



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

April 7, 2020

Hon. Ross Romano
Minister of Colleges and Universities
14th Flr, 315 Front St W
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Via Email

Dear Minister Romano,

First, please allow me to take this opportunity to wish you and your family good health in these challenging times.

Given the COVID-19 crisis and ongoing economic uncertainty, I am writing on behalf of 17,000 university faculty, academic librarians, and other academic professionals across Ontario to request that the Ministry delay and, in doing so, take some time to reconsider the wisdom of introducing performance metrics at Ontario's universities.

Starting this academic year, up to 25 per cent of postsecondary funding is set to be tied to performance metrics. The anxiety and economic uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 crisis will make it difficult, if not impossible for institutions to meet many of the targets identified by the government, including metrics measuring employment rates, graduation rates, economic impact, and research funding. And, as you have indicated, it is not certain we will be able to resume face-to-face instruction for the fall term.

OCUFA has long cautioned that performance metrics impose unfair and unnecessary burdens on institutions and, in many cases, pass judgment on criteria universities have little or no control over. Our concerns are exacerbated in the wake of COVID 19 and the increasing level of uncertainty universities and colleges are facing. This crisis demonstrates the serious inequities, instabilities, and flaws embedded within this new funding formula. Indeed, we believe the government should revisit the entire Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) process in the wake of the challenges now facing Ontario's universities.

Over the past few weeks, OCUFA's members have been at the forefront of the effort to deliver postsecondary education to Ontario's students under challenging circumstances. Given that this crisis will not be as brief as we all hoped, the only viable option at this point is to suspend or, better yet, cancel the planned changes to the funding formula at Ontario's universities and other postsecondary institutions.

These are difficult times for all Ontarians, including for your government in managing a crisis of unprecedented proportions, and our members are keen to be part of the solution. We believe that Ontario's students and faculty need as much stability in the system as possible during this uncertain period. This is not the time to be introducing a set of risky new policies that will undermine our members' efforts to continue delivering quality postsecondary education to Ontario's university students. Rather, it is time for the government to create stability by providing universities with proper funding model and ensuring that there is job security for everyone on campus, including precariously employed contract faculty.

Our members continue to work collaboratively with administrations across the province to maintain a supportive environment during this unique period of remote teaching and learning. We believe that proceeding with the introduction of performance metrics will not just distract from this important work, but jeopardize the already precarious financial footing on which universities find themselves.

We would be happy to discuss this matter with you further as well as share our wider perspective on some of the challenges involved with delivering university education remotely during these turbulent times.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rahul Sapra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rahul" and the last name "Sapra" clearly distinguishable.

Rahul Sapra

President