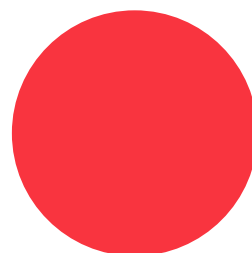
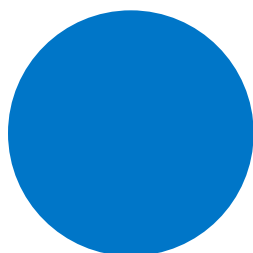
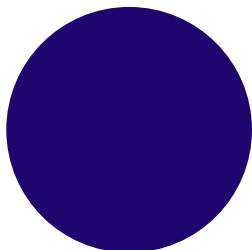


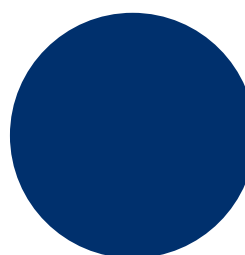
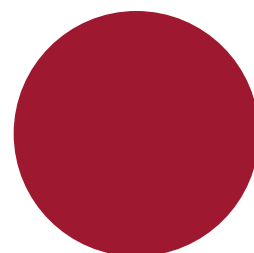
PARTNERING TO BUILD A STRONG ONTARIO

2020 Pre-Budget Submission
to the Ontario Government



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All photos from
Ontario universities.

Introduction

In today's rapidly changing economy, disruption, new technologies and demographic shifts are changing the way we live, work and play.

To help turn this disruption into opportunity, Ontario needs a competitive economy that is open for business – one that can boost local economies and attract investment to communities and regions throughout the province.

Ontario's universities remain committed to continuing to develop the skilled workforce the province needs to compete and to helping spur the type of innovation that leads to economic activity for all of our communities.

But more can be done to build an Ontario that is fully prepared to meet the demands of the new economy.

By working in partnership with government and industry, we can create a world-class postsecondary education system that continues to:

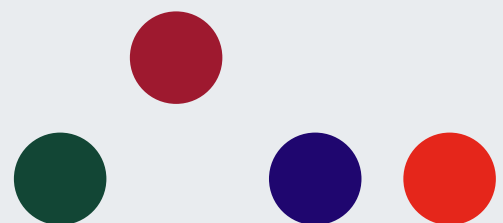
- **Support new ways of learning:** New technologies and innovative programs are changing the way students learn. Universities must continue to adapt, provide work-integrated and life-long learning opportunities, and utilize digital learning to respond to employer and student demand.
- **Build modern learning spaces:** To respond to evolving labour market needs, such as job growth in STEM and health care, new infrastructure, equipment and technologies are required to keep pace with new teaching methods and ways of learning that better prepare students for the workforce.
- **Drive innovation:** A dynamic research and innovation ecosystem will empower entrepreneurs to take risks, develop new products and create jobs, helping keep the province's best and brightest talent at home.

A healthy, financially sustainable university system contributes to Ontario's economic and social well-being. It prepares students for life-long careers, supplies the province with a talented workforce, helps build thriving regions throughout, and supports a globally competitive economy through ground-breaking research and innovation.

Having already faced years of funding pressure, Ontario's universities have and continue to demonstrate their ability to do more with less – providing a quality education and student supports while holding the line on costs.

But, in order to maintain this calibre of education, support for Ontario's university sector is needed.

This pre-budget submission details how government and universities can partner to tackle the priorities that are critical to Ontario's economic growth; creating a more prosperous future for our students, communities and the province.



1

Developing Adaptable and Resilient Life-Long Learners

A competitive Ontario needs the next generation of talent to be adaptable life-long learners who can navigate the province through social, economic and technological change, and innovate through the shifting landscape.

To support an adaptable workforce, Ontario's universities are working to ensure students graduate equipped with:

- Tools to become life-long learners
- Adaptable skills to navigate a changing economy
- Work-integrated and digital learning experiences that reflect new ways of learning and support access for rural and remote students
- Tools that support resiliency and promote mental health in an age of disruption

We can already see how automation and the changing nature of work has impacted the workforce and the type of skills required. Where, once, a worker would hold the same job over a lifetime, it is now estimated that recent graduates may have up to 12 different jobs throughout their careers.

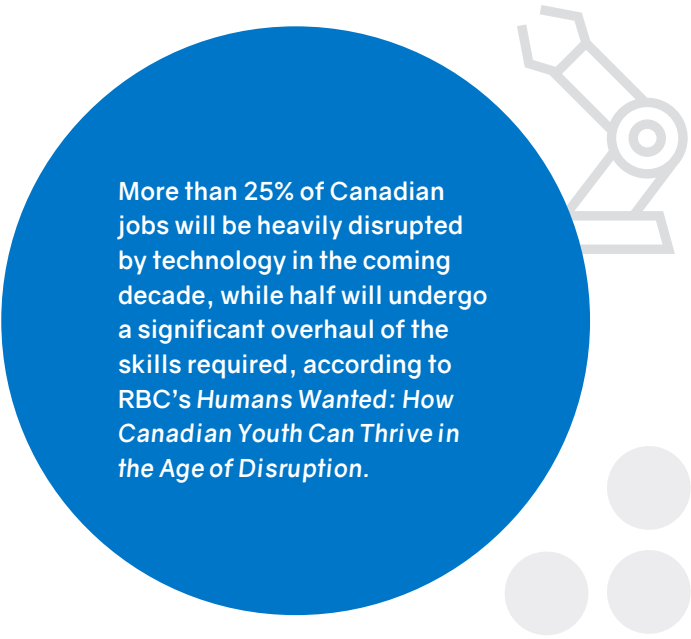
In *On Test: Skills*, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) found that even graduates who hold the same job over a longer period of time may find their role rapidly evolving – all the more reason for a strong transferrable skillset.

It means that today's universities are no longer a destination point during a single stage of life. Instead, a world-class postsecondary education system helps the modern learner become a life-long learner.

Ontario's universities work with business to adapt courses that can support Ontarians of all backgrounds, including mid-career workers in traditional industries. Our institutions are encouraging life-long learning and offer a wide range of current and relevant programs, training and certificates.

The Ontario Council for University Lifelong Learning (OCULL), for example, develops online, distance and continuing education programs that support adult learners and deliver life-long learning opportunities.

At one university, partnerships with employers in the advanced manufacturing sector offer short programs that help manufacturing workers and managers adapt their skills as they work in a changing industry. Not only does this type of programming benefit employees, it also helps employers advance local industry and build the workforce they need.



These types of short-duration programs will become increasingly important for the development of the province's workforce, enabling Ontarians to rapidly build on their experience as the economy continues to evolve.

In fact, the majority of Ontarians (88 per cent) support government funding for programs that can help people who have lost their jobs develop new skills or experience, according to an Ipsos-Reid survey.

Pearson's 2019 Global Learner Survey found that nearly 65% of Canadians believe the world is shifting to a model where people participate in education over a lifetime.

By making short duration programs more affordable for mid-career workers through adjustments to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), and continuing to partner with industry to assess what is needed, we can further strengthen universities' capacity to support life-long learners in a changing economy.

Adaptable skills employers want for the new economy

In addition to short-duration programs, Ontario's universities continue to ensure all students are equipped with the adaptable skills they need to become the province's future leaders and job creators – the creative entrepreneurs, nimble employees and employers who are prepared for roles we haven't yet imagined.

“To succeed in the knowledge economy the pipeline of young talent will need to be dynamic and resilient, equipped with a broad suite of technical and soft skills.” – Future-Proof: Preparing Young Canadians for the Future of Work, the Brookfield Institute, 2017

A 2019 RBC assessment of 20,000 skills rankings across 300 occupations and 2.4 million expected job openings found an increasing employer demand for critical thinking, co-ordination, social perceptiveness, active listening and complex problem-solving skills.

A 2016 Business Council of Canada survey found that companies prioritize collaboration, teamwork, communication, problem-solving and leadership skills when hiring new staff. They are looking for workers with multifaceted and transferable skills that can help them master new technologies and keep up with changes to their industries.

These transferrable skills help both new graduates and mid-career workers succeed in a rapidly changing economy. In *On Test: Skills*, HEQCO notes, “For mid-career workers whose jobs may disappear, the key to successful and speedy re-entry into the labour market is a strong foundation of transferable skills that will help them pivot into a new work environment.”

Not only is this skillset sought out by employers, but according to Ontarians, they are also the skills we've come to expect from university graduates. In a recent Ipsos-Reid survey, problem-solving and critical thinking skills were listed as the most important expectations for a university education by Ontarians.

Equipping the next generation with valuable work-integrated learning opportunities

While fostering adaptability in students is critical, equally important is ensuring they are given the opportunities to apply these skills to real-world situations.



Ontario's universities partner with a wide range of employers to help students take the knowledge learned on campus to the workplace, ensuring they graduate with the practical experiences that will help them start their career.

Through in-class research projects, on-campus entrepreneurship activities, industry-sponsored hackathons, community-based projects and internships, our universities provide students with wide-ranging opportunities to tackle complex, real-life challenges.

According to *Work Integrated Learning and Post-Secondary Education: What Students Think*, Abacus Data found 86% of current students and recent graduates in Canada said experiential learning led to an easier transition from school to a successful career.

In *Work-Ready Graduates: The Role of Co-op Programs in Labour Market Success*, the C.D. Howe Institute found that participating in co-op programs is linked to higher incomes and a higher likelihood of success in the labour market. Additionally, nearly 60 per cent of surveyed employers in Ontario offered employment to at least one graduate who had participated in a co-op program.

Universities recently launched the Propel Initiative to further encourage these valuable work-integrated learning opportunities. Through an online portal, Propel helps connect small and medium-sized businesses to university students.

Launched in partnership with the Ontario Nonprofit Network and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Propel benefits both the student and the employer. It provides businesses with the critical thinking and fresh ideas university students can bring, and students with the opportunity to gain important hands-on learning experience.

An industry-university partnership in Northern Ontario is showing students they don't need to leave their communities to pursue an education and secure a well-paying job. Two Ontario universities and local industry are working together to provide students with invaluable work-integrated learning placements – helping students transition from school to work and towards becoming professional engineers without having to leave the region.



Integrating the digital space to reflect new ways of learning

In *Government's Role in Digital Learning: Review and Recommendations for the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities*, HECQO highlighted the need for a provincial digital learning strategy.

Today, digital learning is part of the university experience for all students. Ontario's universities look forward to supporting the development of this strategy by bringing forth ideas and recommendations for best practices based on our experiences.

Each Ontario university continues to evolve courses, services and programs to support new types of online, digital or technology-enhanced learning. These opportunities are integrated across disciplines at all of our campuses and reflect local community needs – including supports for Indigenous and French learners.

In an overview of the types of digital learning in Ontario, the 2018 Canadian National Online and Digital Education survey found that more than 16% of Ontario undergraduate students complete at least one online course as part of their studies. Currently, there are 240 fully online programs offered through Ontario's universities in a variety of disciplines and credential types. More than 4,000 fully online university courses are available across the province.

Supporting faculty and administrators as they build out the digital space and fully leverage online learning at universities can help support access for students, particularly those in rural and remote communities.

64% of Ontarians support government funding for more online learning at Ontario's universities, according to a recent Ipsos-Reid survey.

Supporting mental health services for postsecondary students

New skills and learning environments are not all that is needed to prepare students for the new economy. With a rapidly changing landscape and increasing demands on new graduates entering the workforce, the types of services students require are changing, as well.

Supports that foster student resiliency and ability to adapt are invaluable in helping build Ontario. An effective mental health-care system is vital for student well-being and can help them access the life-long tools needed to navigate a continuously changing future.

Over the years, Ontario's universities have steadily seen an increase in demand for mental health services. Between 2011-12 and 2017-18, the total number of students registering a mental health disability as their primary disability increased by 151 per cent, while several institutions are reporting an increase of more than 200 per cent.

This increase in demand has occurred even though the total number of students enrolled at Ontario's universities only rose by 11 per cent during this time.

According to data from 10 Ontario universities, 90% of university health services had a top diagnostic code that was mental-health related in 2018-19.



With 75 per cent of mental health issues beginning before the age of 25, postsecondary students are particularly vulnerable to these experiences. Partnering to support this unique cohort will help develop a future workforce that is resilient and adaptable, reduce the burden of mental health needs across the province, and help create a system that fully supports Ontario.

That is why Ontario's universities, in partnership with colleges and student groups, are advocating for a whole-of-community approach to student mental health through our joint initiative, In It Together.

In It Together advocates for community-based mental health services, transitional programming for students as they enter postsecondary and timely access to effective care. It requires partnerships between postsecondary, government, health-care providers and community agencies to ensure Ontarians are supported from K-12 to postsecondary and into adulthood.

Another way universities and colleges are working to improve access to mental health services is through the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH). CICMH works with all 44 campuses and more than 100 community partners to share resources that help campus mental health workers on the frontline address student

needs. The centre avoids duplication of efforts by efficiently delivering resources in its role as a centralized hub.

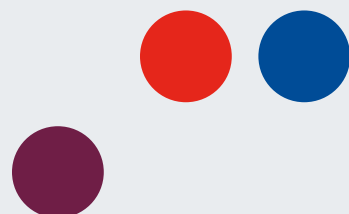
But more can be done. Partnering to build an easy-to-navigate mental health-care system can help foster student success throughout university and ensure they are better prepared for the demands of an evolving workforce.

This access to critical services, coupled with more opportunities for work-integrated learning, short-duration programming and digital learning, will set university graduates on a path towards life-long success. These supports and initiatives will ultimately ensure they are invaluable in helping build a stronger, competitive Ontario.

Recommendations

Develop an adaptable and resilient workforce for the modern economy by:

- **Creating a life-long learning competitive grant that supports initiatives that enable:**
 - » **Experiential learning opportunities for students**
 - » **Short-term courses like micro-credentials and badging to support career upskilling**
 - » **Online technology to enhance greater access**
- **Providing tax credits to small businesses who partner with universities to offer work-integrated learning opportunities for current students and recent graduates**
- **Adjusting the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to support programs less than one year in duration or cost-recovered**
- **Doubling the amount of government funding for mental health supports at Ontario's universities, as well as funding for the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH)**



2

Modern Infrastructure to Support the New Economy

As the government works to develop innovative infrastructure solutions for public buildings, Ontario's universities are committed to doing the same on our campuses.

Our province is home to world-class infrastructure, some of which exists at our own institutions. This infrastructure helps our students, faculty and researchers make the kinds of discoveries that improve the lives of Ontarians.

Whether it's a health science student working with a local hospital to learn how to cure diseases; a researcher partnering with local entrepreneurs to invent new technologies that will create jobs; or a small business owner testing products and prototypes to help scale their company – these shared spaces are ripe for collaboration and innovation.

Leading-edge infrastructure can spur innovation and economic growth – critical components in helping Ontario compete on a global stage.

Providing universities with the support needed to maintain facilities and upgrade outdated learning environments will ensure:

- Our students have access to modern learning spaces
- Ground-breaking research is conducted through cutting-edge infrastructure
- Communities and businesses thrive with access to shared facilities

Ontario's universities contribute millions of dollars to the Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) every year. Institutions also find efficient ways to fund the construction of non-FRP eligible projects such as roads, residences and research infrastructure, both physical and digital.

Despite these efforts, almost half of the total space on university campuses has been deemed in "poor condition," according to the Facilities Condition Index. What's more, a \$4.6-billion backlog of deferred maintenance exists.

As campus infrastructure ages and technology becomes obsolete, the amount of funding needed to retrofit these buildings is growing. More support means university campuses can maximize efficiencies and operate smarter.

Modern learning spaces for students

Modern students require modern spaces.

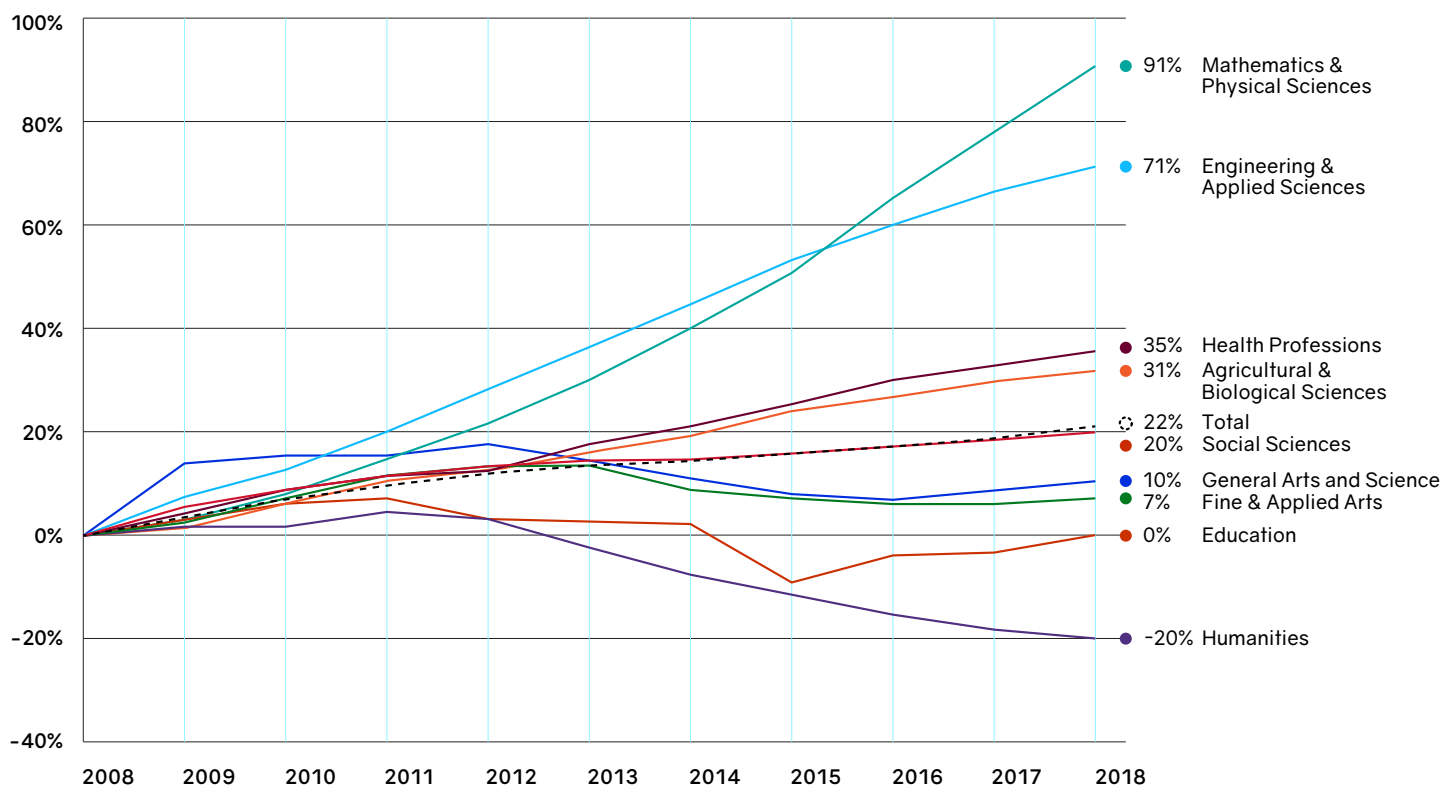
The university classroom is no longer a traditional lecture hall, but incorporates spaces for group work valued by employers. Our institutions are, and must continue to, blend tradition with innovation to create dynamic spaces that foster collaboration, integrate online learning and enable new technologies.

In 2018-19, universities contributed more than \$322 million to FRP-eligible projects that would upgrade classrooms and learning environments, while the government currently provides approximately \$50 million – less than 12 per cent of the \$420 million needed to maintain the current condition of buildings.

Growing universities' capacity to fit and retrofit classrooms, labs and other facilities will help leverage leading edge technology and ensure students are trained, educated and graduate from institutions that reflect the changing needs of the workforce they are entering.

In fact, our universities already have a significantly different mix of students and programs than they had a decade ago. We are seeing student enrollment growth in programs that are responsive to labour market demands. Since 2008, for example, 62,000 more students enrolled in Ontario university science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs.

Enrolment at Ontario Universities by Program Area



As well, starting in 2021, Ontario's demographic forecast shows significant growth in the university-aged population – projected to increase by 11 per cent by 2036.

To fully meet student demand, our facilities, faculty and resources must continue to grow and reflect these changes.

Enabling ground-breaking research through infrastructure

Researchers on Ontario university campuses also benefit from access to leading edge facilities and equipment. Modern physical and digital research infrastructure allows them to push the boundaries of knowledge, support economic growth and improve quality of life through innovation.

These spaces become places where researchers both use and create new technologies and equipment that help them work through some of Ontario's most complex problems, finding solutions in areas such as personalized medicine, smart agriculture and autonomous vehicles.

Mapping Eastern Ontario's entire economic and agricultural activity is leading to a visual treasure trove of information for the Ontario East Economic Development Corporation. One Ontario university's media studio has developed an in-depth, interactive 3-D map of the region's economic assets to help the commission better understand and stimulate economic activity. The studio started by mapping Eastern Ontario's breweries, layered with data on what they produce and what factors into their supply chain – so that, for example, their needs could be matched to hops producers in the regions. The research team is now mapping agricultural and food industries.

Students of all levels receive invaluable training opportunities by accessing research infrastructure. They are given the opportunity to work with leaders in their fields and gain valuable work-integrated learning experience.

Modern research infrastructure in the form of university incubators has provided university students with invaluable training experience. More than 280,000 students have used these facilities to help turn their research into products and services, and create more than 2,200 start-ups and 4,700 jobs.



Supporting communities and businesses through shared infrastructure

Lastly, access to state-of-the-art facilities and equipment on university campuses benefits and supports local businesses, private sector commercialization and drives regional economic development.

These co-working spaces, accelerators, labs and incubators bring students, faculty, entrepreneurs and industry together to find solutions that help businesses thrive, turn ideas into products and enable companies to compete globally.

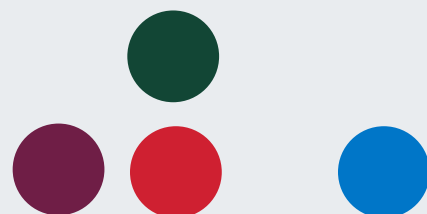
In some cases, through shared university infrastructure, local community organizations and small businesses gain access to leading-edge equipment to test ideas. They have the opportunity to collaborate with students and researchers – opportunities these businesses might not otherwise afford, but that are necessary to drive local industry.

New infrastructure and modernizing existing spaces will ensure Ontario's universities can operate smarter and more efficiently, support talent development and facilitate the creation of ground-breaking innovation that drives economic development.

Recommendations

Create modern learning environments that reflect new ways of learning and researching through:

- A competitive infrastructure fund to develop modern and technology-enabled classrooms, research labs and testing facilities, including retrofitting existing facilities
- Collaborating with federal counterparts to build the cutting-edge infrastructure Ontario needs to drive economic growth, including continuing to match federal research infrastructure dollars



3

Driving a Strong and Competitive Economy

The province needs an economy that empowers innovators to take risks right here in Ontario. This type of entrepreneurial culture is vital to creating jobs and enabling our province to keep the best and brightest talent at home, while attracting global investment.

A risk-taking culture can only be fostered through:

- A robust research and innovation ecosystem to truly open Ontario for business
- A nimble workforce that is responsive to changing labour market demands

Conducting ground-breaking research to fuel innovation

From developing more efficient and effective health-care systems and processes, to helping workforces prepare for the disruption caused by artificial intelligence (AI), Ontario university research is advancing industries, attracting foreign investment and much more.

These discoveries have led to the types of inventions that benefit all Ontarians and address some of the complex issues facing our global economy today. They include self-cleaning surfaces to prevent the transfer of antibiotic-resistant superbugs in hospitals and kitchens, and new methods to help Ontario households prepare for the costs and impacts of climate change.

Ontario university research and development contributes nearly \$25 billion a year to Ontario's economy. The higher education sector is the second largest performer of research and development in Ontario, carrying out an estimated \$5.2 billion in work.

Fostering an environment where our researchers can better work to solve pressing issues, as well as, continue to work with global partners, will enable researchers to further increase Ontario's competitive advantage.

While their impact has been felt globally, researchers are also helping fuel regional economic development and address local challenges within the province. Their partnerships with small businesses and communities are ultimately helping improve quality of life for community members and advance local industry.

86% of Ontarians support government funding for research that can help create new businesses or support issues like health care, according to a recent Ipsos-Reid survey.

Strong innovation ecosystems that bring together universities, businesses and government help local regions and communities address specific challenges, develop new technologies and boost economic activity. Building these ecosystems throughout the province can further drive local economies across all of Ontario's regions.

Building a dynamic innovation ecosystem

Both students and researchers, alike, work with entrepreneurs and industry to commercialize new discoveries and turn made-in-Ontario ideas into products and services. Their work has resulted in thousands of start-ups and revenue-generating companies that attract foreign investment.

In fact, students are increasingly looking for opportunities to support commercialization in on-campus incubators – opportunities that employers value as well when looking to hire. More than 280,000 students have used incubators and accelerators, and their student-led start-ups have

contributed an estimated \$85 million to Ontario's GDP. Additionally, an estimated \$16.6 million in fiscal benefits generated by the economic activity of these start-ups has been returned to the government.

When research is ready to be commercialized, students and researchers work with technology transfer offices (TTOs) in order to take their discoveries to market. TTOs play a valuable role in providing early investments to protect commercially viable intellectual property (IP). They also provide support to the IP creator (the student or researcher) – support that helps them throughout a typically complex process.

The majority of university-generated IP is in its earliest stage when it reaches the TTO, often without working prototypes. TTOs then help secure funding to build first-generation prototypes in order to de-risk the IP and make it more attractive to private sector investment.

But simply creating IP and moving it through the TTO does not always lead to successful commercialization. Increasing the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in commercialization can further help ensure its success, particularly in transferring early-applied research to the private sector.

SMEs make up 99.7% of Ontario businesses, and can help further drive commercialization in Ontario.

There is opportunity to further incentivize these businesses to invest in university applied research, which can help companies scale and keep commercialized ideas in Ontario.

Busy safety managers can quickly identify hazards, assess risks and communicate work instructions to workers thanks to a web app developed by Rillea Technologies. The company works with manufacturers, labs, schools and hospitals to ensure workplace safety. Rillea Technologies was part of a university acceleration and mentorship program that helps entrepreneurs advance their ideas and accelerate the growth of their companies.

Universities, government and industry all have a role to play in ensuring the full spectrum of research flourishes, from basic to applied and community-driven. These efforts will drive the type of dynamic innovation and attract the entrepreneurial spirit Ontario needs to be competitive, both regionally and globally.

Ensuring a talented workforce for a nimble economy

But, beyond innovation, the province needs a skilled workforce that is adaptable to innovative new technologies and responsive to changing labour market demands. While we may not know all of the jobs that will exist in the future, we do know where demand is likely to increase.

For example, we have already seen how talent coming out of health-care and STEM programs at Ontario universities are attracting investment to the province from companies such as Uber and General Electric.

In fact, Canada's tech sector employed more than 860,000 Canadians in 2015. In particular, Toronto is now North America's fastest growing tech market, attracting companies such as LG, IBM and Google – all who want to work with university talent and researchers.

A 2016 World Economic Forum report revealed that in four years, across 15 major developed and emerging economies, computer and mathematical jobs are expected to be one of the major drivers of employment growth, producing 405,000 net new jobs. This growth is expected to be largely driven by data analysts and software developers.

Between 2000 and 2010, more than 70% of new industries that emerged in the United States were directly connected to digital technologies, and often required workers with at least a bachelor's degree in STEM fields, according to *Structural Transformation in the OECD: Digitalisation, Deindustrialisation and the Future of Work*.

In the near future, employers will continue to look for postsecondary graduates – approximately two-thirds of all job openings will require a postsecondary education. In fact, in just three decades, jobs requiring a university education have increased by 145 per cent.

Our university graduates have a 95 per cent employment rate after two years. Eighty-eight per cent of graduates who are employed full-time consider their work either closely or somewhat related to the skills developed at university – skills that will help them navigate an evolving economy from boom to recession.

Job creation in Canada since the 2008–2009 recession has largely been driven by high-wage, private-sector jobs. From July 2009 to January 2014, more than two-thirds (71%) of all jobs created were in high-wage industries. The shift towards highly skilled employment is expected to continue, according to the Brookfield Institute's Future-proof: Preparing young Canadians for the Future of Work.

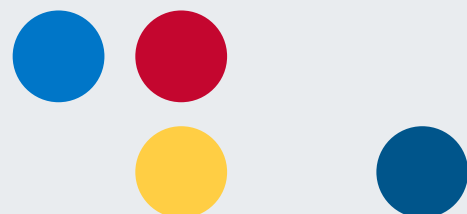
The income that university graduates working in the province receive, particularly in growing fields, totals \$48.7 billion, which can further support the economy through spending.

Together, we can ensure in-demand fields are supported by skilled talent that can adapt to shifting economies. As a result, Ontario will have the workforce it needs to support its citizens.

Recommendations

Develop an innovation strategy to attract and support investment to the province by:

- **Funding research aligned with government priorities, including research that is fast-breaking and responsive to the complex challenges Ontario is facing, enabling researchers to work on a global scale with international partners**
- **Maximizing commercialization opportunities, as outlined in the Driving a Strong and Globally Competitive Economy through Innovation report on intellectual property**
- **Providing additional funded spaces to increase enrollment in high-demand programs**



Conclusion

A healthy, financially sustainable university system is vital to Ontario's economic and social well-being. It prepares students for life-long careers, supplies the province with a talented workforce, helps build thriving regions throughout, and supports a globally competitive economy through ground-breaking research and innovation.

Ontario's universities share the government's commitment to ensure everyone who is willing and able has the tools and opportunity to meet the needs of the future workforce – the people of Ontario truly are our province's greatest asset.

Our universities continue to maximize smart operations – our efforts have already resulted in significant cost savings. We look forward to demonstrating strong stewardship of public sector dollars and continuing to work with government on the Strategic Mandate Agreement.

But, in order to run as efficiently as possible, our sector requires support. Funding for our institutions has been decreasing for more than a decade. Since 2002-03, operating grants per student, when adjusted for inflation, have decreased by 10.6 per cent, requiring Ontario universities to operate at the lowest per-student funding levels in Canada.

According to the recent Ernst & Young line-by-line review of Ontario government expenditures, transfer payment expenditures in the postsecondary sector saw almost the lowest annual growth, at 0.3 per cent, of any of the seven major sectors reviewed.

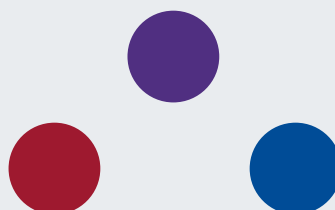
In fact, just under four per cent, or \$5.1 billion, of total government operating expenditure goes to colleges and universities for operating costs, making the postsecondary sector's Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) below that of similar provinces like Quebec and British Columbia.

A pattern of reduced investment by government threatens to erode our ability to be more innovative and entrepreneurial – precisely the factors that will keep Ontario's economy competitive and on the leading-edge. While revenue streams previously considered by universities are no longer available, the demands on our budgets continue to rise.

With growing needs for modernized programs and learning environments; increased campus services in areas such as student mental health; and more cost-intensive resources to foster a culture of innovation – Ontario's universities have put forth the above recommendations for the betterment of our students and communities.

By ensuring universities have the necessary financial resources, our institutions can further contribute to a competitive province and a rapidly changing economy.

Together, we can unleash the potential of our province by helping our students gain the transferrable skills they need to thrive, sharing cutting-edge infrastructure with local businesses, and fuelling a dynamic innovation ecosystem that will help build Ontario.



Appendix A

Budget Priorities – Summary of Recommendations

1 Developing Adaptable and Resilient Life-Long Learners

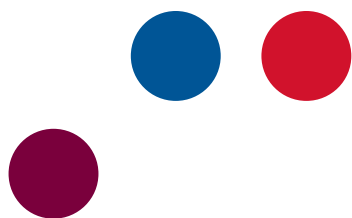
- Creating a life-long learning competitive grant that supports initiatives that enable:
 - » Experiential learning opportunities for students
 - » Short-term courses like micro-credentials and badging to support career upskilling
 - » Online technology to enhance greater access
- Providing tax credits to small businesses who partner with universities to offer work-integrated learning opportunities for current students and recent graduates
- Adjusting the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to support programs less than one year in duration or cost-recovered
- Doubling the amount of government funding for mental health supports at Ontario's universities, as well as funding for the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH)

2 Modern Infrastructure to Support the New Economy

- A competitive infrastructure fund to develop modern and technology-enabled classrooms, research labs and testing facilities, including retrofitting existing facilities
- Collaborating with federal counterparts to build the cutting-edge infrastructure Ontario needs to drive economic growth, including continuing to match federal research infrastructure dollars

3 Driving a Strong and Competitive Economy

- Funding research aligned with government priorities, including research that is fast-breaking and responsive to the complex challenges Ontario is facing, enabling researchers to work on a global scale with international partners
- Maximizing commercialization opportunities, as outlined in the Driving a Strong and Globally Competitive Economy through Innovation report on intellectual property
- Providing additional funded spaces to increase enrollment in high-demand programs



Further Reading

Discover how Ontario's universities are actively working with partners to ensure our students thrive, our communities are vibrant and our province remains dynamic at www.ontariosuniversities.ca.

Reports include:

- [Partnering for a Better Future for Ontario's Regional Economies](#)
- [Partnering for a Better Future for Advanced Manufacturing](#)
- [Partnering for a Better Future for Health Care](#)
- [Driving a Strong and Globally Competitive Economy Through Innovation](#)
- [50 ways Universities are Partnering with Employers](#)

