



# **ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION: THE FORCES RESHAPING HIGHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO**

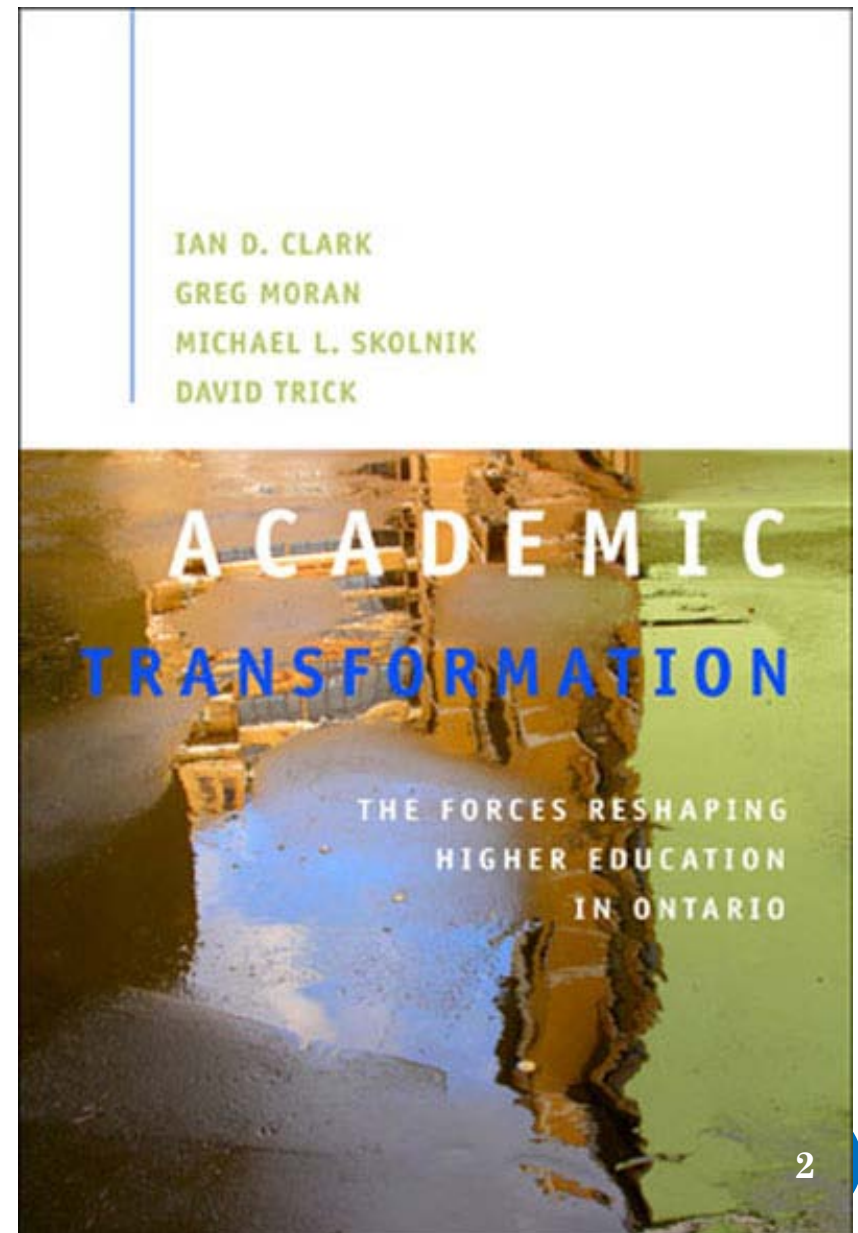
## **Strategic Choices for the Future of Ontario's Universities**

**Presentation to COU Academic Colleagues  
August 26, 2010**

**David Trick**

## OUTLINE

1. Key findings
2. Engaging the forces of change and shaping the outcome – a few of many strategic choices
3. Reactions to *Academic Transformation*
4. Discussion



## SOME HIGHLIGHTS & KEY CONCLUSIONS...

1. Transition from “elite” to “universal” higher education
2. The emergence of a new research paradigm
3. Average total funding has not declined...
4. Ontario undergraduate teaching uses the world’s most expensive model but...
5. The current reality is very different
6. Funding drives university behaviour – One-size-fits-all





## **WE HAVE FAR MORE STUDENTS AND VERY DIVERSE NEEDS**

**4**

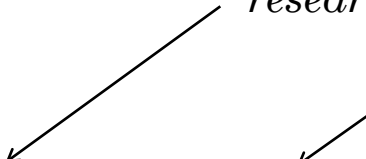
**A university or college degree has become a standard step in the education of a majority of Ontario's youth**

## HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS: AN IMPLICIT MODEL OF GROWTH WITH CONSEQUENCES

*based on an 1960s teacher-researcher model*

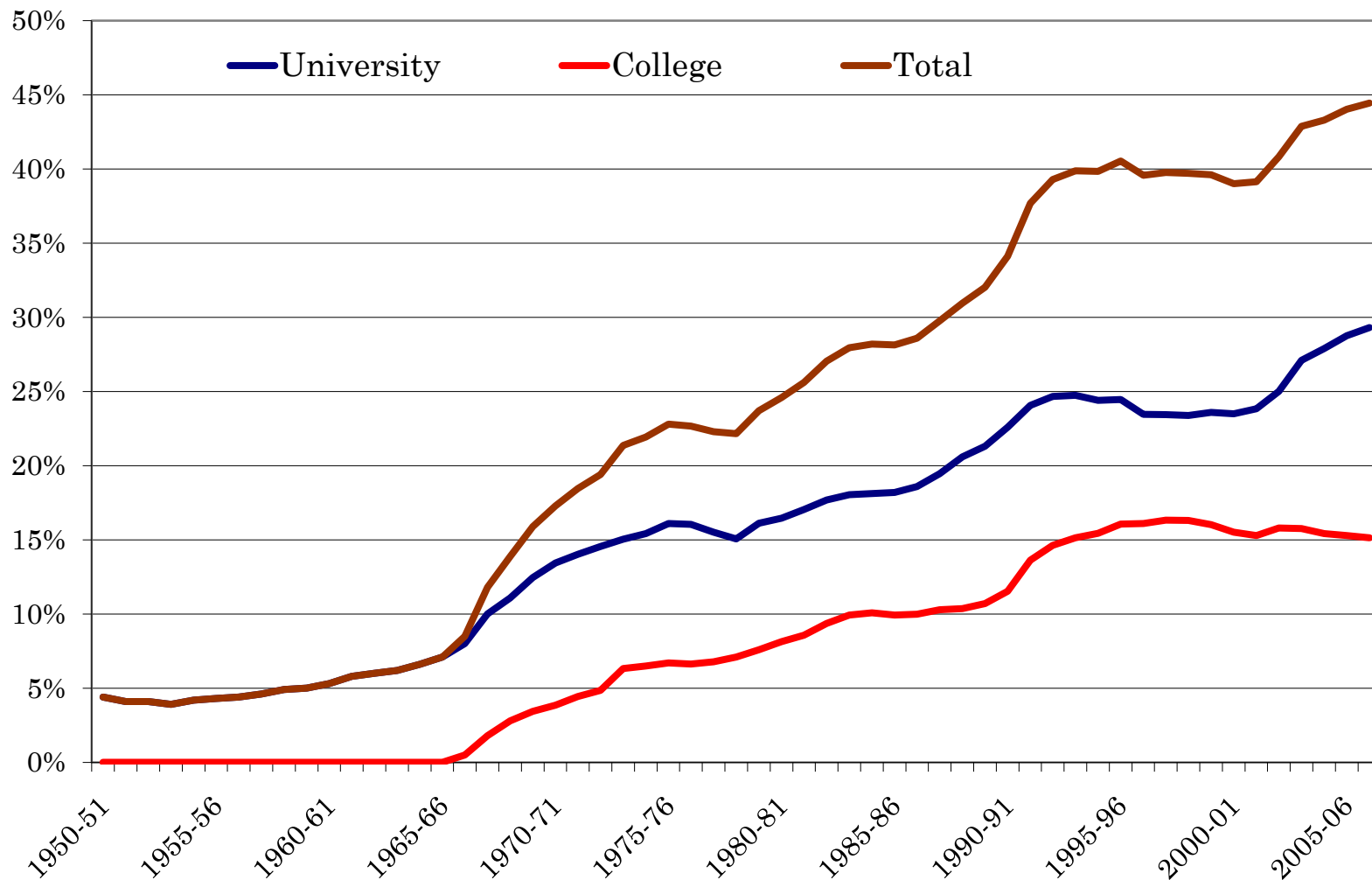
*responsive to the democratic imperative of access*

**System driven by “traditionalist-expansionist” values**  
(after Martin Trow, 1973)

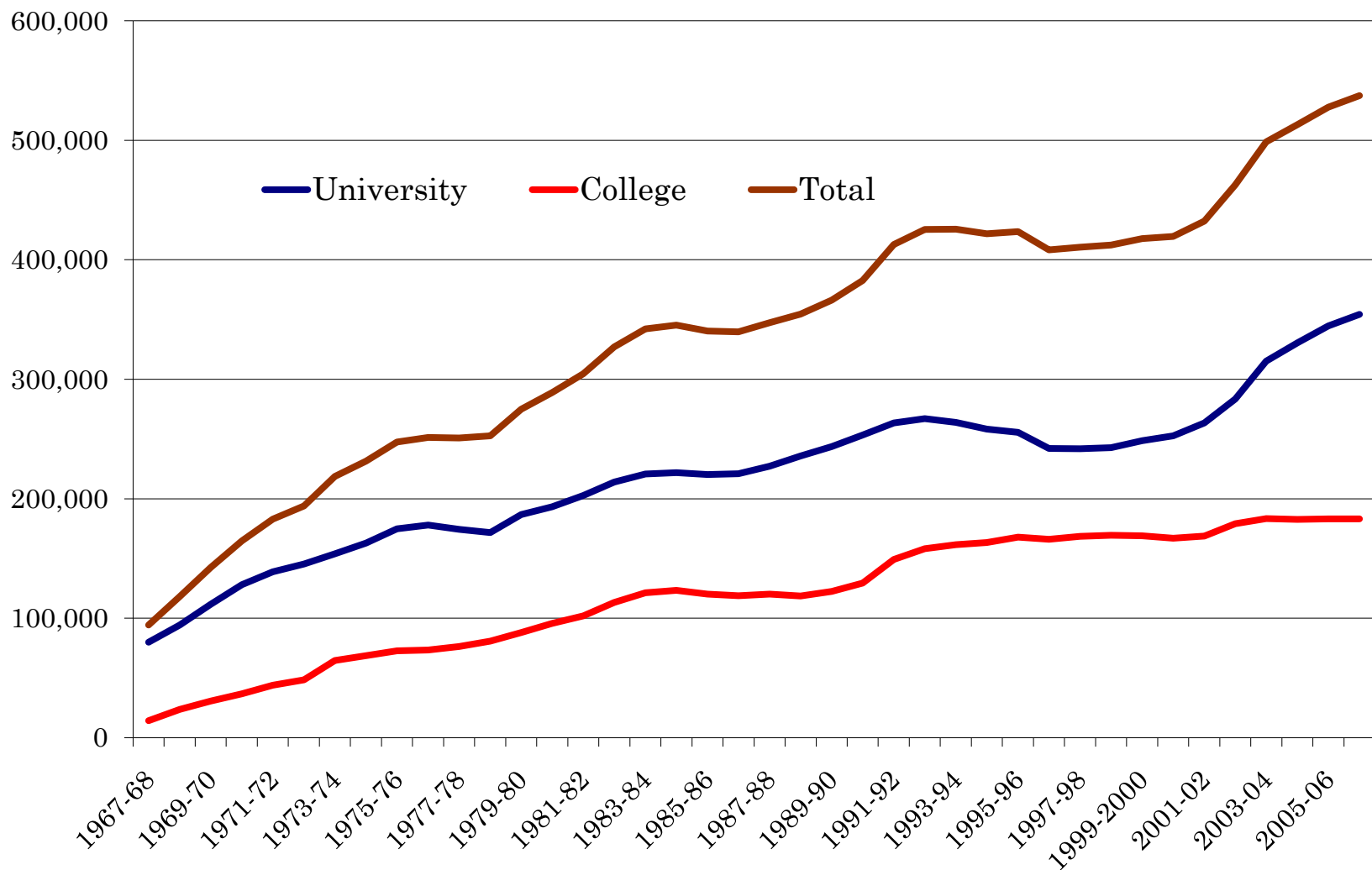


i.e. The province's universities have embraced growth (rather than limiting enrolment) but resisted any change in the model of education

# CLEARLY EXPANSIONIST: ENROLMENTS AS A SHARE OF THE POPULATION AGE 18-24, ONTARIO



# CLEARLY EXPANSIONIST: POSTSECONDARY ENROLMENTS, ONTARIO (FTEs)



## HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS:

### THE CHALLENGE OF ACCESS

**The move from an elite system to a near universal system of higher education is not over yet...**

#### The Approaching Boom in Enrolments

	Enrolments (FTEs, 2007)	Projected growth in student demand by 2021
University undergraduate	354,000	60,000-100,000
College postsecondary	183,000	35,000-50,000





AND AS IF THAT WAS NOT  
ENOUGH...

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**The second force reshaping higher education  
in Ontario**



## HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS: A NEW RESEARCH PARADIGM

### **Knowledge production: the challenge of contributing to productivity, competitiveness and sustainability**

1. Higher education and increased productivity and competitiveness
2. Responding to demands for knowledge creation: the emergence of a new paradigm for university research
3. Universities and knowledge creation
  - the conceptual rationale of the new strategy
  - expanding graduate programs
  - colleges and applied research

## A NEW RESEARCH PARADIGM: CHALLENGES EMERGING FROM THE MODEL

1. The threat of institutional and individual over-commitment
2. The consequences of the new research paradigm for disciplines outside of its focus
3. With application comes commercialization
4. Change is hard – the academy adjusts to the evolution of universities and colleges



## AND ARE RESOURCES DECLINING AT THE SAME TIME?

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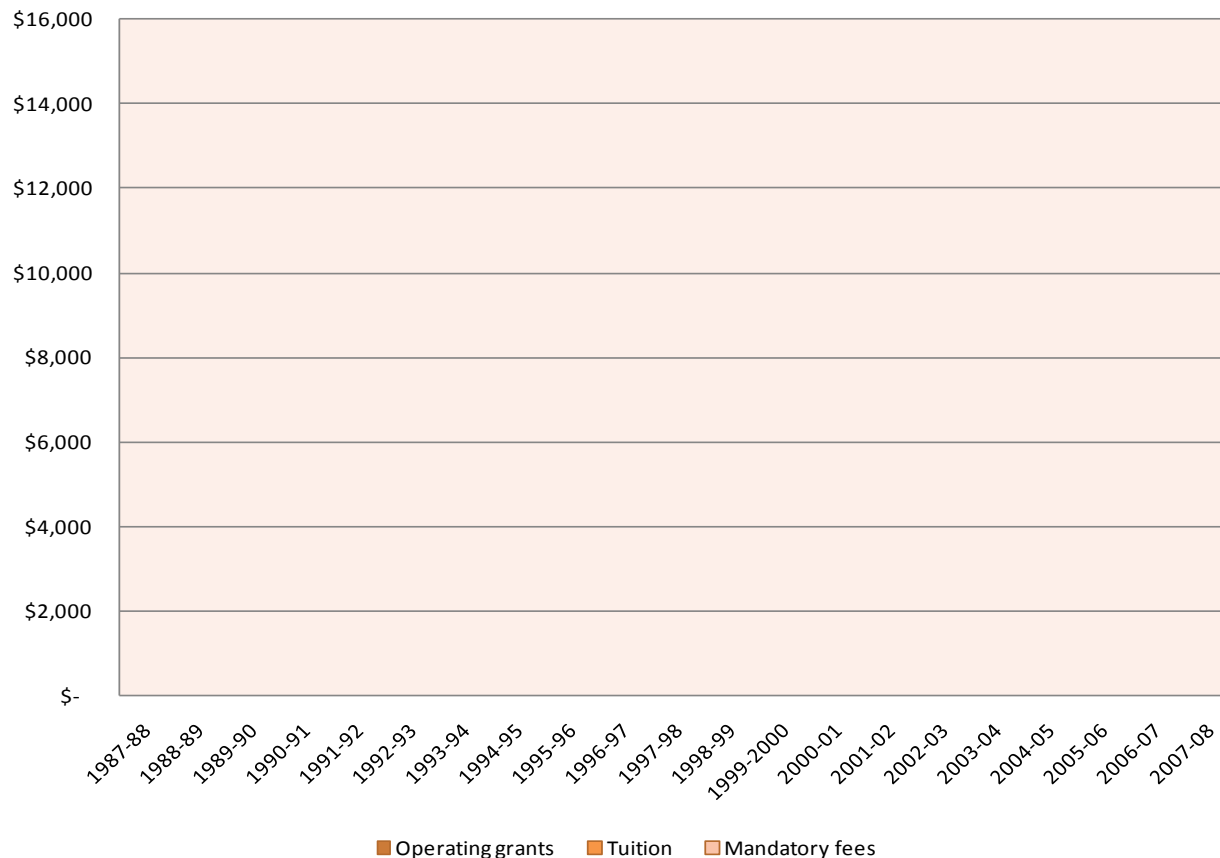
**“No” – in relation to CPI inflation**

**“Yes” – in relation to universities’ actual costs**

# HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS:

## PARADOX OF STABLE REVENUES AND FINANCIAL CRUNCH

**Universities: Total operating revenue from MTCU  
operating grants, tuition and mandatory fees, per FTE  
student,  
1987-88 to 2007-08 (constant 2007 dollars)**



**Universities' CPI-adjusted annual \$ per student has been relatively stable at about \$13,000 (\$2007) since the 1980s**

## HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS:

### FUNDING DRIVES UNIVERSITY BEHAVIOUR

#### **University funding in a nutshell – one size fits all**

1. No allowance for inflationary costs
2. Enrolment growth is the only source of new revenue
3. External and internal pressures to pursue research university status
4. Inadequate resources for focus on quality undergraduate programs

**Outcome: A largely homogenous collection of universities**



## SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

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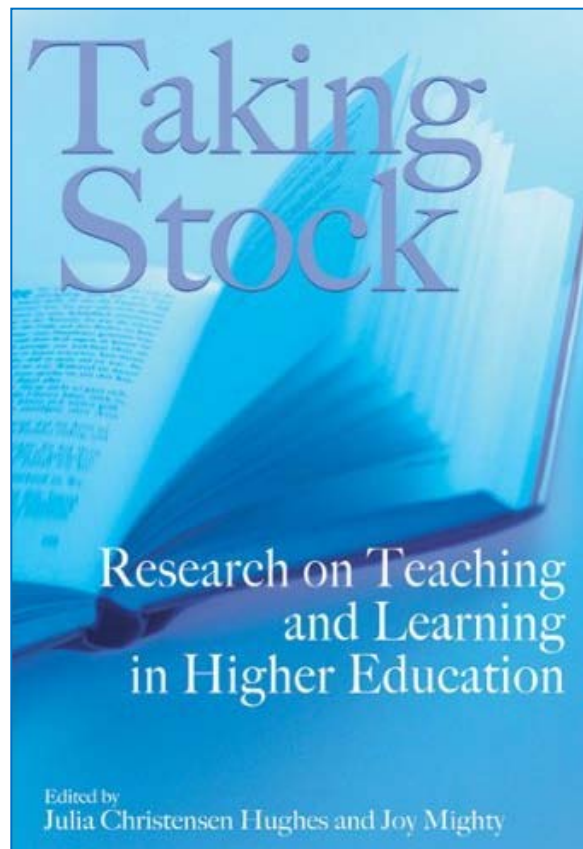
**A disconnect between theory and practice...**

# ONTARIO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING USES THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE MODEL...*IN THEORY*

1. Almost 100% of undergraduates are at “research universities”
2. Norm for faculty in Ontario universities is to allocate their effort on a 40-40-20 model (teaching-research-service)
3. At the same time costs related to undergraduate education and for other activities are rising faster than CPI inflation, e.g.,
  - Faculty & staff compensation
  - Student recruitment, support, scholarships...
  - Information technology
  - Indirect costs of research, including faculty resources, infrastructure, administration...
  - Capital costs
  - Fundraising



# TEACHING QUALITY: STRUCTURE AND INCENTIVES



1. HEQCO (2010) *Taking Stock*
  - universities (particularly research universities) not placing enough priority on teaching and learning
2. Explanations (pages 266-267)
  - lack of prestige associated with teaching competence
  - lack of expectation for professional competence and improvement
  - human-resource practices (selection, tenure and promotion)
3. Call to Action (page 275) for:
  - faculty, education developers, administrators
  - and policy makers!

# FUNDING DRIVES UNIVERSITY BEHAVIOUR: APPROACHING THE LIMITS OF A UNIFORM SYSTEM

1. University funding forces uniformity
  - expand undergraduate enrolments
  - pursue competitive research grants
2. International experience is clear: if a differentiated system is desired, deliberate and sustained government action is necessary
3. Meeting the impending undergraduate enrolment increase (especially in the GTA) requires system change

## ***The Contradictions of Isomorphism***

*(Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution, Altbach et al., UNESCO, 2009, p 19)*

In the 21st century, the trend toward isomorphism can still be observed and tends to restrict the development of differentiated academic systems. Public authorities need to ensure diverse academic models to serve varied societal needs, while many academic institutions still tend to emulate the research universities at the top of the system. Academic staff often press the university to emphasize research as its key mission, knowing that a research orientation and productivity in this area promise the highest prestige and (often) the best salaries for academics.

If the universities remain the sole decision makers, many more academic institutions would seek to improve their status by becoming research intensive. In most cases, this strategy does not serve the interests of academe in general nor is it widely achievable.

Often, it takes governmental "steering" to keep the academic system diversified and institutions within the system serving larger national goals...The essential problem of isomorphism involves unbridled competition among academic institutions pursuing the same goals. This trend may undermine efforts to develop a system of institutions that is appropriately differentiated, based on the specific needs of a given system-with different goals and responsibilities, patterns of funding, admissions policies, and other characteristics.

# THE RETREAT OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

1. Dependence on larger classes and part-time faculty in our undergraduate programs
2. Impact on the educational experience
  - variability in instructor quality
  - limited student accessibility/engagement with itinerant, contract faculty
  - part-time faculty often not embedded in evaluation, support and development structure
3. Sustainability?
  - labour relations
4. Value for money – for government, for students?



## CAN WE DO BETTER?

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**Pursuing strategic options...**  
(A very few of many possibilities)

## PURSuing NEW OPTIONS:

### A NEW TEACHING-FOCUSED UNIVERSITY SECTOR

**Use expected growth in demand to create new sector of baccalaureate institutions that focuses on teaching**

1. Institutions need not all be identical
  - some new; some converted from CAAT status
  - some baccalaureate-only; some offering degrees and diplomas
  - some exclusively career-focused; some including liberal arts
2. Benefits
  - cost effective (higher faculty course load; faculty expected to be current in their fields but not to do discovery research)
  - enhanced student engagement - better for many students, especially from underrepresented groups
3. Key to success is to create these institutions as a separate sector – erect barriers to prevent mission drift
  - models: Alberta, B.C., Florida, California

## PURSUING NEW OPTIONS: FOSTERING INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR

- Different roles among institutions
  - Financial incentives: use substantial portions of the operating grant for distinct mission-related envelopes
- Supporting change within institutions
  - widespread utilization of different appointment categories that promote role differentiation among members of faculty
  - less reliance on part-time faculty
  - continuously improving the processes of teaching and learning

## PURSuing NEW OPTIONS: AN OPEN UNIVERSITY FOR ONTARIO

1. A university with a distinctive philosophy
  - open admissions
  - flexible credit recognition
  - flexible use of resources and infrastructure to best meet the learner's needs
2. A formal relationship with Athabasca University?
3. Primary but not exclusive focus: online distance education

### Benefits

- degree completion for graduates of the colleges
- degree completion for former students who dropped out
- education for learners who work full-time or do not live near a university

## PURSuing NEW OPTIONS:

### A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO FUNDING

1. Governments and institutions need explicit discussion on rising per-student costs of higher education
  - agree on “cost to continue”
  - agree on additional costs for expanded enrolments, research and scholarship, other priorities
  - agree on sources of revenue (grants and tuition fees)
  - update student assistance programs every year to reflect inflation
  - *benefit: end to processes that have tended to ignore inflation*
2. Real incentives for teaching-focused shift in existing universities
3. Detailed public reporting on factors related to efficiency, effectiveness and quality
  - for example: compensation, teaching loads, class sizes, the use of temporary instructors



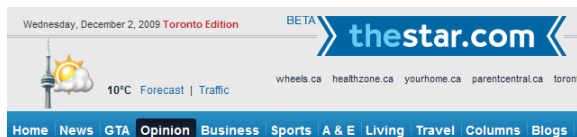


## RESPONSES TO *ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION*

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**A range of reactions...**

# MEDIA REACTIONS



## Traditional teaching model obsolete in crowded colleges

By Ian D. Clark professor in the School of Public Policy, Governance at the University of Toronto

Wed Dec 2 2009

The standard model of undergraduate education in Canada is no longer sustainable.



### RELATED:

- Underfunding shortchanges students
- Traditional teaching model obsolete in crowded colleges

### OPINION

## Underfunding shortchanges students

By Mark Langer

Wed Dec 2 2009

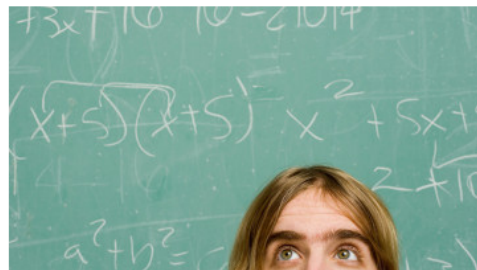
In the recently published book, *Academic Transformation: The Forces Shaping Higher Education in Ontario*, co-authored by Ian D. Clark, Greg Moran, Michael L. Skolnik and David Trick, the authors argue that the current model of university education in...

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Globe editorial

## The elusive ideal of the scholar-teacher



It is long past time to bring the quality of teaching offered to undergraduates up a notch

Article

Comments (12)

From Tuesday's Globe  
Published on Monday  
Last updated on Wed

Universities are oft  
always to their ben  
but it is long past t  
undergraduates up

The book is thoughtful and well-written. But the conclusion it reaches, simply put, is wrong... The authors assert that university teaching is not enriched by university professors conducting original research in addition to teaching. But their assertion is belied by another publication from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario... University research and university teaching depend on one another... So, contrary to the authors' assertions, their model is not going to offer our students a better quality education... It will give students only a lower-cost education, a degree on the cheap.

## THE GLOBE AND MAIL | OPINIONS

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Margaret Wente

## Universities are sitting ducks for reform

According to one 2008 survey, Canadian faculty were the highest-paid among 15 countries studied.

Column

Comments (224)



Margaret Wente

Published on Tuesday, Apr. 13, 2010 5:00AM EDT  
Last updated on Tuesday, Apr. 13, 2010 5:28AM EDT

**W**hat is the most pressing problem facing Canadian universities today?

If you ask the professoriate, the answer is likely to be: massive underfunding, combined with creeping corporatization and growing threats to academic independence.

If you ask Dalton McGuinty, Ontario's Premier, the answer is: poor accountability, and not enough bang for the buck. Last week, he fired a warning shot, saying he plans to have "honest conversations" in the coming months about what universities and colleges can expect in return for the extra money they're getting to educate another 30,000 students. Translation: You folks are in the service business.

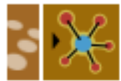
The trouble is that universities aren't set up for that. The principal job of today's university and college system is not to push forward the frontiers of knowledge, but to efficiently deliver mass undergraduate education to 30 or 40 per cent of the population.

Universities now do this job in the most expensive way possible, argues

# MORE COMMENT

## OPTIMUM ONLINE

VOL 40, NO 1, MARCH 2010



### ONTARIO HIGHER EDUCATION AS GOVERNANCE FAILURES

Vol. 40, Issue  
Gilles Paquet

### Introduction

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UA Home > Columns & Opinions > Improve the wheel, don't reinvent it

February 8, 2010

### Improve the wheel, don't reinvent it

Canada's universities should build on what they've already created.

by Roseann O'Reilly Runte

Current times of fiscal restraint call for creativity, increased cooperation and flexibility. Rather than build new institutions and establish hierarchies which stifle innovation, it is time for Ontario and Canada to seek ways to support existing institutions, to encourage them to create viable networks and to share ideas and talents in pursuit of the highest quality education possible.

The recently published book, *Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education*, by Ian D. Clark, Greg Moran, Michael L. Skolnik and David Trick, offers research as well as commentary and conclusions. It sees underfunding of education as the root of most problems. The authors argue that Ontario's model for providing undergraduate education, the research-university model, is no longer sustainable. Among the proposed solutions are greater differentiation among existing universities and creating new institutions –



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UA Home > Columns & Opinions > A taxpayer view of university funding

March 8, 2010

### A taxpayer view of university funding

Or, Steve and Di's evening on the Internet.

by Ian D. Clark

It's budget season in Canada.

With the federal budget still in the news, Steve and Dianne have agreed to prepare opening remarks for next week's constituency roundtable organized by their local member of the legislature, who is parliamentary assistant to the provincial minister of health. The topic is "How can we preserve high quality universities in the face of fiscal sustainability?" Steve and Di are to comment on what might be warranted.

Insurance company in a division that has been through its reorganization in three years. Dianne works with a team that provides health care services under contract to the local integrated health system. Her group has been downsized as the system has shrunk.

Steve and Di will laptops and send a joint e-mail to their two undergraduate students about their evening's research plan. They say they intend to use the research they learned at university to evaluate facts and arguments on the Internet to help them make judgements about the benefits of investing in higher education and to assess whether universities are as effective as other institutions to adapt to the changed economic environment. Steve will begin with Statistics Canada's complex but useful data while Di will start with publications on higher education.

Political science and e-mail counselling simplistic to the question. Insurance companies or they are not there for applied research. High costs, preserve research can flourish. Experts have told that freedom needs to be protected if universities are to remain free of corporate agendas. The link to the Google Scholar database of academic research is free access to the pages.



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