

The Honourable Rod Phillips
Minister of Finance
c/o Budget Secretariat

Frost Building North, 3rd Floor
95 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z1

Re: Career Colleges Ontario Submission for the 2020 Pre-Budget Consultations

October 1, 2020

Dear Minister Phillips,

The career college sector consists of more than 600 career college campuses, employs over 12,000 staff and educators, and saves Ontario taxpayers more than \$1 billion in infrastructure costs while generating over \$94 million in business and payroll taxes annually.

We submit that our sector is an essential part to the province's skills workforce development initiative and the post-secondary framework—especially for remote communities. Our member institutions provide flexible enrolment dates, small class sizes and train students for hundreds of essential skilled jobs within their own communities.

We serve a unique, often marginalized student demographic. Our students are Ontario's laid-off workers, sole-support parents, injured workers, newcomers and persons with disabilities. The 43,000 career college students in Ontario are distinct from those attending public colleges; the average age of career college students is 35, compared to just one in ten who attend community colleges.

Career Colleges are private institutions, receive no direct financial support from government, and each student at a career college represents \$26,000 in public savings. Reducing the regulatory burden on our the sector will improve campus efficiencies, bolster student outcomes and foster innovation within the communities we serve.

Career Colleges Ontario recommendations:

1. **Second Career Program Fairness:** Equitable access to financial supports for *all* Ontario post-secondary students, and a fair and open process for career colleges to collaborate with ministry officials to address ongoing financial aid issues for career college students. We know from demographic studies and research that career colleges are specialists in training or retraining adults for exciting new careers in in-demand fields. Yet, Second Career program places an arbitrary \$10,000 cap on the tuition for an unemployed adult to attend a career college program. In many cases, the same student could receive full funding when attending a publicly funded institution.

Recommendation: Ontario should remove the cap on Second Career funding for career college students, a program that is significantly aligned to benefit the career college student population.

2. **Allow Apprenticeship Training:** At a time when Ontario is in urgent need of skilled tradespersons across the province, its career colleges are not permitted to provide apprenticeship training. Yet, career colleges already adeptly deliver pre-apprenticeship training. With more than 640 colleges across Ontario, allowing career colleges to offer apprenticeship training would alleviate local skills gaps.

Recommendation: The government should recognize the role career colleges play in training Ontario's skilled workers and community needs by allowing PCCs to deliver apprenticeship programs to accommodate local demand.

3. **Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP):** We ask that the Ontario government work with the federal government to allow international students attending career colleges to be eligible for the PGWP. This is currently allowed in Quebec which creates a disadvantage for Ontario career colleges. Educated and skilled workers who are keen to fill in-demand jobs are significant contributors to Ontario's workforce. However, unlike international students at community colleges, career college students are barred from applying for a PGWP. These students receive training equal to a public college credential from a ministry regulated and approved training program. There are 240 career college campus locations across Ontario approved by the province to host international students. The government has an opportunity to bolster the province's skilled workforce by allowing career college students across the province the opportunity to access the PGWP.

Recommendation: Allow career college international students to apply and obtain post-graduate work permits.

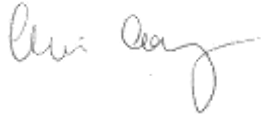
4. **We request a review of the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* and *Delegated Administrative Authority*** to modernize and update the regulation of career colleges to improve opportunities for our students. We have attached supporting documentation as an appendix that provides more detail. As well, we have included our requests related to red tape reduction.

Current oversight of Ontario's career colleges has become a tangle of red tape that serves neither the interests of students nor that of Ontario's economy. It has failed to meet basic, mandated disclosure requirements, such as the status of the Training Completion Assurance Fund and publication of key performance indicators. It has become seized with a focus on administrivia rather than outcomes.

To improve transparency and accountability, as well as truly energizing the full potential of the sector, Career Colleges Ontario believes the government of Ontario should move to a Delegated Administrative Authority model to administer the province's public policies – students' interests – in respect of the province's career colleges.

In conclusion, career colleges support the province's hard-to-train students and give them the one-on-one education and resources they need to fulfill the jobs of today and tomorrow. Career colleges are a bridge to the workforce and a key component for the skills workforce development initiative.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Conway".

Chris Conway
CEO, Career Colleges Ontario

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Adrian P. Sharma".

Adrian Sharma
Chairman, Career Colleges Ontario