

ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES: SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

The Issue: 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 providing critical support to ensure students graduate job-ready, adaptable and resilient.

Supporting the needs of students with a wide range of life experiences is important to ensure they graduate equipped with the right tools for a changing today and tomorrow.



Background

- Today's students are entering an ever-evolving economic, technological and social landscape.
- At the same time, Ontario's universities continue to see growing needs for modernized programs and learning environments; increased wrap-around campus services in areas such as student mental health and well-being; and more resources added to foster a culture of innovation.
- According to the [Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario](#), the province's postsecondary institutions have increased their spending on wellness services to meet the rapidly growing demand and increasing complexity of student mental health issues.
- More and more employers are looking for workers with skills in analytics, cognitive computing/AI, cybersecurity, IT and computer science, as identified in the [Business + Higher Education Roundtable and Business Council of Canada's](#) most recent survey of business leaders.
- Tools that foster resiliency are invaluable in helping ensure student success throughout university and beyond.

During the last four economic recessions, Canadians with a Bachelor's degree or higher were less than half as likely to experience job loss, according to Statistics Canada.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has stated that more than one billion jobs – one-third of all global jobs – will be transformed by technology in the next decade. Ensuring workers have critical, transferable skills will be crucial to weathering future shifts in the economy and labour market.

95.1% of university graduates are employed two years post-graduation, and 90.1% of graduates employed full-time consider their work either closely or somewhat related to the skills they developed at university, according to the [Ministry of Colleges and Universities Ontario University Graduate Survey](#).

How Universities are Supporting Ontario

- To help students navigate economic, technological and social change, Ontario's universities continue to transform and adapt programming in key areas such as work-integrated learning and provide additional resources for student mental health and well-being.
- In 2022-23, Ontario's universities spent nearly \$1.6 billion on student services, including counselling, career guidance and placement, student health and more. In the past five years, overall spending on student services has increased by nearly 27%.
- In fact, each Ontario university has developed comprehensive student mental health [strategies, action plans and frameworks](#), all of which are readily available and accessible for students and parents to review online.
- In addition, universities provide supports to address inequities in participation and representation, as well as more than \$1.4 billion in grants, scholarships and bursaries annually to help ensure every willing and qualified student can access a university education.
- For [international students](#) who choose Ontario for their studies, universities are providing a wide range of wraparound supports, including orientations, specialized scholarships, immigration assistance and cultural and social programming, which provide students with opportunities to engage with their communities.
- Ontario's universities also play a vital role in providing domestic and international students with access to housing. A 2022-23 survey conducted by COU found that universities increased new residence spaces by 10% (or more than 6,400 spaces) over the past five years, bringing the total number to 62,000 spaces.

Partnering for a Strong Ontario

A vibrant and healthy university sector is critical to meeting the needs of students, fostering community economic growth, driving research and innovation and developing the highly skilled talent needed for Ontario's economy to prosper and grow.

It is why, in order to fully unleash their potential, Ontario's universities are asking for support – for greater investment to support their students and ensure student success.

It is now more important than ever for the government and universities to continue to work together to allow Ontario's universities to build a better and brighter future for our province.