

**Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario**



**Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario**

Legislative Research
Information and Technology Services Division
Room 2520, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A9
Telephone: (416) 325-3675
Facsimile: (416) 325-3696

Recherche législative
Division des services de l'information et de la technologie
Bureau 2520, Edifice Whitney
Queen's Park
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1A9
Téléphone: (416) 325-3675
Télécopieur: (416) 325-3696

200537

**CONESTOGA COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING:
ORDER-IN-COUNCIL APPOINTMENT OF
KRYSTAL DARLING ***

Prepared for:

Standing Committee on
Government Agencies

Prepared by:

Alex Alton
Research Officer
Legislative Research

March 5, 2021

- * Projects prepared by Legislative Research are designed in accordance with the requirements and instructions of the Committee making the request. The views expressed should not be regarded as those of Legislative Research or of the individual preparing the project.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CONESTOGA COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING	1
CURRENT OPERATIONS	1
Role of the Board of Governors	1
Board Membership	2
Overview of the College	2
Financial Information	2
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	4
THE WITNESS	4
POSSIBLE QUESTIONS	5

INTRODUCTION

This paper has been prepared for Members participating in the Committee's review of the Order-in-Council appointment of Krystal Darling as a part-time member of the Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning Board of Governors (Conestoga College). It describes the operations of the board, presents information about the appointee, and identifies possible lines of questioning.

CONESTOGA COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING

Enabling Statutes	Responsible Ministry
Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002 and O. Reg. 34/03	Colleges and Universities
Agency Type	Most Recent Annual Report
N/A	2019-20
Activities of the Agency	
The college and its board promote career-focused education, training and applied research programs to prepare students and support economic prosperity throughout the Waterloo region and across Ontario.	
Board Membership	
Statutory No. of Members: 19 Appointed by Cabinet: 5	Remuneration Nil
Term of Office: Members hold office for a term not to exceed three years and shall not serve for more than six years consecutively. Members are eligible for reappointment or re-election, as the case may be, after two years' absence from the board, for successive terms not to exceed six years in total.	

CURRENT OPERATIONS

Role of the Board of Governors

The board of governors is responsible for defining the role and mission of the college and, thereby, setting the strategic directions for the college to achieve. The board of governors has responsibility for fiduciary oversight and institutional performance.

The board is required to submit a strategic plan, a business plan, and an annual report to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.¹ The board is also responsible for ensuring that the college balances its budget every year. If the budget is not balanced and a deficit will occur, the board of governors of the college “shall seek the Minister’s approval ...and shall provide the Minister with an appropriate recovery plan.”²

Board Membership

The board has a maximum of 19 members, five of whom are appointed by the Cabinet. Also on the board are the president of the college, one elected student, one elected academic staff member, one elected administrative staff member, one elected support staff member, and nine members appointed by the members of the board holding office at the time of the appointment.³ The board meets five times a year.⁴

Overview of the College

The college was initially founded in 1967 as the Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology. In 2002, Ontario Regulation 34/03 made under the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act* designated the school as an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning and enabled it to grant degrees.⁵

Conestoga currently has approximately 23,000 registered students and over 30,000 part-time enrolments. The school has over 150,000 alumni and estimates that over 55% of adults in the Waterloo Region have participated in Conestoga training and education.⁶ The school has campuses and training centres in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph, Stratford, Ingersoll, and Brantford.

Conestoga offers more than 300 career-focused program in areas of applied arts, business, health sciences, and technology. The college has more degree offerings than any other college outside of the GTA.⁷

Financial Information

The primary sources of revenue for Conestoga are tuition and other fees collected from students and government grants. The largest portion of expenses for the school is attributed to salaries and benefits. Figure 1 shows the consolidated statements detailing the revenues and expenditures for 2018 and 2019.

¹ [O. Reg. 34/03](#), s. 8 (1), made under the [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002](#), S.O. 2002, c. 8, ss. 2(1.1).

² [O. Reg. 34/03](#), s. 9 (2), made under the [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002](#), S.O. 2002, c. 8, ss. 2(1.1).

³ Public Appointments Secretariat, “[Conestoga College Institute Of Technology And Advanced Learning - Board Of Governors](#).”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Conestoga College, “[50 Years of Conestoga](#).”

⁶ Conestoga College, “[Overview](#).”

⁷ Ibid.

Figure 1 – Revenue and Expenditure Summary, 2018 and 2019

Revenue	2019	2018
Grants	94,389,151	86,981,191
Tuition Fees	146,541,032	95,623,784
Other Student Fees	22,199,403	18,086,373
Contracted Services	15,672,127	12,997,461
Ancillary Operations	18,035,984	15,474,119
Interest	2,192,397	974,880
Other	8,253,236	5,432,939
Restricted revenue	1,732,752	1,450,841
Amortization of deferred capital contributions (Note 7)	7,123,471	6,304,081
Total revenue	316,139,553	243,325,669
Expenditures		
Salaries and benefits	179,545,741	147,814,602
Professional and contract fees	20,764,584	15,548,978
Student related expenses	16,855,608	14,774,258
Supplies and staff related expenses	5,760,929	4,920,005
Plant related expenses	19,284,070	12,299,700
Other expenses	13,437,403	8,210,066
Specifically reimbursed expenses	3,283,391	4,633,302
Amortization of capital assets	13,565,230	11,498,633
Scholarships, bursaries and work-study	4,406,268	4,283,135
Total expenditures	276,903,224	223,982,679
Excess of revenue over expenditures	39,236,329	19,342,990
Fund balances, beginning	63,145,042	43,407,893
Endowment contributions	226,356	394,159
Fund balances, ending	\$102,607,727	\$63,145,042

Source: Conestoga College, [Financial Statements](#), March 31, 2019, p. 7.

The [Detailed Schedules of Payments](#) from the 2019-20 Public Accounts of Ontario indicate a total of \$73,412,733 in transfer payments made to Conestoga College in the most recent fiscal year.⁸

Conestoga College indicates that it makes a large financial impact on the community and the competitiveness of the labour force. They have estimated that employed graduates are “contributing much more than \$3.4 billion dollars each year to the economy of Ontario.”⁹

⁸ Government of Ontario, [Detailed Schedule of Payments - Public Accounts 2019-20](#), September 23, 2020.

⁹ Larry Smith and Connie Phelps, [Adapting for Prosperity II 2016 Update](#) (Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, February 2017), p. 42.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The [2020-2025 Strategic Mandate Agreement](#) for the college indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has “...significantly decreased international student enrolment, college programming and finances” and in response, Conestoga “will continue to transform college operations to support increased remote and hybrid learning.”¹⁰ The college expects there to be a budget shortfall of at least \$65 million due to the pandemic. In April 2020, 119 part-time employees were issued temporary layoff notices. In June 2020, a further 60 staff members were laid-off.¹¹ On November 17, 2020, Conestoga College had its COVID-19 readiness plan approved by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, allowing international students to travel to Canada for studies.¹²

Conestoga College expects to increase Personal Support Worker (PSW) student enrolment from 200 a year to an estimated 2,000 over five years. In the summer of 2020, Conestoga received a \$5 million donation, the largest in its history, from the Cowan Foundation to support the PSW programs.¹³ The school also plans to expand its PSW programs to its Stratford campus.¹⁴

The college received almost \$340,000 from the province in 2020 for a pilot program to assist 30 unemployed workers to prepare for entry-level roles in the long-term-care sector.¹⁵ In 2021, the college launched a national Institute for Seniors Care to “develop innovative education, improve workforce development and strengthen care practices to support care for seniors and their care partners across Canada.”¹⁶

THE WITNESS

The witness, Krystal Darling, is seeking appointment as a part-time member of Conestoga College’s Board of Governors.

According to the Office of the Premier, the witness is Chief Executive Officer for Tri-Mach Group. Her community involvement includes serving as a Director for St. Mary's General Hospital Foundation.

¹⁰ Ministry of Colleges and Universities, [2020-2025 Strategic Mandate Agreement: Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning](#).

¹¹ James Jackson, [“Conestoga College announces more layoffs due to COVID-19: About 60 support staff were laid off Wednesday, and college expects budget shortfall of at least \\$65M,”](#) *Waterloo Region Record*, June 4, 2020.

¹² Conestoga College, [“Conestoga COVID-19 readiness plan approved,”](#) November 17, 2020.

¹³ Johanna Weidner, [“Conestoga gets \\$5M donation to expand PSW program,”](#) *Waterloo Region Record*, June 16, 2020.

¹⁴ Chris Montanini, [“Conestoga College expanding PSW programs to Stratford campus,”](#) *Beacon Herald*, September 29, 2020.

¹⁵ Johanna Weidner, [“Conestoga College gets provincial funding for new long-term care training program,”](#) *Waterloo Region Record*, July 20, 2020.

¹⁶ Conestoga College, [“Conestoga launches national Institute for Seniors Care,”](#) November 17, 2020.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. *What has motivated the witness to seek this appointment?*
2. *What particular contribution does the witness hope to make to the board?*
3. *In the witness's opinion, what challenges, if any, does the board face in exercising its responsibilities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the education sector?*
4. *Postsecondary educational institutions are being encouraged to align with labour market outcomes.¹⁷ How does the witness expect to contribute to responding to this aim?*

¹⁷ Ministry of Colleges and Universities, [2020-2025 Strategic Mandate Agreement: Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning](#).