

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FACULTY QUESTION PRIORITY OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN
ONTARIO ONLINE PLANS

JANUARY 15, 2014 Brad Duguid, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, has announced \$42 million in funding for the launch of Ontario Online as a new resource for online learning access, delivery and support at Ontario colleges and universities.

Although the Minister spoke of "high quality" and "world class" learning opportunities for students through Ontario Online, there was strangely little mention of the faculty who would be developing curriculum and delivering the education.

"College and university faculty are the experts. They should have been consulted in the development of this resource," said OPSEU President, Warren (Smokey) Thomas. "Putting major education decisions entirely in the hands of government and administrators is no way to ensure Ontario students receive quality education."

Underfunding of Ontario's post-secondary education system has led to a steep rise in tuition costs, larger class sizes and fewer full-time faculty.

"We are concerned that the Ontario Online initiative is primarily a cost-cutting venture intended to facilitate larger class sizes and increased hiring of part-time and contract teaching staff," said OPSEU College Faculty Divisional Executive Committee Chair, JP Hornick.

"Faculty know what works best in terms of curriculum development and course delivery. The fact that college and university faculty have not been consulted in this process is a clear indication that delivery of quality online education is not the priority here," said Hornick.

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) represents more than 8000 faculty at Ontario's 24 colleges.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

JP HORNICK, OPSEU COLLEGE FACULTY DIVISION EXECUTIVE CHAIR:
416-806-9526, JPHORNICK@GMAIL.COM EMILY VISSER, OPSEU COMMUNICATIONS:
416-557-7936, EVISSER@OPSEU.ORG