities call on the province to extend the existing tuition framework, at least until the province's budget is balanced and its fiscal capacity allows greater public investment in universities.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has invited written submissions regarding the tuition fee policy for 2013-2014 and beyond. The Ministry has also indicated that it seeks a discussion of tuition based on principles.

The purpose of this paper is to set out the principles that the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) believes should guide decisions about the new tuition framework. These principles are:

- The cost of attending university should be affordable for students and families.
- The tuition framework should reflect a balance between the public and private good of a university education.
- Students should have reasonable certainty and predictability about tuition.
- To ensure student success and protect quality, universities need stable, predictable and adequate revenue.

The following pages set out evidence to support these principles and Ontario universities' recommendation.

PRINCIPLE 1: THE COST OF ATTENDING UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE AFFORDABLE FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Because of financial supports from government and universities, tuition is affordable for all students.

Sticker Price vs. Net tuition Fee: What Students Really Pay

Tuition fees are usually described in terms of simple "sticker price" – the amount listed as the fee. But when student support programs are factored in, the tuition fees that many students actually pay are significantly lower. *Net tuition* (tuition less student financial support) is the appropriate measure for assessing the affordability of university education.

But the impact of student support programs from government and institutions on the actual cost of postsecondary education is not well understood or communicated.

A number of universities recently analyzed net tuition for undergraduate students in 2011-2012, factoring in university scholarships, awards and government grants while excluding loan support. Excluding the impact of the Ontario Tuition Grant (OTG), the findings for 2011-2012 are below.

OSAP Recipients

2011-2012 Net Tuition for Undergraduate OSAP Recipients for Three Universities (percentage of the “sticker price” fee paid):

Program Type	Net Tuition University A	Net Tuition University B	Net Tuition University C
First-entry Programs	39%	47%	52%
Second-entry Programs	60%	64%	52%
All Programs	45%	54%	52%

- **OSAP recipients paid roughly half of the sticker price on average.**
- On average, first-entry program students paid half the sticker price or less (39% to 52%).
- On average, second-entry program students paid around 60% of the sticker price (52% to 64%).
- More than 25% of OSAP recipients paid less than a quarter of the sticker price.
- More than 10% of OSAP recipients had their entire tuition fee covered by student support.

None of this, moreover, takes into account the new OTG that awards eligible students \$1,680 a year, the Ontario Student Opportunities Grant (OSOG) program that caps the amount of student loans, or income tax credits for tuition. Net tuition would be even lower when these contributions are factored in. Analyses from two universities indicate that in 2011-2012 the OTG reduced average net tuition by a further eight percentage points for OSAP recipients in first-entry programs.

The following actual cases provide specific illustrations of what students paid in 2011-2012 under various circumstances:



Arts & Science Student Profile

Last year, “Sean” was a first year student in Arts & Science with tuition and incidental fees of \$6,821. His family income was \$62,000 and he was living away from home.

He qualified for \$12,648 in OSAP including \$2,131 in grants with the remainder in interest-free loans. As OSAP did not fully meet his financial needs, the university provided \$1,200 in grants.

Sean also qualified for the new \$800 Ontario Tuition Grant in the Winter term.

Net Tuition: Sean’s out of pocket tuition and fee expense was effectively reduced to \$2,690 or 39% of the sticker price.



Engineering Student Profile

“Cathy” is a student in engineering and lives at home with her parents who have an annual income of less than \$30,000. Last year, her tuition and incidental fees totaled \$12,381.

She qualified for \$8,832 in OSAP including \$1,919 in grants with the remainder in interest-free loans. As OSAP did not fully meet her financial needs, the university provided \$5,500 in grants.

Cathy also qualified for the new \$800 Ontario Tuition Grant in the Winter term.

Net Tuition: Cathy’s out of pocket tuition and fee expense was effectively reduced to \$4,162 or 34% of the sticker price.

Non-OSAP Students

- Non-OSAP students paid roughly 90% of the sticker price on average.
- In addition, non-OSAP students with family income of less than \$160,000 also qualify for the \$1,680 OTG.

At the graduate level, many Ontario universities also have generous funding commitments for doctoral stream graduate students – in many cases matching full tuition fees plus a living allowance. This reduces the net tuition for many graduate students to zero.

It is time to stop talking about tuition in terms of posted fees or “sticker prices,” and instead focus on net tuition -- the real price paid. By focusing on net price and access, the government can move the tuition conversation toward real costs and results and improve public awareness of the many financial supports available to students and families.

Government Supports

From 2005 to 2011, the Ontario government invested \$1.6 billion in financial supports for students.¹ About 40% of university undergraduate students receive some assistance from OSAP. The dramatic impact of net tuition costs for students described above shows the major successes over the last several years in tackling access and affordability issues, especially for those identified as under-represented in postsecondary participation.

The provincial government has also introduced measures that are important supports for students to limit student debt, though these supports are not well-known. These programs include:

- A new loan repayment assistance program that limits payments to 20% of family income and guarantees that, for individuals who keep their loan in good standing, the loan will be paid off over a maximum of 15 years and over a maximum of 10 years for borrowers with permanent disabilities.
- The Ontario Student Opportunity Grant (OSOG) that caps OSAP students' debt at \$7,300 over a two-term year, meaning that the loans above this amount are converted to grants and do not need to be repaid.

As a result of these policies, almost half of students in Canada graduate without any debt (46%-51%)² and within two years of graduation about two-thirds of students are debt free.³

In addition to the student financial assistance system described above, the provincial and federal governments provide students and their families with tax credits to help offset costs of postsecondary education.

Contributions to Student Support from Universities

Ontario universities also provide a substantial contribution to keeping university affordable for students. The Student Access Guarantee (SAG) is a program maintained by all Ontario universities, in coordination with the OSAP program, that ensures that Ontario students are not prevented from attending Ontario's public universities due to a lack of financial support.

In 2010-2011, universities distributed \$200 million of tuition revenue under the Tuition Set Aside (TSA) program to provide needs-based financial assistance to students and meet their

¹ The OSAP system today provides grants and loans for about 250,000 students (in both colleges and universities). About 40% of university undergraduate students receive some assistance. The new Ontario Tuition Grant (OTG) program introduced in 2011-12 will further increase the financial support for students at universities.

² Luong, May, 2010, *The Financial Impact of Student Loans*, Statistics Canada; and Bank of Montreal 2012 Student Survey report: <http://newsroom.bmo.com/press-releases/students-stressing-more-over-finances-than-academi-tsx-bmo-201208170812920001>.

³ It is also important to note that student debt is incurred for living costs as well as tuition, so only a portion of student debt can be attributed to tuition.

commitments under SAG. The universities' contribution was 20% higher than the government's TSA requirement.

In total, universities provided over \$700 million in scholarships and bursaries to students in 2010-2011 – which is more than 10% of all operating expenditures. Since 2000-2001, Ontario universities' spending on scholarships and bursaries has increased by almost 110% in constant 2010 dollars, which resulted in a more than 30% increase in support on a per-student basis. Since 2000-2001, universities' expenditures on bursaries and scholarships have grown faster than universities' tuition revenue.

Impacts of tuition on access

Research has shown that tuition rates and participation in university are not strongly related:

- Recent research demonstrates that parental education is a much stronger determinant of participation in postsecondary education than the family income.^{4,5} Access is more an issue of family expectations and culture than affordability.
- Comparative analysis of Ontario to other provinces shows that despite high tuition rates, Ontario university education is impacted more by students' interest and aptitude than by financial considerations (grades and not family income are the strongest indicators of participation).
- The proportion of applicants to universities with family incomes in the lowest quartile remained stable over many years.⁶ Moreover, the participation gaps between students with families in the highest income quartile and those in the lowest income remained unchanged over the last decade.⁷
- Relative costs of tuition do not correspond to participation rates across Canada. Ontario, with the highest tuition rate (an average of \$6,640), also has the highest rate of participation (29.2%); Quebec, with the lowest tuition rate (an average of \$2,411), has one of the lowest participation rates (20.1%).⁸

Despite major improvements in student financial assistance, the impact of student support programs on the actual cost of postsecondary education is not well understood, and could be

⁴ Lennon, Mary Catharine, Huizi Zhao, Shunji Wang and Tomasz Gluszynski (2011), *Educational Pathways of Youth in Ontario: Factors Impacting Educational Pathways*, Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

⁵ Finnie, Ross, Stephen Childs and Andrew Wismer (2011), *Access to Post-Secondary Education: How Ontario Compares*, Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

⁶ Dooley, Martin D., A. Abigail Payne and A. Leslie Robb (2009). *University participation and Income Differences: An Analysis of Applications by Ontario Secondary School Students*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

⁷ Berger, J., Motte, A. and Parkin, A. (2009). *The Price of Knowledge: Access and Student Finance in Canada*, Montreal: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

⁸ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, data published June 2010.

communicated more effectively. Understanding net tuition costs will go a long way to breaking down any remaining barriers associated with affordability.

Ontario universities acknowledge the recent efforts of MTCU to provide better information to students and families, to address the non-financial barriers to access – notably in its successful “Life After High School” project.

Ontario universities and the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre (OUAC) are prepared to work with MTCU to improve access to information for students and families to assist them in understanding net tuition costs.

PRINCIPLE 2: THE TUITION FRAMEWORK SHOULD REFLECT A BALANCE BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GOOD OF A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

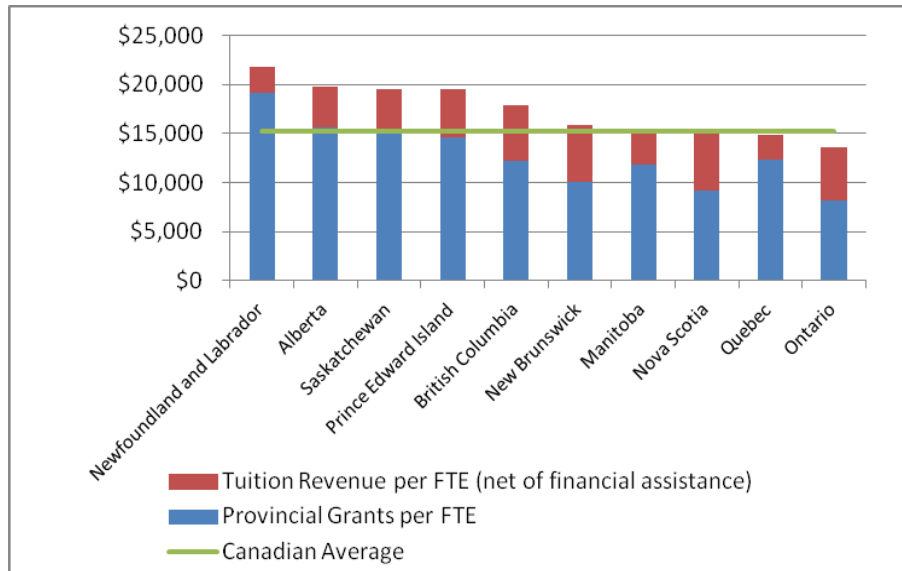
Public Benefits

Government investments in university recognize the important public benefit of a highly educated populace. A well-educated workforce – particularly a workforce with the knowledge, creativity and leadership skills that come from a university education – is critical to Ontario’s economic success. Furthermore, postsecondary education carries significant social benefits, such as impact on reducing crime, better health, greater volunteer activity and democratic participation.⁹ As a result, there is a clear rationale for the province’s ongoing investment in universities to sustain quality through operating grants, and also for continuing to make revenue available to universities through the province’s tuition framework.

Ontario universities acknowledge the significant investments that have been made in the postsecondary sector by the province. Even after the *Reaching Higher* investments, however, Ontario’s public investment in universities is lower than in other Canadian provinces on a per-student basis. Ontario universities have the lowest level of revenue per student from provincial grants and tuition combined.

⁹ Riddell, W. Craig (2004), *The Social Benefits of Education: New Evidence on an Old Question*, paper presented at the conference “Taking Public Universities Seriously,” University of Toronto, December 2004.

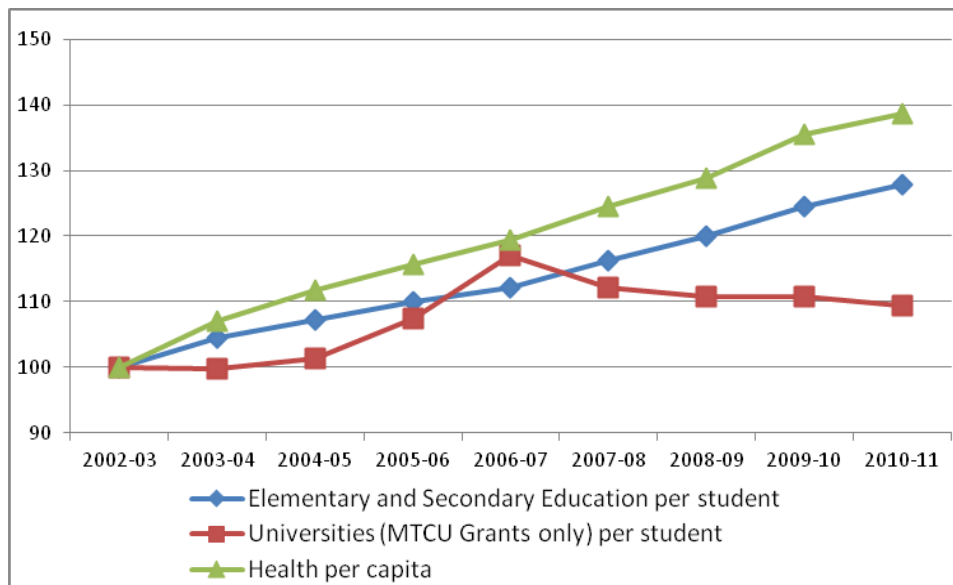
Figure 1. Average Revenue per Full-time Equivalent Students (FTE)



Source: COU calculations based on Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) and Statistics Canada Postsecondary Information System (PSIS) data.

Ontario's public investment in universities also lags behind its investments in other parts of the broader public sector. Ontario's investments in elementary and secondary education (on a per-student basis) and in health (on a per-capita basis) have grown at a rate significantly higher than investments in universities.

Figure 2. Ontario Government Funding for Universities, Education and Health (Indices, 2002-03=100, constant 2010 \$)



Sources: Council of Finance Officers – Universities of Ontario (COFO-UO), Ministry of Education and the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

The provincial government has also made a higher investment in colleges than universities. In constant dollars, provincial per-student funding for colleges has increased by 20% since 2002-2003¹⁰ and for universities by 9%.

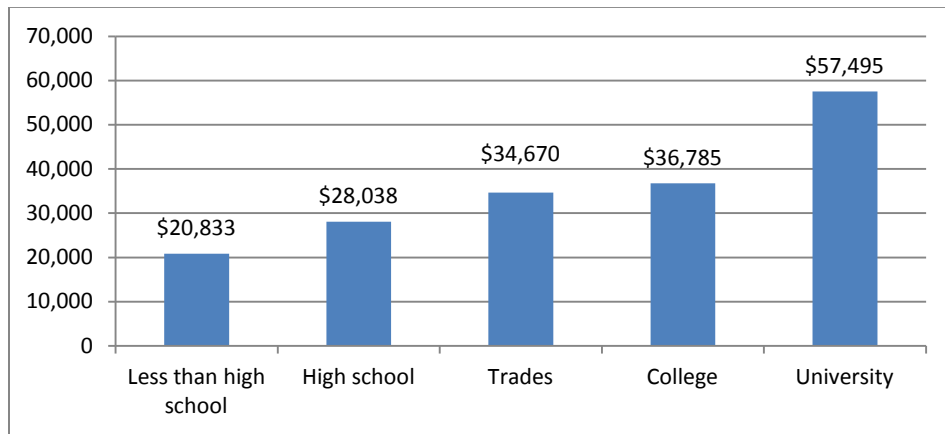
Private Benefits

The private benefit of a university education has been measured against several metrics – most notably, employment rates, income, debt levels and low default rates.

University graduates receive a very high rate of return on the investment that they make in tuition. The internal (economic) rate of return to an undergraduate degree in Canada is estimated at about 10-14%.¹¹ It is one of the best investments that an individual can make.¹² The rate of return is not diminishing even as a higher proportion of the population has university degrees. In fact, both earnings premia and rates of return on investment have been increasing since the 1980s.¹³

Average annual income statistics also demonstrate the long-term earning benefit for university graduates. The Census data from 2006 show that university graduates earned, on average, about \$20,000 more than college graduates and about \$30,000 more than high school graduates.

Figure 3. Average Annual Employment Income



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006

¹⁰ Colleges Ontario, Environmental Scan, 2012.

¹¹ Moussaly-Sergieh, K. and Vaillancourt, F. 2009, *Extra Earning Power: The Financial Returns to University Education in Canada*, C.D. Howe Institute, e-brief, May 14, 2009 and Stark, A., 2007 *Which Fields Pay, Which Fields Don't? An Examination of the Returns to University Education in Canada by Detailed Field of Study*, Department of Finance, Canada.

¹² TD Economics Special Report, *Post-secondary Education is the Best Investment You Can Make*, September 12, 2011.

¹³ Boothby, Daniel and Torben Drewes, 2010, *The Payoff: Returns to University, College and Trades Education in Canada, 1980 to 2005*, C.D. Howe Institute; and Boudarbat, Brahim, Thomas Lemieux and W. Craig Riddell (2010), *The Evolution of Returns to Human Capital in Canada, 1980-2005*, Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network, Working Paper No. 53.

Finally, OSAP default levels also indicate that university graduates are graduating with manageable debt levels compared to other categories of graduates of other types of postsecondary institutions. Default rates on student loans by former university students are very low. The most recent data show default rates of 3.6% in 2011 (compared to 10.5% for college students and 15.2% for private career college students). This indicates that most university graduates have employment outcomes that allow them to realize the return on their investment.

As appropriate for a private good, tuition fees exist in a market. In Ontario, universities have had flexibility, within the province's regulatory framework, to set tuition rates. Universities provide ready access to information about fees. The newly launched comparative tool on the Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) allows prospective students to compare tuition fees across universities and across different programs of study. A large majority of students receive more than one offer from different programs and different universities and, therefore, can consider tuition rates in their decisions.

Differentiated fees for graduate and professional programs reflect the labour market outcomes of their graduates.¹⁴ For example, in 2005 the median earnings of graduates of professional programs were significantly higher than the median earnings of all Canadians. Nurse supervisors and registered nurses earned about \$18,000 more than the average Canadian; pharmacists, dieticians and nutritionists earned almost \$37,000 more; and judges and lawyers earned about \$58,000 more than the average Canadian.¹⁵ The practice of differentiated fees is also common in the United States, where almost half of public doctoral institutions charge differentiated tuition fees.¹⁶

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE REASONABLE CERTAINTY ABOUT TUITION COSTS AND READY ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT TUITION RATES

To provide fairness to students and to support the operation of an effective market for tuition costs, students should be able to gain ready access to information about fees including net tuition fees at an institutional level.

As noted above, universities provide ready access to information about fees. Students and families can find extensive and readily accessible information on universities' websites, through the mechanisms of the Ontario Universities' Application Centre to support applications – notably the *eInfo* website (<http://www.electronicinfo.ca>) – and through the CUDO website (<http://cudo.cou.on.ca/>).

To provide fairness, students should have a reasonable level of certainty about tuition costs over the duration of their programs. The current tuition framework (which has been in place since

¹⁴ See, for example, University of Toronto tuition fee policy at: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/tuitfee.htm>.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, *Earnings and Incomes of Canadians over the Past Quarter Century*, 2006 Census, Ministry of Industry 2008, Ottawa.

¹⁶ Ehrenberg, Ronald G, 2012, *2011 Survey of Differential Tuition at Public Higher Education Institutions*, Cornell Higher Education Research Institute (<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/upload/2011CHERISurveyFinal0212-2.pdf>).

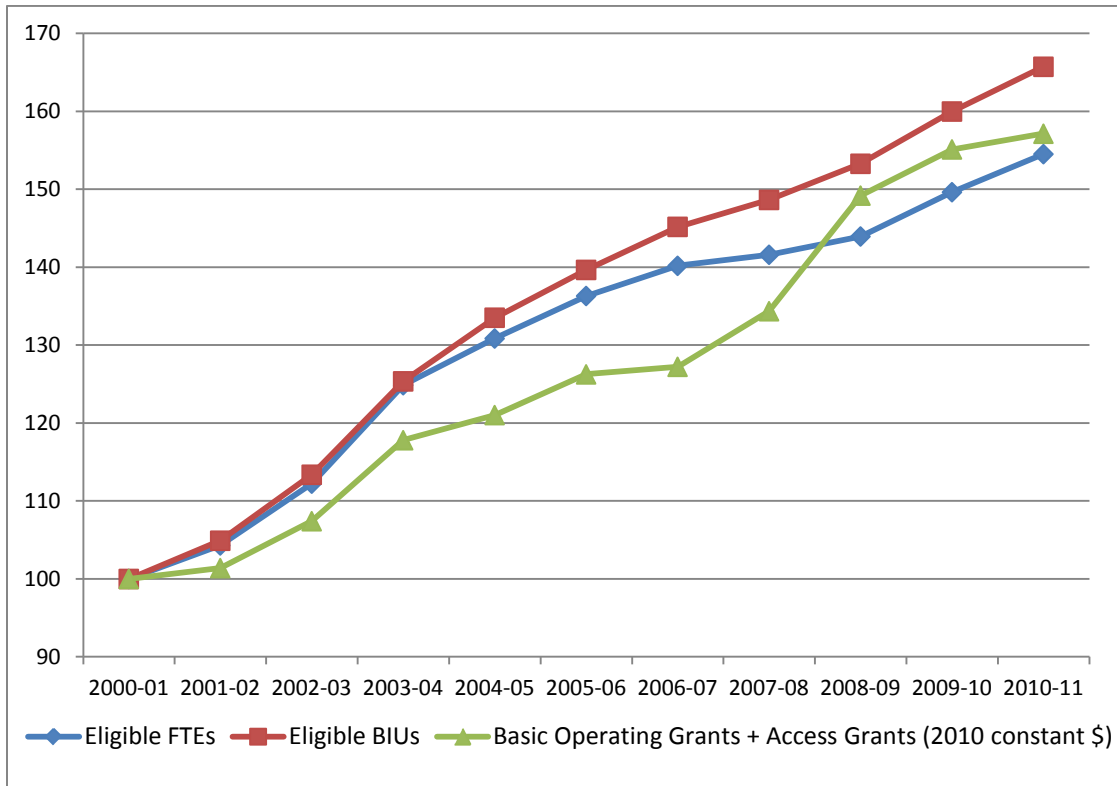
2006-2007) provides this certainty by capping the tuition increase for all continuing students in government-funded programs at no more than 4% annually. Ontario universities support the ongoing provisions in the government’s tuition framework to limit increases for ongoing students. Depending on the government’s direction for a new tuition framework, universities are willing to provide explicit commitments to students concerning the limits to increases in tuition over the duration of their program.

As noted above, Ontario universities and OUAC are prepared to work with MTCU to improve information available to students and families to assist them to understand net tuition costs.

PRINCIPLE 4: TO ENSURE STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROTECT QUALITY, UNIVERSITIES NEED STABLE, PREDICTABLE AND ADEQUATE REVENUE

Ontario’s university sector has benefitted from major investments for growth by the Ontario government since 2003. Since 2001-2002, however, university enrolment has also been growing faster than the increase in government grants, with the result the government’s investment has been used primarily to increase access and to respond to growing enrolments.

Figure 4. Enrolment Growth and Changes in Government Funding (Indices, 2000-2001=100)



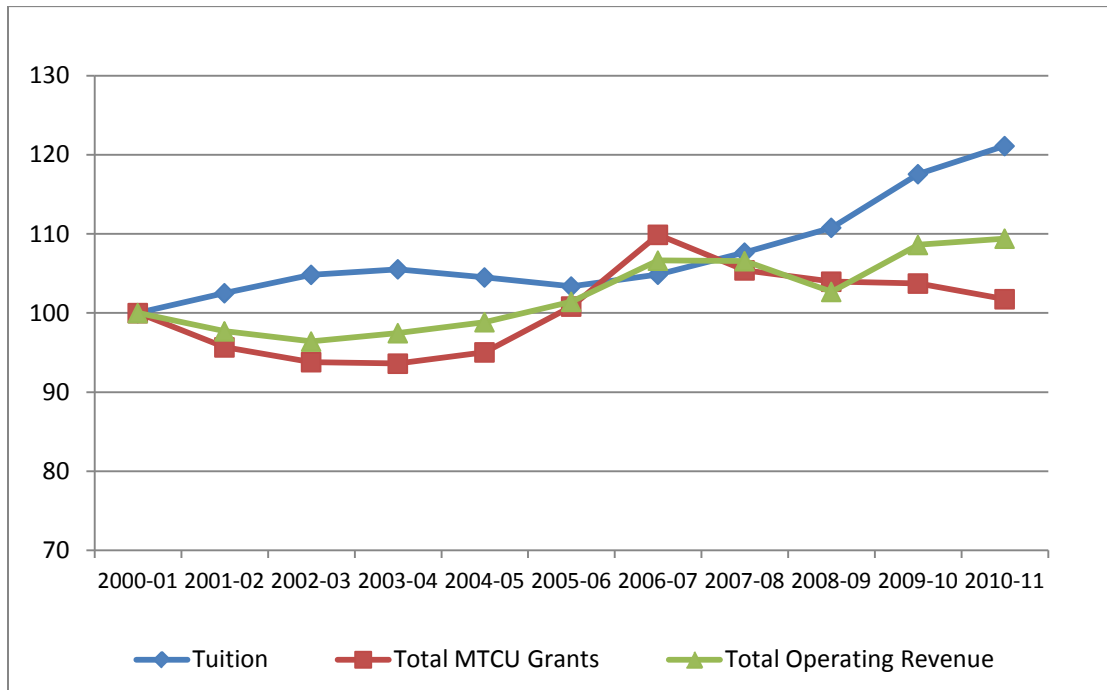
Source: The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Council of Finance Officers – Universities of Ontario (COFO-UO).

Ontario’s operating grants to universities have not been increased, on a per-student basis, to reflect changing cost pressures in the sector. The major source of increased funding on a per-student basis has been tuition. While the government’s tuition framework over the past few

years has allowed tuition rates to increase by 5% overall, these increases have not translated to a 5% increase in universities' operating revenue. Tuition, on average, represents about 44% of universities' operating revenue. Accordingly, the current 5% tuition framework results in an increase of about 2% in operating revenue, on a per-student basis.¹⁷

Students have benefited from the ongoing revenue increases from tuition. Ontario universities have continued to increase the number of full-time faculty. Universities' expenditures on student supports have grown, notably, universities' significant investments in supports for improvement of teaching and learning, career services, and in the technological infrastructure that benefits students. While many classes are larger now than in past decades, the distribution of class sizes has remained stable since 2005, and students continue to experience a large proportion of small classes. The proportion of classes with fewer than 30 students has remained at above 40% since 2005.¹⁸ These benefits to students could not have been realized without additional revenue from tuition increases.

Figure 5. Revenue Changes per FTE (Eligible + Ineligible students) in constant 2010 dollars.



Source: The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Council of Finance Officers – Universities of Ontario (COFO-UO).

¹⁷ There are other reasons that limit the effect of the current tuition framework on revenue increases to support universities' operating costs. Universities are required to set aside a portion of revenue from tuition increases each year to meet the Student Access Guarantee and provide other needs-based financial supports to students. As mentioned above, in 2010-2011, universities set aside \$164 million for student financial support. Also, the current tuition framework limits not only overall fee increases but sets caps on different programs and different years of study. As a result (and also because of market forces), universities have increased average tuition fees by only about 4.0% to 4.5% each year.

¹⁸ Common University Data Ontario: <http://cou.on.ca/facts-figures/cudo>.

The tuition framework must be an integral part of the overall funding picture for Ontario universities. Already ranked at or near the bottom in terms of funding per student, the gap between Ontario and other provinces is worsening¹⁹ (see Figure 1 on page 10). At the same time, fundamental cost drivers are straining institutional finances. General inflation, increased numbers of students, more students with special needs, continuing pressure for new technology, increased government regulation and reporting, and increased expectations about the role of institutions as economic and social catalysts in their communities, have placed, and continue to place, increasing cost pressure on universities in the province.

As cost pressures mount, universities are constantly looking for operational efficiencies and increases in productivity – and there is ample evidence of successful efforts across Ontario universities, which have been finding operating efficiencies for decades. We have been increasing productivity through efficiency measures such as collaborative procurement, shared services such as the Ontario Universities' Application Centre and the Scholars Portal, increases in the use of part-time and sessional instructors, changes in the structure of students' programs, and changes in the organization of classes (while maintaining the opportunity for most students to have some small classes).

Productivity indicators developed by HEQCO²⁰ show that the Ontario university sector is a leader in teaching and research productivity and that Ontario universities achieve this with a much lower level of resources than universities in other provinces:

- The average cost of a degree awarded²¹ (both undergraduate and graduate) in Ontario is below the average of the rest of the country and the average cost of degrees has been decreasing since 2002.
- Ontario universities' produce high-quality graduates with fewer faculty resources. Faculty members in Ontario universities, on average, educate more students and graduate more students than their counterparts in other provinces. Moreover, the pace of productivity gains in Ontario has been faster than in other provinces.
- Ontario is also a leader in research productivity. The Ontario university sector is ranked first among all provinces in both Tri-Council research funding and publication productivity as measured by the H-Index (in analysis completed by Higher Education Strategy Associates for HEQCO).

To recognize the principle that universities need stable, predictable and adequate revenue to protect quality, universities will need increases in revenue from a combination of government grants and tuition increases.

¹⁹ Council of Ontario Universities, *Interprovincial Comparison of University Revenues*, <http://cou.on.ca/interprovincialcomparison-1>.

²⁰ Forthcoming. The results of Productivity Indicators in Post-secondary Education in Ontario are anticipated to be released by HEQCO in November 2012.

²¹ The cost of a degree awarded refers to the amount of operating revenue (from the government and tuition) that is required to award a degree in a given year.

It is important that the provincial government considers decisions about the tuition framework in the context of other directions that will, or may, affect total revenue and costs for universities. In the 2012 provincial budget, measures were announced that will reduce universities' revenue in 2013-2014 and future years (efficiency targets and a recovery of funding based on international student enrolment). MTCU has been consulting with colleges and universities about a range of issues concerning administration of tuition fees (deferral fees and penalties, tuition billing integrated with student financial assistance and the Ontario Tuition Grant, program fees, and ancillary fees); new requirements from MTCU may reduce revenue and/or increase administrative costs. The province's decisions about the tuition framework should take into account the total impact on costs and revenue from different government decisions.

RECOMMENDATION: Extension of the Existing Tuition Framework

This paper demonstrates that under the existing tuition framework, "net" tuition, supported by Ontario's robust student financial aid system, keeps students' costs for university affordable and sustainable. Extensive research shows that tuition increases do not adversely affect access to university education among Ontarians. The tuition framework is critical to the quality of programs for Ontario's students and the sustainability of Ontario's universities.

Ontario universities call on the province to extend the existing tuition framework, at least until the province's budget is balanced and its fiscal capacity allows greater public investment in universities.

It is important to maintain both the rate of tuition increases and structure of the current framework (allowing higher increases for incoming students and for professional and graduate programs, and providing a cap for predictability for students in upper years).

A multi-year tuition framework that allows for stable, predictable and adequate revenue for universities, together with continuation of Ontario's effective student financial assistance system, is essential to support a healthy university sector and protect the quality of postsecondary education for students in Ontario.