



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

## **Policy Position on Satellite Campus**

**Approved on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

## Satellite Campuses

### Introduction

In Ontario, university programming has been offered at satellite or branch campuses for decades to meet student demand in particular areas and to decrease the inconvenience and costs of long commutes or residency. For example, UT/Mississauga was established in 1967 and Trent/Oshawa in 1974. Typically, these older satellites were set up and operated in the same way as the "mother university" as to staffing, facilities, program quality, etc.

In recent years, the satellite programming model appears to be becoming more attractive to administrations motivated by a different set of interests than in the past. Satellites have been seen more and more as a way to increase enrolment by locating in student-rich areas such as the GTA, to increase tuition fee revenue (sometimes to offset declining growth at the main campus), to deliver programs more cheaply than on the main campus, to take advantage of land and money offers from municipalities desperate for new economic engines, and to establish a more robust "brand" for recruitment purposes.

Several Ontario universities have launched major projects that aim to bring their degree programs to regions at a distance from their main campuses. Some examples follow.

Trent is planning to open a satellite campus jointly with George Brown in Toronto, already home to four universities and a number of satellite campuses. President Bonnie Patterson of Trent stated: "This would give Trent University a presence in downtown Toronto". It would also give Trent access to a huge pool of potential Toronto-based enrollees as rising demand puts pressure on existing GTA institutions.

The McMaster administration recently announced it intended to establish a business school in Burlington with enrolment of about 800 anticipated.

Wilfrid Laurier was planning a second large satellite campus in Milton, in addition to its satellite in Brantford which currently has an enrolment of 2,000. (The Milton satellite has now been put on indefinite hold due to the current economic crisis.) Senior WLU administrators had envisaged a future of three campuses equal in size in ten years time. The new direction at Wilfrid Laurier is to concentrate on growing enrolment at Laurier/Brantford to 5,000-10,000 over ten years.

There is currently a government policy vacuum regarding satellites. However, the provincial government may see the satellite model in a positive light to the extent that access to degree programs is increased, opportunities in rural or more remote regions are provided, and growth pressures in the GTA and Southern Ontario are met without

massive new public investments.

Many of the proposed or recently established satellites have been partially paid for by municipalities and private sector interests, thereby lowering government costs to expand access to degree programs.

Government also agrees that satellite campuses are a good economic development lever for municipalities. In 2008, when provincial coffers were fuller than now, the government announced funding specifically to encourage economic activity, create employment, and help municipalities. For example, \$8M went to Waterloo to establish a Health Sciences campus in Kitchener.

And municipalities agree with the provincial government. Satellite campuses are seen by struggling municipal centres throughout Ontario as a viable economic development initiative and a way to bring jobs and money into moribund downtowns across medium and small-town Ontario. The municipal, provincial, and federal governments and private entities have committed about \$50M to a digital media initiative that will include a Stratford campus of the University of Waterloo with enrolment expected of about 1,000. An economic impact study estimated that the project will generate about 180 permanent jobs and have an ongoing economic impact of about \$56M. Media reports positioned this as a win-win-win for London, Stratford, and Waterloo. Stratford's mayor stated that the city will ... "end up with a technology economy....it benefits all of us." The satellite campus has been labeled a "beacon of hope" for a local economy dependent on manufacturing and automotive industry employment.

The McMaster/Burlington project is being partially funded by \$5M donations each from Halton Region and Burlington. Burlington's mayor anticipates many local benefits, including advanced degree opportunities for Burlington's residents in disciplines relevant to the local economy.

Lakehead University is building a new campus in Orillia, hundreds of kilometers from Thunder Bay and a 90 minute drive from Toronto. A media report noted that both Orillia and Thunder Bay posted lower population growth than the provincial average of 6.6% between 2001 and 2006 (.01% for Thunder Bay; 3.9% for Orillia) and are struggling financially, with major employers shutting down. A Lakehead Dean said that the Orillia project will help meet the demand in Southern Ontario for degree opportunities as well as help sustain the "mother" university by increasing enrolment and tuition fee revenue. Orillia is hoping the university project will bring stable, well-paid, full-time employment opportunities and more consumers to town.

As well, students are indicating strong interest in these opportunities. The Academica Group Inc. recently reported that "...satellite university campuses are receiving more than their fair share of Ontario university applicant pool...OUAC /data/ showed a 30.2% increase in first-choice applications at Guelph-Humber and a 31% first-choice increase

at Wilfrid Laurier-Brantford."

Finally, distance to a degree opportunity does matter, especially to first-time, rural, Northern and poorer students. A 2004 Ontario Undergraduate Students Association paper provided an excellent summary of the issue: the closer an individual lives to school, the higher their educational attainment; the necessity of going away from home to attend school imposes additional costs on students and their families; families from rural areas typically have lower educational attainments and income levels. (going the distance: rural and northern access to university education, 2004). The same paper summarized existing Canadian studies that found "...that across the board, students who live within a 40 kilometre radius of an institution participate in university education twice as often as students who live over 80 km away."

Recent and rapid increase in establishing satellite campuses raises issues for faculty, students, government policy, and municipalities. So far, administrations, receiving municipalities, and the provincial government appear to agree that satellites meet many needs: as economic drivers in communities that desperately need them; as a source of increased university revenue; as a way to expand degree opportunities, particularly in Southern Ontario, (thus addressing the anticipated shortfall in spaces where they will be most needed); as a way to strengthen an individual university "brand"; and as a way to reach new clusters of potential students by offering a close-to-home option.

In most cases, individual university administrations are making the decisions to expand programming in this way, absent any analysis of the impact of this type of growth on all universities in Ontario, on faculty, or on students and absent any overall provincial policy or approach to the increasing interest in establishing satellites.

This policy paper will describe two satellite initiatives, both of which raise issues common to newer satellites, and will address these issues related to this particular form of university programming and its rapid expansion.

## Two Case Studies

"While universities in Southern Ontario, particularly in the GTA, look for ways to cope with capacity challenges, demographics in the North work against us. If we are to prevent another enrolment decline, we need to market our competitive edge..., continuing to draw students from outside our catchment area...". Laurentian University current strategic plan

### Laurentian@Georgian

The current strategic plan at Laurentian may result in an even more rapid expansion of the L@G model. What kind of university education does that model reflect?

In 2001, Laurentian University began to offer what one LU administrator called a “franchise model” of degree programs at the Georgian College University Partnership Centre. The Centre was the result of one of the successful SuperBuild applications, the major capital funding program of the government of the day. The region of Barrie had been advocating for a university for some time and, instead, was given funding to build a dedicated centre to offer degree programs in partnership with universities.

The two partners had common goals: Georgian College wanted to provide the region with more degree opportunities; Laurentian wanted access to students in central Ontario and another strategy to deal with the double cohort.

In the beginning, the program had Laurentian providing the curriculum for three majors in psychology, political science and sociology leading to a B.A. (honours). The first two years were taken at Georgian and the last two in Sudbury.

Faculty were recruited by Georgian from within its own faculty and locally. LU reviewed and selected the candidates, who were hired by Georgian according to the current OPSEU-negotiated rates.

In the beginning years, Laurentian administrators confessed that curriculum choices were more limited than in Sudbury but “minimum requirements were provided” and that learning resources (e.g. access to a university-level library and associated services) were underresourced. At first, the program, which had an enrolment of about 50 in the first year, was supported solely through tuition revenue and Georgian’s infrastructure. It was noted in 2002 that the program “drastically requires government grant consideration.”

By 2008, the model had expanded considerably, offering general and honours BAs with seven majors of which three could be completed at both levels entirely at Georgian (Barrie), a general and honours BA program at Georgian’s Orillia campus (a satellite of a satellite) with four majors, two of which required transferring to Georgian for the fourth year and two of which required transferring to LU, a BSW program at Orillia based on a 2+2 model, with the practicum component in the Barrie area, and an Honours BBA completed entirely at Georgian (Barrie). The previous academic year, students could earn a general B.A., but still had to attend in Sudbury for a four-year Honours degree. Enrolment had grown to 1,137 FTEs.

The staffing model had changed to include members of Laurentian University Faculty Association, although information on who teaches what is scanty. At the Georgian campus, there were 4 full-time faculty in 2007 doubling to 8 full-time faculty in 2008 (members of LUFA). Presumably, the balance of teaching is being done by part-time staff retained by Laurentian (13 in 07; 17 in 08) and Georgian College professors. (By comparison, in 2007 full-time faculty at the main campus numbered 427.)

Funding arrangements were also different than at first: the two institutions share tuition fee revenue paid by Laurentian students in Laurentian degree programs in Barrie/Orillia. Each institution receives funds on a per course, per student basis, depending on whether the professor teaching the course works for LU or Georgian. The two institutions share growth funding on a formulaic basis. Laurentian provides no detail regarding the amounts, how they are split, and the revenue/costs for L@G to the university.

By 2008, Laurentian had provided more, but still not adequate, library resources, had provided electronic access to its Sudbury Library, and had promised in its 2008-09 budget to increase, by an unknown number, Laurentian faculty and administrative personnel.

The Laurentian Vice-President, Academic provided information to the Senate in 2008 that L@G students can borrow books through the Sudbury campus library through off-campus services and can access the library's electronic database. Despite these provisions, the Senate noted "that L@G students do not have full access to the complete collection of the Desmarais Library. In particular, they cannot make use of the many essential print materials for which there is no electronic substitute, including books on reserve (usually the books that faculty consider most important and that are in highest demand), items from the reference section, and older government documents."

Another 2008 Senate meeting noted that L@G students were still not represented on the Board of Governors or the Senate. At that point L@G students did not have a student association either, due to the lack of administrative capacity to collect dues on the Georgian campus.

In 2008, Laurentian@Georgian produced 152 bachelors compared to 1,693 studying at the main Sudbury campus. Laurentian could not provide data on whether the rate of progress towards a degree was comparable between the two campuses or whether drop-out and retention rates were comparable.

In 2007-08 class size at the main Sudbury campus averaged 22.1 at the undergraduate level. The website for Laurentian@Georgian indicates an average of 34 students per class for the business program. Inquiries to Laurentian regarding average class size for all L@G programs elicited the response that "we do not have this information. Only Georgian College may be able to provide it."

Laurentian could also provide no information on planned expansion, planned additional future tenure-stream hires, and number of Georgian faculty teaching in the program.

The LU Academic Planning Committee noted in May, 2008 that a new four year program being proposed for L@G "is not exactly like the program offered at Laurentian",

and that L@G needed additional library resources.

LU's strategic plan for 2008-2011 interestingly mentions the Laurentian@Georgian initiative specifically under "increased revenues" and calls for a business plan related to drawing "sufficient students to maintain revenues". In that regard, L@G is a smashing success. Total undergraduate enrolment growth for the Laurentian main campus between 2002 and 2007 was 899; L@G almost matched that growth, logging 841 more students (159 growing to 1000 for the period). L@G accounted for almost 40% of undergraduate enrolment growth for 2002-2007

The following summarizes some key information about the Laurentian@Georgian program:

Year	Program model	enrolment	faculty source	LUFA numbers	Academic oversight
2001	2+2 Honours B.A. program With 3 majors	50	Georgian	-0-	LU
2008	3, 4, 3+1 in 4 programs BA gen* BA hon* BSW BBA *8 majors *some 3+1 Orillia-Barrie	1137	LU & Georgian	8 FT 17PT	LU

#### Laurier Brantford

Laurier Brantford enrolled its first students in September, 1999. Three years earlier, the Brant Community Futures Development Corporation had commissioned a business plan to establish a university in Brantford. In 1997, the community established a Brant University Steering Committee, which presented a proposal to WLU in 1998. WLU decided that a satellite campus would meet its and Brantford's needs.

At first, Laurier Brantford had five full-time employees – a Dean, campus manager, administrative assistant and two limited term professors. It enrolled 40 full-time students, which represented about half of one percent of WLU's total undergraduate enrolment.

Its academic model was to build all degree programs around a core program of Contemporary Studies and emphasize interdisciplinary programming in the liberal arts and sciences.

Governance and academic planning emphasized the Dean's role. The Dean, then the senior administrator in Brantford, "represents the campus in Senate and other university governing bodies and manages Laurier Brantford's relationship with the WLU senior administration and other external partners."

Since its inception as a satellite and as recently as 2008, the curriculum development process, according to an unpublished internal faculty study, "remains obscure" and, continues to be "either initiated or steered by the Associate Dean, Dean, or Vice-President/Principal" with the recruitment office playing "an unusually weighty role in the...process." (The Waterloo campus, of course, develops curriculum in a more traditional, faculty-based fashion.)

For the first five years, student services were not provided at a level "normally associated with university student services", mainly because of small numbers. Not until 2004-05 was a Director of Student Services appointed and Health Services, accessible learning services, and career counseling established, six years after the first students enrolled.

By 2007-08 Laurier Brantford had 1,143 undergraduates enrolled, representing about 10% of total WLU undergraduate enrolment. Plans in 2005 were to expand to at least 1600 and preferably 2500 students by 2011. Projected enrolment is 2,400 for September, 2009. The current administration, as noted, seems to be interested in expanding enrolment equal to the Waterloo campus, which had 11,689 undergraduates in 07-08. (As noted, the third planned campus in Milton is on indefinite hold.)

WLU's Institutional Data and Statistics book reports that full-time faculty numbers had grown to 43 by 2007-08 out of a total FT faculty complement of 486. However, WLU Faculty Association members at Laurier Brantford report that this does not reflect reality. For 2008-09, the total full-time faculty complement is 46 which includes six half-year limited term appointments counted as 3 full appointments. The current faculty is composed of sixteen tenured faculty, nineteen tenure-track faculty, eight limited term appointees (one year or more) and six limited term appointments (six months). (Six of the tenure-track applicants have been approved for tenure starting July 1.)

The WLUFA collective agreement set a ceiling of 1/3 for contractually limited faculty; Laurier Brantford currently has about half of its teaching done by contract faculty. This percentage appears likely to increase in the next academic year (09-10). Overloads are common with many full-time faculty teaching more than a full-time course load.

In the report on possible growth done in 2005, the expansion models envisaged a full-time faculty to student ratio of 23:1 "as governed by the WLUFA agreement", even though Laurier Brantford administration has never achieved or even approached the mandated ratio. (In the recent set of negotiations, the administration reported a present ratio of 39.3:1.) The report also stated that 70% of faculty would be full-time, tenure-track; once again, as noted, the Laurier Brantford administration has not reached that goal with far less enrolment.

There are currently no teaching assistants at Laurier Brantford. It employs third-year and fourth-year undergraduates in those positions.

The overall average undergraduate class size at Laurier Brantford in 2007-08 was 55, comparable to the faculty of arts (55.6), faculty of science (53.5), and school of business and economics (50.2).

Library services remain less than optimal. For a campus of the size of Laurier/Brantford, compared to other satellite campuses, the paucity of library resources is remarkable. Students have access to the Brantford Public Library, with approximately 9,000 books from WLU holdings. The main campus employs 38 librarians/librarian assistants to serve about 11,000 students; Laurier Brantford employs one to serve about 2000 students.

That the Brantford academic program is as robust as it is at present and that it attracts large numbers of well-qualified student and faculty applicants, is a result, in very large part, of Herculean efforts by its faculty. Most of the original faculty have now achieved tenure. For the past couple of years, core faculty have been challenging administrative decisions detrimental to the academic quality of the program, conducting independent research on models of academic governance and issues, and insisting on governance, administrative, and academic decision-making models more in keeping with normal university practice. They have undertaken this in addition to their usual faculty roles.

### **Satellite Campuses: A Discussion of Access, Quality, and Challenges Confronting Faculty**

It is clear from the two case studies and other research that, at least in the formative years, satellites, unless carefully and thoughtfully planned and launched, will offer a lesser education to students and worse conditions in which to work for faculty. Given the recent proliferation and planned expansion of satellites and the experiences OCUFA member associations have had to date with these campuses, OCUFA is well-positioned to suggest minimum criteria for what needs to be in place before the first student is enrolled in a satellite and to bring those criteria to the attention of administrations, the government, and the public. As well, OCUFA is well-positioned to suggest

circumstances under which a satellite should not be established.

### **Access**

Bringing access to degree opportunities closer to those Ontarians where distance or income may be a factor in their educational opportunities is obviously a positive step. However, much of the recent satellite activity appears to have been decided based on declining population and concomitant drop in the regional application pool in the university home base, cash and land incentives being offered by municipalities and regions hoping to draw consumers and good jobs, and a wish to exploit the expected GTA university-bound population growth.

If there are geographic pockets in Ontario that are ill-served regarding tertiary education, is a satellite campus always the right answer? No one has done a comprehensive survey to locate areas and populations which might benefit from a university satellite, as opposed to a distance learning opportunity or residence on a university campus. It is probable, for example, that the far Northern aboriginal populations could benefit from more comprehensive tertiary educational opportunities closer to their territories. However, research did not uncover any plans by institutions to establish satellites to the north of their current locations.

### **Quality**

It is well-known what reflects a high quality university education: full-time, tenure-stream faculty in the classroom and qualified instructors for tutorials, marking/grading, etc; a curriculum and program development process that recognizes the centrality of faculty; access to the full range of library, research resources, and staff typical of a university; adequate physical resources to support programming; access to a full range of student services, including financial support; and access to recreational, social, and other programming to round out the academic experience.

It is clear that programming quality is lower and not comparable to the home campus at many satellite campuses and that it takes years to bring expected university-level basic services to students and faculty. Yet satellite students receive no tuition or fee discount to reflect a lower quality university experience.

### **Faculty Challenges at Satellites**

First, it is likely that new satellite campuses will have a predominance of contractually limited appointments until enrolment growth is deemed to be sufficient to appoint tenure-stream faculty. Complicating the personnel question is the presence of CAAT faculty teaching at some of these campuses who are governed by an entirely different collective agreement, hiring process, terms and conditions of work, and salary/benefit structure.

Governance structures tend not to reflect those at the main campus or accepted university governance standards, the implication of which is that faculty often move from centrality in processes to the margins. Important relationships are often undefined and parity with home campus conditions often does not exist.

For example, a 2008 report by faculty on Laurier Brantford governance stated: The duties and functions of a coordinator in relation to both programme faculty and the Dean are also not established." In April, 2008, the Dean informed co-ordinators of two large programmes that they will be treated on a par with Waterloo Chairs regarding course relief, sabbatical credit, stipend, etc. However, this decision appears to be at the Dean's discretion. As well, the Dean is taking steps now to define the role of co-ordinators, programme councils, and addressing other like issues. This is almost a decade after Laurier Brantford was founded.

Appointment, tenure, and promotion decision-making bodies and processes often do not reflect those at the main campus. Departments traditionally decide what hiring priorities are, the nature of the positions to be filled, what the job posting will say, etc.

At satellites, senior administrators often have a far more prominent role in these processes than is the norm.

Departments also traditionally have a central role in providing budget estimates and administering their budgets, usually through a faculty-elected co-ordinator. Contrasted with the reality at Laurier Brantford where "... the Dean retains almost all of the budgetary privileges granted to Departments and Chairs at Waterloo ... ", once again, faculty and their contribution to decision-making are marginalized.

Some provisions of existing faculty association collective agreements tend to be ignored by some senior administrators at satellites and faculty associations can have a difficult time keeping on top of issues or breaches of the collective agreement-that arise tens or hundreds of kilometres from the main university campus.

Both at satellites and at the main campus, faculty and their associations are confronted with serious issues regarding fundamental processes and appropriate decision-making during the planning, establishment, and ongoing operation of satellites.

**Recommendations:**

1. As there is currently no oversight or accountability regarding this activity except for individual institutional decision-making processes, encourage the province, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to develop and adopt principles and best practice guides, with stakeholder input, related to whether a satellite should be established. For example, it is not sufficient that a municipality or region want a university campus or a university want to address declining enrolment/demographic challenges through a satellite campus.
2. Ask the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to establish an ad hoc committee, with faculty representation, to assess the current state of satellite operations, assess planned new satellites, and provide the ministry with advice on principles and best practices.
3. Assign an OCUFA staff person to monitor issues related to satellites, and, when necessary, provide briefs and other information and policy support to appropriate OCUFA bodies.
4. Encourage individual faculty associations to determine the need for and best approach for monitoring issues related to satellites in light of their departmental and institutional circumstances. This is particularly crucial as, often, standards and practices codified in collective agreements are not respected at the satellite and satellite faculty, to date, tend to be junior and unfamiliar with their rights and the responsibilities of the administration at the main campus and the satellite to maintain academic quality.

Appendix – Satellite Campuses – Policy discussion paper

Selected List of Current and Planned Satellites  
2009

University	Satellite (date opened or planned)	Enrolment	Faculty
Nipissing	Bracebridge (1996)	200	
	Brantford (w/WLU)		
Guelph	Humber College (GTA) (2002)	2500 (2007) growing to 3000	No information available
Trent	Toronto w/George Brown (to open 2011)	2500 university spaces 2500 joint spaces 2500 college spaces	
	Oshawa		
McMaster	Kitchener (Medical School 2007)	15	
	Burlington (B School approved 2006- to open 2010)		
Lakehead	Orillia	301 (07-08) target of 1100 (2009) target of 1500 (2010) target of 7000 (2023)	20 FT 13 PT