

MEDIA RELEASE

Ontario universities up to tackling the Ontario government's growth and online challenge

Toronto, March 8, 2010 – The Ontario government's Throne Speech has set ambitious goals for increasing domestic and international enrolment as well as developing an online university, and Ontario universities are up to the task of tackling these goals, according to the Council of Ontario Universities (COU).

“We look forward to working with the government to address the growing numbers of students seeking university education and to contribute to the province's goal of ensuring that 70% of the population attains higher education,” said Sheldon Levy, Chair of Council and President of Ryerson University. “Ontario universities stepped up and accommodated over 100,000 new students over the past five years with the funding provided by the province's Reaching Higher plan,” said Levy.

On the international front, Ontario universities will work with government to enhance efforts to recruit students, implement exchanges, foster research partnerships and internationalize domestic curriculum. Over the past decade, the volume of international students recruited to Ontario universities has tripled to over 26,000 students and this success provides an excellent platform to take on the stated challenge of increasing international enrolment by a further 50%.

“We are happy to enhance our international activities and to work with the government to explore how to leverage the online learning solutions of our institutions into the development of an online university,” said Bonnie M. Patterson, President of COU. “Universities already have many online learning solutions and an online collaborative operation called the Scholars Portal, from which over 4 million digital journals are downloaded and 12 million searches are made a year by university students and faculty in Ontario.”

“Ontario universities will continue to collaborate with the government on the development of a multi-year plan to fund university enrolment growth with the necessary operating support to educate our students and the capital funding to ensure that we have the space and facilities needed to support both domestic and international growth,” said Patterson.

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