

COUNCIL OF  
ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES  
CONSEIL DES  
UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

PRESS RELEASE

**Brighter days ahead for Ontario students**

Budget delivers significant gains in access, quality and excellence

*Toronto, May 11, 2005:* Today's budget measures generated an enthusiastic response from Ontario university leaders as significant investments were committed to improve access, quality and excellence. The "Reaching Higher" investments mark a turning point in preparing for Ontario's future prosperity.

"This is a great day for Ontario students, for our province and for the people of Ontario," says Richard Van Loon, Chair of the Council of Ontario Universities and President of Carleton University. "We applaud Premier McGuinty for his leadership in making the importance of higher education so abundantly clear and, in doing so, for narrowing the gap between the quality of university education in Ontario and that provided by our economic competitors. Ontario's future is inextricably linked to the future of our students. The government's investment will enable universities across the province to plan for the long term and build on strengths that will ensure Ontario's prosperity and overall well-being in the new economy."

The substantial investments in the day-to-day operations of our universities will provide the platform to restore excellence in students' experiences in the classroom, the laboratory and beyond. The multi-year nature of those investments will greatly enhance universities' ability to plan for the future. The addition of \$130 million in 2004-2005 for repairs to university buildings will improve the overall quality of students' learning experiences.

With full funding for all students, Ontario universities will be in a much stronger position to serve the growing numbers of students who are seeking university education. The new student financial assistance initiatives – including the low-income tuition grant – will help ensure that qualified students will not be deprived of the opportunity to pursue a university degree because of inadequate funds.

The commitment to fund an additional 14,000 graduate students by 2009-2010 will substantially increase Ontario's competitiveness. The \$100 million for endowments for graduate scholarships will help Ontario attract and retain more of the best and the brightest graduate students. "The barriers are starting to come down at all levels," says Paul Davenport, Past Chair of Council and President of the University of Western Ontario. "We will be in a position to graduate greater numbers of students with the advanced degrees that are in such demand in the workplace. Until now, inadequate funding has prevented us from coming close to meeting this demand."

Ontario universities will also have increased capacity to address public policy issues that are of social importance and are vital to economic prosperity, with the announcement of the \$25 million Ontario

Research Chairs. “The Chairs program will attract leading-edge researchers in public policy that will position Ontario among the world leaders in a number of areas in public policy research,” says Ian Clark, President of Council. “The program will also benefit future graduate students by enabling them to work alongside these leading researchers.”

Ontario universities are committed to demonstrating accountability and results for the public funding received. They look forward to working with government to develop multi-year agreements to demonstrate the enhanced contribution to Ontario’s economic and social development that the investments will facilitate.

“Ontario university leaders commend the government for its vision,” says Ross Paul, incoming Chair of Council and President of the University of Windsor. “We owe a debt of gratitude to Bob Rae, for his outstanding leadership of the recent Postsecondary Review that was commissioned by our government, and to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Mary Anne Chambers, for the intensive review and consideration of the important recommendations included in Mr. Rae’s report, and for helping to make postsecondary education among the top priorities in Budget 2005.”

- 30 -

For further information:

Arnice Cadieux  
Executive Director,  
Public Affairs  
(416) 979-2165 ext. 224

Richard Van Loon  
Council Chair and President  
of Carleton University  
(613) 520-3801

Ross Paul  
Incoming Chair and President of the  
University of Windsor  
(519) 253-4232, ext. 2000