ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES: DEVELOPING JOB-READY GRADUATES

The Issue: With the widespread disruption caused by COVID-19, Ontario’s workers and employers are looking for ways to best protect against future economic shocks and job displacement. As the labour market continues to change and evolve at a rapid pace, one thing is certain: to emerge successfully from the current crisis, Ontario’s workforce needs to be equipped with adaptable skills to succeed in the jobs of today and tomorrow and weather future economic downturns.

Employers are in search of candidates who are future-proofed with adaptable, strong soft skills, such as communication, complex problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership and the ability to work well in teams.

The impact of COVID-19 has brought a greater emphasis on these types of transferrable and cross-disciplinary skills that include a mix of a digital, non-digital human and interpersonal skillset.

In fact, recent economic recessions have highlighted that jobs that require a university education appear to be more adaptable and resilient to job market shifts.

In order to have the opportunities that will prepare them for the changing workforce, as well as the resilient jobs that will weather job market shifts, Ontarians need access to a high-quality, sustainable university education that equips students with life-long skills.

Further supporting access for all Ontarians who want to pursue a university education will help strengthen their ability to support their local communities, reduce short-term unemployment rates and increase long-term participation in the workforce.

Overview

Background

- Employers are in search of candidates who are future-proofed with adaptable, strong soft skills, such as communication, complex problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership and the ability to work well in teams.
- The impact of COVID-19 has brought a greater emphasis on these types of transferrable and cross-disciplinary skills that include a mix of a digital, non-digital human and interpersonal skillset.
- In fact, recent economic recessions have highlighted that jobs that require a university education appear to be more adaptable and resilient to job market shifts.
- In order to have the opportunities that will prepare them for the changing workforce, as well as the resilient jobs that will weather job market shifts, Ontarians need access to a high-quality, sustainable university education that equips students with life-long skills.
- Further supporting access for all Ontarians who want to pursue a university education will help strengthen their ability to support their local communities, reduce short-term unemployment rates and increase long-term participation in the workforce.

How Universities Are Supporting Ontario

With a high demand for transferrable skills from employers and industry, coupled with a commitment to help students develop resiliency in a changing world, Ontario’s universities are working to ensure every student graduates job-ready with the adaptable skills that will help them become recession-proof.

- Universities are providing traditional and non-traditional learners with the foundation, as well as the reskilling and upskilling opportunities, they need to transition into new roles and adapt as the nature of work continues to change.
- With a commitment to ensuring all those who are willing and qualified can access a university education and the learning and economic opportunities that come with it, universities are also providing more than $1.1 billion each year in scholarships and bursaries to those most in need.
- In addition, to help address the systemic and structural challenges many students from marginalized groups face accessing postsecondary education, universities are engaging with campus and local communities and have developed action plans aimed at redressing existing inequities and ensuring meaningful action towards building fully inclusive communities.

Overview

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 to ensure Ontario has a highly skilled workforce — make critical investments in the sector today to rebuild a better Ontario for tomorrow.

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.