PARTNERING TO DEVELOP RESILIENT LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

ONTARIO'S **UNIVERSITIES**

To help navigate the social, economic and technological change that will continue to face our province, Ontario needs a strong workforce of adaptable, life-long learners – well equipped to transition into new roles and meet the changing needs of Ontario's labour market.

The value of a university degree, credentials and the skills and experiences that come with it are critical to ensuring the workforce of today and tomorrow has the adaptable skills it needs. Universities are preparing students for the future by providing them with the tools to adapt and encouraging life-long learning through a range of relevant programs and certificates.

Below are just a few examples of how through pre-skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling, Ontario's universities are helping the modern learner become a life-long learner.

Pre-skilling for the first job

A new Career Zone at **Lakehead University** is helping students transition from classroom to workplace by providing career exploration, resume reviews, job preparation and employment opportunities.

To help students, faculty and staff advance and enhance their digital literacy and technical skills, **Laurentian University** is expanding services offered through the Jim Fielding Innovation and Commercialization Space. With funds from FedNor, the Fielding Innovation Space bought 3D printers, laser cutters, and virtual and augmented reality systems to help students enhance their digital literacy and technical skills, develop new technologies, and create new business start-ups.

Adapting to workplace needs in an uncertain and evolving economy requires skills that may not show up on a standard university transcript. **McMaster University's** Faculty of Engineering is offering undergraduates the opportunity to earn "micro-credentials" that target high-demand skills, as well as to validate and communicate these skills through badging, ultimately leading to faster hiring.

To encourage students to leverage skills learned during their degree through community engagement, workshops and networking, **Trent University** is partnering with RBC to boost online resources at its Life After Trent program, in order to prepare all graduating students for bright futures.

As the pandemic compels us to spend time online, cybersecurity is increasingly important. The **University of Windsor** and Blackberry Limited have joined forces to deliver a cybersecurity curriculum for the university's master's program in applied computing. The training ensures students emerge with in-demand skills.

Career-ready skills through work-integrated learning

Students need high-quality internships. Businesses and not-for-profits need help adapting to COVID-19. **Algoma University** and Mitacs are partnering to provide both by connecting students with relevant experience to businesses in need of research and development in Northern Ontario.

The pandemic has forced some Niagara businesses to completely rethink their operations. Many could use help. With funds from the federal government, and working with local chambers of commerce, **Brock University** has hired 19 students to do just that. In return, students receive valuable mentorship.

To help students find work-integrated learning opportunities – co-ops, field placements, internships, job shadowing and research projects – **Nipissing University** has launched the Sparrow Experiential Learning Centre. There, students can customize experiences and plug into valuable professional networks.

To provide a pipeline of talent to local tech companies, the **University of Ottawa** established a satellite campus at Kanata North, Canada's largest tech park. Established just two years ago, already nearly 300 co-op students and more than 4,100 alumni are solving complex challenges and commercializing innovations.

Not all work-integrated learning opportunities are created equal. The **University of Waterloo** is teaming up with CEWIL Canada to highlight the practices that lead to success. In partnership with RBC, they will ensure students get the most out of their work placements and emerge with in-demand skills.

● To encourage the development of innovative, work-integrated learning opportunities, **Western University** has created the Experiential Learning Innovation Scholars Program. The program is developed for and with students to teach transferable skills, clarify interests and values, and strengthen employability.

● **Reskilling to prepare for new jobs**

● Empathy and social insight can help us get through the pandemic's upheavals. Working with government and industry partners, **OCAD University's** online micro-certification program, Empathy + Social Insight for Human Centred Design, provides a reskilling opportunity for designers, emphasizing how to put end users' needs first for a successful end product.

● To help alumni and community members remain current in the ever-changing job market by providing required reskilling and upskilling, **Ontario Tech University** created Ontario Tech Talent. The program works with students and employers to assess skills gaps and develop flexible programming tailored to evolving needs.

● To bring in-demand skills to under-represented groups, **Ryerson University** is partnering with cybersecurity training specialists, SANS to deliver a program to women, new Canadians, and displaced workers. With the help of corporate and government funding, it opens up the sector to those who need it most.

● The McKinsey Global Institute predicts workers will spend 55 per cent more time using tech skills than they do now. The **University of Toronto** is stepping up with 24 short courses in the areas most in demand. The courses leverage Ottawa's Canada Training Credit, which provides a refundable tax credit.

● To help companies reorient in the midst of a pandemic and train mid-career professionals for new skills, **York University** is partnering with industry on a series of short, accelerated online programs. Students develop in-demand expertise in big data analytics, blockchain development and cybersecurity.

● **Upskilling for the long term**

● Jobs requiring coding expertise can be hard to fill and employees with the right skill set will be in demand for years to come. **Carleton University's** part-time coding boot camp is stepping up with a skills-based curriculum, hands-on instruction from industry professionals and extensive career services.

● To eliminate financial barriers to continuing education and help people meet changing workplace demands, the **University of Guelph's** OpenEd bursary program covers tuition for one course. The bursary, funded by former and current students, staff and faculty, brings students closer to career goals.

● Providing opportunities for life-long learners enriches communities. **Queen's University** is bringing seniors back to the classroom to explore topics in art, science and the humanities. The Ever Scholar program keeps learners who may have completed their education years ago engaged in their communities.

● An 11-month Executive Master's in Technology Management that incorporates a residency at UC Berkeley and Stanford University is helping students develop digital literacy, innovation management and design thinking skills. **Wilfrid Laurier University's** program provides reskilling and upskilling for working executives.