



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des associations des professeurs des universités de l'Ontario

Risking Ontario's Future: The Dangers of Underfunding Ontario Universities

OCUFA's solutions for stronger universities and a stronger Ontario

Ontario's universities provide many positive contributions to Ontarians and their communities, including by building Ontario talent, generating knowledge, stimulating the economy, driving innovation, and directly addressing the needs of the communities and regions in which they are located. It's clear that universities benefit all Ontarians, regardless of whether they have attended university. These tremendous benefits are at risk if Ontario continues to underfund its universities.

To improve Ontario's university sector and provide benefits to all Ontarians, OCUFA calls on the government to:

- Increase total provincial university funding by 11.75 percent annually for a five-year period to bring Ontario close to the Canadian average in per-domestic student funding.
 - This requires \$511.8 million in funding in year one.
- Boost the number of funded student placements to immediately fund the 28,000 enrolled domestic students who are currently unfunded.
 - Funding these 28,000 students at the current national provincial funding average would cost \$470 million annually.
- Review and modify Ontario's provincial university funding model to ensure that universities are supported to enroll academically qualified domestic students.
- Double and make permanent the [Northern Ontario Grant for Universities](#) over its 2024-25 total to reflect the immense contributions of Ontario's Northern universities and their unique costs, with annual increases thereafter tied to inflation.
- Convert student loans into grants to directly address the affordability crisis facing Ontario families.

Universities build Ontario talent and stimulate the economy

Ontario's public universities substantially improve Ontario's economy by:

- driving innovation and research and development (R&D);
- training the talent needed for Ontario's growth industries; and
- stimulating local, regional, and provincial economies.

The economic benefits from Ontario's universities improve the lives of *all* Ontarians, regardless of whether they have attended university.

Universities drive innovation

Ontario's universities are where much of Ontario's innovative research and development occurs.

The provincial government knows that Ontario's universities drive innovation. The government's [Ontario Research Fund](#) supports "ground-breaking research that will advance knowledge, drive innovation and create a better future for the people of Ontario." Between summer 2018 and the present, this Fund has supported 1,223 projects at universities and a further 157 projects at research hospitals, institutions that are typically affiliated with a university. Just 29 projects have occurred at colleges, underscoring the importance of Ontario's universities to transform knowledge generation and discovery that positively shapes lives and economies.

Recent projects funded through the Ontario Research Fund have included the development of next generation electric vehicle battery charging stations at Queen's University; the creation of new growing and fermenting approaches to increase grape and wine production and promote crop resilience at Brock University; and research at the University of Toronto into how hydrogen can be used as a clean fuel for aircrafts. This is research with significant economic impact potential.

Ontario Research Fund investment since 2018 has amounted to \$831 million. This investment has led to 120,000 training opportunities for students and researchers, 421 new patents, and 76 new spin-off companies.

The research supported by the Ontario Research Fund is but one portion of the immense amount of R&D conducted by Ontario's universities. In 2021-22, Ontario's higher education institutions spent [\\$6.6 billion](#) on research and development, representing nearly 40% of the R&D conducted by Canada's entire higher education sector.

Investing in research in Ontario's universities improves lives and economies. As Minister of Colleges and Universities [Nolan Quinn](#) attests, "When we invest in research, we invest in our province's future." As Minister Quinn states, investments in research mean that "Ontario's researchers can continue making discoveries that drive key sectors, create good-paying jobs, and improve the lives of all Ontarians."

Universities train the talent needed for Ontario's lucrative growth industries

A university education is associated with high-paying in-demand jobs in every region of Ontario.

The most [lucrative](#) jobs in Ontario go to university graduates. Examining the top 15 occupation categories with the most annual job postings in Ontario makes this clear. In the Greater Toronto

Area, five of the top six highest paying in-demand jobs have workforces composed of over 64% university graduates. In all other regions of Ontario – Central, Northern, Eastern, and Southwestern – two of the top three most lucrative in-demand jobs have a majority university-educated workforce.

The Ontario government has emphasized several sectors as offering significant growth potential, including electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing and supply chain; life sciences; information and communications technologies; financial services; and agri-food. All of these sectors require workforces with significant numbers of university educated workers. Ontario's universities train the talent needed for these sectors to thrive. For example, 46% of students in programs relevant to EV production are in university undergraduate programs, with an additional 14% in university graduate programs. Colleges play an important role as well, educating close to 40% of learners in relevant programs.

What the above figures underline is that even in the manufacturing sector, Ontario's universities are a major component of the talent ecosystem, providing learners with tangible skills that enable individuals and the larger economy to thrive.

Ontarians understand that there are talent shortages in medicine, and the Ontario government has recently expanded the [Learn and Stay Grant](#) to help address these needs. Universities are central to educating the medical professionals of today and tomorrow. In addition to new medical schools at Toronto Metropolitan University and York University, Carleton University is opening the first [new university nursing school](#) in Ontario in more than two decades. Clearly, Ontario's universities are eager to do their part to improve Ontarians' access to medical professionals.

The economic benefits from Ontario's universities are not just limited to STEM and medicine. Programs in the arts and social sciences promote [tangible skills](#) in communication, including the ability to craft narratives and understand the needs of others. Adaptability and the capacity for continuous learning are also hallmarks of university graduates in the social sciences and humanities. Employers have identified a growing need for workers trained in these areas, with [social and emotional intelligence](#) ranking highest among the skills that employers see as essential. Graduates from programs in the arts, humanities, and social sciences are also apt to be particularly entrepreneurial and innovative. In the United Kingdom, there have been as many [successful start-ups](#) founded by history graduates as by engineering graduates.

Regardless of field, a postsecondary education is the new standard, with 75 percent of new job growth [estimated](#) to require higher education.

Universities stimulate economies and lead to higher earnings

Investments in Ontario's universities are investments in Ontario's local and regional economies that pay dividends. Public investment in postsecondary education contributes approximately [\\$96 billion](#) annually to Ontario's GDP. Every dollar invested in universities returns a value of \$1.36.

Among the myriad of benefits accruing to university educated Ontarians are financial ones, with university graduates having [lower unemployment rates and enhanced resilience](#) to recover from economic downturns, such as those experienced in 2008 and 2020. When university graduates do lose employment, they tend to find jobs much more quickly than do those with college or high school educations.

The [higher salaries](#) associated with a university education are significant and transformative. On average, among Ontarians aged 35 to 44:

- high school graduates made \$46,960;
- college graduates made \$56,550;
- university graduates with bachelor's degrees made \$80,100; and
- university graduates with master's degrees made \$90,700.

Higher university wages circulate in the economy and promote economic activity, benefitting even those without a university education. For example, high wages are a prerequisite for someone who has decided to renovate their home. Committing to renovations requires hiring skilled tradespeople and engaging in a significant amount of economically beneficial spending. Economic impact literature details how spending produced important spin-off effects that multiply the effects of the initial spending, producing significant indirect and induced impacts. Following the initial spending of money, industries affected by the initial spending will themselves spend money to purchase goods and services from their supply chain industries; next, these supply chain industries will themselves engage in their own inter-industry spending. Collectively, these actions result in beneficial economic impacts, including job creation. As a rule: the higher the spending, the higher the economic impact. The higher wages of university graduates make much of this economic impact possible.

The Ontario government is rightly concerned about the crisis of affordability in the province, with prices for food, shelter, and basic consumer goods experiencing significant increases. However, affordability is not just about lower prices. Higher earnings will help make life more affordable.

Universities serve Ontario's North as community hubs and anchors of economic growth and development

Ontario's universities benefit the entire province, but their impact is especially felt in Ontario's North. Ontario's five Northern universities drive their local and regional economies, attract and retain talent in their regions, respond to community needs, and are major sources of community pride and cohesiveness.

Northern universities attract and retain talent, supporting local economies

Ontario's Northern universities attract top talent to the North and ensure that Northerners do not need to leave the region to receive a world-class education. That learners can receive an undergraduate degree in the advanced sciences in smaller municipalities such as North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie is a unique advantage for the province. Unlike other provinces, there is only one municipality in Ontario – Barrie – with more than 80,000 residents that does not have a university or a university branch campus. Fortunately for Barrie, Lakehead University operates a campus in nearby Orillia and may soon open a new branch [campus](#) in Barrie itself.

Northern universities – and universities in smaller municipalities – attract new residents to their regions, injecting new energy and investment. According to an economic impact report, Lakehead University attracts [70 percent](#) of its enrolment from outside of the commuting range to its campuses in both Thunder Bay and Orillia. Most of these students are Ontario domestic students.

Northern universities such as Lakehead are major economic drivers. With 2,200 employees in 2017, Lakehead University is one of Thunder Bay's largest employers. The economic activity generated by its staff and students contributed \$1.425 billion to Ontario's GDP that year, supporting the equivalent of 6,277 jobs.

Other Northern universities make similarly strong contributions to their local and regional economies. In 2022-23, Algoma University had a total [economic impact](#) of \$145.4 million on Sault Ste. Marie alone, supporting 1,645 jobs and supplying the local workforce with highly educated workers. The third-largest employer in North Bay, Nipissing University has a \$130.9 million local impact. Its annual operating and capital expenditures support 1,300 jobs. In just 2018, the institution now known as NOSM University contributed an estimated [\\$122-134 million](#) in new economic activity in Northern Ontario.

In 2021, Laurentian University's economic impact was immediately felt in another way. When Laurentian cut jobs and programs, this resulted in an immediate [\\$100 million hit](#) to the local economy, representing roughly 2% of Sudbury's GDP. Much as communities benefit from strong universities, they are harmed when these universities struggle.

Northern universities address community needs

Northern universities are committed to serving their local communities. They deliver programming and services that directly address identified community needs.

Algoma University's Sault Ste. Marie campus is on the site of the former Shingwauk Residential School. This legacy informs Algoma University's programs and mission. Algoma University is home to the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, a cross-cultural research and educational project that collects and preserves the history of residential schools in Canada. Algoma University is guided by its [special mission](#) to promote cross-cultural learning between Indigenous communities and other communities and to serve as a teaching-oriented university with a "particular focus on the needs of Northern Ontario." Understanding these local needs, Algoma University has recently expanded its programming in mental health and addictions, and its satellite campus in Timmins has emphasized programming in social work.

Lakehead University has embedded making "a significant contribution to our communities" in its [Strategic Mandate Agreement](#) with the province of Ontario. It further encourages prospective community partners to participate in [community-based research](#) in Lakehead's areas of strength, including aging, economic development, and health.

Officially bilingual, Laurentian University has a [tri-cultural mandate](#) to serve the region's Anglophone, Francophone, and Indigenous communities. It is strategically committed to "[building up the communities we serve](#)" through being an engaged partner and supporting economic growth and needs of the region's diverse communities.

Nipissing University has significantly expanded [access](#) to higher education in North Bay. It has partnered with colleges to provide important pathways for students to transfer into university programs, and its commitment to access is evident in its high proportions of women, first-generation, and Indigenous students.

As the only Northern medical university in Ontario, NOSM University is a distinct Northern solution to regional health care inequities. Its [community-engaged learning model](#) requires strong engagement with remote, rural, Indigenous, and Francophone communities across all Northern Ontario. This model directly addresses the health needs of the region and ensures the provision of highly trained, culturally respectful and knowledgeable medical practitioners in the

North. With more than 300 physicians currently needed in the North, NOSM University is an important part of the solution to the region's physician shortage. As the expansion of Ontario's Learn and Stay Grant reflected the high likelihood of medical practitioners to elect to reside in the communities in which they train, the existence of a major medical school in Ontario's North will help ensure that Northern Ontarians have essential access to physicians and other medical professionals for generations to come.

Northern universities are sources of community pride and cohesiveness

Considering the immense social, cultural, research, and economic contributions provided by the institutions, Northern Ontarians are rightly proud of their universities. In the North, universities aren't just schools, they are economic hubs that have a transformational effect on their ability to innovate or even become a more diverse society.

Charla Robinson, President of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, noted that "the vitality of our post-secondary institutions is essential to the prosperity of Northern Ontario. These institutions are not just educational hubs; they are economic engines that attract diverse faculty and students, stimulate local businesses, and address critical labor shortages. Increased funding can support the delivery of top-tier education, so universities can cultivate a skilled workforce that drives innovation and growth in our region."

Reggie Caverson, Executive Director of the Workforce Planning Board for Sudbury and Manitoulin echoed similar sentiments. "It is well acknowledged that higher educational attainment through a university degree is associated with more positive employment outcomes. It is important to note however, that universities do far more than just grant degrees. In northern Ontario, universities are not only a centre of critical thinking, research and academic growth, but are a key driver in supporting local businesses in the Sudbury and Manitoulin area. As such, it is essential to ensure that increased and sustainable funding for universities is available to both support a rewarding experience for all students, but to also ensure that the resources needed to attract, recruit and retain the best talent possible are safeguarded as we move into the future."

The value of Laurentian University to Sudbury was never clearer than during its bankruptcy proceedings. In 2021, Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce Chair Cora DeMarco [stated](#) that "Laurentian University is a key economic pillar of our community, and has contributed immensely to Sudbury's growth, research, economic well-being and quality of life; it is one of the many reasons Sudburians are proud to call Sudbury home." Perhaps the greatest indicator of Laurentian University's importance to the community was the fact that the campaign to save the university was called "[Save our Sudbury](#)," not "Save Laurentian University." Clearly, the impact of Laurentian University – and all the public universities in Ontario's North and beyond – extend well beyond campus boundaries.

Ontario is damaging its public universities

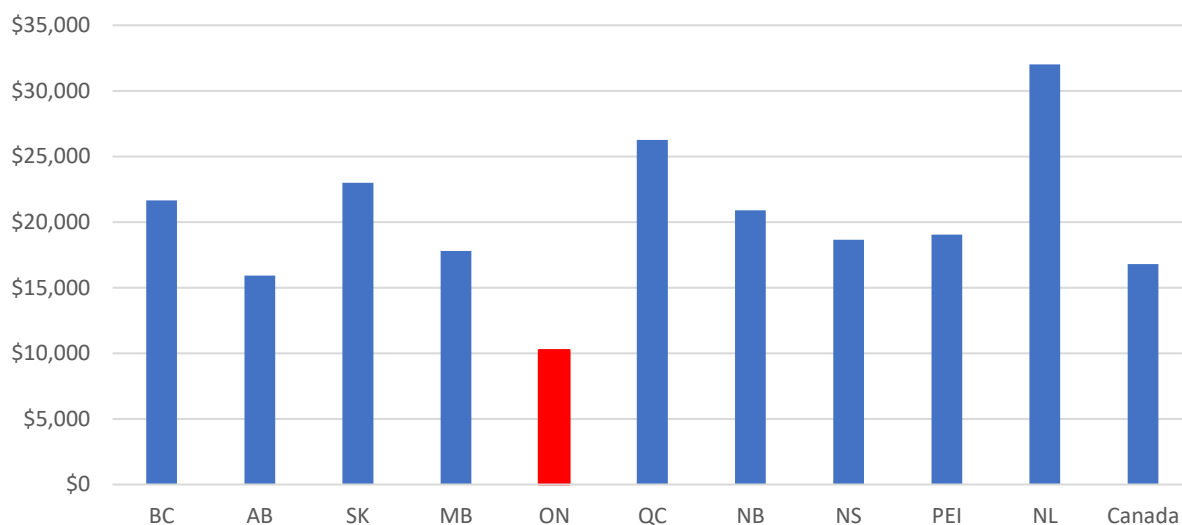
Universities provide Ontario with a wide array of benefits but sustained underfunding puts universities' abilities to continue producing these benefits at serious risk.

Ontario provides its universities with the lowest level of funding in Canada

Ontario is the clear last place in Canada when it comes to funding universities. This low funding negatively affects education, increases students' costs, and leaves Ontario's universities unable to educate the growing number of Ontarians who want to pursue a university education.

Ontario provides its universities with the lowest amount of total provincial funding per-domestic full-time equivalent (FTE) student in Canada, and it is not close. In the 2022-23 academic year, Ontario provided just \$10,246 per domestic FTE. This is over \$6,500 less than the Canadian average of \$16,789.

Figure 1: Total Provincial Funding per-Domestic FTE (current dollars)¹



Only Ontario and Alberta are below the Canadian average, with Alberta only slightly below. This means that if Ontario were to suddenly fund its universities at the current Canadian average, it would still provide its universities with the second-least amount of per-domestic student funding in Canada.

Nevertheless, the province certainly could afford to immediately bring Ontario's universities to this level of funding. Bringing Ontario to the current Canadian funding average would cost an immediate \$2.78 billion. A total that is less than the \$3.2 billion cost of the government's recent decision to send Ontarians \$200 cheques.

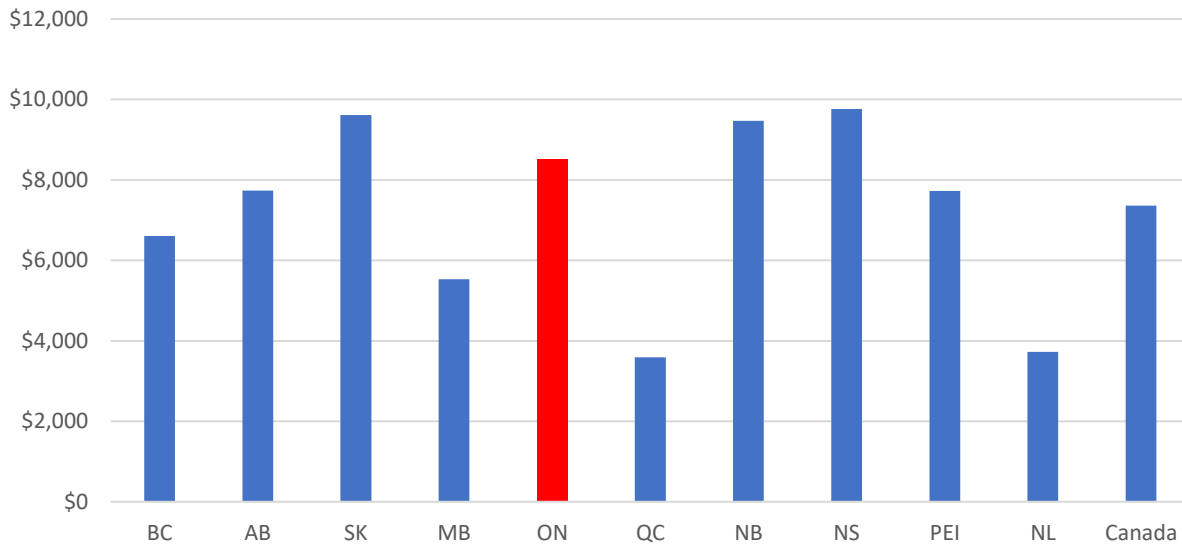
OCUFA is not asking for this immediate investment; rather, our recommendations are to bring Ontario to a level near the Canadian funding average over a period of five years via annual 11.75% funding increases. The funding needed in year one of our plan is an additional \$511.8 million, just 16% of what it cost to send those \$200 cheques.

The absence of strong and stable public funding also means that Ontario's universities must rely more extensively on tuition dollars taken from students and their families than is normal across

¹ Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0018-01: Postsecondary enrolments, by registration status, institution type, status of student in Canada and gender, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3710001801>; Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0026-01: Revenue of universities by type of revenues and funds (in current Canadian dollars) (x1000), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3710002601>; Author's calculations.

the country, making education and life more unaffordable for many Ontarians. Despite the government’s 2019 decision to cap and freeze domestic tuition, Ontario domestic undergraduates still pay rates of tuition that are well above the Canadian average. In 2024-25, Ontario domestic undergraduates paid an average of \$8,514 in university tuition, over \$1,150 more than the Canadian average of \$7,360.

Figure 2: Average Domestic Undergraduate Tuition, 2024-25 (current dollars)²

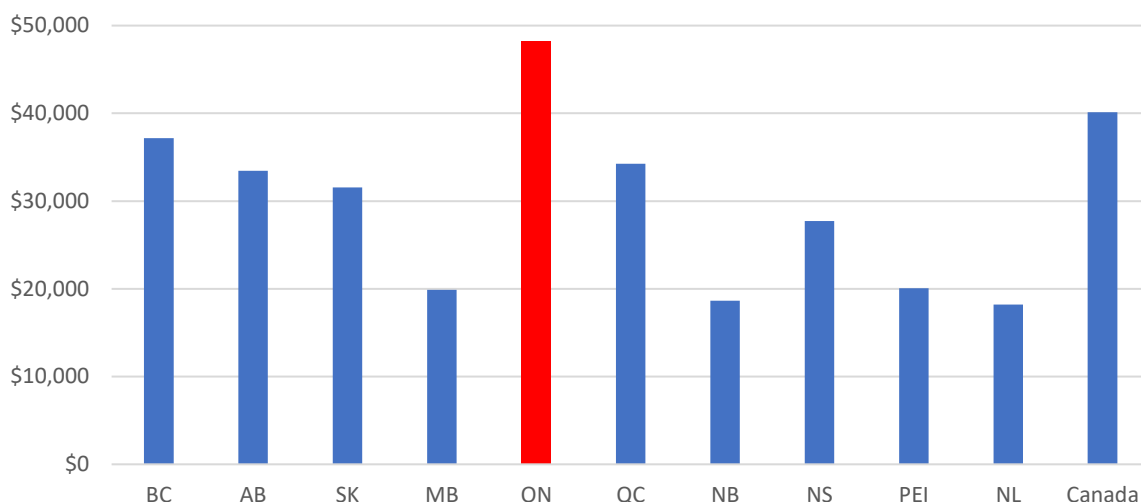


Higher-than-average rates of tuition means that Ontario students graduate with higher-than-average rates of debt. In 2019, Ontario accounted for over half (51.5 percent) of all national [student debt](#) despite educating 44 percent of full-time Canadian university students. Despite suggestions that student debt is most prominent among students from comparatively wealthier families, it is students from the bottom 20 percent wealth quintile who account for a 36.7 percent plurality of student debt. Debt is also a middle-class issue, with the middle quintile (families between the 40th and 60th percentile of household wealth) possessing 19.7% of all student debt. Students whose families are in the wealthiest quintile are the least likely to owe debt.

Inadequate public funding has caused Ontario’s postsecondary institutions to aggressively pursue international students. Although it is Ontario’s college sector that educates most international students in Ontario, international tuition dollars are an important source of revenue for Ontario’s universities, simply owing to the astronomically high rates that these students pay.

² Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0045-01: Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study (current dollars), <https://doi.org/10.25318/3710004501-eng>.

Figure 3: Average International Undergraduate Tuition, 2024-25 (current dollars)³



Universities have used international student tuition to make up for the provincial funding gap, with the province effectively downloading responsibility for funding a large portion of its public postsecondary system to international students and their families.

The federal government's new restrictions, on the number of international study permits, motivated primarily by "[bad actors](#)" in the college sector, means that much of this revenue is no longer available to universities. Although the Ontario government seems to acknowledge that universities did not cause this issue, allowing all but one university to maintain their previous number of international provincial attestation letters, the newly changed policy climate has negatively affected Canada's image among international students and led to a significant reduction in the number of international applicants for Ontario's universities. The recent federal decisions to reduce the number of international students by another [10 percent](#) and include graduate students within the caps will lead to a further loss of needed revenue.

In theory, these absent international students could be replaced by domestic students from Ontario. However, Ontario's university funding model does not accommodate an increase in the number of domestic students. The 'corridor' mechanism within the university funding model places a cap on the number of funded students a university will receive. While institutions are penalized with a loss of funding if their enrolments drop below their corridor range, they do not receive any additional funding for educating more domestic students above this threshold.

Currently, [28,000](#) Ontario students are above this funded cap. The universities who are educating these students are doing so without financial incentives from the government. As the government's own [Blue-Ribbon Panel](#) acknowledged, "universities are foregoing grant funding to ensure... qualified students will receive a university education." Not all universities can afford to educate these students.

³ Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0045-01: Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study (current dollars), <https://doi.org/10.25318/3710004501-eng>.

The caps on funded domestic students made sense in a time of demographic decline, but we are now seeing a boom in the population of young Ontarians. This funding system is no longer relevant given Ontario's changing demographics.

Without greater public funding [100,000](#) qualified prospective students will be beyond the enrolment caps and will therefore be at risk of not finding a spot in an Ontario university. Owing to underfunding and the caps on funded student placements, Ontario is at risk for a brain drain that takes young Ontario talent – and the economic benefits they entail – elsewhere. While it is clear that Ontario's universities bring the province major economic benefits, the cap on funded domestic students should cause us to ask what the cost of not properly funding universities would be. It is certainly not to Ontario's benefit to lose an educated and motivated young population.

Ontario's students understand what improved funding would mean.

The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) asserts that enhanced university funding would mean strengthened education, enhanced student success, and a robust labour market. OUSA President Michelle Wodchis-Johnson shared that increased university funding “would allow our students to access the services they need to thrive throughout their postsecondary experience, equip our institutions to provide a higher quality of education, and enable the system to better produce well-rounded graduates who possess the skills they need to succeed in the labour market.”

Adaeze Mbalaja, Ontario Chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) highlighted how students are feeling the impacts of the government's chronic underfunding: "Whether it is the high-cost of tuition fees, large class sizes or a lack of resources on campus, students continue to experience firsthand the underfunding of Ontario's post-secondary education. Undoubtedly, post-secondary education has felt the impacts of the lowest level of per-student funding province-wide, while students in Northern Ontario have been hit especially hard by the underfunding of the postsecondary education system. Now more than ever, students need public funding for quality public education."

It's clear that the solution to the funding crisis facing Ontario's universities requires both improved funding and a better funding model that incentivizes universities to enroll academically qualified domestic students. And that the quality of the student experience is degrading as a result of government inaction.

It is now impossible for universities to do more with less

The province has responded to the financial challenges of universities with a two-pronged strategy entailing minor increases to funding and a major focus on so-called efficiencies. Yet Ontario's universities, long cut to the bone, are the most efficient in Canada. However, this is a perverse efficiency that is detrimental to education. It is impossible for Ontario's universities to do more with less.

Packaged in every recent funding announcement is a government commitment to promoting efficiency. The province is providing universities with \$15 million over three years as part of its [Efficiency and Accountability Fund](#) to “support third-party reviews that will identify institutions can take to drive long-term cost savings.” Similarly, [Budget 2024](#) paired \$10 million in additional one-time funding through the Small, Northern and Rural Grant for colleges and the Northern Ontario Grant for Universities with a requirement for institutions to pursue efficiencies. This funding is only a temporary measure “while the government works with them on efficiency

initiatives.” Cuts under the guise of efficiency rather than appropriate and sustained funding has been the government’s solution.

Ironically, the efficiencies promoted by government have been inefficient. In practice, government efficiency funding has led to largely identical consulting projects advancing one-size-fits-all solutions at high costs. Multiple institutions are currently paying an identical \$500,000 amount to the same consulting firms to receive the same advice. These efficiencies are most notable for enriching consulting firms and increasing administrative workloads, not improving university education.

Government efficiency funding would be better spent on enhancing education. With Ontario’s universities receiving \$2.78 billion less in provincial funding than the Canadian average, Ontario’s universities are already the most efficient in Canada, and by far. It is impossible to catch up to the rest of the country through finding efficiencies alone.

The provincial government knows that Ontario’s universities are already efficient. The government’s own [Blue-Ribbon Panel](#) noted that Ontario universities’ “expenditures on salaries and benefits per Full-time Equivalent (FTE) are among the lowest in the country.” This same panel called for more postsecondary funding and for this funding to be made permanent.

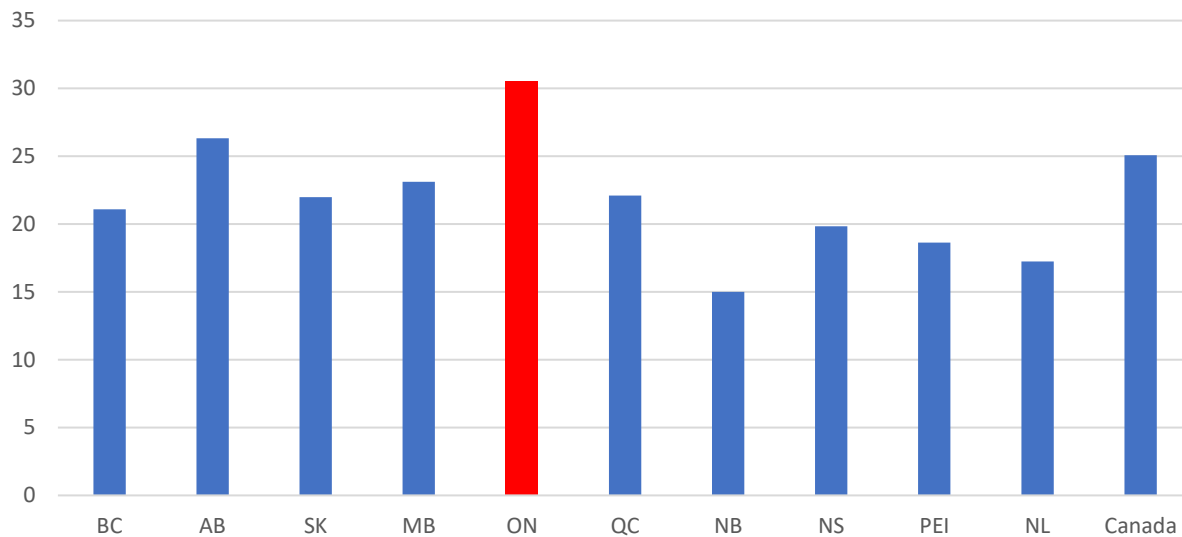
While the recent funding package of \$1.3 billion over three years to Ontario’s colleges, polytechnics, and universities is an important contribution, it is *half* of what the Blue-Ribbon Panel asked for and this funding has not been made permanent. If this money was divided equally between Ontario’s 47 public colleges and universities, each institution would receive \$9.2 million per year – equivalent to just the tuition revenue from just 190 international undergraduate students.

Even had Ontario matched the Blue-Ribbon Panel’s recommendations, it would still have the country’s lowest funded universities. This low funding promotes a perverse efficiency that is detrimental to education and the student experience, entailing less individual contact between students and their professors and a reliance on precarious contract faculty who are unable to serve as student mentors and supervisors. This often has negative impacts on the ability of contract faculty to even pursue research and scholarship that is valuable to universities and to their own professional careers.

Low funding under the guise of efficiency negatively affects the education that students receive. Greater funding allows for more professors and smaller class sizes, which allows for more student-professor interaction. The most [engaged students](#) prefer small class sizes because they produce a better learning environment; in contrast, students associate large class sizes with decreased responsibilities – hardly a vote of confidence in the quality of large classes.

Regrettably, Ontario’s university students are much more likely than students elsewhere in Canada to face large class sizes. In 2022-23, Ontario had 33.6 university students per faculty member. The Canadian average was just 28.

Figure 4: Student-Faculty Ratios by Province, 2022-23⁴



Ontario's neighbours significantly outperform us on this measure. Manitoba universities have 23.8 students per faculty member; Quebec does better still, with just 22.5 students per faculty member.

Low provincial funding means that Ontario's universities are relying more than ever on contract faculty. These faculty differ from their tenured and tenure-track colleagues primarily in having to continually reapply for their jobs each semester. By 2016-17, [54 percent](#) of all faculty appointments in Ontario were contract appointments. Many of these contract faculty members string together appointments across multiple universities and lack the ability to plan for the future.

By all accounts, contract faculty members provide strong education in the classroom, but they are unable to serve as student mentors or supervisors the way a tenured faculty member can. The reason is simple: these faculty members cannot support a student throughout their educational journey if they do not know where they will be a semester from now. This negatively affects the student experience.

Rather than doing more with less, Ontario's universities are facing cuts and being forced to do less with less. It cannot continue this way.

Better funding would benefit Ontario's students, faculty, and communities

The evidence is clear: universities provide tremendous value to the province and to the lives of Ontarians.

⁴ Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0018-01: Postsecondary enrolments, by registration status, institution type, status of student in Canada and gender, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3710001801>; Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0228-01: Number and distribution of full-time academic staff at Canadian universities by age group, gender and province: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3710022801>; Author's calculations; Note: faculty counts include professors at the assistant, associate, and full professor levels.

Ultimately, world-class universities are defined by the world-class education they provide. Only made possible by the truly remarkable contributions of faculty across Ontario. While they understand the value of a university education better than most, they also understand what is at stake should the government continue to refuse to act:

"Restoring adequate public funding in Ontario universities is essential to protecting high-quality education and research, to maintaining and improving student outcomes. Smaller class sizes allow for more personalized instruction, better student engagement, and higher academic success. We are tired of doing more with less."

Susan Spronk, Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO)

"As a faculty member at a small northern university, I know my students and their families struggle with affordability and having more grants and less debt would be an enormous boost for them and for the local economy. Our university is at the top of our "corridor" and yet struggles with economic stability. Fully funding all students would allow us to pursue sustainable growth and better serve our region. Nipissing was historically left out of our full share of the Northern grant—it is long past time to correct that costly mistake!"

Gyllian Phillips, Professor, English Studies, Nipissing University

While the current government continues to ask universities to look for efficiencies to deal with their financial issues, it's clear that increasing funding to universities has enormous benefits:

- Smaller class sizes, allowing for deeper learning and more considered reflection;
- A better student experience, with more personalized feedback and interaction with professors;
- Pathways for contract faculty members to secure permanent employment and provide mentorship throughout a student's educational journey;
- Improved economic outcomes, with the higher salaries and innovative ideas of university graduates coursing through the economy;
- Increased resources and more time available for professors to engage in the productive research that enhances knowledge, drives innovation, and strengthens the economy;
- More opportunities for academically qualified students to learn and stay in Ontario, preventing a brain drain and ensuring that the dollars of taxpaying Ontario parents directly support their children's education; and
- A stronger and more prosperous Ontario, with universities contributing even more to their local regions and communities.

Taken together, this adds up to a much better university sector that would benefit all Ontarians. Let's work together to make it a reality.