As President and Vice-Chancellor at Wilfrid Laurier University and Chair of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), I feel fortunate to have a career that surrounds me with world-renowned scholars, leading researchers, and bright students. Each day, I am reminded of the incredible value our institutions bring to the people of Ontario, and to the fabric of our communities.

All Ontarians experience the positive impact of living in a province that is home to so many leading universities. Take my own university as an example—15 years ago, Brantford was completely transformed when Laurier opened up a campus in the downtown core. The campus boosted the economy, created jobs in the city, and brought in students who were brimming with excitement for their bright futures. The private sector followed, which created even more opportunities for students and the community.

Through COU, universities are working together to make Ontario even more technologically innovative, culturally rich, and socially progressive. Universities truly lay the groundwork for success in this province, and act as engines for the economy.

Ontario’s universities are continuously adapting to the evolving needs of students and society, as well as the changing marketplace. As an organization that serves Ontario’s universities, and ultimately their students, COU must be equally nimble.

Entrepreneurship and experiential learning have moved from the margins to the mainstream of university education in recent years. These trends reflect the changing economy and the fact that students are encouraged to have relevant work experience when they graduate, as well as the ability to think critically and creatively.

Over the past year, there has been a great deal to celebrate at Ontario’s universities and our role in advocating for and promoting their progress. COU helped demonstrate the impact that our universities have on Ontario by launching a report outlining how university graduates are securing prosperous, fulfilling careers related to their fields of study. Through the Research Matters campaign, COU also put a spotlight on important research across the province.

COU also engaged with politicians of all parties as well as key influencers to inform legislation, policies and decisions that affect universities, and also to minimize any negative impacts on the sector. This work tends to make few headlines, but it is equally important for the continued success of our institutions.

I hope you’ll enjoy reading through what we’ve deemed our “greatest hits” from the past year.
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**GREATEST HITS—HIGHLIGHTS**

Over the past year at COU, Ontario university graduates’ success was profiled in the media and online as never before. Empirical data was released and events were hosted to demonstrate the value of a university education, and to show that graduates are making a positive impact on the economic, social and cultural well-being of the province.

**UNIVERSITY WORKS AND WE CAN PROVE IT**

A COU report demonstrates a university degree is still the surest path to career success, measured by labour market outcomes, earnings, and employment growth.

**02**

By injecting a spirit of entrepreneurship into Ontario’s talent pool, universities are transforming communities, creating businesses & teaching the next generation to lead.

COU profiled entrepreneurship at universities in a recent report.

**03**

Ontario’s universities are putting students’ learned skills to work in a range of experiential learning opportunities now available across all disciplines. COU captured a sample of these opportunities in a report profiling work-integrated learning.

**04**

Because all students in Ontario deserve an education that’s fully accessible, COU developed an online hub of resources to help educators and administrators remove barriers for students from programs, courses and instruction.
05
RESEARCH MATTERS

To educate Ontarians about the impact of research on their lives, COU travelled across the province with a CURIOsITY SHOP where the public could submit questions they were curious about and have university researchers provide expert answers.

06
COU sent Ontarians on a VIRTUAL SCAVENGER HUNT to explore university research through AN ONLINE PUZZLE invented by an enigmatologist.

07
Collaborative spending increased in the sector by 7% →

COU worked with government to help Ontario’s universities establish and enhance group purchasing for better pricing across the sector.

08

The Council of Chairs of Ontario Universities and COU brought together leaders, including the Governor General of Canada, at a conference that explored university governance and how universities are meeting and adapting to the needs of Canadian society and the economy.
FUELLING THE ECONOMY BY BRINGING STUDIES TO LIFE
Ontario’s universities create jobs for many thousands of people, enhance the local, regional and global economy, and provide businesses with ready-to-hire graduates.

University graduates’ earnings are significantly higher than for any other educational group, and these earning premiums start early in graduates’ careers.

University graduates have low unemployment rates and the highest life-time earnings in Ontario

University graduates experienced the highest employment growth of any educational attainment group over the last ten years

UNIVERSITY WORKS
COU demonstrated that University Works for Ontario graduates by analyzing data from Statistics Canada and spotlighting findings showing that university graduates can expect the highest earnings, the best labour market outcomes, and the highest employment growth of any other educational group.

FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS
Incubators that nurture entrepreneurs can be found on university campuses across Ontario, and many have established accelerator centres that have helped students launch start-ups and grow businesses. Students are also using mobile applications and other technologies to address some of the world’s most pressing social issues. Since entrepreneurship skills are being taught in all disciplines from the arts to engineering, Ontario’s university students are honing their leadership skills and starting innovative companies throughout the province and beyond. COU captured this prolific trend in a report on entrepreneurship.

GRAD SURVEY
A survey of Ontario university students who graduated in 2010, conducted for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, showed that graduates of undergraduate programs consistently have higher employment rates and earn higher incomes than those with any other level of education.

46% of Canada’s postsecondary students surveyed by Pollara for BMO said they see themselves starting a business after graduation.
When it comes to what Ontarians expect universities to provide to students, the vast majority said it was important for them to attain not just valuable skills (97%), and access to better jobs (95%), but also the chance to grow personally (94%).
BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Making sure campuses are accessible by removing both visible and invisible barriers for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities remains an important priority for Ontario universities. Over the last few decades, Ontario university campuses have been provincial leaders in this area.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

COU worked with a number of partner institutions to produce mental health education guides, reference materials and videos for educators, administrators and student leaders. These resources help identify signs of mental health issues in students, and improve awareness of mental illness while reducing stigma on campus.

MENTAL HEALTH 2.0 COMPETITION

To get students involved in reducing the stigma of mental illness, COU challenged university students to build social media campaigns that promote good mental health on campuses across the province through the Mental Health 2.0 competition. Brock University’s Kaitlyn Kerridge took home the top prize and a cash award of $1,500 with her campaign Cope-Care-Connect.

“The knowledge gained around mental health will help students act as more informed and compassionate members of their communities.”

Bonnie M. Patterson, COU’s President and CEO
To assist Ontario universities in meeting their obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, COU has worked with the sector to develop Accessiblecampus.ca, a unique online hub of resources that includes fact sheets, videos and other tools to help members of the university community remove barriers to accessibility on campus. AccessibleCampus.ca is used internationally and continues to draw a high volume of web traffic.

COU launched the third annual Innovative Designs for Accessibility (iDeA) contest, encouraging students to invent cost-effective, practical solutions to accessibility-related barriers in the community. This year’s winner invented a portable, expandable toilet for outdoor festivals that accommodates people with disabilities.

Through Accessiblecampus.ca, COU has developed a number of resources to support educators at our universities in making their programs, courses and instruction more accessible to students. In addition to a how-to guide on making labs more accessible, which will encourage more students to enter STEM fields, COU has worked with sector partners to develop a guide to accessible online learning.
CELEBRATING LEADING SCHOLARS

Ontario is home to some of the best and brightest scholars in the world—people working on research that enhances lives, transforms communities and boosts economies. COU honours researchers from a wide range of disciplines, reflecting the diversity of citizens in this province as well as their varied needs and interests. COU also brings together the Ontario Research Chairs in Public Policy for discussions and events that aim to tackle the province’s most pressing issues.

An event series administered by COU brings together academics and leaders from the public and private spheres to explore Ontario’s key policy challenges. This year’s Symposia of the Ontario Research Chairs in Public Policy, hosted by Glendon College of York University, gathered academic experts and decision makers to discuss solutions to Ontario’s key economic, educational, social and environmental issues. These events promote the practical application of research on Ontario’s prosperity, sustainability, health and education.

In addition to honouring established scholars, Ontario’s universities also attract future leaders. The Ontario Universities’ Application Center co-ordinated the 17th annual Ontario Universities’ Fair in September, drawing in more than 121,000 visitors over the three days and encouraging countless students to study at universities in Ontario.

To improve research on women’s health, each year the Women’s Scholars Award recognizes exceptional researchers who receive up to $22,000 from the Ontario government. The 2013 awards, administered by COU, went to researchers studying poverty, Alzheimer’s disease, osteoporosis and sex differences in autoimmune disorders.

In honour of John Charles Polanyi, recipient of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, five top Ontario postdoctoral researchers are awarded $20,000 each through the annual Polanyi Prizes, funded by the Ontario government. COU administers the awards, which showcase scholarship ranging from studies on infidelity, to breakthroughs in quantum physics, and examinations of blood-feeders as transmitters of disease.

The Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing ceremony, administered by COU, celebrated the hard work and excellence of nursing educators, scholars and supporters.

$100,000 IN AWARDS

121,000 VISITORS

14 AWARDS HONOURED FACULTY MEMBERS, RESEARCHERS, STUDENTS, MENTORS AND PRACTICE LEADERS FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO, NURSING EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP.
SPOTLIGHT ON GROUND-BREAKING RESEARCH

At Ontario universities, scholars are working on research that transforms lives and communities. COU works to ensure Ontarians are aware of this research through Research Matters, a public outreach initiative that explores how research affects everyday life, and improves the ways people live, work and play. Two new Research Matters initiatives were launched over the past year.

Research Matters is travelling across the province with the Curiosity Shop that seeks answers to Ontarians’ burning questions on any topic under the sun—even zombies! Participants have their photos snapped at the shop while asking questions, and then the day’s top questions are answered by one of Ontario’s researchers.

Research Matters’ Virtual Scavenger Hunt raised awareness about research at universities in Ontario. An online puzzle provided new clues by email each day for a month, and scavengers unlocked secret clues to be entered for prizes. An enigmatologist was enlisted to design the puzzle, and prizes were given out each day.

STAY CURIOUS

How will technology change healthcare in 30 years?

who owns our water?

can we recreate the ozone layer?

Win prizes.

Solve clues.

Explore research.

Stay curious.
Universities are fuelling student and economic success in Ontario, and it’s important for them to work with and advise government on initiatives that affect the people of this province. COU advocates for Ontario’s universities with all political parties, advises government on workable policy solutions, and also works to avert proposals that could be harmful to students and education.

Ontario’s universities are adapting to various learning styles, incorporating technology into the classroom, and offering hands-on learning.

COU helped facilitate communication between universities and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities during the Strategic Mandate Agreements, which were submitted at the request of the Ministry. The agreements highlight the unique aspects and strengths of each university that are changing the face of 21st century university education.

COU helped shape policy on ancillary fees, resulting in more flexibility in using licensed digital resources in curriculum. In a position paper on ancillary fees and digital learning resources, and by advocating to government and other groups, COU made the case for modernizing policy on digital learning resources and highlighted the many ways technology is improving teaching and learning experiences at university.

COU, working closely with Colleges Ontario, facilitated the government-funded Ontario Online Initiative, which aims to improve student access and experiences. The Initiative is establishing a collaborative Centre of Excellence that will leverage the capacities of universities and colleges to develop online courses, and increase the availability of these courses to students across the province. The Centre of Excellence will be a resource hub for partners including students, faculty and administrators, supported by funding from the Ontario government. COU is working closely with university partners to support this important initiative.
The Council of Chairs of Ontario Universities and COU organized the annual Conference of Ontario University Board Members to give board members the opportunity to explore effective governance practices and learn about important issues affecting the university sector. His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, spoke during the two-day conference, and leaders from the public and private sectors addressed how universities are meeting and adapting to the needs of Canadian society and the economy.

COU built a consensus among Ontario’s universities around the implementation of various government-proposed changes to university administration of the tuition framework. COU advocated for a flexible transition to these new policies, which balance the financial needs of universities and the ability to protect quality, with government’s interest in predictable fees for students.

When the Ontario government set out to bring teacher supply in line with demand for the profession, and also to make the length of teaching programs align with other Canadian jurisdictions, COU presented ideas for the transition to a new teacher education program.

**COU acted as a liaison among government, university executives and stakeholder groups, and advocated for greater flexibility in the transition to minimize the impact on students and institutions.**

To inform the dialogue surrounding performance-based funding in higher education, COU put a spotlight on research and data in this area with a position paper. The paper notes the strengths and weaknesses of performance-based funding, and highlights that early engagement with stakeholders on structure and metrics is crucial to its success.
ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE CAMPUSES

COU acts as a bridge between universities, government and other organizations in addressing priorities for postsecondary education. Drawing on these strong relationships, COU helps make Ontario universities more efficient and more environmentally sustainable by facilitating the sharing of best practices and reporting on the sector’s progress.

COU issues a yearly report on Ontario universities’ environmental sustainability and, in 2013, announced that the majority of campuses have begun generating their own renewable energy, are conducting greenhouse gas inventories and are implementing green building standards. Another development was the emergence of the Ontario College and University Sustainability Professionals, who share best practices in sustainability at postsecondary institutions, and take note of new green practices to adopt.

MEETING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

As the legal and regulatory environment continues to evolve, the management of universities becomes increasingly complex. Over the past year, COU collaborated with professional associations and affiliates across the sector, as well as government, to ensure universities are meeting the highest standards possible in areas such as health and safety, greenhouse gas emissions, and financial accountability. COU supported the Council of Environmental Health and Safety Officers in developing a set of template agreements and safety checklists, which are used by employers and students when taking on work placements or research field trips as part of their programs.

THE LIBRARY RESEARCH CLOUD

The Ontario Digital Library Research Cloud will house large volumes of digital content, translating to significantly lower costs of storage for libraries. Ten Ontario universities received funding from the government’s Productivity and Innovation Fund for the project, which is being managed by University of Toronto libraries. The library research cloud will be available to all 21 university libraries in the Ontario Council of University Libraries, and it will deliver and preserve massive digital collections for current and future generations.
7% INCREASE IN COLLABORATIVE SPENDING IN THE SECTOR RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT COST-SAVINGS, MORE COMPETITIVE PRICING AND A REDUCTION IN ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD

COU has worked with the Ministry of Government Services to help Ontario’s universities establish and enhance group purchasing for better pricing across the sector.

MORE THAN 90 million GROSS SQUARE FEET CONSTITUTE ONTARIO’S UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Space on campus is a critical asset, and it is important to be as efficient as possible when managing the more than 90 million gross square feet that constitute Ontario’s university campuses. A group purchasing initiative spearheaded by the University of Toronto and supported by COU focused on software for managing space. Each Ontario university agreed, with support from the government’s Productivity and Innovation Fund, to use a leading software that maximizes the use of existing space, improves facilities management and planning, and ensures space is used effectively to enhance the student experience and result in high cost savings.

Before 2013, university applicants who did not apply directly from high school were unable to submit their high school transcripts electronically to the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre (OUAC), making the application process somewhat arduous. As part of the continued push toward accessibility for all students, a partnership between OUAC and the Ontario College Application Service leveraged an electronic transcript management system, to make the process more user-friendly and cost-effective.
CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

COU and its member universities work with educators and government to enhance planning for health science professions. Research, education and strategic programming are strengthening Ontario’s healthcare system and improving health outcomes for Ontarians.

Healthcare educators at Ontario universities are helping to ensure graduates are well-equipped to meet the needs of older adults.

THE BETTER AGING: ONTARIO EDUCATION SUMMIT BROUGHT TOGETHER ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS, SENIORS, RESEARCHERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

The summit identified priority areas and approaches to enhancing care provider education related to older adults. COU organized the summit in partnership with the Ontario government and Baycrest Health Sciences.

THE FAMILY MEDICINE EXPANSION REPORT was launched to inform the public and key stakeholders about strides made in primary care in Ontario. The report demonstrated improved access to primary care, especially in northern and rural Ontario communities. It also highlighted the fact that the province’s six family medicine programs have boosted the number of graduates by 1,900 over the last decade, and now graduate more than 500 doctors a year, up from 200 in 2003. Better access to primary care leads to improved health outcomes for patients.
COU facilitates two groups that have an impact on medical graduates and help ensure the right number and mix of physicians will meet the health needs of Ontarians: the Postgraduate Medicine Working Group and the Medical School Career Counsellors and Student Affairs Working Group.

Over the past year, these groups have worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to ensure that Faculties of Medicine are training future doctors in specialties that are needed in Ontario, and assisting medical students in choosing a specialty that is in demand in the province.
The statements of COU’s Financial Position, and its Income and Expenses for the year ended June 30, 2013, are derived from the audited financial statements of COU Holding Association Inc. The statements provide summary information on COU’s assets, liabilities and fund balances, and its income and expenses relating to COU’s general operating activities and other activities funded through restricted contributions. Financial information for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 has also been provided for comparative purposes.

COU Holding Association Inc. is responsible for the financial and business operations of COU. The directors of the corporation are the COU Chair, Vice-Chair, President & CEO, Chair of the Budget and Audit Committee, an Academic Colleague, and an external member.

It should be noted that government grants and other externally restricted contributions are used exclusively to fund projects and activities designated by sponsors; they are not used to finance the operations of the Council of Ontario Universities. The 2013 fiscal year covers the period July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

### Statement of Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Balances</th>
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<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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### Table

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<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
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**THE NUMBERS**
### Statement of Income and Expenses (Thousands of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Operations</th>
<th>Internally Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Externally Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>General Operations</th>
<th>Internally Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Externally Restricted Funds</th>
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<td>421</td>
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<td>Internal cost recoveries</td>
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<td>(683)</td>
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<td>(834)</td>
<td>(84)</td>
<td>(165)</td>
<td>(1,730)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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