

## **Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs June 7, 2012**

### **Bill 55, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Diane Posterski and I am the Executive Director of OCASA, the Ontario College Administrative Staff Association. We represent the interests of managers and leaders in Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning – those who are responsible for providing leadership in strategic and business planning to support the delivery of effective programming, which in turn is creating the skilled workforce Ontario needs for its economic success. Our members include Vice Presidents, Directors, Deans and Managers.

I would like to speak to you today about the recent legislation Schedule 5, *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2012*, in particular the language in section 7.3.1 (1)(v) of the Act, where “Deans” in colleges are included in the definition of “executives” for purposes of wage restraint. We are clear in our assertion that this inclusion is not consistent with college structures, and inappropriately identifies a management group and creates unnecessary inequities within college administration.

Furthermore, it has a far-reaching impact on Ontario colleges' ability to recruit and retain talent into academic leadership, particularly from faculty, while ensuring programming meets the needs of today's industry, and the future economy.

Available for your interest are background documents including OCASA's Pre-Budget Submission to the Minister of Finance.

#### **ABOUT DEANS**

Let me first say a few words about Deans and their role in colleges. The term “Dean” often conjures up pictures of a prestigious position in an academic institution.

There is no doubt that Deans are absolutely critical to Colleges' success – they work with industry, community and faculty to bring relevant, forward-looking programs that address the needs of a skilled workforce and a strong economy. Administratively, they tend to the needs of students (often those with challenges), faculty supervision and scheduling, materials and technology, budgets and administration, business plans and reports, hiring, performance management, legislative compliance, and so on. And they're charged with finding funding partners in industry to support their schools.

They work extremely long days, and weeks, and months. And in lean times, their titles are often too long for a mailing label – as more schools are put under the leadership of one Dean.

Yet in Colleges, Deans are the third tier down, reporting to the Vice President Academic. They're not included in the executive meetings. Although deans are often recruited from faculty (with a firm knowledge of the college structure), the position is that of a full time manager. Deans are not faculty members who rotate into the Dean's role and back into faculty, as happens in some universities. They are administrators, managers – part of a larger leadership team within the College structure. Don't be mistaken – they are a passionate, highly educated group of college leaders, dedicated to their jobs, but still more at the operational level.

If the role of College Dean was once desirable, it is less so now. Working conditions are becoming less attractive. With the past two years of wage restraint, and longer hours than ever, faculty just aren't interested in the job. As one Human Resources Director recently noted:

*Currently, some faculty are earning more than their Supervisors ...  
All of our Deans are external [hires]. Academic staff members rarely apply and certainly do not apply to become Chairs, which gives them some management experience before jumping into a Dean role.*

This might not be the experience everywhere, but it is the trend. And we at OCASA hear about it often. We also hear about succession planning, or rather the challenges of it, particularly with looming retirements on the horizon. Institutional knowledge is leaving the Colleges at alarming rates. And yet new hires into academic leadership are increasingly from the outside, simply because faculty see no benefit in making the move into academic leadership. The expertise of academic programming, and an understanding of the learning environment for Deans, is being threatened.

### **THE IMPACT OF WAGE RESTRAINT**

Wage restraint for Deans will only exacerbate this situation. We know that 35% of administrators are eligible for some form of retirement – right now – while 11% are eligible for unreduced retirement. Many will be thinking about accelerating their exit date, adding even more stress to the academic leadership capacity.

Hinted at in the quotation above is that salary compression is only intensifying after the past two years of wage restraint. Entry-level deans sometimes earn less than those they supervise.

Deans' salaries represent a very small percentage of budgets. Administrative salaries in total – including presidents, vice-presidents, deans, chairs, administrative assistants, and

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others – account for only 14% of all college expenditures. The portion of that for Deans is miniscule.

The inclusion of Deans specifically in wage restraint is a mal-aligned target, accomplishing little on the budgets, yet risking greater erosion of much-needed leadership – and creating unnecessary inequities within college management structure.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, OCASA and its members understand the economic and political landscape. Wage restraint at the executive level for the public sector is understandable. But choosing one title beyond that clearly definable executive group simply makes no sense in the College context. And it creates inequities at the operational level, which is counter-productive.

The Drummond Report noted that wage restraint for administrators delivers little savings and great risk. This is no more evident in colleges right now than with Deans as academic managers. Targeting this group is short-sighted, and will have long-lasting effects on a system that has been so successful in supporting Ontario's economic agenda for the future economic prosperity and growth of Ontario.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

OCASA recommends the following:

1. That section 7.3.1 (1) of Schedule 5, *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2012* be amended by removing the title of "Deans" at the Colleges from the legislation.
2. Alternatively, a fixed dollar amount be used to determine which employees are included in the wage restraint. OCASA would recommend a minimum salary of \$150,000 be used as this benchmark. This would eliminate inequities within the college structure as wage restraint is extended for two more years.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. We urge you to consider the far-reaching negative effects of including Deans, and other titles, outside of true Executive positions.