



Queen's University Pre-Budget Submission

January 2019



RECOMMENDATIONS

Queen's University recommends...

- That the Government of Ontario work with the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and its member institutions to review the reporting and accountability requirements placed on post-secondary institutions.
- That the Government of Ontario use its capacity as a convenor to bring together stakeholders from post-secondary, health care and other relevant sectors to address the efficient and effective delivery of mental health services, and that the government earmarks a portion of the funding pledged to mental health services for the post-secondary sector.
- That the Government of Ontario support sector-led innovation to address government priorities such as healthcare wait times and public sector efficiency.
- That the Government of Ontario partner with Queen's on a pilot project to expedite the approval of new programs or program streams in high demand fields, and permit targeted enrollment growth in these fields.
- That the Government of Ontario partner with Queen's to provide matching funds for an expansion of the Queen's Career Apprenticeship: Kingston program – supporting the creation of early-career jobs for new graduates in Eastern Ontario.
- That the Government of Ontario leverage existing federal and private industry investments in university research – which are contributing to economic growth through the training of highly-qualified graduates, as well as through the commercialization of research discoveries.

In addition to Queen's recommendations which are specific to our institution and the broader region of Eastern Ontario, we also would like to echo our support for the recommendations made by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). Queen's works closely with the COU to advance university education, research and innovation in Ontario.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As advances in technology continue to disrupt legacy industries and transform the nature of work, universities will have an even greater role in preparing our graduates with the skills and competencies to navigate the changing labour market. By developing the talent, knowledge, and innovations to fuel economic growth today and in the future, universities remain important partners in helping the province encourage investment and improve quality of life.

Queen's University is one of Ontario's leading universities, combining an unparalleled excellence in education with an innovative, research-intensive environment. Bringing together exceptional students and leading researchers, Queen's creates an environment that supports, challenges, and encourages all to strive for excellence. Our outstanding student experience leads to impressive educational outcomes, including: leading Year 1-2 retention (94.7 per cent) and graduation rates (86.2 per cent), as well as Master's (88.6 per cent) and Doctoral (84.8 per cent) completion rates well above the national average. Queen's graduates enjoy some of the post-secondary sector's highest employment outcomes, with 90 per cent employed six months after graduation. Further, our graduates earn an average income of \$79,000 five years after graduation from an undergraduate program; \$8,000 more than the national average.

Queen's University recognizes the challenging fiscal circumstances facing Ontario, and the need for fiscal prudence across the public sector. As responsible stewards of public funds, Ontario's universities are well-equipped to develop creative means to reduce costs and bolster efficiency. In the 2018 Fall Economic Statement, the Government of Ontario referenced one such proposal – the joint University Pension Plan – which will reduce the costs associated with managing costs and risks across three of the province's largest institutions. Queen's appreciates the Government's support for this important initiative, and looks forward to continuing discussions around both its implementation as well as the expansion of the UPP to other postsecondary institutions across the province.

With these circumstances in mind, Queen's is pleased to provide the following recommendations in advance of Budget 2019.

STREAMLINING REPORTING PROCESSES

As recipients of government funding, universities have a responsibility to both the government and the taxpayers of Ontario to manage this funding in an efficient and responsible manner. Ensuring public funds are spent in a transparent and responsible manner requires that universities maintain an accurate accounting of funds under management, to be reported to the ministry as needed. However, the reporting requirements themselves are rarely considered as parts of a larger whole. Rather, successive

governments have instituted new reporting requirements, programs and/or responsibilities, which often overlap.

One such example is the Tuition Set-Aside – a requirement under the former tuition-framework that requires institutions to set-aside (and report) ten per cent of any new revenue brought in through increases to tuition fees to support student financial aid. The Student Access Guarantee – a separate institutional liability, which requires universities to provide additional funding for OSAP recipient students – created additional reporting requirements that largely overlap with those already in place under the Tuition Set-Aside. As a result, both institutions and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities must spend valuable time accounting for the same funds across two different reporting mechanisms.

By exploring these and other avenues to streamline approvals and reporting requirements – including developing a singular Master Transfer Payment Agreement, conducting a review of ministry reporting schedules, and streamlining program approvals and procurement processes – the Government can reduce the costly red tape that effects both the Government and broader public sector organizations – distracting from the goal of efficient delivery of government-supported programs and services.

- **Queen's University recommends that the Government of Ontario work with the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and its member institutions to review the reporting and accountability requirements placed on post-secondary institutions. Such a review would reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts, streamline accountability, and free up staff to focus on efficient delivery of government-supported programs and services.**

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Queen's recognizes the importance of ensuring students have the supports necessary for success. While supports are usually considered in the context of academic success, post-secondary institutions are increasingly under pressure to provide mental health support services.

The transition to post-secondary can be stressful for students. Across the province, the number of students requiring mental health services has more than doubled in the past five years. Despite the expansion of student health offerings on Ontario campuses, institutions are struggling to meet demand. Discussions around mental health services cannot take place in a vacuum, and universities cannot be expected to meet this challenge alone. Mental health is a complex topic, requiring a multi-sector approach – including the provincial

government, universities, and health care agencies – to ensure individuals receive appropriate care.

There is an important role for government and community health care providers to play in developing a holistic mental health and wellness strategy. During the 2018 election campaign, the Ontario PC Party pledged to invest \$1.9 billion (with matching federal funds) over 10 years in mental health, addiction and housing supports.

Queen's welcomes this planned investment, and would recommend that a portion of the funds be committed to campus mental health. We further request the government utilize its capacity to convene stakeholders in education, community organizations, and the healthcare sector, to develop and implement a community-based, comprehensive mental health and wellness strategy. By bringing together the expertise of all respective partners, the Government can ensure that all Ontarians have access to critical support for mental health and wellness, while ensuring the greatest value-for-money in mental health care investments and the effective, efficient delivery of care.

- **Queen's University recommends that the Government of Ontario use its capacity as a convener to bring together stakeholders from post-secondary, health care and other relevant sectors to address the efficient and effective delivery of mental health services, and that the government earmarks a portion of the funding pledged to mental health services for the post-secondary sector.**

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE PROVISION

The Faculty of Health Sciences at Queen's University – consisting of the School of Medicine, the School of Nursing and the School of Rehabilitation Therapy – aims to advance the tradition of preparing leading healthcare practitioners by embracing a spirit of inquiry and innovation in education and research. However, despite the number of highly-competent graduates who enter the workforce every year, considerable obstacles exist in ensuring all Ontarians have access to the health care services they need.

Queen's has extensive experience – both as a leader and a founding member in a partnership – in addressing challenges in health care through creative approaches. One such example is the Southeastern Ontario Academic Medical Organization (SEAMO), which supports the delivery of outstanding health care, fosters excellence in research and education and transformed academic medicine in Southeastern Ontario. Through a unique Alternate Funding Plan agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, SEAMO has supported medical education and care provision in underserved communities across the region, while providing cost stability for the Ministry.

Further, Queen's is a leading partner in the nine-university Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner (PHCNP) Program – a Master's level, hybrid program that has, for 24 years, supported the education of primary healthcare Nurse Practitioners (NPs). This program has an annual intake of ~200 students, and trains the majority of NP graduates in the province. By partnering across institutions, member universities are able to reduce overhead and deliver the program far more efficiently than if they were to manage separately. Under the previous government, the program saw its budget cut from \$7.1 million to \$6 million. These cuts have threatened the sustainability of the program, and the ability of Ontario institutions to continue training NPs who provide critical primary healthcare services.

Both SEAMO and the PHCNP demonstrate how encouraging institutional collaboration and innovation can result in more cost effective program delivery, improved access to care, and better quality education for Ontario's health care providers. The experience and institutional knowledge these projects have acquired could serve as models for expansion in other regions of the province facing similar challenges. By reducing red tape and supporting innovation in education and health care, the Government can improve access, maximize the impact of its investments, address shortages in health care labour, and reduce wait times in underserved communities. Queen's would welcome the opportunity to engage further on creative, innovative solutions in this field.

- **Queen's University recommends that the Government of Ontario support sector-led innovation aimed at addressing key government priorities such as health care wait times and efficiency in the public sector. Specifically, we would request the Government of Ontario:**
 - Commit to sustained funding of the PHCNP program – an innovative and cost-effective means of training highly-qualified Nurse Practitioners, who provide crucial primary care in underserved communities.
 - Engage with Queen's as part of a medium-term expansion of medical school and residency positions in Kingston and Eastern Ontario – supporting both the regional and province-wide need for highly-qualified medical graduates, as well as the Government's efforts to address wait-times and access to health care in smaller communities.

ADDRESSING LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

Employers look to universities to train and graduate students with both the industry-specific "hard skills" required by their industry, as well as the transferrable skills – such as critical thinking, communication, and organizational capacity – needed to succeed in the changing workforce. However, as the nature of work itself continues to evolve and be disrupted, these needs change. Highly technical fields suffer from a shortage of qualified graduates to fill jobs and, as demographics change, more long-time employees approach

retirement. To meet the demands of employers, graduates will need both leading-edge skills and have workplace-relevant experience.

Queen's is already recognized as a leader in experiential learning and student outcomes. Eighty-two per cent of Queen's students graduate having participated in an experiential learning opportunity, including the more than 40 per cent who participate in an internship or co-op placement. As well, explicit learning outcomes are embedded in all Queen's programs, to promote the effective development of transferable skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving and communication.

However, as new technologies create new disciplines, new programs of study will need to be created. Further, the model of post-secondary education programs – diploma, undergraduate, and graduate (Master's and Doctoral) – may need to adjust as well, in the form of post-degree certificates focused on emerging fields. Ontario universities are subject to extensive government regulation – in terms of tuition, enrollment, and the programs they can offer. Creating new programs – at any level – is a lengthy and complex process. As such, institutions such as Queen's who wish to implement new programs in response to market demand are unable to respond as quickly as may be needed. Cutting red tape and streamlining program approvals and curriculum adjustments would further help Ontario's universities react to changing market needs, and allow institutions to tailor their program offerings to align with the demands of the workforce.

The enrollment corridor model, instituted as part of the Strategic Mandate Agreement process, limits the growth of enrollment in high-demand fields. These factors combine to delay universities' efforts to react to changing labour market needs. Reducing the regulatory burden on institutions in a targeted way would allow Queen's to increase enrollment in high-demand programs – such as undergraduate and professional masters-level programs in engineering, medicine and health sciences, computer science, and business. By permitting increased enrollment in these targeted programs, the Government of Ontario will be supporting both the creation of new jobs in high-demand fields, while allowing Queen's to more rapidly respond to the talent needs of Ontario businesses.

To demonstrate the potential that an integrated, market-driven approach to enrollment could provide, Queen's would welcome the opportunity to partner with the Government on a pilot project to develop best practices in this space. Queen's has a number of proposals in development for the creation of new program streams aimed at addressing unmet market needs. Such a pilot program would allow the Government to see the impact of more responsive program approvals and integrated experiential learning before committing to a broader roll-out.

By working with innovative institutions such as Queen's, the Government of Ontario can better meet the needs of employers, prepare their graduates for the workforce, and make Ontario Open for Business.

- **Queen's University recommends that the Government of Ontario partner with Queen's on a pilot project to:**
 - **Expedite the approval of new programs or program streams in high demand fields such as:**
 - Biomedical Engineering,
 - Mechatronics and Artificial Intelligence,
 - Business
 - Computer Science, and
 - Health Science and Medicine,
 - Permit targeted enrollment growth, outside of the enrollment corridor, in these high-demand fields, to allow Queen's to increase the number of highly-qualified graduates with the skills Ontario employers are looking for.

SUPPORTING EARLY CAREER GRADUATES

Ontario universities are committed to ensuring our graduates enter the workforce with the skills and competencies employers demand. Queen's is a recognized leader in employment outcomes, with 90 per cent employed six months after graduation. Further, our graduates earn an average income of \$79,000 five years after graduation from an undergraduate program – \$8,000 more than the national average. However, while Queen's continues to produce employment-ready graduates, Eastern Ontario has faced challenges in attracting and retaining talent. The region as a whole has faced its share of difficulties in fostering economic growth, as talent continues to be drawn to major population centres.

In recent months, Queen's has announced a new initiative to address this trend. With the support of a generous donor, Queen's has partnered with the Kingston Economic Development Corporation to create the Queen's Career Apprenticeship: Kingston program. Employers who commit to a one-year, full-time job with training and career mentoring built in for a new graduate are reimbursed for four months of the gross salary to a maximum of \$4,000 per month.

Following a successful pilot cohort in 2018, the program – which is tailored towards creating employment opportunities for graduates of the Faculty of Arts and Science – will provide funding for 35 new apprenticeships for the class of 2019, with the goal of creating sufficient value that these positions are made permanent. The program has already shown itself to be highly scalable, and could be expanded further with the addition of matching, or other, funding sources.

By leveraging the generous philanthropic support of a donor, the Queen's Career Apprentice: Kingston program is creating value and economic impact that vastly exceeds its initial investment. Queen's would propose that the Government of Ontario partner with Queen's and private investors to provide matching funding on a pilot project to expand the Career Apprentice program and support early-career job creation. By leveraging this combined investment, such a project will serve to create even more career opportunities for new graduates, retain talent in a region of the province that has experienced challenges in fostering economic growth, and match legacy industries and new firms with high-potential and highly-skilled early career employees.

- **Queen's University recommends that the Government of Ontario partner with Queen's to provide matching funds for an expansion of the Queen's Career Apprentice: Kingston program – supporting the creation of early-career jobs for new graduates in Eastern Ontario.**

LEVERAGING INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH

Research that takes place on university campuses helps reshape our understanding of the world. It leads to the development of new technologies and medical treatments, as well as innovations that support legacy manufacturing and the resource-based industries. Further, it provides training and skill development opportunities for students, which can benefit them in a wide range of career settings after graduation.

The benefits of campus research are also multifaceted. While some of the advances being developed in campus labs take time to transition from concept to consumer product, many more are just steps away from becoming “the next big thing.” Queen's has long been a leader among Canadian universities in commercializing technologies and IP emerging from research. Since 1987, Queen's researchers' discoveries have led to more than 500 patents and over 50 spin-off companies – attracting outside investments in excess of \$1.4 billion, and creating hundreds of direct and indirect jobs. The impact of Queen's research has allowed the university to take on a central role in the emerging eastern Ontario innovation ecosystem – breathing new life into a region that has faced challenges fostering economic growth. The research capacity of universities also helps attract companies from outside of Ontario, and encourages them to invest in the province. A successful research partnership can lead to the establishment of a larger local presence, as it represents not only access to leading research and development capacity, but also to a supply of highly-qualified graduates.

Many research funding programs – be they governmental or private-sourced – require the investment of matching funds from a variety of partnerships. Queen's recognizes the challenging financial circumstances Ontario finds itself in, and is not suggesting that the

sole responsibility for investment lies with the province. Rather, we would recommend the Government seek opportunities to leverage investments from other sources to bolster Ontario's research capacity.

Investments in research deliver returns far beyond the base funds provided – both through the matching funds they attract, as well as the economic impact of the resulting discoveries. In regions such as Eastern Ontario, these second-level effects of research are creating new opportunities for economic growth. By ensuring Ontario retains its share of federal and private research funding, the Government will be investing in present and future economic competitiveness.

University research contributes to Ontario's economy in numerous ways. Investments in research will help ensure that Ontario remains Open for Business.

- **Queen's University recommends that the Government of Ontario leverage existing federal and private industry investments in university research – which are contributing to economic growth through the training of highly-qualified graduates, as well as through the commercialization of research discoveries.**

CONCLUSION

Ontario's universities have an important role to play in promoting economic prosperity. Employers count on us to ensure our graduates have the skillset necessary for success in a labour market experiencing rapid change. Communities count on us to train the healthcare practitioners (doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners) who provide them with crucial medical care close to home. At the same time, the research conducted on Ontario campuses leads to the development of new technologies that are helping legacy industries tackle new challenges, or are being commercialized in their own right – creating jobs and supporting economic growth.

Queen's recognizes the fiscal challenges identified by the government and the need to evaluate government spending to ensure publicly-funded services are provided efficiently and with an eye to ensuring value for the money invested. We believe the recommendations offered herein strike this balance, and will allow Queen's and other Ontario universities to continue their role in educating and preparing our students for the challenges of the modern workforce. We thank the Government of Ontario for allowing Queen's to participate in the 2019 Ontario Pre-Budget Consultation process, and look forward to continuing to engage on ways to make Ontario Open for Business.