Summary Status Table in Response to the Report of the Auditor General of Ontario

Public Colleges Oversight

[Section #, 2021 Annual Report of the Auditor General]

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 1	To mitigate the risks of public colleges relying highly on the tuition revenues from international students from one country and to assist the public college system in proactively planning for related circumstances that are not within their control, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (Ministry): • develop a formal and comprehensive strategy for the diversification of international students for the public college sector; • require that public colleges establish risk mitigation plans, with clear action plans, timelines and measurable outcomes, that align with the Ministry's strategy; • and require public colleges to report annually on their status of achieving their goals and take corrective actions when necessary.	Work to advance this recommendation has not yet been undertaken.	Timing to undertake this work will be contingent upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. **Estimated Completion: TBC**
Rec 2	As part of the comprehensive international student strategy discussed in Recommendation 1, we recommend the Ministry of Colleges and Universities work with public colleges to develop a long-term strategy for the sector, including options to diversify revenue streams to reduce the sector's high reliance on international students.	Work to advance this recommendation has not yet been undertaken.	Timing to undertake this work will be contingent upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. **Estimated Completion: TBC**

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 3	So that international students who are recruited to attend public colleges in Ontario are provided with accurate information to make informed decisions, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • expand the Ministry's directive requirements to include the advertising of college admissions processes, such as visa and language testing; • confirm that public colleges have a formal policy for the selection and removal of international student recruitment agencies; • require public colleges to monitor the agencies' advertisements at a regular interval (between three and six months) to confirm they are factually correct, and that any errors or other misleading advertisements found are corrected in a timely manner; • and collect data related to fees paid to recruitment agencies, and assess the reasonableness of the fees paid on a per student basis.	Work to advance this recommendation has not yet been undertaken.	Timing to undertake this work will be contingent upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. **Estimated Completion: TBC**

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	Auditor's Recommendation	Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 4	So that domestic students continue to have access to study at public colleges and high-demand programs, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities track applicant information and confirm that Ontario residents are given priority to oversubscribed programs.	Work to advance this recommendation began in 2022. Applications and applicant information are held by the institutions and their application centre (OCAS) and is not provided to the ministry.	The ministry will work with OCAS to determine the potential of obtaining applicant data for "high-demand" programs. **Estimated Completion: 2023**
Rec 5	To comply with the Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • set a timeline for public colleges to submit their international enrolment plans and establish a reasonable and timely date to comply with the 2:1 international enrolment ratio requirement; and • implement penalties or other measures for non-compliance with the Directive.	Work to address this recommendation began in 2022: • MCU has begun a review of the Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive. • Through the review, MCU will assess the impact of the Directive on the sector and consider any adjustments to ensure it continues to support student success, program quality, college financial health, and a responsible, sustainable approach to growth. • In Winter 2022, MCU began engaging with stakeholders including publicly-assisted colleges, private providers, universities and communities, as well as representatives from the federal and other provincial governments. Stakeholder feedback will inform potential amendments to the Directive.	In Spring/Summer 2022, MCU will consider potential revisions to the Directive to address the Auditor General's recommendations regarding college compliance with the enrolment limits in the Directive. Timing may be impacted upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. The release of a revised Directive is targeted before the end of 2022. **Estimated Completion: 2022**

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Rec 6	Given the public college-private partnerships started as early as 2005 and the number of partnerships has been growing, we recommend the Ministry of Colleges and Universities review the financial model for these partnership arrangements.	Work to address this recommendation began in 2022: • MCU has begun a review of the Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive. • Through the review, MCU will assess the impact of the Directive on the sector and consider any adjustments to ensure it continues to support student success, program quality, college financial health, and a responsible, sustainable approach to growth. • In Winter 2022, MCU began engaging with stakeholders including publicly-assisted colleges, private providers, universities and communities, as well as representatives from the federal and other provincial governments. Stakeholder feedback will inform potential amendments to the Directive.	In Spring/Summer 2022, MCU will consider potential revisions to the Directive to address the Auditor General's recommendations regarding the financial model for these partnerships. Timing may be impacted upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. The release of a revised Directive is targeted before the end of 2022. **Estimated Completion: 2022**

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	Auditor's Recommendation	Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 7	To independently confirm that private partners are delivering a quality of education consistent with that provided by the public colleges, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities confirm with public colleges that they require the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service to: • conduct quality assurance reviews of partnership arrangements at public colleges that focus solely on the new requirement in the College Quality Assurance Audit Process Standards established in May 2019 every two to three years, in addition to the full quality assurance review that is conducted on a five-year cycle; • include a requirement that at least one program offered by the public-private college partnership is selected for audit as part of the quality assurance audit process; and • interview the private partners' management and request audit-related information directly from private colleges as part of its quality assurance audit processes.	Work to address this recommendation began in 2022: • MCU has begun a review of the Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive. • Through the review, MCU will assess the impact of the Directive on the sector and consider any adjustments to ensure it continues to support student success, program quality, college financial health, and a responsible, sustainable approach to growth. • In Winter 2022, MCU began engaging with stakeholders including publicly-assisted colleges, private providers, universities and communities, as well as representatives from the federal and other provincial governments. Stakeholder feedback will inform potential amendments to the Directive.	In Spring/Summer 2022, MCU will consider potential revisions to the Directive to address the Auditor General's recommendations regarding quality assurance processes at partnerships. Timing likely to be impacted upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. The release of a revised Directive is targeted before the end of 2022. **Estimated Completion: 2022**

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 8	To help ensure students have access to an appropriate range of services (such as mental health support, wireless internet access, tutoring services, academic support and student activities) at private career colleges, as required by their public-private college partnership agreements and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities' Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive, we recommend that public colleges: • monitor student services offered at their private partners' campuses and compare them to the services offered by the public colleges annually; and • address any shortcomings identified in these reviews	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 9	To increase transparency to students and maintain the principles of the Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities revisit the existing British Columbia cross-jurisdictional partnership arrangement and determine whether it should allow Ontario public colleges to continue to operate with partnerships in British Columbia, and, if the decision is to allow them to operate, create a formal agreement with British Columbia and update the Partnerships Directive to address concerns.	Work to address this recommendation began in 2022: • MCU has begun a review of the Public College-Private Partnerships Minister's Binding Policy Directive. • Through the review, MCU will assess the impact of the Directive on the sector and consider any adjustments to ensure it continues to support student success, program quality, college financial health, and a responsible, sustainable approach to growth. • In Winter 2022, MCU began engaging with stakeholders including publicly-assisted colleges, private providers, universities and communities, as well as representatives from the federal and other provincial governments. Stakeholder feedback will inform potential amendments to the Directive.	As part of its review of the Directive, MCU is planning to meet with representatives of British Columbia's government to discuss inter-jurisdictional partnerships in Spring 2022. In Spring/Summer 2022, MCU will consider potential revisions to the Directive to address the Auditor General's recommendations regarding partnerships in British Columbia. Timing likely to be impacted upon the confirmation of the government mandate following the provincial election in June 2022. The release of a revised Directive is targeted before the end of 2022. **Estimated Completion: 2022**
Rec 10	To foster and support continuous improvement of public college performance under future Strategic Mandate Agreements, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities work with public colleges to reassess their performance target-setting formula so that targets are not set lower than the prior year's target and/or actual performance achieved.	In developing the next round of Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA4), MCU will evaluate the outcomes from the SMA3 process to assess the effectiveness of the performance-based funding model. This work is scheduled to begin in 2023-24.	**Estimated Completion: 2025-26 (Start of SMA4)**

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 11	To align the performance-based metrics established for public colleges under the Strategic Mandate Agreements with the mandate of public colleges, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities reassess future performance metrics and modify them so that the metrics: • are within the control of public colleges; • incentivize colleges to meet workforce needs even though graduate earnings might be less for some sectors; and • do not further increase dependency on international enrolments without a longer-term strategy in place to address the risks of this approach for financial sustainability.	In developing the next round of Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA4), MCU will assess and confirm performance metrics aligned with government priorities and shared goals for the postsecondary education sector. This work is scheduled to begin in 2023-24.	**Estimated Completion: 2025-26**

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Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 12	So that prospective students and the public are better informed about the performance of public colleges, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • reinstate the collection and reporting of student satisfaction by individual colleges; • publicly report the performance indicators for both domestic and international students; and • work with public colleges to identify barriers faced by domestic students and any opportunities to increase the domestic graduation rate.	Work to advance this recommendation is estimated to begin in 2023.	MCU will seek direction on the possible reintroduction of the student satisfaction survey and if a decision is made to proceed, it will: • Conduct consultations with publicly-assisted colleges; and • Issue a separate Electronic Request for Bids to secure a service provider for the survey. **Estimated Completion: 2025** MCU will work with publicly-assisted colleges and internally within the ministry to establish a methodology that aligns—where possible—to publicly reported Key Performance Indicator data for both domestic and international students. **Estimated Completion: 2024** MCU will continue to work with colleges on ways to improve graduation rates individually and provincially. **Estimated Completion:** Implementation of this item will be ongoing over the longer term to allow time for progress.

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 13	To confirm that the funding from the COVID-19 Emergency Fund and Support Fund was allocated to colleges most impacted by the pandemic, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (Ministry): • complete its assessment of whether the public colleges that received this funding met the eligibility criteria using the most recent audited financial statements and other updated information obtained from public colleges; and • recover any excess of COVID-19 support funding based on the results of the Ministry's assessment.	The ministry has received all report-backs from colleges regarding their spending related to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund and Support Fund and has completed its assessment. **Completed in Fall 2021.**	
Rec 14	To better allocate capital funding to public colleges based on deferred maintenance needs, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • conclude its re-evaluation of the way it allocates funding to colleges for deferred maintenance; and • allocate funding based on a method that considers colleges' facilities condition and colleges' management of their deferred maintenance work from self-generated funds.	Work to address this recommendation began in 2021: • MCU signed memorandums of understanding with Colleges Ontario and Council of Ontario Universities to standardize and streamline the reporting of building-level data to the province. • MCU also collaborated with the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, and Infrastructure Ontario to develop a comprehensive reporting template for colleges and universities to report facilities data to the ministry, on an annual basis.	MCU will continue to work through the issues and deficiencies identified in facilities data reported by colleges and universities. The ministry plans to transition to deferred maintenance and/or current replacement value driven funding methodology for its renewal programs i.e., Facilities Renewal Program. **Estimated Completion: 2023**

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 15	To maintain consistent, high-quality and relevant non-degree programs as offered by public colleges, and to help students achieve Ontario's desired learning outcomes, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • update non-degree program standards that have not been revised within the intended five- to 10-year time frame for updating standards; and • develop program standards for all applicable non-degree programs.	Work to advance this recommendation is scheduled to begin in 2022.	Out of the 147 program standards that MCU has developed, 36 programs standards have not been updated within the last 5 – 10 years. If our request for an annual budget of $1,000,000 is approved to complete this program standards work, PEQAB could complete the review and update of these 36 program standards over the course of the next 5+ years. With that budget, PEQAB could potentially contract with approximately 10 External Expert Facilitators to complete program standard reviews including the ones that are 5 – 10 years old. Each full program standard review takes approximately one year to complete. MCU's development/review processes for program standards/vocational learning outcomes, currently through PEQAB, have generally been "applicable" only when a significant number of different Ontario Colleges is teaching a non-degree program or cluster of related programs to a significant number of students. For programs taught by only one college or by a limited number of colleges to a limited number of students, the colleges' internal processes for developing these vocational learning outcomes are entirely adequate. The ministry's program development process is principally one of harmonization, and the currently applicable candidate programs for this process are captured in the 147 programs above, hence the same timeframe: 5+ years. **Estimated Completion: 2027+**

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Auditor's Recommendation		Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 16	To enable timely approval processes for both degree and non-degree programs so that colleges can respond quickly to employer needs, while ensuring program quality and needs are met, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • create specific documented guidance and a checklist that should be used by each Ministry program reviewer when reviewing a program approval application submitted by a public college; • provide status updates on the approval process to public colleges (every two to three months) so that colleges can understand the timing and probability of program approvals; • track and identify reasons for delays in the degree and non-degree program approval processes; and • take corrective actions in a timely manner.	Work to address this recommendation began in Winter 2021/22: • Revised program funding approval processes were implemented by MCU in February 2022. The new processes will support more timely approvals for both degree and non-degree college programs. • A series of technical briefing sessions on the new process were held with institutions the week of March 7, 2022.	MCU will develop clear guidelines to support service quality commitments pertaining to timelines and regular communication with the sector. Estimated date of release is Summer 2022. MCU will update and enhance its Program Funding Approvals and Administration Module (PFAAM) to reflect the new processes. Estimated date of completion is Winter 2022/2023. MCU will engage the sector and continue to review/revise approval processes on an ongoing basis, and commits to providing status updates on pending program approvals on a regular basis or as needed. **Estimated Completion: 2024**

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Rec 17	To strengthen the orientation processes for new public college board governors we recommend, where applicable, the boards of Loyalist, Sault, Seneca and St. Clair: • require, as per the Ministry's Protocol for Board Nominations and Appointments, that external governors attend the College Centre of Board Excellence's (CCBE's) orientation sessions; and • encourage the ongoing development of external governors by setting a minimum participation rate for external governors to attend CCBE courses over a specified period of time, with the aim of achieving the CCBE's Good Governance and Advanced Good Governance certificates.	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	
Rec 18	To strengthen its oversight of boards of governors' conflict of interest policies and processes, including ensuring greater alignment with leading governance practices, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • update its directives to require public college board governors to complete annual Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms that are reviewed by board chairs; and • confirm on an annual basis that the updated directive is adhered to by the public colleges.	Work to advance this recommendation is scheduled to begin in 2022.	In Spring/Summer 2022, MCU will draft proposed revisions to the Conflict of Interest Minister's Binding Policy Directive to address the Auditor General's recommendation for Minister's approval. The release of a revised Directive is targeted for the end of 2022 – early 2023. **Estimated Completion: 2023**

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Rec 19	To strengthen their board of governors' conflict of interest policies and processes, including ensuring greater alignment with leading governance practices, we recommend that the boards of governors of Loyalist, Sault, Seneca and St. Clair colleges have their board members complete an annual Conflict of Interest Declaration Form, which is then reviewed by the board chair.	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	
Rec 20	To improve board performance in fulfilling governance functions and to align with leading governance practices, we recommend that the boards of public colleges: • conduct board evaluations on an annual basis, and make tangible improvements to their board's practices as a result of the evaluation process; and • conduct comprehensive, documented annual performance evaluations of the president, based on meaningful criteria and performance measures that identify leadership competency strengths, achievement of strategic objectives, and opportunities for improvement.	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	

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Rec 21	To support public college boards to operate with a full complement of board members, and provide for an orderly transition of appointees, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: • stagger the terms of the Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments; and • appoint members on a timely basis to comply with the September 1 start date under the regulation O. Reg 34/03 of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002.	Work to address this recommendation began in Winter 2022: • MCU is preparing to invite colleges to submit nominees for Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC) appointment for terms starting on September 1, 2022.	MCU will continue to support a timely LGIC appointment process, recognizing that that the upcoming election period may impact the September 2022 appointment cycle. Starting in Fall/Winter 2022, MCU will consider potential regulatory and/or appointment process changes to address the Auditor General's recommendation for the 2023 appointment cycle. **Estimated Completion:** 2023
Rec 22	To provide transparency to the public and to comply with all accountability reporting requirements and operating procedures, we recommend that • Fanshawe and St. Clair submit their audited financial statements to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities by the required deadline; • Canadore, George Brown and Sault make their annual reports publicly available on their websites on a timely basis; and • Loyalist and St. Clair include complete audited financial statements in their annual reports on their operational performance.	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	

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Rec 23	To provide effective oversight of public colleges and their compliance with the accountability reporting requirements, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities maintain documentation regarding delays from public colleges that are consistently submitting their audited financial statements late, and take corrective action to address the causes for the delays.	Work to advance this recommendation began during 2021-22 fiscal year end.	During year end training sessions, MCU will provide direction to colleges to uphold their MCU directive obligations and fulfil the commitment they made under recommendation 22. A protocol will be introduced for colleges to provide documentation for delays and steps for correction and mitigation.
Rec 24	To improve the reliability and usefulness of public colleges' financial statements, we recommend that: • the 18 public colleges (Algonquin, Boréal, Cambrian, Canadore, Conestoga, Confederation, Fanshawe, Fleming, La Cité, Lambton, Loyalist, Mohawk, Niagara, Northern, Sault, Seneca, Sheridan, and St. Clair) append a signed statement of management responsibility dated on or before the date of the audit opinion to their audited financial statements published on their websites; and • Fanshawe include board signatures in its published audited financial statements.	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	

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Rec 25	To improve the quality of financial information received from public colleges, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities require public colleges to report the gross revenue earned and expenses incurred from their public-private college partnerships in their statement of operations, and include a description of the partnership revenue stream in the notes to their financial statements.	MCU has reviewed the position the colleges gave regarding this issue in their response to recommendation 24. MCU has also conducted its own analysis of the reporting practices among the colleges with public-private partnerships, in relation to their signed agreements.	The ministry will adjust college submissions so that the 2021-22 Public Accounts includes the gross revenue earned by all colleges from their public-private partnerships. MCU will engage in consultations with the College sector on the requirement to report the gross revenue earned and expenses incurred from their public-private college Internal Audit will be conducting a review of public-private college partnerships. **Estimated completion 2023**
Rec 26	To improve the reliability and usefulness of public colleges' financial statements, we recommend that any public college that has or enters into a partnership with a private career college: • report the gross revenue earned and expenses incurred (instead of revenue on a net basis) from their public-private college partnerships in their statement of operations; and • include the partnership revenue stream as a separate revenue line item either in the statement of operations or within a separate schedule in the financial statements, in addition to a description of the revenue stream in the notes to their financial statements.	*No MCU response - This recommendation was directed to publicly-assisted colleges*	

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