

A newsletter about achievements, innovations and leadership in Ontario's college system

National vision needed to address workforce issues Canada must set benchmarks: new report

Canada must set a clear vision and measurable benchmarks in order to produce the highly skilled workforce that is needed in today's knowledge economy, says a new report on the country's workforce challenges.

The report, *What We Heard*, is part of the Pathway to Prosperity consultations initiated by Ontario's 24 colleges last fall. The provincewide consultations have included round-table meetings, breakfast forums, online reports and other discussions of the workforce challenges in the 21st century.

"Clearly, there are real concerns about Canada's ability to compete," said Dr. Rick Miner, the president of Seneca College and chair of the colleges' committee of presidents. "There is a need for leadership and vision, and clear targets for measuring success."

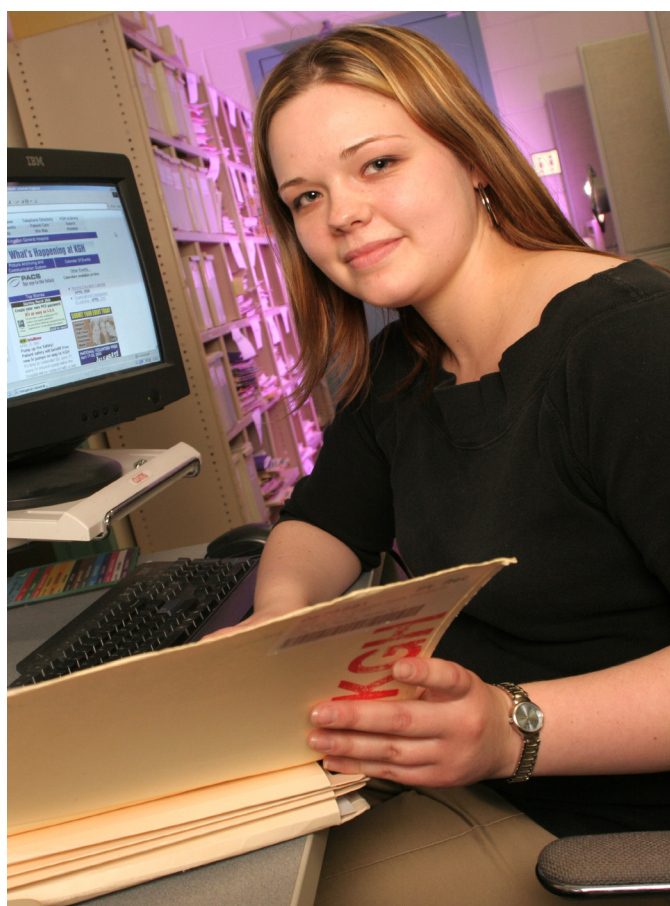
The Pathway to Prosperity initiative included a symposium in Toronto that featured

a keynote address by Ontario Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Chris Bentley, and an expert panel that included *The Globe and Mail* columnist Jeffrey Simpson, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters senior vice-president Jayson Myers and Ca-

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nadian Auto Workers Union president Buzz Hargrove.

Contributors to the consultation have included the C.D. Howe Institute and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. About 2,000 people participated in the consultations, and more than 600 companies and organizations were represented. A copy of the report is available at www.pathwaytoprosperity.ca.



Ontario must produce greater numbers of highly skilled and trained college graduates, says a new report on the workforce challenges of the 21st century. (Photo: St. Lawrence College)

Robot provides 'hands-on' experience

Georgian receives technology from Honda

It's the perfect combination of man and machine.

An industrial robotic arm is being used at Georgian College in Barrie to teach engineering students how to program a robot for use in the workplace.

Unlike a smaller, demonstration machine, this full-size robotic arm is the real thing. It has already had experience in the workplace as a robotic tool at the Honda plant in Alliston, where it was used to install fog-light holes on rear bumpers. It joins two others in the robotics lab at Georgian,

purchased through Strategic Skills Initiative grants from the provincial government.

Honda donated the robotic arm to Georgian College

last fall. Students use the robotic arm as part of the setup for a complete industrial work area, just like one that would be found at the auto plant.



Colleges work in partnership with businesses to provide leading-edge training to students. At Georgian College in Barrie, students train with a robotic arm provided by Honda Canada.

They also program the computers that operate the robot.

"It is our hope that this robot will provide a real 'hands-on' experience for generations of students," said Joe Sperduti, the vice-president of administration at Honda.

Brian Tamblyn, the president of Georgian College, said partnerships with business help to create innovative and meaningful learning environments for students.

"It is essential to have access to up-to-date technology and the latest innovations," Tamblyn said. "This helps ensure that the education and training we provide is relevant."

Early start at college re-ignites high school students

Unique opportunity to attend full-time college courses

Nathan McCallum was one of those Grade 12 students you might find in any high school. Although his grades were about average, McCallum had outgrown high school before his actual graduation day and was getting restless.

Fortunately, a new program in the Windsor area managed to re-ignite his interest in education. McCallum was one of 11 students in Grades 11 and 12 who participated last fall in a pilot program, called Getting Started, where they studied full-time college courses at St. Clair College in Windsor while they were still completing their high school education.

For McCallum, who received an 'A' in his business writing course at the college and now studies there full time, it was the exact change he needed.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity. It seems I was maturing beyond high

school," said McCallum, 18, in a telephone interview. "I thought my work ethic might get better. It would push me a little bit."

The project was initiated by Kevin Hamlin, the vice-principal at Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School in



Leamington. Hamlin, who is also the coach of St. Clair College's hockey team, said it was important to provide young people in his rural community with a chance to see the opportunities available in higher education.

"If we can get some of these

students exposed to college life, or any kind of postsecondary education life, I think it gives them a goal," he said.

In fact, this type of project is expected to become more common in Ontario's education system. The Ontario government has introduced legislation that would allow school boards and colleges to establish dual-credit programs throughout the province, as part of the effort to encourage young people to stay in school.

The government legislation would go even further than the pilot program at St. Clair College. Under a dual-credit system, each completed college credit would count as both a high school credit and towards the student's college education.

Hamlin said the pilot program in his community has been successful. "Most of the students want to go back again," he said.

Trailer brings skilled trades to students' doorstep

Hands-on experience with tools

Lambton College in Sarnia is taking its efforts to promote the skilled trades to the streets.

The college is using a 53-foot tractor trailer, retrofitted with 10 work stations, to provide hands-on experience in the skilled trades to students in Grades 7 and 8 – delivered directly to the students' schools.

Inside the tractor trailer, the young students get experience using the tools needed in such careers as carpentry, electrical, manufacturing, plumbing and welding.

"This partnership is a great example of how our community benefits when public- and private-sector organizations partner—creating synergies that bring long-term benefits to our community and in par-

ticular our youth," said Judith Morris, the vice-president of academic and student success at Lambton College.

The trailer is funded by a partnership between Lambton College and the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, the Sarnia-Lambton Training Board and Canadian

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Tire. Already, the trailer has been used at Catholic schools in Sarnia and Wallaceburg and it will also be available to promote the skilled trades in the community.

"We believe this is an important partnership, which will lead to increased learning opportunities for our

Grade 7 and 8 students right across the St. Clair district," said Margaret Nelson, the director of education for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. "It will introduce careers in the trades for students at an earlier age, which will help them to be more successful at the secondary level and beyond."

In the trailer, a qualified teacher leads students through work with the tools at a beginner's level. The teacher also presents safety-related courses and information on career pathways. The tools used by the students have been provided by Canadian Tire.

"This unique partnership opportunity falls in line with our ongoing efforts to promote to both our students and the community the importance and the viability of the skilled trades," said Vicky Ducharme, executive director of the Sarnia Lambton Training Board.

In Brief

Bentley announces quality funds

Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Chris Bentley has made several announcements of provincial investments to Ontario colleges under the new Quality Improvement Fund. The funding is designed to allow colleges to hire faculty and invest in resources and other supports.

"After more than 10 years of underfunding and neglect by previous governments, the McGuinty government is rebuilding the foundations of learning so that our postsecondary students get the very best education possible," Bentley said.

Some of the recent announcements have included:

- \$5.2 million for Centennial College in Toronto
- \$5.8 million for George Brown College in Toronto
- \$6.8 million for Humber College in Toronto
- \$8 million for Seneca College in Toronto
- \$5.8 million for Sheridan College in Oakville
- \$5.5 million for Fanshawe College in London
- \$6.2 million for Algonquin College in Ottawa
- \$1.6 million for La Cité collégiale in Ottawa
- \$2.5 million for St. Lawrence College in Kingston.

Nursing students volunteer in Honduras

Six nursing students from Fleming College in Peterborough travelled to Honduras recently to do volunteer work with patients in the rural areas of the Central American country.

The students – Anette Dangerfield, Olivia Field, Kristi Hebb, Laurie Lee, Vickie Riddell and Cherie Willis – went in groups of three, alongside the Peterborough Medical Brigade. The trips occurred in January and February and the students paid their own way.

"We've been told to expect the unexpected, so we have to be willing to adapt and learn," Dangerfield said prior to her trip. "It's going to be an amazing experience and an incredible opportunity."

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