ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES:
SUPPORTING A GLOBALLY
COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

The Issue: Through talent and innovation, Ontario will be better positioned to respond to the changing needs of the labour market, while producing the type of Ontario-made innovative solutions that will continue to help our province throughout the pandemic and beyond. These key ingredients will help Ontario and its regions compete globally, fuel economic growth and improve quality of life for all Ontarians.

Background
- Ontario needs a strong workforce that can fill the job gaps of today and tomorrow, coupled with ground-breaking innovation that continues to drive discovery, commercialization and investment for its economic recovery.
- A highly skilled workforce with the transferrable and cross-disciplinary skills to meet the changing needs of the job market will position our province as a jurisdiction that can attract investment and compete with the best that Europe, India or China has to offer.
- Ontario is already seeing increasing levels of demand amongst certain high-quality STEM and non-STEM jobs that require a university degree, such as engineers, computer programmers and health-care professionals.
- In addition, a strong innovation ecosystem will bridge the gap from discovery to commercialization, help firms grow and scale, advance local industries and turn ideas into products, services and jobs in Ontario – ultimately attracting global talent and investment.
- The ripple effect of innovation ecosystems and university-industry partnerships is not only supporting job creation, but also attracting interest and investment from the global marketplace.
- Much like Silicon Valley, Toronto, Ottawa and Waterloo have become high-tech ecosystems, attracting companies like Amazon, Uber, General Electric and Stripe who are looking to invest in Ontario’s highly skilled talent and innovation.

How Universities Are Supporting Ontario
- Ontario’s universities are working to ensure the province remains competitive and attractive to investment by developing the highly skilled talent for Ontario to prosper, conducting and commercializing ground-breaking research and acting as innovation hubs, critical connectors and job creators.
  - Universities are leading the development of talent, particularly in fast-growing fields, such as artificial intelligence, clean technology, life sciences, engineering and cybersecurity, providing students with the critical skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow in these research and development-intensive sectors.
  - Students are increasingly enrolling in these high-demand programs. Universities have seen a 98% increase in enrolment in math and physical science, 58% in engineering and applied science and 31% in health care since 2010.
  - To encourage the movement of research from ideas to market, universities are working to foster a culture of risk-taking and entrepreneurship, fuel the innovation pipeline and partner with industry to encourage investment in the early-stage innovation.
  - Whether it’s by partnering with small businesses to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, working with local industry to develop made-in-Ontario solutions, or by supporting Ontarians through innovations in health care, researchers will continue to drive ground-breaking research and discovery.

Partnering to Rebuild Ontario
- Vibrant universities will continue to develop adaptable talent, help rebuild our health-care system, as well as drive innovation and regional economic development.
- It is why in order to fully unleash this potential, Ontario’s universities are asking that the government – through increases to university revenue sources, such as expanding spaces in high-demand programs — make critical investments in the sector today to rebuild a better Ontario for tomorrow.

Number of STEM graduates Canada will need from now until 2028, including 57,500 engineers; 72,700 computer programmers, software engineers and designers; and 37,800 managers in engineering, architecture, sciences and computer sciences, according to the Canadian Occupational Projection System.

Due to the attractiveness of Ontario’s highly skilled talent, as well as recognizing its manufacturing capacity and ground-breaking innovation, Hoffmann-La Roche Limited invested $500 million over five years in 500 highly skilled and specialized full-time positions in the province.

By working together, we can navigate through this pandemic, safeguard Ontario’s health and economy and build a brighter future – not just for the students we teach and the communities we serve, but for Ontario’s future and all who live here.