

Improving the Relationship
between Postsecondary
Education & Industry
by
Modifying the Design of the
Postsecondary System

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Introductory Comments

- Although short term measures may be necessary to deal with severe imbalances, it is important to look also at fundamental factors that influence labour market balance in the long run
- One important set of fundamental factors is the relationship between Education & Industry – affects not only skill shortages but quality, productivity & innovative capacity of the work force
- One of the main determinants of the effectiveness of this relationship is the Design of the Postsecondary Education System



What is Meant by “Design of the Postsecondary System”?

- Refers to the way in which the various functions of postsecondary education are combined and assigned to different types of postsecondary institutions and the way in which the missions of these institutions are configured
- Postsecondary systems consist of two or more distinct sectors of institutions that are similar to each other & different from institutions in other sectors
- The dominant feature of Ontario’s system is its binary structure – partitioning of institutions into two distinct sectors: universities and colleges

Basis of the Binary PSE System:

In contrast to universities, colleges

- have as their primary mission, preparing students for jobs and careers;
- Are more teaching-oriented, but also conduct applied research
- have strong connections with industry & are more responsive to the needs of industry;
- facilitate learning that is practice-based, applied, and experiential;
- have more flexible admissions policies and serve a more diverse clientele of students
- Are more responsive to government



Colleges and Baccalaureate Degrees

- Not until after 2000 were Ontario colleges allowed to offer baccalaureate programs
- Beginning in the 1970s, colleges in many jurisdictions began to offer baccalaureate programs – three main reasons:
 - recognition of economic value of a higher (parallel) level of applied education
 - provide opportunities for those who faced barriers to accessing traditional university route to mobility
 - address rising costs of higher education
- The distinction between roles of colleges and universities shown in the previous slide persist even when colleges award degrees



Diversification of Baccalaureate Production: Share of Baccalaureate Degrees Awarded by Colleges

- Netherlands 75%
- Ireland 40%
- Germany 33%
- New Zealand 20%

- Ontario 1-2%

A Related Development Abroad: the Growth of the 3-Year Baccalaureate

- Has become the predominant form of the baccalaureate degree in Europe following the Bologna Reforms
- Is awarded by colleges in several countries, e.g., Germany, Ireland, and New Zealand
- Is common in Ontario universities (e.g., 44% of B.A.s at Carleton University)
- Was recommended for Ontario colleges as long ago as 1972 (Commission on Postsecondary Education)
- Ontario colleges have a strong base for 3-year baccalaureate in their (3-year) Advanced Diplomas

Possible Modification of the Design of Ontario's PSE System

- Diversify the production of baccalaureate degrees by expanding enrolment in the workforce-focused baccalaureate degrees that are provided by colleges – like many jurisdictions have done;
- As part of the increase in baccalaureate activity of the colleges, allow colleges to offer three-year, workforce-focused baccalaureate degrees, as also is the practice in several other jurisdictions.



Benefits of Adding 3-Year Baccalaureate and Expanding the College Baccalaureate

- A more efficient balance between applied and academically-oriented baccalaureate education;
- Making the PSE system more responsive to the needs of the labour market by having more students in programs that are designed to meet labour market needs, including many that are of shorter duration
- Providing opportunity for upward mobility for many individuals who have been left behind in the PSE system as it is presently designed; and
- Making better use of the human potential of the Province's workforce by enabling more people to develop their skills to a higher level