



ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



COLLEGES | COLLÈGES
ONTARIO | ONTARIO

COLLEGES DELIVER EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The college sector's pivotal role in the economic strength and the vitality of the province took on heightened importance in the past fiscal year as the world was rocked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colleges were provincial leaders in responding to the challenge. The sector moved quickly to adapt online options to protect the health and safety of students and staff while ensuring students could complete their year.

At the same time, colleges contributed their resources, ingenuity and expertise to support health-care workers and others. Throughout the province, colleges donated protective gear and other critical resources to the health-care sector. As well, colleges delivered new products and services to bolster the delivery of care.

In the coming months, colleges will be central to Ontario's efforts to rebuild the economy.

Throughout the past year, the sector made important progress on reforms that ensure colleges can respond quickly and effectively to accelerating changes in the economy and in communities. The significance of these improvements takes on greatly heightened importance with the new challenges created by the COVID lockdown and the efforts to reestablish Ontario's economic strength.

This report examines the colleges' tremendous efforts to support Ontario's action plan for the COVID-19 crisis.

As well, it describes the many ways the sector has delivered on the goals in its strategic plan, [Ontario's Colleges: Catalysts for Career Success](#). These successes mean Ontario is in a better position to rebound in 2020-21 and the years beyond.





COLLEGES RESPOND QUICKLY TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ensuring students complete their year

Protecting the health and safety of students and staff was paramount when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Ontario.

College leaders kept in regular contact with Ontario's chief medical officer of health and other public health officials. When it became clear individuals could transmit the virus, colleges moved quickly to adapt. In-person classes were cancelled and alternate arrangements were created to ensure students could complete their year.

Much of the remaining content for the academic year was transferred to online learning. For labs and other work that required in-person participation, alternatives were developed to facilitate the completion of students' programs.

Thanks to the tremendous work of the colleges' faculty and staff, the efforts were successful.

Strengthening health care and the protection of workers

Colleges used their expertise and resources to strengthen the delivery of care and the protection of people on the front lines.

Throughout the province, colleges contributed much-needed equipment and protective gear to hospitals and health-care centres. The donations from colleges included hospital beds, ventilators, hand sanitizers, face shields, isolation gowns, surgical gowns, cleaning supplies and much more. Some of the colleges that donated protective materials and gear included Algonquin, Boréal, Cambrian, Canadore, Centennial, Confederation, Fleming, George Brown, Humber, Lambton, Northern, Sault and St. Lawrence.

Colleges also used their advanced manufacturing and design equipment to create new products to tackle this challenge.

For example, [Georgian College](#), [Niagara College](#) and [Mohawk College](#) produced new face shields for front-line workers in health care.

Colleges also worked with their partners to accelerate opportunities for students to help deliver care. For example, students at [Fanshawe College](#), [St. Clair College](#) and [Collège La Cité](#) who were in their final year of the respiratory therapy program headed straight into the health-care field. And [Loyalist College](#) paramedic students graduated early to help on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic.

Professors' efforts win international acclaim

The expertise and dedication at Ontario's colleges garnered international acclaim.

In March 2020, a story in the Washington Post on "caremongering" in Canada described Seneca College professor Amara Possian's work creating support networks to provide help to people in need. The praise on social media included a tweet by former U.S. president Barack Obama, who said it was a "great example" of the community spirit the world needed to get through the challenge.

Similarly, the Toronto Star reported in April 2020 on a "garage industry" created by Durham College professor Chris Daniel that used 3D printers to make visors for health-care workers' face shields. The story received a digital high five on Twitter from movie star Ryan Reynolds.



At Sheridan College, Tony-nominated producer Michael Rubinoff spearheaded a 24-hour telethon on YouTube to support the entertainment industry. The event, which was promoted in the Globe and Mail and other news media, raised more than \$41,000.



Collaborating with government on the emergency response

The sector worked closely with Colleges and Universities Minister Ross Romano to ensure colleges had the resources to respond effectively to the COVID-19 crisis. Responding to research prepared by colleges and others, Minister Romano announced in March 2020 that Ontario was providing \$25 million in emergency funding to the post-secondary sector. The funds could be used by institutions at their discretion to address immediate cost pressures.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN “ONTARIO’S COLLEGES: CATALYSTS FOR CAREER SUCCESS”

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Put Ontario at the forefront of innovation

Ontario’s colleges will produce a 21st century workforce for a new age of rapid automation. More people will get the expertise that is pivotal to economic growth and successful communities.

New ads featured college as a ‘smart’ choice

Colleges Ontario launched a new advertising campaign in 2019-20 that promoted how colleges prepare graduates for many of today’s most appealing careers.

Using the theme “a smart world requires a smart education,” the ads showed how college programs open the door to challenging and fulfilling careers in a “smart” world of smartphones, smart watches and smart homes.

The campaign included TV ads ([Smart education - 1](#) and [Smart education - 2](#)), radio ads, digital spots and online videos. The campaign was supported by a system-wide social media strategy where colleges across the province promoted the ads on Twitter and elsewhere.

As well, a [new section](#) was added to the colleges’ application website that provides descriptions of the numerous college programs that lead to smart careers in the new economy.



Smart World



Smart Careers



Smart Education

New partnership promotes internships

Mitacs, a non-profit national research organization, and Colleges Ontario [announced](#) they would award up to 200 internships to college students in 2020 on applied research projects. This research will stimulate economic growth throughout the province, particularly in rural and northern communities. It will also provide new work-integrated learning opportunities to full-time college students throughout the province.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advance learning opportunities for all

Colleges will deliver improved access to quality programs to ensure everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their ambitions.

Improving access to apprenticeship

Colleges are working closely with Labour, Training and Skills Development Minister Monte McNaughton on opportunities to modernize apprenticeship training.

This includes creating clear and publicly promoted opportunities for students to enter apprenticeship training. Colleges continue to advocate expanding the college system’s provincial application service, www.ontariocolleges.ca, to include apprentices.

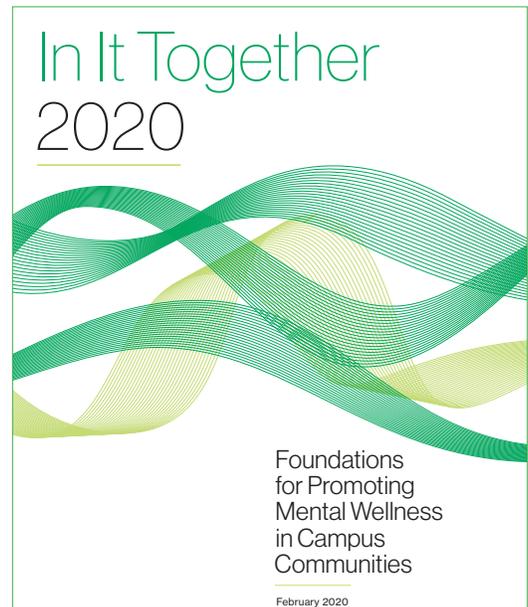
The college system has the technical strength and the expertise to process large volumes of applications. The current application site gets more than four million hits each year.

Pursuing improved support for mental health

The province should invest in campus-based mental health supports such as front-line counselling and early intervention services. That was among the recommendations in a report, [In It Together 2020](#), which was publicly released in March 2020.

Student associations in collaboration with Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities prepared the report. It is an updated version of a report first submitted to government in 2017. The report continues to call for a 'whole-of-community' approach to strengthening services that includes student associations, post-secondary institutions, health-care providers, community agencies and government.

In February 2020, the student associations and representatives for the colleges and universities hosted an event at Queen's Park to call for more support for mental health services on post-secondary campuses. College and university students who spoke at the event shared their lived experiences and described how campus supports were essential to them. The students reiterated the need for increased government investments in post-secondary mental health services to ensure that all students – regardless of geographic location – have timely access to the supports they need.



Creating more opportunities through partnerships

The Ontario government announced a new policy in November 2019 to expand partnership agreements between Ontario's colleges and private trainers to produce a more highly qualified workforce.

The new partnership agreements will provide more spaces for international students who want to acquire an Ontario college education. This is particularly important in filling labour shortages in communities outside the GTA.

Addressing Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations

Work on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations continued in 2019-20. The fourth annual Truth and Reconciliation Commission Gathering of Ontario Colleges, Gimaajitaamin, was held at Confederation College in Thunder Bay in March 2020.

The goal was to demonstrate what the system is doing collectively and the impact on colleges' day-to-day operations. Some examples of initiatives to fulfil the recommendations include:

- Seneca College's [CITE building](#) in Toronto has infused Indigenous knowledge throughout.
- St Lawrence College in Kingston is [creating new](#) Indigenous spaces on campus.
- Confederation College in Thunder Bay [announced](#) a new diversity, equity and Indigenous lens manual. The new assessment tool will help college departments analyze their actions and perspectives using a broader lens.
- Colleges are [collaborating](#) with each other and universities to provide Indigenous students with more streamlined pathways to post-secondary credentials and degrees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Revitalize college education in Ontario

Colleges will create new opportunities for people to strengthen their qualifications and expertise.

Groundbreaking policy announced for nursing programs

The Ontario government announced a major policy change in February 2020 that strengthens nursing education throughout the province.

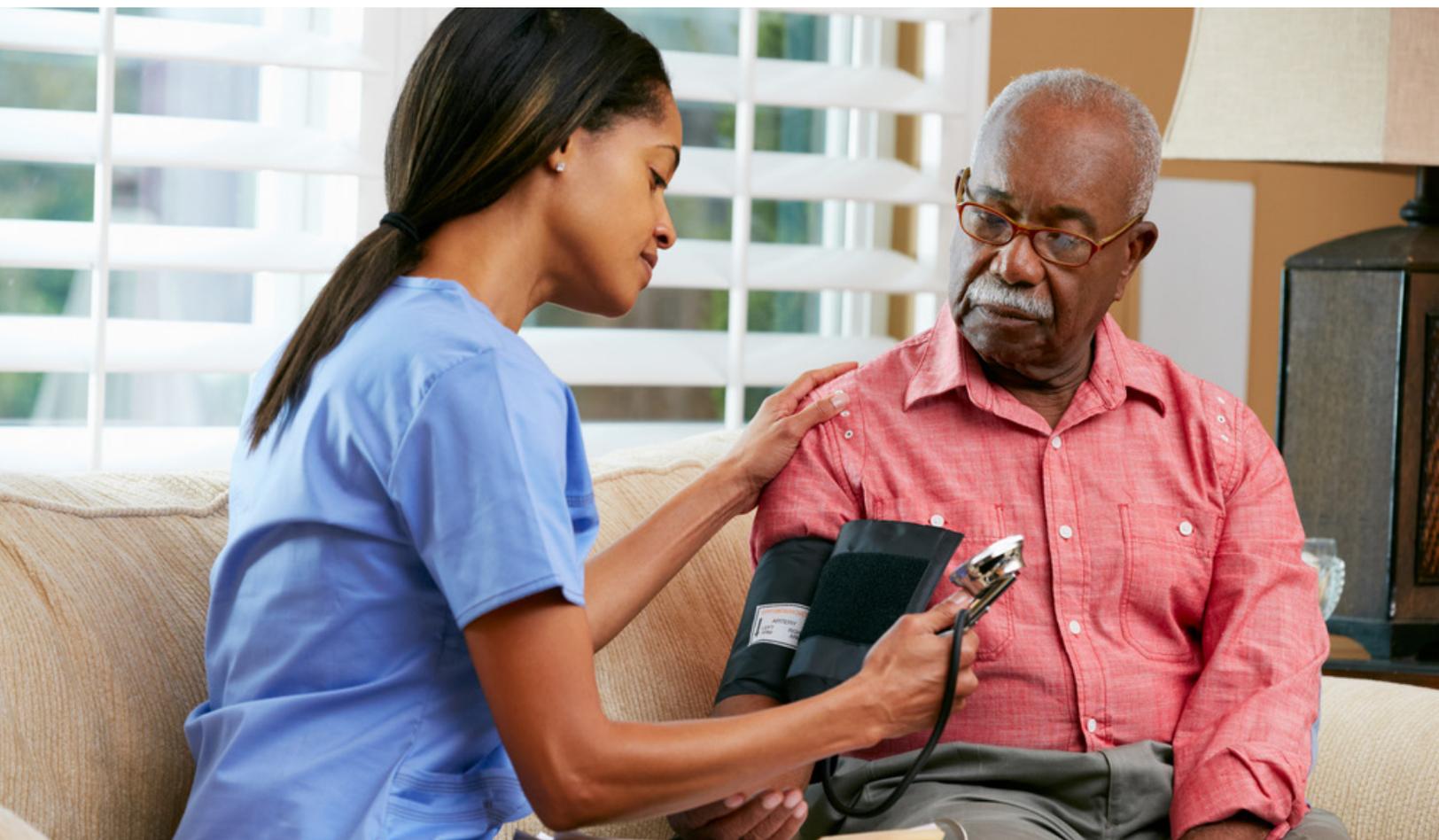
Colleges and Universities Minister Ross Romano said colleges will now have the option to offer independent bachelor of nursing degree programs that don't require the college to find a university partner.

Previously, the province had required any college wishing to offer a nursing degree program to provide the program in partnership with a university, where the final years of study would be at the university. That had created unnecessary costs and other bureaucratic hurdles that often discouraged students from going into nursing, particularly if it meant a student would have to relocate to another community to complete the program.

Providing students with the option to complete their nursing degree program within their home community reduces the costs for students and government and makes nursing programs more attractive to many students.

The decision also allows nursing education in Ontario to evolve. Colleges can now independently develop or update curriculum to ensure programs are responsive to the unique needs of their communities.

Minister Romano's announcement was a significant policy improvement that reinforced the government's support for the career-focused degree programs offered at colleges. The announcement followed years of strong advocacy from colleges and leaders in health care.



Approvals process improved for degree programs at colleges

Colleges and Universities Minister Ross Romano announced measures in 2019 to speed up the approvals process for new degree programs at colleges.

Responding to the college sector's advocacy efforts, the minister said the reforms will allow colleges to bring new programs into the market more quickly to meet innovations in the workplace. The program approvals process for college degrees has been reduced to about three to five months from the previous standard of about two years.

"Students can get the training they need to get a good job and help grow Ontario's economy," Minister Romano said.

Higher Education Summit transforms leaders' thinking

Colleges Ontario hosts an annual conference called the Higher Education Summit. The theme for the 2019 conference was "Transformations" and the event was a huge smash, with 97 per cent of attendees rating it good to excellent in a post-conference survey.

The highlight was a keynote speech from internationally renowned whistleblower Edward Snowden, who appeared via satellite from Russia to be interviewed by onstage moderator Peter Mansbridge. They discussed the threat to free societies in this age of hidden and unaccountable global surveillance.



Other highlights included remarks by Toronto Star columnist Chantal Hébert, who discussed the Canadian political scene; a motivational speech from renowned musician and bestselling author Jann Arden about her personal journey; and a featured address from Harvard psychologist and professor Steven Pinker on his theory that the world is actually getting better, not worse.

The 2019 conference also included the Transformations Expo, an exhibit area with more than 35 exhibitors showcasing everything from a VR experience highlighting women in the trades to displays featuring Indigenous food and a farm-to-fork initiative.

The event concluded with the annual celebration of the Premier's Awards for outstanding college graduates. More than 800 college alumni, family, staff and students attended the event and were treated to a variety of college alumni success stories.

Award winners in 2019 included animator and Oscar nominee Dean DeBlois, 3M vice-president Don Ashton and Easter Seals Ontario president Kevin Collins.

The Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS)



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

Service de l'assurance de la qualité des
collèges de l'Ontario

The Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) is the oversight body for the college's self-regulatory system that was established in 2005. OCQAS operates two quality assurance services for the colleges: the credentials validation service at the program level and the college quality assurance audit process at the institutional level.

A report describing the activities of the credential validation service can be found [here](#). The emphasis this past year was on building capacity. OCQAS has been working on this in numerous ways. The service:

- Hosted the colleges' "heads of quality" as observers of the site visits of other colleges to experience the work of the panel and the workings of the quality assurance audit process from the other side.
- Seconded college staff two days a week for half a year to support the work of OCQAS but mostly for them to become more aware and in tune with the role of OCQAS through interactions with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, other provincial quality assurance agencies and their colleagues.
- Hosted a series of workshops in August 2019 to review the updates and best practices in the credential validation service, the online validation tool and the college quality assurance audit process.

The combined value of these strategies allowed OCQAS to engage all stakeholders in activities that are relevant in their potential, future or current quality assurance work by making the operations of its unit visible and open.



OCAS

OCAS is lucky enough to leave its mark on the world every day, providing the pathways and support that help over 250,000 individuals every year as they take the first step toward a brighter future.

As a shared service provider, OCAS also leverages the power of data, people and partnerships to deliver leading-edge systems, dependable technology and cost-effective solutions across the higher education sector.

2019-20 was an execution year for OCAS, with a focus on enhancing its application services for both domestic and international learners while also supporting new and existing partners through its opt-in shared services and technologies.

To better support the growing number of international learners applying to Ontario's colleges, OCAS introduced enhancements to the login and account creation experiences on its applicant-facing websites – ontariocolleges.ca and collegesdelontario.ca.

When applying to college, potential applicants can now self-identify as Canadian or international and are kept on separate streamlined pathways to ensure they use the correct application. Since making this change, OCAS and its college partners have seen significantly fewer applicants using the wrong system to apply.

It's been two years since the launch of OCAS' international application service. Twelve colleges have now signed on to the service and over 153,000 international learners have submitted applications through the system.

Throughout the year, OCAS has continued to grow and enhance the service to support the needs of its partner colleges, worked to integrate it with the college student information systems and created a comprehensive international data and reporting portfolio.

Finally, OCAS is proud to have designed and developed a contemporary and accessible new website for Colleges Ontario – one that provides deeper insight and visibility into the trends and issues affecting higher education.

In 2019-20, OCAS also created websites for the Committee of Registrars, Administration and Liaison Officers (CRALO) and the Ontario College Council of Chief Information Officers (OCCCCIO) conference, as well as a microsite showcasing St. Lawrence College's 2019-2024 strategic plan.

With many exciting projects already underway in 2020-21, including a new and improved domestic application, OCAS will continue to provide the high-quality service its partners depend on while also exploring opportunities to extend its shared services and technologies to organizations and initiatives across the higher education ecosystem.

Statement of financial position

Year ended March 31, 2019, with comparative figures for 2018

	2019	2018
Assets		
Current assets	7,191,804	8,667,623
Long-term assets	500,924	-
Capital assets	6,248,204	115,805
Total assets	13,940,932	8,783,428
Liabilities and net assets		
Current liabilities	4,503,677	6,077,157
Deferred capital contributions	3,098,963	-
Long-term liabilities	3,330,609	-
Net assets	3,007,683	2,706,271
Total liabilities and net assets	13,940,932	8,783,428

Statement of changes in net assets

Year ended March 31, 2019, with comparative figures for 2018

	2019	2018
Net assets, beginning of year	2,706,271	2,541,833
Excess of revenue over expenses	301,412	164,438
Balance, end of year	3,007,683	2,706,271

Statement of operations

Year ended March 31, 2019, with comparative figures for 2018

	2019	2018
Revenue	10,142,427	10,164,601
Expenses	9,841,015	10,000,163
Excess of revenue over expenses	301,412	164,438