|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Ontario | 40e | 1e | Discours sur l’éducation | 5 septembre 2012 | Glen R. Murray | Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities | Ontario Liberal Party |

What I’d like to do is just, in the first hour, give you a bit of an overview of where the ministry is at right now, what some of the key trends have been in the last couple of years, where we’re going, and give you hopefully a bit of context so we can explain a little bit about not just the whats that we’re doing, but the whys.

I think the government—and I think it’s probably shared with all members of the Legislature—understands that our universities, colleges and training programs are arguably one of the most important and foundational ministries in a provincial government. Our new economy, driven by innovation, really looks to our ability as Ontarians to attract and retain capital for investment.

The one thing probably more important than that is the thing that attracts that capital, which is talent and the educated level and skills of our workforce in the trades, apprenticeships, colleges and universities. Our ability to build and retain a high-skills workforce is fundamental to our social policy, to reducing poverty at one end, and to our economic policy in a knowledge economy in driving the growth of that. We have some very clear aspirations, which I’ll get into, and look forward to your comments.

The government started with the Reaching Higher plan, which was a $6.2-billion investment in our universities and colleges and apprenticeships. It was arguably one of the largest expansions of investment in post-secondary education in Ontario, and it really came at a time when we hit extraordinary global economic turbulence, with the worst recession in our lifetime, the rise and fall of the tech industry and the rapid expansion in mobility of capital.

There was an interesting study by Richard Florida, published at University of Toronto, pointing out that young folk spend as little as three years in one city and one year in a job and are as likely to graduate from university to start a business as to go and seek employment. So it puts a lot more demands on the university and college platform to meet the increasingly rapidly changing needs of young people. As my friend John Polanyi, Canada’s Nobel laureate, said when asked what age we live in, we live in the age of acceleration, where change is happening so fast that the normal systems of government and business and academia can’t make decisions in time to understand change, never mind anticipate it. So I think for all of us, as public policy makers in this field, this is a time of great challenge.

That $6.2 billion was really started as a result of about 13 years where we saw really no net growth in any of our university/college budgets. We almost had the same budgets in 2003 as we had in 1990. As a matter of fact, in many of our northern colleges and universities, we saw as much as 25% and 30% actual net reductions in spending. We were also coming in at a time when the demand for colleges and universities was growing rapidly but the capacity had been shrinking.

So the government set out to really achieve what we called Putting Students First, our first Putting Students First policy, and part of the goal of that—and we’ve come pretty close to achieving it right now—was, over the next decade, to increase the capacity of the post-secondary system by about 250,000 students. I think right now we’re at about 210,000.

In the years ahead, the government’s efforts will focus on the needs of students as a top priority. We’ll continue to work with our colleges and universities to build on this past success and to align our strengths and aspirations with the college and university sector.

I would also just like to take a moment to really thank the great leadership that’s not just caused by our management, by our staff, by the unions, by our students who have worked to build the system, but the incredible leadership that’s come from Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities, whom we have had as great partners in developing policy, coordinating dialogue in the sector, understanding the current needs and anticipating changing needs.

Out of, I think, the conversations that we’ve had in the provincial Parliament, a number of things have emerged that are really critical.

One is integrating employment and training services across government through Employment Ontario, which is a major initiative that we are in the middle of right now, which my deputy is fearlessly leading, and I say “fearlessly” because if you’ve ever tried to pull together employment programs from 11 different ministries, it takes huge courage to do that in a short period of time.

Promoting apprenticeship completion to increase supply of skilled workers: I think this is a system that has not seen reform in almost half a century. It’s now going through, arguably, one of the biggest reforms and rethinks through the work of Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Whitaker.

Maintaining support for the Second Career program: This is a program that I think we’re particularly proud of because it has been imitated in so many different places. One of the things that happened in the recession that hit us and hit the entire Western world in 2008 was about a quarter of a million jobs lost, but it was the nature of that job loss that I think profoundly underlined the importance of colleges and universities and apprenticeships. Of the people who lost jobs, as has been pointed out by many of my colleagues and I think many of you, 81% of them had a high-school-or-less education.

As we came out of this recession, and we’re at somewhere upwards of 550,000 jobs created since, 70% of those jobs require university or college education, or a trade.

One of the great challenges for our university and college system is that it’s been generally tooled to meet the needs of young high school graduates. It has re-tooled itself, and I think they’ve done it quite brilliantly, to meet the needs of older workers who sometimes have been out of the education system for 10 or 20 years. Many of them never even completed high school. Some 62,000, I think, is the latest number. The deputy will jump in if I get any of these numbers wrong, I’m sure. At this point, we have 62,000 older workers who have gone back to school, back into a trade, back into apprenticeship. This program provides $28,000 to each of these families to keep them financially secure so they don’t drop through the bottom of the social safety net.

We’re over about 80%, I think, of these folks, or 76% of these folks, who have landed jobs in the fields that they studied for. You can imagine the relief. If you had never, ever been able to get that education, you lose your job and you’re in a moment of terror. The industry that you were in before for some reason has been disrupted by the economic change, and you managed to get those kinds of skills. That is not easy, and I think we should have huge respect for the people who put themselves through that. This is a program that continues to be a high-demand program in the ministry and one that we get probably more calls about than almost any other from other parts of the world, especially other industrial manufacturing economies or resource economies that have gone through that kind of downturn.

Right now, about 64% of Ontario adults have post-secondary education. That’s up from just about 50% in 2003. For the Premier of this province, if he had one very determined goal—and he had many, but this was certainly a priority one—it was to achieve a 70% attainment rate for post-secondary education. We’re well on track for that. We are within spitting distance, quite frankly, of achieving that 70%, and that will actually line up with the 70% of jobs that require university or college education.

The spectrum of that has been quite amazing in the range across socio-economic groups and in aid. Our colleges are attracting more mature students, often in their 20s and 30s. Some of them, interestingly, even have university education; we now find they are tracking back to college to get a college program to get the skills on top of the theoretical education. The colleges have been handling that. One of the things we’re discovering is that it’s very hard to predict demand because individuals in a lifelong learning economy, like we are in right now, can re-enter for a partial education or a complete education or supplemental education repeatedly through that.

Ontario now has about 210,000 new students, as I mentioned earlier; 60,000 new apprenticeships, up to 120,000—one of the things that we’re very proud of. This has been extraordinary, not just by the students who do that, but by many entrepreneurs, labour leaders, college folks, that our apprenticeships are now growing by 30,000, and probably greater than that this year. We’re now seeing the fastest growth we’ve seen ever in apprenticeships in Ontario, so that is pretty exciting news for all of us.

We have 114 college confirmations for first-year fall entry. That exceeds the double cohort confirmations in 2003. So we now have more students entering our colleges than in 2003—

Sorry, 114,000. Thank God you have a deputy.

To date for 2011-12, Ontario has issued approximately $1.1 billion in grants and loans, including the 30% tuition grant. I think $380 million was what we did back in 2003. Ontario has one of the most generous financial aid programs in Canada, supporting our students and the workforce of the future. Ontario’s publicly funded PSA system includes 20 universities and 24 colleges of applied arts and technology.

The Ontario employment network has helped more than one million Ontarians in the last year, including more than 90,000 employers in Ontario. It is one of the most successful networks in Canada. Employment Ontario invests more than $1 billion annually in employment services. Despite the challenging economic times we discussed earlier, Ontario will continue to invest in the post-secondary sector.

In keeping with the recommendations made by the Drummond commission, funding provided to the sector will grow at a sustainable pace. As you may remember, Mr. Drummond said that given the importance of education, there was no net gain if you cut in this area. You just really cut off the supply of talent to the economy, and there would be consequential diminishments on the other side of the ledger.

In 2012, the Ontario budget, Strong Action, announced that funding for Ontario colleges and universities will increase by $111 million in this coming fiscal year, rising to $155 million in 2014. Stability is being provided to the sector through multi-year frameworks and a number of modest expenditure management measures that are being implemented in light of the current fiscal challenges.

Although enrolment growth has moderated in the past year, we are still committed to the 60,000 additional spaces—budget 2012’s commitment to improve access to colleges and universities. The government will continue to strengthen student aid to ensure that every qualified student has access to post-secondary education and we will continue the new 30%-off tuition grant, which, you may know, is indexed to increase with the rate of increase in tuition.

In the 2012 budget, the government also announced that it would further improve employment training programs and services to better prepare Ontarians to meet the increasing challenges of the global economy. Programs would focus on delivering measurable results such as integrating employment services and strengthening apprenticeships and maintaining the Second Career program.

More than 363,000 students—the full-time head count—are enrolled in Ontario universities. In our colleges, we now have 181,000 students. To give you a little summary of enrolment growth, enrolment for the 2011-12 year indicates that there are more than 544,000 eligible-for-funding, full-time students that are enrolled in colleges and universities. That represents a 2% increase over 2010-11—essentially more than 10,500 students than in the previous year. More than 150,000, or 38%, more students are attending colleges and universities than in 2002-03. Post-secondary enrolment growth for the last decade was about five times higher than in the 1990s. Between 2002-03 and 2011-12, enrolments increased by 57%. So if you just think about that scale of expansion, that is huge. There are very few things in our society that have grown, that have been in that much demand, and that gives you a little sense of how much Ontarians value post-secondary education and seek it out.

We have in the graduate area, which, as you know, historically has been a challenge for Ontario—we’re quite happy to report that we have 9,542 additional masters students as well as 4,750 additional Ph.D. full-time-equivalent enrolments.

Completion rates for students: 81% of undergraduate students are now completing university, up from 73% in 2002, and 65% of college students are graduating, compared to 57% in 2002; 92% of 2008 university grads, at the worst of the recession, were employed within six months. You’ve heard the Premier talk at times about—in the recession we actually had increased job uptake for people with university education, and you see that in the results of our 2008 grads, and that has continued since.

Even during the challenging market—sorry. College graduation rate is 83% within six months of graduation today, and the employer satisfaction rate with college graduates is 93%. That is really quite remarkable. You will not find many public education systems or private institutions, when you go to the people who hire the students, where you get a 93% satisfaction rate, which speaks not only to the quality of our education but, particularly in the college and skills-based area, how relevant to employers the skills are that the college is putting out.

Student satisfaction rate with the quality of their programs and learning experience, which we evaluate—and it’s very important to us—is 77%, and that’s the same with universities. In the National Survey of Student Engagement, the university student satisfaction rate was also 77%.

Anyone who has a college or university anywhere near you will be aware of the provincial capital program and also, generously from our federal government, matching dollars in many cases for that. Our contributions under the Reaching Higher plan have been $2.45 billion invested in capital funding for Ontario colleges and universities, providing really critical investment in capacity for this rapidly growing student body and providing them with excellent technology, housing, labs and advanced facilities.

In May 2009, Canada and Ontario announced infrastructure investments totalling $1.5 billion for 49 projects at Ontario’s colleges and universities through the federal knowledge infrastructure program, KIP, and the 2009 Ontario budget. And there’s been a very high level of synergy in planning and collaboration with the federal government in these programs.

In addition to that, we as the Ontario government added $75 million to provide support for eight more projects at institutions that did not receive funding under the federal program. So for those institutions that were provincial priorities or for communities often where members both in the government and on the opposition side had come forward with that, the government found additional money.

As part of the ministry’s long-term infrastructure plan, we announced funding of $594 million towards 20 capital projects at 10 colleges and nine universities.

I want to thank my colleague, Minister Chiarelli, who has worked very closely with us to ensure that there is room and that we’re not just building only roads for cars, but we’re building pathways for students as well.

As many of you know—and I want to thank all of you, because many of you, completely non-partisanly—there’s been great interest from folks in all parties in the three new campuses. We have huge capacity challenges. We have a lot of high-growth communities in Ontario that are underserved. We also realize—and I’ve received letters from many members of the Legislature who have pointed out—that one of the biggest costs for students is that if you live in a community that’s a high-growth community where you can’t go to college or university, the cost of relocating to a large city like Toronto or Ottawa can be very expensive. You’re very familiar with—we inherited a commitment and an initial investment for the northern medical school; we’ve continued that. We now have a law school in Thunder Bay and a medical school that spans northern communities—Sudbury.

We also know that to build capacity in the north is really, really critical, and if northern Ontarians can get their education—we also know that it builds alumni and it builds more sophisticated employment networks that, as things like the Ring of Fire expand, a lot of those jobs are not blue-collar jobs; a lot of them are human resource jobs, finance jobs, administrative jobs, and we want to see cities in northern Ontario actually build the talent base so they can build the additional value and additional higher-value jobs and businesses that go with that. So we’ll be working with you on that. We’re also looking at unmet community needs, aboriginal communities and others like these.

I want to thank the member of provincial Parliament for Cambridge. We’ve had a very good discussion about some of these things, and I think we’re always at our best when we’re Ontarians before we’re partisan because these kinds of initiatives really have to get out there in front of community need. It’s very hard today to be a successful community if you don’t have some sort of post-secondary institution. It’s just vital to the success of most cities and most towns in Ontario, large and small.

More student spaces: We have support right now to colleges and universities of $111 million in 2013, growing by $155 million in 2011-12. I won’t repeat that. I think I’ve already bored you to death with graduate spaces.

Research support: This has probably been one of the biggest areas. Ontario is one of the highest investors per capita in the world in public sector research dollars. We do that with the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. We have, with the federal government, wraparound programs that provide high-value research dollars. It’s quite extraordinary. We are seeing now increasingly from the private sector more dollars in investment in research, and we’re working with the federal government on a number of studies that look at the measurement of technology, R&D and commercialization.

Queen’s University’s Parteq program right now, the president there tells me, is the fourth-ranked in the world, and we’re seeing some of the best platforms for acceleration and research right now almost anywhere in the Western world.

Our medical school commitment is very important. Since 2009, we’ve been providing our medical schools with an additional $20 million each year to help support high-quality innovative medical education for students. Through our investments, we are creating 100 first-year medical school spaces, establishing four new medical education campuses and improving the quality of undergraduate medical education. With an aging population, you can appreciate that this profession and the training of this profession continues to be an absolute critical priority. We’ve been working with Ontario medical schools in planning this expansion. The additions include 24 new spaces in 2009-10, 67 in 2010-11 and, in the coming fiscal year, an additional nine spaces.

Demand for nurses: We have more than 4,000 new full-time nurses enrolled in nursing degree programs in 2011-12. In 2012-13, we provided colleges and universities with over $109 million to support nursing degree programs in Ontario and provided an additional $99.7 million for the extension of the nursing graduate program, guaranteed to provide new Ontario nursing graduates with an opportunity to gain full-time employment. Our government is also providing colleges and universities with $11 million to enhance clinical education in nursing programs, which again connects people to lifelong learning.

One of the areas that has been really quite positive: This is one of the areas in nursing where colleges and universities show a high degree of collaboration in joint programs, in sharing facilities and getting much greater value for the tax dollar. It is one of the models that, as we’re going through our reform and transformation package about how we get institutions to share platforms and share services and reduce duplication so we get better value for students’ tuition dollars and tax dollars, really, the nursing schools have been some who have been leading the way in showing best practices in this area as well as meeting an incredibly important need.

Financial assistance arguably has emerged and continues to emerge as one of the most important areas. I mentioned the $1.1 billion in grants and the 30% off tuition, but that builds on a number of other initiatives that we have undertaken.

Almost half, just over 45%, of all full-time students attending an Ontario college or university qualified for the Ontario student assistance plan. With the introduction of the OTG, the share of students receiving OSAP increased to over half. An additional 53,900 non-OSAP students received the 30%-off tuition grant. Most of these had never received student financial assistance before.

We’re really experimenting with this in some ways, and we’ll be reviewing it again in the spring, because we brought it in in January, in the middle of an academic year, so it’s hard to get a good measure of that because people have already enrolled.

One of the things in the demographic changes, if you go knock on doors—Vic and I went and knocked on doors in his constituency. One of the things the Premier noticed—and my predecessor John Milloy, and we heard from Vic and Amrit and Bob Delaney and folks, if I just go around, Michael Chan—is, we have a lot larger demographic families. We have many communities, and many of the high-growth communities, where it is not unusual to find four, five or six kids at home and often grandma and grandpa living at home with the family as well. So there’s a lot of financial stress on the new demographic that has emerged, particularly in the 905. The 30% tuition grant, if you’ve got three, four or five kids going into college or university—one of the great things that we know about, especially with recently arrived first-generation families: huge importance on their children getting their education. You know, my family came from eastern Europe. I was the first person to go to university within my entire family. I remember my grandmother, who was living with us at the time, when I applied, was the first one—she got up at the ungodly hours of the morning, even before the postman came, to see if the letter carrier had actually brought that. She said to me, “The most important piece of paper in our family’s history was when I got my citizenship. The second most important one is when my grandson gets an acceptance letter to university or college.” We know these are deeply emotional because they really are the second passport, in a sense, to success in Canadian society. When you come from a newcomer family—so many Ontarians relate to that—these things are not just opportunities for their children; they are important standards of success and they are often the realization of the dreams of parents.

So we see this expansion, this ability to make sure that every qualified student has a seat in a university or a college, as a—well, I would almost call it a sacred commitment to Ontario families, and one that we have invested heavily in. I want to thank all of you, whatever party you’re from, because I know there are many here who are not in our party who also advocate. I want to thank my colleagues in the Liberal governments before who made these investments before I had the pleasure of sitting with all of you.

The 30% tuition grant is really our first step in trying to meet those needs and trying to understand the demographic changes and move forward with that, and we are continuing those conversations with the students and with the sector to better retool and tool our financial programs. To that, we’ve had some initial advice from Don Drummond, and we continue, through the discussions, getting ample advice. The Ontario Undergraduate Students’ Association just supplied us about a month ago with an 88-page submission, so we know it’s being taken quite seriously.

OSAP improvements, other than the 30% off: We’re providing access grants to students from low- and middle-income families, including crown wards, and I’m very proud of the crown wards program that we now have in place. We have increased OSAP student loans, making it easier for students, capping students’ annual repayable debt at $7,300, reducing expected parental income from middle-income families—this is one of the things that we are finding with the 30% grant. We often had assistance for very-low-income families or people of very modest means, but for middle-class families struggling through the recession, this really came forward. I know my colleague from Windsor, MPP Piruzza, who worked in the middle of employment aid, is very aware of this, and I want to thank you for the advice and help you’ve given us on this.

Providing relief to students struggling to repay their loans—you know of that program—and creating a new distance grant: Under the direct results of our investment in student assistance, the number of Ontario college and university students qualifying for OSAP has increased by 77% because more middle-income families and more higher-needs students can now qualify. Ontario graduate scholarships: I’ll just quickly—how are we doing for time, there?

I just want to talk a little bit about French language. We have replaced the old $1,400 francophone one-time grant with a $1,600 university grant. What’s been really interesting is, we’re seeing the highest growth in our francophone colleges right now. Our college enrolment—we just got the first numbers out in the last couple of weeks—was 3%. Collège Boréal, which is about to open up a new, small campus in downtown Toronto, grew by 14%.

One of the things that’s been particularly important to us is the importance of the French language in places like Timmins, Sudbury and eastern Ontario particularly. French is very much a working language, and we know our francophone colleges and our bilingual universities play a particular role in that. We believe that the tuition grant, which provides more generous support—

I will wrap up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. This is my very first estimates, so please be gentle with me. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.