

Ministry of Training,
Colleges and Universities

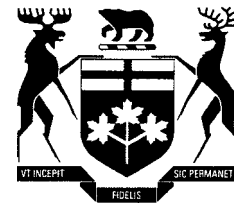
Minister

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Ministère de la Formation
et des Collèges et Universités

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Ontario

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April 22, 2015

Dr. Jocelyn Williams
President
Trent University Faculty Association
1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough ON K9J 7B8

Dear Dr. Williams,

Thank you for your correspondence about the governance structure of the Ontario Online Learning Consortium (OOLC).

As you are aware, our government has committed \$42 million over three years to establish Ontario Online, a collaborative centre of excellence in technology-enabled learning. The centre will build on existing strengths in the system, allow faculty and institutions to share best practices in pedagogy, collaborate on research, and facilitate the offering of online courses that are recognized for credit across multiple institutions to students.

Our hope is that Ontario Online will facilitate and expand communities of practice for faculty and support the sharing and mobilization of research, data and best practices in technology-enabled pedagogy throughout Ontario.

The OOLC was incorporated in October 2014 as an independent, not-for-profit corporation. It is governed and operated by Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities. Given the scope of activity the new organization is likely to undertake, our government recognizes the need for colleges and universities to be self-governing in this endeavour. That said, our government's conceptual model defines a strong role for faculty across the hubs of activity.

Faculty at Ontario universities have developed or redesigned 124 high-quality online courses and 45 online modules that will be available to students in the 2015/16 academic year. Faculty will play a vital role in the OOLC beyond course development and delivery. The OOLC will support research on technology-enabled learning, and will provide faculty with opportunities to access and contribute to professional learning networks. These networks will foster innovation and excellence in pedagogical practices.

Our government understands that faculty are an integral part of the postsecondary education system and, as such, should be represented in the governance structure of the new consortium. I appreciate your position that front-line faculty are in a strong position to provide valuable insight into the supports and services the consortium will provide, as well as the research activity it will support.

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I am pleased to inform you that the OOLC Board of Directors recently confirmed the appointment of Dr. Alison Flynn as the university expert in online learning. Dr. Flynn is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Ottawa with expertise in developing online content.

In addition to this representation on the board, there will also be a clear consultative role for front-line faculty within the OOLC as a sub-committee structure is developed.

Thank you for your interest in Ontario Online, and for your advocacy on behalf of Ontario faculty on this important issue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reza Moridi', with a period at the end.

Reza Moridi
Minister