

May 22, 2018

Dr. Gyllian Phillips  
President  
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)  
gyllianp@nipissingu.ca

Dear Dr. Phillips,

Thank you very much for providing us with the opportunity to respond to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations election questions. Please find attached our completed response.

In 2014, the people of Ontario elected a Liberal government that promised to build Ontario up. We promised to create jobs and growth, improve retirement security for workers and build the next generation of infrastructure.

And we delivered. We made historic investments in hospitals, schools, transit, roads and bridges. We strengthened the economy, leading to the lowest unemployment rate in 17 years and economic growth that outpaces the United States and Europe. We made university and college tuition more affordable for the middle class and completely free for 235,000 students.

But we have more to do. I believe government should be there for people who need help. It's the reason why I entered public life. I believe the way we care for one another is our greatest strength — and government's greatest responsibility.

So we've made a deliberate choice to invest in more care and opportunity. We're investing in more health care, more child care and more support for people where they tell us they are falling behind. And we're making sure people can take advantage of every opportunity to get a good job and get ahead in life.

Thank you again for all your work and strong advocacy and I look forward to speaking soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kathleen Wynne'.

Kathleen Wynne

Leader, Ontario Liberal Party

**Ontario Liberal Party**

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## OCUFA – Liberal Response

### **1. How will your party address precarious work at Ontario universities and will your party commit to delivering job security, equal pay, and access to benefits for university contract faculty?**

The Ontario Liberal Party believes that Ontario workers have the right to strong protections at work, and that fairness and decency must continue to be the defining values of our workplaces. With the passage of Bill 148, we implemented many key changes to employment standards and labour relations laws in Ontario. This includes mandating equal pay for equal work for casual, part time, temporary and seasonal employees who do the same job as full time employees for the same employer. Employees who inquire about their wage rates are protected.

Our government shares your concerns with the rise of precarious work at Ontario's universities. We committed to an ongoing dialogue with faculty, unions, and the universities around the important question of faculty renewal. With a new mandate, we would move these conversations forward, and look to develop a "made-in-the-sector" approach that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

### **2. Will your party implement and fund new labour laws, including equal pay provisions for university contract faculty?**

We are committed to being active partners in helping universities transition to the new Employment Standards Act. In 2018-19, we are providing \$32M to universities to fund key priorities, which includes the implementation of the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act.

### **3. Will your party commit to launching a faculty renewal strategy that supports quality education through additional full-time faculty hiring, replacing retiring faculty, and creating pathways for contract faculty into secure, full-time positions?**

Through the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, we've already improved the working conditions of thousands of contract faculty in Ontario. The Liberal Party of Ontario is committed to the success of our postsecondary education system. Institutions work hard to provide students with this high-quality education, and they must use all tools at their disposal to ensure that they and their students succeed. As more and more students are able to pursue postsecondary education, the number of full-time university faculty has grown since 2006.

However, we know that many workers are concerned about job security. That's why our government introduced the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, to address precarious employment and improve workers' rights. We made these changes because our government believes that part-time workers are just as valuable as full-time workers, and deserve the same respect and treatment. They deserve to be paid properly for the valuable work they provide their institutions, and the important role they play in our postsecondary system.

We know that equal pay and educational quality are key priorities for the sector now, and we're supportive of the \$167M new dollars in the budget being used by universities and colleges to support these important outcomes.

#### **4. Will your party commit to increased investments in core operating funding for Ontario's universities to support quality research and education?**

We have introduced a new funding formula that will help build financial sustainability within the postsecondary sector. Through the 2018 Ontario Budget, we are providing a five per cent increase in funding to universities in 2018-19 over what we provided in 2017-18.

The 2018 budget included a package of investments that help build on our talent advantage and competitiveness. Reflecting the need to accelerate learners into the labour market, we extended the Career Ready Fund by one year, and made an investment in short-term flexible training.

We also made a significant new investment of over \$500M in PSE capital and infrastructure to help address repair and renewal needs. Updated facilities are more efficient and less expensive to operate, while also providing students with an improved learning environment.

#### **5. What is your party's position on performance based funding for postsecondary education? Will your party repeal the performance based component of Ontario's university funding model?**

As part of its commitment to a high quality and accessible higher education system, the Liberal Government undertook a comprehensive review of how we fund colleges and universities. The goal was to create a new funding formula that focused on quality, rather than just on enrolment, and supported the long-term financial health of the postsecondary sector.

The consultation process took over a year, and involved in-depth input from students, faculty, colleges, and universities. The new funding formula has taken all of this feedback into account, and represents the first major change to how we fund institutions in over 40 years. Under this new system, a portion of funding will be "at-risk" according to performance outcomes, driven by robust data and meaningful metrics. However, recognizing that this would be a significant change for the sector, implementation of the at-risk portion would not occur in the current Strategic Mandate Agreement cycle (SMA2), and would wait until the third Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA3) round in 2020.

As we approach SMA3, we will work closely with our college, university, student, and faculty partners to ensure that outcomes-based funding is fair, effective, and reflects best practices around the world. We will consult with all of our stakeholders to make sure we have the best data and the right metrics. We hope OCUFA will be active participants in this process. Together, we can ensure that postsecondary education in Ontario continues to build on its outstanding record of quality, accessibility, and public accountability.

**6. Will your party require meaningful consultation with faculty as part of the Strategic Mandate Agreement development process?**

Strategic Mandate Agreements are fundamental to our plan for building a high quality, accessible, and accountable postsecondary system in Ontario. As such, it is important that all stakeholders - students, faculty, staff, and administrators - have the ability to make a meaningful contribution to these documents. At the beginning of the SMA2 negotiations, the Liberal Government sent clear direction to each college and university that their campus communities should be meaningfully engaged with the negotiation process. We have since heard that, in some cases, this engagement did not meet expectations. As we go into SMA3, we will commit to working with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure that all stakeholders feel engaged and heard in the SMA process.

**7. Will your party respond to calls from student groups to freeze tuition fees and improve access to postsecondary education for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds?**

The Ontario Liberal Party firmly believes that attending college or university should be based on a student's potential to learn and not on their ability to pay. That's why we've launched one of the most ambitious reforms of student assistance in North America to make postsecondary education more affordable for hundreds of thousands of students.



The new OSAP is providing more generous financial support than ever before, including free tuition for hundreds of thousands of low- and middle-income students. This year, more than 235,000 students are receiving free average tuition – that’s one-third of all college and university students.

**8. Is your party proposing any additional policies or initiatives that will directly impact university education in Ontario?**

The Ontario Liberals are always committed to building a world-class university education system in Ontario and we look forward to working with partners such as OCUFA if we are re-elected.

**Ontario Liberal Party**

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