



ISSN 1180-4327

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 1 April 2015

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 1^{er} avril 2015

**Standing Committee on
Public Accounts**

2014 Annual Report,
Auditor General:

University undergraduate
teaching quality

**Comité permanent des
comptes publics**

Rapport annuel 2014,
vérificatrice générale :

Qualité de l'enseignement
universitaire de premier cycle

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Wednesday 1 April 2015

Mercredi 1^{er} avril 2015

The committee met at 1231 in room 151, following a closed session.

2014 ANNUAL REPORT,
AUDITOR GENERAL
MINISTRY OF TRAINING,
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BROCK UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Consideration of section 4.11, university undergraduate teaching quality.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I call the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to order. We're here to consider section 4.11, university undergraduate teaching quality, of the 2014 annual report of the Auditor General. For our deputations this afternoon, we have the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the three universities that were part of the audit: Brock University, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the University of Toronto. I want to say welcome to everyone at the table.

Before we start, if we could just have the table introduce themselves for Hansard. You can do that right now, or you can do that as you start to speak, but we do need it on the record as to who's speaking. Once you've been introduced, from then on, you don't have to reintroduce yourself; Hansard will remember that. If there are any others who will be speaking or who will answer questions, we would ask that when they do that, they introduce themselves by name for the record.

You'll have 20 minutes to make your presentation. That will be the presentation for everyone, so if we have more than one speaker, make sure that you divide it up fairly. We don't want to start a fight because somebody's time was taken up. I will not divide the 20 minutes up for you.

I thank you again very much for being part of the audit, and also for being here today to help us understand what's happening. With that, the floor is yours.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Thank you very much, Chair Hardeman and committee members. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to address the auditor's follow-up report on university undergrad teaching qual-

ity. I am Marie-Lison Fougère, interim Deputy Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Joining me are David Carter-Whitney, assistant deputy minister of post-secondary education, and David Fulford, who is sitting behind us, assistant deputy minister of employment and training. We also have Dr. Cheryl Regehr, vice-president and provost of the University of Toronto; Dr. Tim McTiernan, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology; and Dr. Jack Lightstone, president and vice-chancellor of Brock University. You'll hear all of them in a moment, but if I may, I'll just make some introductory remarks from the ministry's perspective.

We know that all Ontarians—including students, parents, institutions, employers and other community partners—want to ensure that the significant investments they and the government make in post-secondary education prepare graduates for the demands of a socially complex society and globalized economy. With that in mind, we welcome the standing committee's interest in undergrad university teaching quality, and we're pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the Auditor General's recent follow-up report. We've made further progress since her follow-up report was published in December, and we're pleased to tell you about that as well.

To meet the needs of Ontario's future job market, the government set a goal to have 70% of Ontarians earn post-secondary credentials by 2020. Now at 66%, we've made significant progress. Since 2002-03, the government has taken steps to improve access for all qualified students, as enrolment in Ontario's colleges and universities increased by 43%, or more than 170,000 students.

In November 2013, the ministry introduced the Differentiation Policy Framework for Postsecondary Education. Subsequently, in 2014, the ministry negotiated and signed strategic mandate agreements with all publicly assisted post-secondary institutions. This was accomplished through a balanced and collaborative approach between the ministry and the sector.

The strategic mandate agreements focus on each institution's strengths within the context of provincial priorities while ensuring that colleges and universities operate as complementary parts of the whole system.

It is also important to note that teaching and learning is a key component of these agreements and is explicitly linked to a quality student experience.

For the past few years, the ministry has been working very closely with the sector on a number of key priorities that also focus on the student learning experience

—credit transfer, and I can elaborate further if so desired;

—Ontario Online, online education—we're actually in the process of setting up a collaborative centre of excellence in technology-enabled learning; and

—learning outcomes; we've been supporting the work of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, an agency of the ministry, on learning outcomes assessment, and the council has been playing a leadership role in learning outcomes and has been working in partnership with a number of institutions across Ontario, but also in Canada.

When it comes to gaining a better understanding of student outcomes, capturing and reporting reliable data is a crucial element of our plan. In February of this year, the ministry released additional new data on students' outcomes, much of it by 26 program categories, offering more detail than had been previously available.

To continue and improve the collection of student-level data, the ministry has been working in partnership with all post-secondary institutions to implement the Ontario education number. The number, which is unique to every student, is used as the key identifier on a student's school records and follows the student through his or her elementary and secondary education. If you have elementary or secondary children, you would probably be aware of that number.

It is now being extended to post-secondary education. As of January 2015, about 97% of full-time and part-time university students now have an OEN.

As well, changes were made recently to the MTCU and Education Acts that will strengthen our ability to use data from Ontario education numbers to better understand, for example, students' transitions and outcomes. This is something that has actually been done in other jurisdictions: understanding the transition of students from secondary school to post-secondary education; and identifying what the barriers might be that inhibit student participation, progress, completion and transition to education or employment.

Those are a few highlights of the work we've been doing in order to address the auditor's recommendation. More details on these and other initiatives were included in our written submission.

Now, in order to give everyone a chance to deliver their introductory remarks, I will turn it over to Cheryl Regehr, who is provost and vice-chancellor of the University of Toronto.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: Good afternoon, and thank you for providing this opportunity to speak before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and giving the opportunity to address the Provincial Auditor's report on university undergraduate teaching quality.

Let me start by acknowledging the importance of accountability. We, at the University of Toronto, believe that we are the trustees of the investments that our stake-

holders—including our students and the public—make in our university. We believe that demonstrating the efficient and effective use of investments is essential to this accountability.

Since the audit of undergraduate teaching quality was initiated in 2012, we've had the opportunity to exchange information and ideas with the Provincial Auditor's office. Through this process, we've had the opportunity to enhance our focus on teaching excellence.

Through the rollout of our course evaluation framework in particular, we've made great strides in the assessment of teaching quality. I'm pleased to say that we've made progress on each and every one of the recommendations of the auditor's report and will continue to do so.

Rather than addressing each of these recommendations, I wanted to take a few minutes to speak about the broader goal for Ontario universities identified in the auditor's report, that of "teaching its students and preparing them for the future workforce." Specifically, I want to elaborate on how the University of Toronto addresses this important objective given its distinctive role as Ontario's globally recognized, comprehensive and leading research-intensive university.

In response to societal and economic demand for greater access to post-secondary education, the University of Toronto has expanded its enrolment by 23,000 students in the last 12 years alone. Today, across our three campuses, the university enrolls 84,500 students, 68,000 of whom are undergraduates.

1240

While we educate the largest number of students of any university in Canada, we're also committed to the success of every single student. More specifically, we are absolutely committed to the quality of learning achieved in our classrooms, our laboratories, our seminars, our studios and in the field.

To do this, we have enriched university strategies and supports in flexible and creative ways to enhance teaching quality and further support the learning outcomes and workforce readiness of our students.

To enhance teaching quality, we have created a category of teaching-stream faculty, thereby resulting in a lower reliance on part-time and sessional instructors. We offer teacher training to all of our faculty to help them augment their skills. Our online course evaluation system is an amazing new resource in our tool kit to measure teaching effectiveness. At this point, 80% of our students, or 66,000 students, are now using the system to evaluate the thousands of courses offered by the university. We are very proud to have been one of the first Ontario universities to implement a system that is now being emulated by others.

To support the learning outcomes of our students, we have implemented a big-and-small strategy so that all students, including first-year students, are given the opportunity to experience small-group learning formats. All students have the opportunity to learn from some of our best teachers in large undergraduate courses supported by

the latest technology. New learning formats such as flipped classrooms, online courses and IT innovations enrich hundreds of our courses.

To support workforce readiness, we offer hundreds of experiential learning opportunities. These include co-op placements, internship and practicum terms, professional experience year opportunities, entrepreneurship training, placements in community organizations, study abroad opportunities and undergraduate research learning opportunities.

To help our students market themselves to employers, we have developed a co-curricular record to supplement the academic transcript. Students can document their learning experiences outside the classroom, including their volunteer activities, their leadership training, their student government participation and entrepreneurship activities. Again, we're leading other universities in this initiative to help students compete in the marketplace by officially documenting what the employers are looking for.

Let me close by saying that as an institution of higher learning, we at the University of Toronto, like our sister institutions, will continue to learn and will continue to advance our most important mandate: the education of our students. Thank you.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: My name is Tim McTiernan. I'm the president and vice-chancellor of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I am very pleased to be a part of these hearings. Thank you for the opportunity to present our university's perspective.

The University of Ontario Institute of Technology, as you know, was announced in 2001, legislated in 2002, took in its first class of 947 students in the 2003-04 academic year, and now has approximately 10,000 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with over 70 programs covering degrees to PhDs.

Our students are largely greater Toronto area students. In fact, over 40% of our students are from east of the Rouge River. Half of our students work at least 10 hours a week; more, proportionately speaking, commute long hours than students in other universities. More than half have dependent responsibilities at home, and 85% receive some form of financial aid and support.

Eighty-four per cent of our graduating cohort last year had some form of experiential learning as part of their course material, and that is reflected in our graduate employment figures two years after graduation, where well over 90% of our students—in fact, 95% is the figure I have in my briefing notes—have employment and careers relevant to their training. That's largely because the UOIT was established with a specific mandate to deliver career-focused programs to address college-to-university transfers—about 30% of our new intake every year are students coming from a college environment—and to be focused on degree activities that are responsive to the changing needs of the economy.

We are a science-, tech-, engineering- and math-focused university. We're the smallest of the three institutions represented here, with relatively small class sizes,

on average, of about 60 students. We provide technology-enriched learning, and we provide students with industry-standard tools to facilitate their learning and give them a competitive advantage for employment, following completion of their degrees. We think it's working. I cited our employment stats.

We have standardized procedures for student course evaluations applied to all undergraduate offerings, regardless of who is offering the course. These evaluations are summarized every year by faculty at the university level, to allow for comparative assessment of teaching. The instructor and the deans review these evaluations.

Teaching effectiveness is a significant component of the assessment for tenure and promotion. If issues are noted, related to teaching, instructors are formally encouraged to access the appropriate resource, including remedial help from the Teaching and Learning Centre, and that does happen.

All new instructors, including sessionals, at UOIT attend an extensive workshop offered by our Teaching and Learning Centre, which is a resource to our faculty members as they improve their teaching effectiveness and their teaching methods.

I want to assure the committee that UOIT takes teaching very seriously, and we continue to invest in our students and in the professional development of those who teach them.

Thank you.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Jack Lightstone, president and vice-chancellor, Brock University. Thank you, Chair Hardeman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to speak with you.

Just a bit about Brock and then on to the topic at hand: Brock was founded 50 years ago, largely as a local regional university focusing on the liberal arts and sciences, with a teacher college. In 1999, its mandate changed substantially when it began to incorporate research and graduate education in a pervasive way across its departments as part of its mission.

The university has grown substantially since 1999. For many years, we hovered around 9,000 to 10,000 students; we are now at 18,800 students. In other words, we have basically doubled in size over the past 15 years or so.

The university, from its very inception, had a very strong culture of teaching excellence which it still values, even while it has ventured into research and graduate studies. It has developed a number of significant areas of research strength, recognized in our strategic mandate agreement: biotechnology, psychosocial development, environment and sustainability, neuroscience, and health science, among others.

Our business school is accredited by the international Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business, and its student honour society is ranked in the top 5% in the world of AACSB member institutions.

Brock's tradition of trans-disciplinary research that serves local economic, social and cultural needs is very strong. I'll just reference one of those institutes, the Cool

Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, which serves the grape and wine industry. For those of you who have enjoyed the 2012 vintage, one of the best in the history of Niagara, that vintage would not have existed at all, were it not for our research, because most of the vines would have been killed in the cold weather event that occurred in April 2012.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: We thought we'd get samples.

Interjections.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Next time.

Brock's tradition of valuing teaching has been evidenced in the teaching awards established in every faculty and by the university; in the very large number of 3M teaching excellence awards, the national 3M awards, that have been awarded to our faculty; and in an ongoing dialogue among our faculty about teaching excellence and teaching quality, supported now by an ever-enhanced Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and the establishment of a vice-provost position in teaching and learning—and our senate has a standing committee on teaching and learning.

We are, like UOIT, very strongly committed to experiential learning. We have the third-largest co-op education program in Ontario, the fifth-largest in Canada, and the largest business co-op program in all of Canada. We have also been developing, at a very strong rate, other forms of experiential learning, a whole gamut of types. We too, like U of T, offer an experience transcript along with our formal academic transcript.

It is no secret to you that, with respect to the use of teacher evaluations, our development of their use has been hampered by provisions in our collective agreement. We recently renegotiated that collective agreement in August 2014. We made many gains, which I'm pleased to talk about, but one of the gains we did not make was seizing back ownership of the course evaluations from the faculty. Notwithstanding that, I believe that Brock has had a long standing of valuing teaching excellence and continues to do so.

I'd be happy to answer any of your questions.

1250

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentations. We're going to start the questions with the government side.

I just wanted to say, for full disclosure for the committee, that I have a lot of money tied up in Brock University: They educated two of my sons.

We have the government asking. Mr. Potts.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes, thank you. Thank you very much for coming here and participating in this. I wanted to start somewhat philosophically. But before that, I have to declare my own conflicts as a graduate of U of T; I started in 1977. I have a picture of Brock in my constituency office, right beside Tecumseh, so I have a great affection for both of those.

But I wanted to start with this: What I think was sort of a basic aspect of this whole review was the premise of teaching and preparing for the workforce. I come from a very general liberal arts background, where the focus in

the university sector was less on preparation for the workforce than it was on preparation of the mind and learning, all those aspects.

I wonder if you might just comment briefly, because it will go to the questions I have about the experience of a liberal arts education, which I think is what distinguished universities initially from colleges, technology institutions and such like that. Maybe if you just had a comment on the experience of a liberal arts education rather than streaming? I had to resist, even in 1977, the direction that I had to be streamed into a major and a minor. I just wanted to take courses that I was interested in, and I did, but it came with some cost.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: People are looking at me, so I will begin.

I agree with you that a liberal arts education is a wonderful thing for students to have. We've really been working on integrating a liberal arts education so that students get broad sets of skills in terms of critical thinking, broad awareness of the world and a broad awareness of social issues—at the same time as thinking about how those skills prepare them for a life of learning and a life of working and engaging in society.

Let me give you some examples of how we do that at the university and how we integrate those two. We have a program in our faculty of arts and science called Step Forward. The Step Forward program is for all undergraduate students in the faculty of arts and science. The first step, year one, is the step into university, so the focus is on helping students develop skills that will help them transition from high school into university. Those skills include study skills and self-management skills, because there are different kinds of skills that students need to have in order to handle a university career, as opposed to a high school experience.

Step two is the step into a program. At the University of Toronto, in the first year you take a very, very wide range of courses, and then in your second year you decide what your major is or your majors are. The second year, then, is stepping into your major so that people can understand what they're interested in doing, how they select that and what this might prepare them for.

Year three, or step three, is the step into action. That's where we get students to spend time thinking of the various experiential learning opportunities that they might have already had or that they're about to take, and how those experiential learning opportunities connect with their longer-term goals.

Finally, in the final year, the step into the future, we focus on taking their liberal arts education and how that prepares them for future careers. We focus very heavily on mentorship and other kinds of experiences like that.

Within the action phase, if I could just take another couple of minutes, we have a number of different opportunities. One of those is the opportunity for what we call service learning courses. We have many, many courses, in disciplines that you wouldn't expect, that help students give something back to our communities.

One example of this is in our math program. We teach students who are math majors to take their knowledge

and put it in understandable ways so that they can tutor students. They go into high-risk high schools and provide tutoring. There we're taking students who have a math major, which you might not automatically expect would fit with service learning, and finding ways in which they're able to do service learning.

That would be one of the kinds of examples where students would take that very broad-based education and think about how that might apply in real-world situations.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes?

Dr. Jack Lightstone: If I may add to my colleague's remarks, part of your question explicitly addressed the issue of whether a liberal arts and science education is still a valuable pathway to the workforce. Quite apart from all of the efforts that all of our institutions are making in order to complement in-class learning with experiential learning—which helps people, I think, gain the skills and confidence that they need for the workforce—all studies over the past number of years have shown that people with liberal arts and science undergraduate educations do get work. They get work in significant numbers and, for the most part, they consider the education they received in the liberal arts to be relevant to the work they're doing.

The most complete study, I think, done to date was spearheaded by the University of Ottawa just last fall, which gives, I think, very detailed information about the job outcomes and employment outcomes of various disciplines, and that confirms that over the long haul—not necessarily one year to the next, but over the long haul—a liberal arts and science education probably provides the best job opportunities through the ups and downs of the economy than just about anything else.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Right. If I could, in the second part—sorry; go ahead.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: Thank you for the opportunity. It seems strange for somebody from a university that has the word “technology” in it to speak about the value of a liberal arts education. But to the issues of critical thinking, problem analysis, problem-solving and communications, there are elements that are embedded in a liberal arts education that we pay strong attention to in our professional and science- and technology-oriented programs, because that's what our employers are telling us they need, in terms of students who come out and not only have the technical skills but have the adaptability and the ability to integrate productively into a workplace.

We, like our sister institutions, have a variety of strategies to provide our students with those learning experiences. On a fundamental level we work very closely with Trent University in a variety of dimensions, but, particularly with respect to Trent, in providing electives for us.

More broadly within our own evolution as an institution, we're working on pedagogical shifts, as the other institutions are doing, towards less classroom time and courses; more online substitution of course content delivery; more small-group projects where students learn how to work together on problem analysis, problem

definition and problem resolution; and more experiential learning opportunities.

Capstone projects are common across our faculties in senior years, where students and groups take a real, live problem in a business or in a public service environment, address it and come up with solutions.

An example I'll give—I won't get the precise characteristics right, but we have a group of students working on a capstone project at the Grandview Children's Centre to develop a serious game where children with different cognitive abilities can strengthen their cognitive, problem-solving focus in the game. It's something where our students learn not only how to work with each other, not only how to work to deliver a project to an institution, but how to work with clients who require some degree of interpersonal skills to deal with.

Our students are active in inter-varsity competitions where communication becomes a fundamental aspect of winning and succeeding, and they are successful. We have leadership opportunities and volunteer activities in the university and in athletics that support the types of characteristics one talks about.

1300

I should probably leave it at that, but we manage around the program specifics to augment the students' experience to provide that richness of breadth.

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question arises out of the notion of the fifth recommendation from the auditor's report about student outcomes and tracing them after graduation. I'm delighted to hear about your 95% success ratio, particularly in areas of their education choosing. It may be harder to do in the liberal arts sense, but maybe not, given the kinds of comments that have been made.

What progress have you been making on identifying the outcomes of students in employment after university and how does that feed back into the training, tenure placements and other aspects within your school? If kids are being more successful coming out of university, that should reflect back on the instructors.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: I'll take a short, quick stab at it because we rely on figures that are generated across the system that work quite well. But we have the advantage of actually being able to establish a relationship with our alumni at a very early age in the life of the institution, and we track and work with our alumni very closely.

We also have several hundred regional businesses, enterprises, and not-for-profit and public sector organizations with whom we do placements with our students. We canvass those on a regular basis. We get anecdotal feedback, but we also get constructive feedback about what is and isn't working and we incorporate that into how we orient our students. That transition point becomes quite important, to have a step out somewhere where you've had the experience, in many instances somewhere where you end up working as a result.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: I could perhaps add that, as Tim mentioned, there are system-wide numbers that come out in terms of employment, and those are released to us from MTCU. At the University of Toronto, with a very

different suite of programs than UOIT would have, our two-year employment rate is at 92.6%. That is one measure that we have of success. Other measures that were also mentioned are engagement with our alumni, who come back as mentors. We have alumni mentors who are engaged in many, many different aspects of the university. They come back and talk to students about what they were able to do with their degrees and what kinds of careers they've had.

We also have alumni mentors coming in our entrepreneurship activities. We have a course called Entrepreneurship 101 that hundreds of students take in the arts and science. We have innovation hubs. We have alumni who volunteer their time in those, who give us opportunities to see what kinds of outcomes there are.

In addition, however, there is a new survey that just began, and it's being run out of British Columbia. This is the first year we're engaging in that particular survey. It's for students who are five years out of undergraduate. It asks specific questions about what aspects of their undergraduate education are helpful in their current experience in the workforce, in their career and in their life.

As I said, this is the first year that we've engaged with that. That's all very new data. We could provide some follow-up data, if you wish, in written form, once we have all of that and once we have the reports back.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Does it feed back into your training of your instructors?

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: It certainly will. As I say, this is new, and we're just engaging in it, but it will absolutely be something that feeds back into the system.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Excellent.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: In terms of the feedback loop, which is one of the things you're wanting to get at, the other thing that I just want to add is that there are many more people involved now in the education of our students than just the instructors. When we talk about experiential learning, co-op education, entrepreneurship experiences and so on, there is a cadre of staff now that work at the university in a correlative fashion with our instructors to provide many of what I would call these value-added aspects of their education that specifically help them be better positioned for the workforce. This, too, happens not just in the technical disciplines like engineering but also even in the humanities.

For example, at a number of our institutions, Brock included, we have a co-op program in history. People ask me, "Where do you place history students?" Part of the co-op program is the preparation of the students before going out, and the debriefing of them when they come back, and the debriefing of the people with whom they've had co-op placements, when they come back. Our co-op office really spearheads that.

When we talk about a feedback mechanism, the feedback mechanism includes not only, at the instructional level, what the individual instructor does as a professor—but also in terms of refashioning the structure of the program, which is a departmental and faculty issue. Also, there are, in all of our universities, offices filled with

competent staff who work hand in hand with the academic departments in structuring these experiences and improving those experiences, based on the feedback gotten.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Mr. Dong.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you very much for coming and making that presentation. Just so you know, in our previous discussion on this topic, one thing that I noticed is in the AG's recommendations, "collect and make public sufficient information on student outcomes" was one of the recommendations. The concern was that that the data are still not published at the university or program level, to better assist students in making informed decisions on their university and program of study.

I heard that the acting deputy made a note on, and she used a couple of sentences to explain, the Ontario education number, which will now be extended to post-secondary study. I find that very interesting. I just wanted to ask if you would explain how that will help the students, or how that will help to improve student-level data. Would you make that data available to the public? Is that the plan? Because I think it would be very helpful for the public. I don't know if you've picked a date yet, but when would it be released, or when would you be starting to roll this out?

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: I'll start, and then I'll ask ADM Carter-Whitney—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You just have one minute left—

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: How many minutes, sorry?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Just one minute—

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: One minute—I'll fill a minute. No problem.

The Ontario education number is actually critical. It's now in effect. It has been proclaimed—actually, yesterday. This will be absolutely critical for the ministry, working with the institutions, to really, really start getting a better understanding of quality of education through the kind of information that we can collect by linking the data to that student number.

It has all been cleared through the privacy commissioner, so there are no privacy issues here.

It has been done for years in K-to-12 education, so everyone has a unique identifier. We have worked with all of our universities and colleges. It has now been extended to all institutions.

It's going to take time because, obviously, we need to work closely with institutions in order to implement this, but there is no question that this will advance the ability of the sector and of the government to get a better understanding of quality from a student perspective, as it relates to their education.

Mr. Han Dong: Would that be made public—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. You'll have to hold that thought to the next time around.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Chair, I'll give him the extra minute—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay, but that's going to confuse it all.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It's now with the official opposition.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much to everyone. My name is Lisa MacLeod. I actually grew up in a little place called New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and I'm a proud St. FX graduate. Growing up there, obviously, I learned a little thing or two.

I'm very proud today—I have to show this. I got this from some Brock University students, and I use it every single day. I live, basically, on the University of Toronto campus, which is beautiful. I'm really proud of the legacy of the Ontario government, particularly under Ernie Eves and Mike Harris, that we have the UOIT, which we all have. I feel a connection to each of your schools in one way or the other.

I must say, I thought the auditor did an outstanding job on this audit. It's one of the very good news stories, I think, out of the government of Ontario, when you see in audits that your government is working, with a few minor tweaks. I think that there are some areas of concern, and I'm really pleased that the deputy minister is here today.

1310

With respect to you being here, Deputy, we talked a little bit about—and I thought Mr. Potts had a good question with respect to a liberal arts education as many of us, previous to the early 2000s and certainly now, would have experienced when we went to university. Over the past decade, I would say, we have seen dramatic changes in post-secondary education throughout Ontario, and really throughout the rest of the world.

I think you mentioned—a number of you did—getting people career focused. You've talked about the introduction of Internet technology, people doing online learning. My husband is actually a professor who deals solely in online learning.

And then of course you're talking about something that I don't think is a new phenomenon, but it has certainly expanded: People have gone on, started their career, started their family, and then they're starting to go back. Now that has all dramatically changed.

We're talking about quality education at the undergraduate level, in the context of all those changes that we're only just really getting to understand. Maybe I'll start this off with the deputy: How has the ministry adapted to that? Have you seen some of the challenges, whether it's in an older school or a newer school, of which we have both here; or a larger school or a smaller school, of which we have both here? Have those challenges been discussed?

Secondly, I used to be the education critic, and we talk a lot about the testing of our students and standardized testing. We have EQAO, for example, at the secondary school level and even in elementary. Has there ever been any consideration to going to a sort of model of testing so that it doesn't take an auditor's report to highlight some of these rankings or understandings of where our students are?

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Thank you very much for the question. There are a couple of things I'd like to say. I think that there is a recognition that higher education, post-secondary education, is changing. It is actually changing across the world. There are many, many emerging issues that I think it's fair to say institutions are contending with, and so are jurisdictions across the world.

I think that the return of adult learners so to speak, or professional people who wish to go back either to university or college, is a phenomenon. Basically, when we look at the data that we have, the majority of learners that we serve there—about 80%—belong to the 18- to 24-year-old cohort. Then you've got about 20% who fall in the category of adult learners who may just be returning or going to continuing ed or something. It is an emerging phenomenon.

It is fair to say that, at least as far as the ministry is concerned—we also have another side of the ministry which is responsible for employment training. A lot of these people get access to employment and training programs, be it Second Career or Literacy and Basic Skills and all these kinds of employment services.

I don't know if this is what you were getting at, but there is an issue around the flexibility of delivery, particularly if you are trying to respond to the needs of someone who has a full-time job or they may be working part-time. They can't afford to leave the workplace, that kind of case, which is quite frequent when you talk about adult learners. Flexibility of delivery and the extent to which we can explore new and more flexible modes of delivery—online being, obviously, one that is quite helpful in that respect—is something that we're looking at in the ministry. We've had quite a number of conversations with institutions. If you look at the strategic mandate agreements of institutions, and they're all posted on the website of the ministry, you will see that, in fact, there are very specific examples of what universities and colleges are actually looking at in terms of flexible delivery. I would say that for working-age adult learners, this can be an impediment, and this is something that we are interested in looking at pursuing further, but it's fair to say that institutions are also doing a whole lot. They look at the profile of their students, they look at who applies and, as a result, they respond.

Interjection.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Finally, I'm being reminded that we're just setting up Ontario Online, which is a consortium of all institutions. We have a board made up of—and this is quite something. In Ontario Online, we have a board made up of universities, colleges, students and experts. In fact, Jack Lightstone is the co-chair, along with—

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Judy Morris.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: —Judy Morris from Lambton College in Sarnia. In fact, we have invested a fair amount of money—millions of dollars—in the development of new online courses that will start being delivered in the fall. So I think that this is one thing.

The other thing that I'd like to point out is credit transfer. We've done a lot of work on credit transfer. Again, I

think it has been fairly transformative in the sense that now we have the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer, colleges and universities being in charge and working closely amongst themselves but also with the ministry. With credit transfer, one of the things that we need to be very conscious of is that it is important to recognize what adults have actually done in order to then allow them to complete what they may want to do in terms of professional development and avoid having to repeat learning that they have already achieved. So the credit transfer initiative is part of this.

On the testing issue, I have to be quite frank: We have not been looking at testing as such, in the sense that you have evoked. I used to be in the Ministry of Education, so I understand very well the EQAO agency and understand—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's not controversial.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: I understand very well. In fact, at the time I was part of the team that basically developed all of the student achievement programs. I think that in post-secondary—and there's a lot of assessment that happens at the institutional level—I would say, from a jurisdictional perspective, that this is something that is being discussed at a conceptual level because of the emerging concept of learning outcomes and how you assess learning outcomes. It's fair to say that there isn't a jurisdiction in the world that has actually found an answer because you need to respect the fact that institutions have the primary role to play when it comes to assessing learning outcomes in relation to programs, in relation to disciplines, and accreditation bodies as well.

In terms of what a government can do, I think it remains to be seen: What would be useful? Would there be value added if this were to be considered? This is where, actually, the higher education council, HEQCO, has been looking at learning outcomes assessment. They've been working, actually, with a number of institutions to see what makes sense, because one of the things you don't want to do is just assess for the sake of assessing. It has to add value.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: When you look at, for example, what Dr. Lightstone has to deal with—not having the ability to provide any of the student assessments to be available to current students because of collective bargaining—I'm just wondering if there was an ability there for assessments. I won't lie. My husband was an Acadia grad and I was a St. FX grad. When St. FX wins the ranking in Maclean's over Acadia every year, he hears about it for 24 straight hours, every hour on the hour. So many students look at the Maclean's rankings. I'm just wondering if we were more proactive at a provincial level.

Again, when we talk about other jurisdictions, in our research and even in our conversation that we're having right now, we've alluded to the British Columbia survey and their ability to look at five years out—the exit outcomes. Is Ontario prepared to do any of that? I think that every Ontario student, or any student coming into Ontario to go to one of our wonderful universities would

probably like to have that information. We are in an information age. I'm wondering if the ministry is contemplating—and by the way, to the other deputants, if you have anything, please jump in. I'm just wondering if we would consider moving to making this information more readily available, because I think more information is power. The more information we have, the better we are able to equip our faculties to deliver better outcomes.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Maybe I'll ask ADM Carter-Whitney to respond. Maybe just one thing, David, before I do: I think that your question can really be parked under the notion of transparency and providing better information to everyone and as much clarity as possible. I think that the ministry has been doing a lot of work on labour market information and how this can be linked to education. David will give you an idea of the progress we've been making.

1320

The one point I would like to make about BC is that BC has had an Ontario education number in post-secondary for quite a while. It takes time to actually develop mechanisms, and you also have to make sure that they are very rigorous and that they are not providing misleading information.

David, maybe speak on the progress we've made so far?

Mr. David Carter-Whitney: Sure, and I guess I'm supposed to introduce myself. I'm David Carter-Whitney. I'm the assistant deputy minister of post-secondary education for TCU.

Thanks for your question. I think it gets to, really, the essence of what this discussion started from: How do you get at quality? How do we know if we are doing well? It's a discussion that the ministry has been engaged in for a number of years. I think the Auditor General's report maybe sharpened our attention a little bit.

The use of key performance indicators is a way of really trying to get at quality. It's trying to say, without doing a standardized test in the EQAO sense, what are the outcomes? What are people's experiences coming out? That should be an indicator of how well they're doing.

We have been collecting and publishing data. Even just since the most recent update, we have expanded and made more data available as of February 2015. Where previously we gave employment rates at an institution level, we're now breaking it out into 26 program categories and by institutions. You can see how a humanities grad fares at six months and two years.

We are providing relatedness of their employment. We are surveying individuals—those who are employed—about how relevant the area of study was specifically and then how relevant the skills are that they acquired. Because they may have—again, history—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The math example is good.

Mr. David Carter-Whitney: Yes—so to get an indication of to what extent do individuals see that the studies that they did were related and helped them into employment.

Just to say, we also look at salary ranges. We're publishing about incidents of unpaid internships, whether they participated in co-op and didn't, things like that. We're trying to expand the data.

I think the question is right. We're going to continue to push that. We have work we're doing with the sector both to figure out what the right measures are and also how to improve the reporting rate.

One of the challenges of this methodology is we get a response rate of about one third. That then has a problem: Are you getting representative samples? So we have been looking at how do we drive that up. We're introducing phone surveys and things that try to get through the survey fatigue that students are—we're not the only ones who are sick of responding to surveys on various things.

All that is to say is, I think, we'll continue to push on this. We want to know about aboriginal self-identification, first generation students—a whole range of things that help us understand who's there and how they are doing.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm just going to see if there's time.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Five minutes left.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you very much for joining us today. As I've been listening to the comments and questions from the others, I realize that it's incumbent upon me to disclose the fact that I'm a graduate of the University of Toronto.

A couple of things that haven't been touched on that I thought maybe you would like to spend a few minutes to discuss: the teaching learning centres, because as a former secondary school teacher, I'm aware of the value and the risk of so many different learning methods and teaching styles and things like that. I thought perhaps you might be able to give us a sense of what one of these centres looks like, who would come and under what sort of circumstances.

Ms. Marie Lison Fougère: I think Dr. Lightstone would like to.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: As soon as my mike goes on, I'd be happy to take a stab at the question.

Interjection.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Okay. I'm still Jack Lightstone, for the record.

I'm sure ours is not that much different than what you would find at other universities. For example, what our Centre for Pedagogical Innovation does is, number one, it provides teaching workshops as an orientation for all incoming new faculty members. We can't force them to go, but it's part of the orientation session they go through. It also provides mandatory pedagogical training for all TAs in our university. Then it also has thematic workshops on various issues in pedagogy throughout the year that it advertises throughout campus and invites people to come to.

More recently, it has also begun to have what's called learning communities. In other words, since pedagogy in math might present different challenges than pedagogy in

sociology, they have been organizing groups along these lines for people, to enable them to launch pedagogical seminars on areas of common interest.

The other thing that they do for us is they have been the lead in helping faculty advance the use of technology, whether it's in hybrid learning or in online courses across the university, and in the incorporation of forms of experiential learning right into course design.

Experiential learning runs the gamut from things like a co-op placement—which is completely apart from one's courses, right?—versus, at the other end of the continuum, building into a particular course an experiential placement—within the course—where students, during the course, go out into a placement and come back into the course and alternate. Our centre helps individual faculty members design their courses to do that.

It also advises our faculty on appropriate measurement, appropriate development of actual course syllabi, and the structure of a course. I developed an online course two years ago. I turned to them for all sorts of advice on assessment in an online course, on how to define learning outcomes for the course within an online mode, and so on.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: If I could just add a few words to what Jack has just said, our teaching and learning centre is very similar. It does provide a two-day workshop for every new faculty member who comes in. Every new sessional instructor who comes in gets a day's workshop. There's a stipend that the professors get to support their participation, but their participation is expected.

Beyond that, as Jack has indicated, they provide support in best practices, support in the development of online programming, and actually are a catalyst for pedagogical change and for course redesign and delivery. We have a new associate provost starting shortly, one of whose chief remits will be to keep that process invigorated.

One of the key things that our teaching and learning centre has been involved in over the years is the integration of technology into the classroom, and support for technology, particularly since we're a laptop-program university at the moment. The teaching and learning centre is involved in a major think-through on how we migrate from being a laptop program to being a bring-your-own-device program, with all of the technology as well as the pedagogy that that entails. In that respect, there is very close engagement with faculties and with understanding shifts in pedagogy that are taking place elsewhere.

It's interesting that we're here today when there is a large contingent of UOIT faculty, along with OCAD U, Trent and Durham College faculty, at a conference in Ireland, dealing with colleagues in Ireland who measure outcomes differently, modularize programs differently and, in fact, have parallel teaching experiences but in a different structure. One of the major themes of the conference, and a focus of the conference, is on pedagogical changes in the post-secondary level at both the college and the university level.

That addresses the earlier question about how you address lifelong learning requirements and how you provide a reach-out system beyond the degrees so that, essentially—to use a technology analogy—people who want to reboot their qualifications get the chance to do it.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We will now go to the third party: Ms. Sattler?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, and welcome. It's great to have you here. I am the NDP critic for training, colleges and universities. Before I was elected, I was a researcher at Academica Group, which specializes in the post-secondary sector, and did a multi-year project for HEQCO on work-integrated learning. Oh, and I should also say that I'm a grad of McMaster and Western, but I did take a night course at U of T.

1330

I'm delighted to hear about the work that's being done in your institutions to provide students with experiential learning and other forms of work-integrated learning.

I'd be interested in your comments on some of the findings from the HEQCO project that I was involved in. That project involved large-sample-size surveys of students, faculty and employers, and heard about some of the barriers and challenges to participating in work-integrated learning programs.

Students said that these programs were mostly clustered in certain faculties and not available broadly across the institution. I think it's really exciting that it's available in history at Brock, but I don't know if that is the trend within the sector. That was definitely an issue that I heard then and that I continue to hear now. Both OUSA and the Canadian Federation of Students have flagged this as an issue: that students are not able to participate broadly across faculties in these kinds of programs. Other issues were around the potential costs for students to participate: if they had to look at giving up a part-time job in order to take up a short-term field placement or other thing, and also potential relocation costs. There are some real barriers that may prevent students from participating, and I know the student organizations are very interested in trying to address some of those barriers.

On the employer side, the HEQCO research found that only 40% of Ontario employers are providing these kinds of placements, and I know from the institutions that I've talked to that it can be a real challenge to get employers to agree to take on these students. I'm very interested in hearing what your institutions are doing to engage more employers in providing these opportunities.

Finally, when we spoke to faculty, they often talked about the challenges of delivering these kinds of programs, particularly when there wasn't a robust institutional infrastructure to support them. As we're seeing more innovative integration of these programs in non-traditional fields of study, I think that there is less likelihood that there is institutional support there to help deliver them.

I think that from the student perspective, and clearly from the institutional perspective, you do recognize how

fundamental this is to the quality of the learning environment. Students talk about how these opportunities have enhanced their educational experience, and there's also data that I'll come to later about the outcomes that they support. But first, on the delivery side—the challenges for students, the challenges getting employers, and then also faculty delivery of these programs.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: Perhaps I could take the first stab. When people think of barriers, it's because perhaps they're thinking too narrowly about what is experiential learning and what is work-integrated learning. When we think across the continuum, there are the co-op programs which both Jack and Tim have talked about, and we have as well. In engineering, they have a professional year experience, which is a full year. Obviously, that means that students' number of years to degree are extended. For some students that works; for some students that doesn't work. Co-op placements also often have some kind of extension to the length of the degree. In many, many of our disciplines—the health sciences, which are both undergraduate and graduate—experiential learning is an integral part of the experience, and it's just another course; it is a part of what the experience is.

But if we think about beyond that, things such as service learning experiences—that's what was talked about in terms of it being part of a course. That can be envisioned in a very broad way, what that experience might be for the students. It is a part of a course. They don't have to take it in addition; it's integrated into their learning experience. The course, then, has some kind of an assignment where they reflect on that service learning experience and talk about how it fits with what they've learned academically.

In addition, undergraduate research experience in a lab is service learning or work-integrated learning. Many of these students might be choosing to go on in other kinds of fields that are going to involve lab work, so that might be part of a course. We have special courses that students can take that are basically a research course where the student works with one professor. That's another form of learning that the students do that is work-integrated learning.

We certainly all have centres. We have a centre for community partnerships, and that centre helps faculty members work out how to do a service learning component in their courses, particularly in non-traditional courses, where they hadn't normally expected to do that kind of thing.

Part of the challenge is helping students think much more broadly about what is a work-like experience. Maybe being a student governor and being engaged in the politics of the university is a service learning experience. How do we help them articulate that and see that as part of their learning experience?

I think all of us have a huge array of what these work-integrated learning experiences might look like. For instance, I was talking about Entrepreneurship 101 and being in an entrepreneurship hub. We have campus-led accelerators on campus where students take their ideas

and try and build a small business out of it, and people mentor them and talk to them about how they do that. That is a work-integrated learning experience. They might never think of it that way.

One of the things, as we look at student surveys and all the rest, is that sometimes we'll ask students, "Have you had a work-related experience?" They'll say, "Well, no, I didn't, because I did it at the university, so it wasn't work-related." They don't necessarily conceptualize this as being something that really prepares them for the future.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: It's very hard to add any more to what our colleague from U of T has said, because she has covered the gamut very, very well.

I'd like to speak to two or three things, however. First of all, everything in the HEQCO report obviously speaks to a constant tension that we have to deal with. Engaging and sustaining our relationship with employers and with placements becomes particularly challenging where we have economies in transition.

It's challenging in those instances where we have small and medium enterprises that are very good corporate citizens and very much engaged but perhaps haven't adopted technology to the degree that is helpful for our students, who are technologically sophisticated going into those. It involves, as President Lightstone said earlier, a lot of ongoing work to establish the connections, build the connections and sustain the connections.

It involves particular attention to students who have other stresses and strains. I mentioned some of those at the outset of my comments. The students who come from across the GTA spend a lot of time commuting from across the GTA to our institution.

Nevertheless, if you build the opportunities into the structure of programs, it's enabling.

As has been said, if you look at a definition of work experience that's a broad-reaching definition, it actually captures quite a lot of initiatives. We have a lot of our undergraduate students who spend time in research labs. That's built into the DNA of the institution because our faculty members, in the first several years of the institution, before we had graduate programs, had to rely on undergraduate students as lab assistants. So that pattern has developed and set, which is actually a really good advantage for our students.

1340

We had awards for student service and student leaders a couple of years ago; we have them annually. The first time I became involved, I was reading through the list of fairly substantial activities that students were involved in, and it captured 60 different sets of volunteer activities, some of them extremely challenging: working on poverty issues in south Oshawa; working with children with different abilities; and taking very, very strong leadership roles in the communities with not-for-profit organizations, where they were not only providing resources but providing leadership within the organizations.

It's managing the tension between faculty, student, and employer needs and capacities, and being opportun-

istic about where the opportunities come, and making sure that when they do arise, we look at ways of sustaining them as they arise.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: One thing I'd like to add, from a ministry perspective, is that for the past few years, we've had a number of conversations, round tables, with institutions and students and so on. There is absolutely no question that experiential learning is work-integrated learning, and I realize there are definitions for all of those.

It is topical, and it's extremely important. It's also coming out in a lot of research, and experiential research, that there has to be a way of addressing the youth gap experience. You can be a graduate, but it's the transition to employment. I think that sometimes, people assume that as soon as you graduate, you go in and you become a manager. That is not the reality.

How do you actually facilitate that transition? Some of it can be done through work-integrated learning. I think it would be important to enhance the linchpin between education and employers.

Actually, the ministry has been reaching out lately to employers, working with the chambers of commerce, CME and so on to really find ways—creative ways—of facilitating that transition.

I'm very familiar with the study. It was actually a very good study—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: —and I mean it quite seriously. The ministry was very pleased to benefit from the study that you authored.

The last things I'd like to say—two things—are that SMAs, strategic mandate agreements, are again worth looking at, because in fact, one of the threads that runs through all of those SMAs, whether it's colleges or universities, is actually experiential learning and how we can enhance experiential learning in different forms.

There is a component of the differentiation framework which we put in place and the strategic mandate agreements that's called "jobs, innovation and economic development," and within that particular category, we have metrics. In fact, we will be working with the sector on metrics in order to report back, as this is essentially where you get at opportunities, and not only opportunities but success and outcomes for students.

Finally, as you know, the government has had a co-op tax credit for a number of years. It is certainly something that is critical.

I think that the conversation between employers, educational institutions and government is a key one, and it's very much something that needs to be triangulated. The government is definitely committed to experiential learning, work-integrated learning. You can tell by the research being done that it is critical for students then to succeed and to transition into meaningful employment earlier rather than later.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: You spoke about the number of programs in the institutions. I'm curious to know how many are paid. Are you able to offer paid experiential

learning opportunities to students, and to what extent are you able to offer those?

Yes, Jack?

Dr. Jack Lightstone: First of all, all of our universities tend to operate under the definition that co-op is paid.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes, okay.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: For the rest, I think it's very spotty. Nevertheless, just because it's not paid doesn't mean that it doesn't pay to do it. I think students perceive that quite clearly, that the value added to them is high.

I know that there has been, in the public sphere, talk nationally about whether this is exploitative, and obviously, one wants to guard against exploitation of unpaid labour. But on the other hand, I would say that if it's integrated with the educational experience and is organized through the infrastructure and auspices of the university, then it's formally integrated, to one degree or another, with our actual learning. Whether it's paid or not, therefore, it's part of the educational experience that they are paying for and can afford themselves the opportunity of having.

But all co-op placements are paid, and that is the standard definition across the country, which every university in Canada has accepted.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The final HEQCO report that just came out earlier showed that participation in these kinds of programs increased the fit with the program that the student had studied, and also their future career goals.

The auditor's 2012 report said that only 65% of the graduates surveyed were employed full-time in a job that was related to the skills acquired in their studies.

I wondered if you could speak about what the institutions are doing to try to move that number, or to improve that number, so that we have more students employed in jobs that relate to their program of study.

I'm also interested in knowing, within your institutions, if you have done any comparative analysis to look at students who did participate in experiential learning and if they are more likely to get employment in jobs that relate to their program, versus students who didn't.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You have three minutes left for an answer.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: First of all, I think the auditor's report is working with 2009 graduates, and I think we now have the data for 2011 graduates. There, the employment rate two years out is at about 94%, or roughly 93.5%. The number of students who report that their programs of study are either partially or directly related to their employment has risen to something close to 80%, I think, if I remember—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: From 65% to 80% in two years?

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Yes.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Wow.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: I have a feeling that either it's a function of the samples—the people who responded or didn't respond in those years—but the latest data, from my recollection, is quite different.

With respect to whether experiential learning makes a difference in terms of employment prospects, we have

pretty good data for co-op, at least. Whereas the provincial average two years out for all graduates is about 93.5%, for co-op graduates it's something like 97% or 98%, number one.

Number two, I think the national data show consistently that about 80% of co-op graduates will get a full-time job after employment with one of the companies with which they have actually had a placement, which means by definition it's relevant to their courses of study.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Right.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's over?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That concludes your time.

For the second round, we'll have 18 minutes for each caucus. We'll start with Mr. Dong for the government.

Mr. Han Dong: I just want to make a quick comment. I heard quite a bit, and I learned quite a bit, about the experiential learning. It takes me back. I remember that with the first job I got after university, I started to realize that for each class that I missed, there was a cost to it. So I got a better understanding of opportunity lost and opportunity costs in the cost-benefit analysis.

I heard quite a bit of information being passed around during the first round. As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I understand that the ministry had made considerable achievements in answering the recommendations tabled in the 2012 AG's report, especially on university undergrad teaching qualities. Can you perhaps tell us some of the progress made and what needs to be done more, going forward?

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Are you addressing this to institutions—

Mr. Han Dong: To the ministry folks.

1350

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Okay. I will go back to the point that I made earlier around strategic mandate agreements and the fact that when the ministry released the differentiation policy framework in 2013 and then proceeded with negotiating strategic mandate agreements with all 45 institutions in Ontario—and I should say, this was quite a historic milestone for the ministry and for the institutions—one of the areas that the ministry focused on, and that the institutions also zeroed in on in their SMAs, was actually teaching and learning.

Within the category of teaching and learning, one of the commitments that has been made is to make sure that we actually get metrics and we get performance measures more explicitly around student satisfaction; graduation rates, which we already have but we're really sort of drilling down; retention, because that's pretty important, like a student coming in and then, do they stay from year one to year two; co-op enrolment, so this is part and parcel of the SMAs and what will need to be reported on; and then finally, with respect to SMAs, how many students are registered online, and then the delivery of

online through institutions but also through Ontario Online.

Teaching and learning again: I will go back to the Ontario Universities Online Consortium that was formed recently. The first priority that we focused on with the institutions was actually the development and the production of state-of-the-art online courses. There are a lot of myths around online: “It’s good.” “It’s not good.” The reality is that there is emerging research that online education can be very effective, but it really depends on how the programs or the courses are structured—and certainly, my colleagues from institutions know a whole lot more than I do—but also how they’re delivered and how this is facilitated. This is very much part and parcel of courses that are currently being developed.

I have to say that within the space of a year and a bit more, we have under way over 240 courses or modules that are being developed by institutions—universities and colleges—that then would start being delivered through online as of fall 2015. The reason why this is very much relevant to teaching and learning is because in the prescription, so to speak, around how those courses ought to be designed, it is very much around: How do you maximize and facilitate learning and success for students? There are ways in which you can do that, and there are components that need to be part of that structure in order to succeed.

That’s certainly a major initiative. The government has committed basically \$42 million over three years in order to get this. I’m very pleased to say that we have the participation of all institutions—colleges and universities—working together and working also in their respective sectors.

Maybe one final thing around progress for teaching and learning on the part of the ministry, and then I will certainly open it up for colleagues here to comment further: One of the things we need to keep in mind is that the ministry does not deliver education to students.

Mr. Han Dong: That’s true.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: We need to put this on the table. The ministry is not in the business of delivering education. There is oversight, funding and, obviously, accountability, but the fundamental role of universities and colleges is, in fact, to deliver education, and there is also a part on research.

When it comes to how we can advance teaching and learning, and the useful role that the ministry can play, I think that it’s through a number of arrangements that we’ve put in place—with certain requirements so that the sector, as it advances, can actually steer in a direction that ultimately will make a difference for the system. The ministry is interested in the system and the impact, and institutions contribute to this through their initiatives.

Assessment of learning outcomes: I’ve talked about the learning outcomes earlier. Right now this is very much at a research stage. As I said, the higher education research council is very much involved in this. They’re working with institutions because a number of institutions are looking at learning outcomes and are looking at

how to measure learning outcomes in a way that is meaningful. I think one fundamental point that I’d like to conclude with goes back to the point that Dr. Regehr made that very often it’s not so much what they learn; it’s basically helping students translate into tangible terms that what they’ve learned matters for the workplace and for employers. We hear two things from employers: technical skills, yes, to go in; but the high order skills—like critical thinking, communication, teamwork, flexibility, being able to adapt—are always on par with technical skills because that’s how a worker will evolve in the workplace. This is very much part of the package that gets delivered through good teaching and learning at the undergrad level and beyond.

I don’t know if my colleagues want to add something.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: I’ll add two points. One is that we talked, for the course of this session, about teaching and learning. I think one of the fundamental shifts that has taken place in the last several years is de-emphasizing teaching and emphasizing learning as a student-centred approach to pedagogy. Active learning is becoming a stronger and stronger component of how we design and deliver courses and programs. It’s reflected in what we’ve discussed about co-ops and other forms of experiential learning. It’s reflected in what we’re all doing to enable small-group discovery sessions and what we’re all doing to support capstone projects where groups work together to identify and solve problems. It results in a shift in course and program delivery, as we’ve all talked about before.

But beyond that, there has been mention earlier in this session about the support systems that occur corollary to the classroom: peer mentoring systems; early identification of students who are perhaps struggling, if they’re not submitting assignments on time and such; early intervention to help support students, particularly in the early years of study so that they don’t get lost in the system; and providing alternative pathways for those students who are having a hard time grappling with course material. That can be particularly the case in some of the STEM subjects, where there is sort of an off-the-cliff immersion in math and other disciplines that sometimes can take a while to consolidate. It’s taking a student-centred focus that provides both the opportunity to introduce a bit of pedagogy in and around the course delivery as well as strong support systems to support students as they engage in their program.

Mr. Han Dong: How much time do I have?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You have about six minutes left.

Mr. Han Dong: I’ll share my time with my colleague.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: As we all know, the ministers have all received their mandate letters. What we wanted to talk about was, how is the ministry working to improve the consistency and the availability of institutional-level and system-level outcomes and measures?

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: I’ll just start very quickly. I think it very much goes back to the use of the OEN, the Ontario education number. I think it’s something that is going to evolve. If you really want to take a step further

around how we can make information more readily available and more consistently available, the OEN is going to be very helpful. But there also is a challenge right now, and it is the fact that there's actually a lot of data. We have a lot of data, and in fact, institutions have a lot of data.

1400

I think that one of the issues we need to address, along with our partners from institutions, is how we can get some of those databases—or data sets, actually—to somehow speak to each, in a way, and just be able to extract, in a way that is as coherent as possible, the relevant information that we need.

Institutions have their own data, and they study the data all the time. The ministry has some data, but I think that in the ministry's mind, it will be important to start looking at what we have and to structure it in such a way, within the context of an information management strategy, that we can actually bring coherence to the data and also focus on what matters for government, because we need to be careful here. We need to sort out what really matters at the systems level and then what really matters at the institutional level, and all together, you get a complete picture.

I would say it's a work in progress. I think that, through some of the additional information that has been increasingly released, through the key performance indicators, we've come a long way, but we recognize that we need to go further.

When I say "we," I mean the ministry. This is something, obviously, that we will need to work in partnership with universities and colleges about.

I think Dr. Regehr wants to say something.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: Yes. As research institutions, having data that allows us to compare ourselves with others is critically important. Let me just give a couple of examples of the way quality assurance is data-driven at universities in Ontario.

First of all, one of the things that was identified was course evaluation systems. At the University of Toronto, we have now implemented our online course evaluation system. We had 33 different ones across the system—our own system; we're a big place, with big history.

We have been able to bring these together, so now 66,000 students have access to the system. In the three years, we have evaluated 24,000 courses, and one million course evaluations have been done. That is an enormous database that we have available to us that can now allow us to cut the data in different kinds of ways, looking at different kinds of pedagogical techniques, different kinds of sizes of classroom, the nature of students—all kinds of things like that, that we can begin to look at.

We established seven core questions that are used in every one of the course evaluations, and then there's division-wide questions, and faculty members can choose their own questions. Our seven questions have been picked up by other universities across Canada; some other universities have picked up our seven questions. That will allow us to look very directly across institutions on those course evaluations.

In addition, the quality council of Ontario is, through the Council of Ontario Universities—every single program in an Ontario university is evaluated within seven years.

At our institution, when those are evaluated, we create data packs. Those data packs have in them the productivity of the faculty members and how they compare internationally with others in terms of productivity, the course evaluations, and how they compare across the institution. Other pieces of data we have are the NSSE, the student satisfaction results, and how those compare.

That data pack, which is about 50 pages long—the groups who are doing the self-study have to address all the questions and all the data in there. Then we bring in three international experts, to come in and say how we compare with the best in the world. That's another kind of a measure.

On top of that, you have the World International Rankings. When you ask our international students, "Why did you choose us?," they tell you where we sit on the World International Rankings.

That's not only for research. If you look at the Times Higher Education, University of Toronto was ranked 20th in the world for teaching in the UK Times Higher Education rankings.

There are many, many different measures that we already have, and we have a central data bank of Ontario universities where we share data around average class size, around faculty numbers, around all kinds of other data.

So there is data available. We share that data with one another, and we benchmark ourselves in that particular way.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you. Just a very quick comment.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much for being here today. I very much appreciate your co-operation with the auditor and your being here in front of the committee.

There has been, as the member across said, a significant investment, especially in the last 10 or 12 years, in post-secondary education, not only through operating funds but through infrastructure and programs like KIP.

I want to thank you again, but I just want to emphasize that I'm very pleased that you're measuring outcomes and you're continuing to improve measuring the outcomes, because it's very important that those significant investments are able to show value, not only on the side of value for money but the value of experience.

I wish you luck. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much, Mr. Fraser.

To the opposition side: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Actually, on the last go-round, I had two companion questions. There was the one we discussed the last time around, on the teaching and learning centres, but the companion question I had, some of which I think you've alluded to, is the question of refining student evaluation. It seemed to me that when

evaluations first started, it had more to do with what you wore or didn't wear, and it was a personal thing. It would seem to me that by concentrating, even through the vehicle of the teaching and learning centres, students are going to have a much more sophisticated idea about what—they are going to see themselves as having some skin in the game here. Because this is going to be useful information to them, they want to have the integrity of the question.

I just wondered if you would comment on that process that you've been able to undertake as well.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: I'd be happy to comment on it from the standpoint of the University of Toronto, and then our colleagues will as well.

The core institutional questions that we have at the University of Toronto came from, first of all, trying to identify the core things we hope to achieve. Then, through a series of testing with focus groups of students, with testing the questions with students, we went through a process of evaluating whether or not this question really reflected what we hoped it would reflect.

To give an example of a question that went wrong, many of our units used to have something about the climate of the classroom, or something along that line. We were all thinking about the learning environment. If you ask students what they think they mean by that—and they think it's something very structural, like, "I didn't like the chairs in this class."

So it was very important for us to go through this process of testing and evaluating and seeing. Then we did factor analysis of the questions and went through all the statistical measures.

Just in terms of transparency, now that we have this system in place, all our course evaluations are online, and our students can see each and every course evaluation. They go in through their learning management system, which, for us, is Blackboard, and they can see what the evaluations of the classes were, and that can help them choose what courses they will take.

Dr. Tim McTiernan: We've used, and do use, the same instrument for all undergraduate courses, so we can compare across courses. Like the situation at U of T that Professor Regehr describes, we have a standard set of questions that address both the characteristics of the professor and the quality of the course.

I'll give you examples of the questions. With respect to the professor, the types of questions relate to matters such as availability for extra consultation, ability to communicate, teaching methods, and the overall contribution of the professor to the student's learning experience.

The nine questions regarding the quality of the course relate to the clarity of the syllabi, the relation of material to learning outcomes, the contribution to the program of study, and the overall quality of the course, among others.

That allows us to compare across courses and programs. It also provides longitudinal data, at which we can look over time.

I expect, with our new associate provost, we will be taking a look to see if it's still a relevant tool. We'll need to consider any changes in terms of what we need to do to preserve the longitudinal data chain.

1410

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Obviously it's well known to this committee that part of the barriers for us has been that under our collective agreement with full-time faculty, the faculty own the results of the student evaluation questionnaires. Notwithstanding that, however, we do have a committee working with our senate in order to establish a standard set of questions that would be used across the university to evaluate teaching performance, so that at least in the short run we will be able to disseminate a standard set of questions which will produce a standard dataset for the university while we work on the issue through the collective agreement and through the bargaining agent as to who will have access to this data, when and how.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Can you comment, either singularly or as a general comment, on if it has improved the percentage of people who engage in the survey? Has it made any difference with this kind of better approach?

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: Online course evaluations, in general, show lower levels of response rates than if you hand it out in class. That is a general issue that we're going to have to deal with. One of the things is that when we look at the response rates, it's highly variable. It depends on the nature of the course and the unit. For us, it goes anywhere from 72% to 35%. It's quite variable in terms of the response rates.

What we've done is that Professor Ajay Agrawal in our Rotman School of Management—an expert in "nudge," which is how you get people to do things—is now working with us. We're using his international expertise to help us with this particular challenge of trying to increase student engagement in the online course evaluations.

There's no question that what's important is making students know that it matters. Where it does it best is when the professor stands up in class and says, "It's important that you fill this out because I'm going to change my course on the basis of that." The more we can work with faculty members around those kinds of issues, the better opportunities we have.

In addition, there are well-designed techniques that are used throughout the world in business and others that are helpful in this regard and we're seeking assistance from experts to try and help us with this.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you. My other question is, there's the issue out in the press and in the community generally that we have people without jobs and jobs without people. Does this have a message for the university community?

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: I'd like to comment first and then I will certainly invite colleagues to add.

I think this is a statement that has had a lot of currency over the past two or three years. I think it has grown into a bit of cliché, which I would argue, given when we look

at labour market outcomes of college and university graduates—and I stress university graduates. The labour market outcomes of university graduates are systematically positive, whether you look at KPI data, which is key performance indicator data, whether you link this with labour force survey data, or the National Household Survey. The reality is that when you look at past performance, up until recently labour market outcomes are very strong and university graduates and college graduates do systematically much, much better than individuals who may only have a high school diploma. That's one thing.

Then there's the issue of, is there's indeed a misalignment between education and labour market outcomes? I think it's fair to say that when you look at the evolution of the labour market, I think there's a transition issue. I think that's what I was trying to get at earlier. That transition issue, frankly, is being investigated by a lot of researchers across the world, and in the western world in particular, trying to understand what is changing around the transition for post-secondary education graduates, and is it because we now have a lot of people going to post-secondary education and we have more than before? So that's one think.

At the same time, it's important that they go to PSE, because we realize that without post-secondary education, it's very difficult to have sound employment and, I would say, meaningful employment over a prolonged period of time. We look at resilience in the workplace. We look at resilience around unemployment and employment trends. Even in the recession, systematically, post-secondary education graduates did a lot better than others and continued to do better.

But there is a question around transition and there is a question around the extent to which what are understood to be the skills of some graduates—because it also varies a lot by programs. Right? If you have a graduate in the humanities, they do well, but it may not be as immediately visible as if you are coming out of an accredited program like engineering—or business, for that matter. So they still do well. We look at the trends, and they still do very well. It may take a little longer. I think some of the issues may have to do with how you translate what they have actually acquired in university or college into, then, something that makes sense to employers, and we've talked about experiential learning.

So I'd really like to caution people around this particular statement that has been turned into something which certainly, when we look at the data, and the ministry has been looking at a lot of data, and institutions look at their own data—doesn't carry the day.

Unfortunately, sometimes there's also a bit of a misunderstanding of what's happening in Ontario, Canada, and what is happening in the US, where graduation rates are a lot more problematic in a number of institutions. I mean, here the story is extremely positive. I was recently in the US. In some public institutions in the US, it's a real struggle around graduation rates.

So I'd like to caution that this is not—are there questions that we need to get at? Yes. How do we better

understand the needs of employers? But how we facilitate the conversation between employers and post-secondary institutions, I think, is also important.

There are also a lot of innovative programs that are now coming on stream with a lot of experiential learning.

But please be careful about that statement, because I think it has been bandied about and it's not necessarily something that is actually corroborated by the facts.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I thought you would have something to say about it.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Now you know what we think about it.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: I'd like to support the deputy's remarks by making some other comments.

The danger of enacting public policy based on what the deputy has called a cliché is very real. It has to do with the fact that we have to recognize that there is always going to be some misalignment in the system. Why? We cannot time the economy perfectly.

We all remember an era in Ontario and Quebec—when I was in Quebec, we were trying to increase dramatically the number of people in software engineering, computer science and computer engineering. Just as we got to the finish line, the dot-com crisis happened, and all of a sudden we had a surplus of people, and the statement is true on the downside.

I think we have to recognize that no one has been very good in predicting the economy five, six or seven years out on all job categories, because you would have to predict it five, six or seven years out to be able to time the education of graduates to it. So I think we have to accept that, in my view, trying to exactly time the economy by occupational sector is a fool's game that will likely do more harm than good. Basically, I think, coupled with the deputy's remarks, that the story told by the data just does not jibe with the cliché that is circulating in the media.

1420

Dr. Tim McTiernan: I'd just like to add two points for colour commentary.

I think none of us ever thought to educate people to be webmasters, and yet that was a category that happened upon us. What we do hope is that our students are adaptable enough to be able to take opportunities.

I think the surge—and I don't think that's too strong a word—in the last few years of students with a strong sense that as they graduate, or before they graduate, they're going to create their own work and their own jobs with their own companies is something that we do need to pay attention to, and we are supporting in a variety of entrepreneurial-type support systems, from Entrepreneurship 101 at U of T all the way through the innovation hubs in our institutions. We're all moving very strongly towards that. It's a very different sense than we would have had 10 years ago—about how we're educating for outcomes and for the classic career trajectory.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That concludes your time.

Ms. Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to address this question to the deputy. You made several references to Ontario Online and the courses that have already been developed and the delivery that's planned in the fall. OCUFA was at Queen's Park earlier this month, I think, and has raised a concern that seems to me to be quite compelling about the lack of front-line faculty representation on the board of directors, the governance structure, for Ontario Online. They make the argument that front-line faculty are the people who have the most direct experience in knowing how this is going to be implemented with students and knowing what some of the issues and challenges might be, drawing from their past work with students. I wondered if you're in a position where you could comment on why the decision was made not to include front-line faculty on the board of directors of Ontario Online.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: I'll just speak briefly and then turn it over to the co-chair of Ontario Online, Dr. Lightstone.

First of all, I think it's fair to say that the government recognizes the importance of faculty and also recognizes that there are expert faculty in all institutions across Ontario who specialize in online learning. In fact, one of the benefits of Ontario Online, when we think about the conceptual framework of it, is that there is a role for faculty experts to play in how they will inform the design of courses. They're doing it already through the courses that are being developed, but also ultimately even with how students can be supported. This is all part of the conceptual design of Ontario Online.

Ontario Online has just been recently incorporated, and a board has been set up. I want to commend the institutions for having done a terrific job in record time in getting incorporated because this is always a very complex process.

The ministry has a transfer payment relationship with Ontario Online, with very specific requirements. When it comes to governance, the ministry deems it important to make sure that the folks who own Ontario Online and who will be responsible for delivering courses and supporting students and doing the research be in charge of the board makeup.

I will ask Dr. Lightstone to comment.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: I'm not quite sure what information you're getting from OCUFA or OPSEU, for that matter, because the board is comprised, under its current bylaws, as follows:

- one college president and one university president as co-chairs;
- one academic vice-president of a university;
- one academic vice-president of a college;
- one student of a university;
- one student of a college;
- one faculty member of a university, with extensive experience in online and technically assisted pedagogy;
- one faculty member from a college, with extensive experience in online pedagogy and technology-assisted learning; and
- two members of the general public.

All members have been appointed except the two members of the general public, so there is faculty representation from both the college and the university sectors.

OCUFA may mean that they didn't appoint the faculty member to the board, but it is not the case that there is no faculty representation. I think the board, as a whole, is extremely proud of the calibre of the faculty from both the college sector and the university sector that they've managed to recruit to the board because they will add tremendous value at the board from people who are in the trenches, so to speak, and who have been, in the academic trenches, leaders in the development and use of technology-assisted learning.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. I appreciate the response. I do know that OCUFA distinguished between the expert who may be somebody who is involved at an administrative level in terms of the development of technology-enabled learning versus the front-line faculty. But I appreciate your explanation for me as to why the governance structure was set up that way.

The other issue I want to raise, which is mentioned in the 2014 auditor's report on page 532, is that "Further progress needs to be made in evaluating the use and performance of sessional instructors." Certainly, this is something that I am hearing about constantly from students who are increasingly being taught by sessional instructors. Again, the information that I have from OCUFA says that the number of courses taught by contract faculty has almost doubled between 2000 and 2012, so we're seeing this significant proliferation of courses that are taught by sessional instructors. From the students' perspective, the student organizations that I've met with, this does have implications for the quality of the learning environment. The auditor's report had raised some issues around the kind of performance feedback that sessional instructors get, or the lack thereof, based on the student evaluations. I'm interested in hearing from the institutions, and also perhaps from the ministry, your sense of what is happening in the sector in terms of the use of sessional instructors and contract faculty and how your institutions are addressing that in order to ensure a quality learning environment for students.

Dr. Cheryl Regehr: Perhaps I could just begin by talking about this. At the University of Toronto, as I indicated, we have both tenure stream faculty and teaching stream faculty. In the professoriate, we have 2,300 tenure stream faculty members, and we have 525 teaching stream faculty members. In addition, we have 579 sessional instructors. In the last five years, the number of teaching stream faculty has risen by 16%, the number of sessional instructors has grown by only 5%, and 75% of our courses are taught by full-time faculty. In fact, we are having a reduction in the percentage of courses that are taught by sessional instructors, not an increase.

Our teaching stream faculty are people with PhDs. They are full-time faculty members, but they are focused on teaching as opposed to having a portion of their time used for research. We've just created a new arrangement

with our faculty association that will be giving professorial rank to our teaching stream faculty to give full credence to the wonderful contributions that they make to teaching and life at our university.

In terms of the evaluation of sessional instructors, every course at the University of Toronto is evaluated every time it's given. That is regardless of whether it's a faculty member or a sessional instructor. Sessional instructors have ranks, so sessional instructors can move up from being a sessional 1 to a sessional 2 to a sessional 3. That is based on a review of their teaching.

1430

Dr. Tim McTiernan: If I could add, from a University of Ontario Institute of Technology perspective, we offer 1,383 undergraduate courses. The percentage of those courses offered by sessional instructors is 33%. The rest of our courses are offered by tenure and tenure track and teaching faculty and term positions. The mean course offering for tenure and tenure track faculty is 3.5; the mean number of courses offered by teaching faculty is 7.4; and the mean number of courses offered by sessional faculty is 2.2.

We would categorize, if we were to disaggregate our sessional faculty, into probably three different categories. One which is quite important to us, particularly in our professional programs, is people with deep knowledge expertise in the area involved—energy, for instance, in nuclear energy. In business, one of our sessionals is a vice-president in one of our major banks. In education, we use a large number of sessional faculty to provide an experiential link, for our students, with the education system.

With the professional programs we have across all of our faculties, having that engagement with people working in the discipline, who have the academic qualifications to teach in our institution, is quite an important part of our program design.

The second category we could speak to is the academically qualified enthusiastic teacher, who may have a permanent position somewhere else but who teaches sessionally because they're up to speed in their discipline, and it's a way of engaging with students and doing knowledge transfer.

To give a personalized example, when I was in the Ministry of Research and Innovation—one of my colleagues teaches at University of Toronto in geography on regional innovation, an issue that he worked on at that time from a public policy perspective, and he was able to carry the work experience into the classroom as well.

The third category is the category that I think people talk about commonly when they talk about sessional instructors, and that is people who have no other regular permanent position but aggregate a number of sessional teaching assignments and work across institutions. We do indeed employ people with the qualifications that do fall into that work cohort, if you like.

All of our sessionals, as I mentioned earlier, get a one-day orientation from our teaching and learning centre. Evaluation of our sessional instructors is as important as

the evaluation of our regular teaching faculty and tenure and tenure track faculty.

In the collective agreement we have with sessional instructors—which is under negotiations right now—article 14 gives explicit recognition to the value of evaluation, both in terms of feedback to the sessional and to affirm the sessional's value to us as part of the academic enterprise.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay.

Dr. Jack Lightstone: At Brock, 14% of our courses are given by sessionals, and that is a limitation by policy at the moment, at the university.

The obligation to have course evaluations administered in a course is not an obligation which depends on whether the instructor is sessional or a regular full-time faculty member. A course evaluation is administered in every course with five students or more—period, no matter who teaches it—for both the instructor, whether sessional or full-time, and for that matter, for all of the TAs who work in the course.

The services of the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation, that I've talked about earlier, are available to all instructors and all TAs, whether they are sessionals or regular faculty, and the encouragement to participate and make avail of those services are equally done for all sessionals and for all regular faculty.

Mr. David Carter-Whitney: I'll speak to the question about the ministry's role, just because I think what you're hearing unpacks to a bit of a description of how governance works in Ontario.

The ministry sees itself as the steward of post-secondary education in terms of the quality, the credential mix, the approved programs that are eligible for provincial funding and so on. But universities themselves have a governance and are autonomous around academic matters and the internal resources. So we have an interest in it, but we rely on them.

That said, the Auditor General's report points to both the importance of information—so we're a bit on a journey around trying to give students, families and institutions information that speaks to quality. We also rely on the national student satisfaction surveys and things that give information about that and a number of other measures that speak to quality. But the specific decisions around who is hired and the mix of full-time and part-time—you know, this emerging idea of different categories, like teaching only and things—we rely on the institutions to determine what's best. But we're interested in that experience as it pertains to outcomes and effectiveness of the system and the student experience.

I would note—this will be interesting to you particularly—that *Academica* is actually doing a study on behalf of HEQCO around this particular issue. They have done an online survey around non-full-time contract faculty to understand their experiences. So that's going to look at and provide us more information about that workforce as well. Again, we'll share it throughout the system and try to understand it. So it is something that's being looked at through HEQCO as well. We'll know more about that in the coming years.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay, great. Thank you. My next question refers to something that was in the—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It better be a short one.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Oh, okay. It's from the 2012 report, on page 276. It refers to faculty workload and talking about some of the implications of large class sizes, with faculty members reducing one-on-one time with students outside the classroom, giving more multiple-choice tests and giving fewer writing assignments. I'm interested in hearing from the institutional perspective what you are seeing as the impacts of large class sizes. Are these some of the results that you're seeing?

Dr. Jack Lightstone: Perhaps I'll start, Mr. Chair. At Brock, there's no question that we have a number of large undergraduate courses, particularly in the early years. However, the university also has a policy across its faculties of taking large classes and dividing them down into smaller units for small-group learning, whether it's seminars or other forms of small-group learning. For example, our largest lecture hall seats 450, but that group would spend part of its time in small learning groups, seminars or other forms of small learning groups, in groups of about 25 or less. That is part of the integral operation of the course.

We've had a long tradition of this small-group learning and use of seminars. Obviously, at the level of the

seminars, there's a great deal of one-on-one attention, a great deal of focus on getting students to write, to present to their fellow students and have students critiquing and analyzing the work presented by their student colleagues. That's a strong tradition at Brock.

I think, when we see statistics at Brock of average undergraduate class size, what that doesn't capture is the seminar and small-group-learning structure that is policy at the university.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. I think that does conclude the time we have. I can tell by the excitement that we have more to say, but we have run out of time. So thank you very much for being here this afternoon. We really do appreciate it, not only on behalf of the committee, but even on the behalf of the Auditor General and the office for all of the co-operation that we've seen from the deputants today and their work to get us this far.

Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère: Thank you for a spirited discussion.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for being here.

I would ask the committee members, if they wish to chat further, to do that outside the door. We do have an in camera meeting coming up right after this to talk about report writing.

The committee continued in closed session at 1440.

CONTENTS

Wednesday 1 April 2015

2014 Annual Report, Auditor General.....	P-111
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; Brock University; University of Ontario Institute of Technology; University of Toronto.....	P-111
Ms. Marie-Lison Fougère	
Dr. Cheryl Regehr	
Dr. Tim McTiernan	
Dr. Jack Lightstone	
Mr. David Carter-Whitney	

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Chair / Président

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton PC)

Mr. Han Dong (Trinity–Spadina L)

Mr. John Fraser (Ottawa South L)

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford PC)

Mr. Percy Hatfield (Windsor–Tecumseh ND)

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton PC)

Ms. Harinder Malhi (Brampton–Springdale L)

Mrs. Julia Munro (York–Simcoe PC)

Mr. Arthur Potts (Beaches–East York L)

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland–Quinte West L)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr. Granville Anderson (Durham L)

Ms. Peggy Sattler (London West ND)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Ms. Bonnie Lysyk, Auditor General

Ms. Vanna Gotsis, Director, Office of the Auditor General

Mr. Emanuel Tsikritsis, Manager, Office of the Auditor General

Clerk / Greffier

Mr. William Short

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Erica Simmons, research officer,
Research Services