



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

Trevor Day  
Clerk of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly  
99 Wellesley Street West, Room 1405  
Whitney Block, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

October 18, 2016

To the members of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly,

On behalf of the 17,000 faculty members across Ontario that OCUFA represents I am writing to express support for Bill 64, the *Protecting Interns and Creating a Learning Economy Act, 2015*.

As educators, OCUFA's members believe that it is important for students to have equitable access to a broad range of learning opportunities. OCUFA is also committed to ensuring that the process of higher education policy development is grounded in meaningful input from those who work in the sector. Bill 64 is consistent with both of these aims.

The provisions in this bill seek to increase student access to work-integrated learning opportunities by creating an advisory council that would make recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development about how to increase access to paid work-integrated learning opportunities. The bill would also provide for increased regulation and oversight of unpaid internships by extending certain provisions of the Employment Standards Act to cover unpaid interns.

Following the report of the Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, the provincial government has expressed its desire to expand work-integrated learning opportunities for students. Bill 64 provides a framework that would help to ensure the expansion of work-integrated learning opportunities occurs in a thoughtful and considered manner, compatible with the needs and perspectives of the higher education sector.

OCUFA is committed to the principle of university autonomy and to senate jurisdiction over academic decision-making within universities and believes that the expansion of work-integrated learning opportunities for students must be undertaken within that framework. By calling for the creation of an advisory council with representation from all key stakeholders in the higher education sector to advise the Minister on the expansion of work-integrated learning opportunities, Bill 64 would help to ensure that decisions about the expansion of work-integrated learning opportunities are made with the input and advice of faculty, students, and administrators. This model, whereby all higher education stakeholders are represented and consulted in policy decision-making structures, is one that OCUFA supports both in the context of the creation of an Advisory Council on Work-Integrated Learning and in the sector more broadly.

The provision in the bill that the Advisory Council focus on the expansion of *paid* work-integrated learning opportunities is centrally important. This will help to ensure that students from a broad range of economic backgrounds are able to benefit from the learning experiences offered through work-integrated learning. In addition, the expanded regulation and oversight of unpaid work-integrated learning opportunities will help promote fair treatment and protection in the workplace. As has been heard in the Changing Workplaces Review consultations, moving away from a system of exemptions under the Employment Standards Act will help protect those in vulnerable situations at work, including unpaid interns.

Together with my colleagues from across the province, I hope that you will return Bill 64 to the House for Third Reading in a form that preserves the key elements of the legislation outlined above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judy Bates", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Judy Bates  
President, OCUFA

Cc: Peggy Sattler, MPP London West