



News Release

For Immediate Release

December 1, 2021

Ontario's Public Colleges Are Economically Dependent on International Student Tuition Fees: Auditor General

(Toronto) The province's 24 public colleges rely on international student tuition for their financial health, a risky formula for their long-term survival, says Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk in her *2021 Annual Report*. There are three times the number of foreign students in Ontario colleges today compared to almost a decade ago.

"Ontario colleges are more and more reliant on tuition revenues from international students," said Lysyk. "At some smaller schools, over 90% of their tuition fees are coming from foreign students. That puts these institutions in a precarious position, should students decide to go elsewhere, or are no longer able to come to Canada to study."

Across the province, 68% of all tuition fee revenue now comes from international students, a total of \$1.7 billion. International students pay an average of \$14,306 in annual tuition fees compared to an average domestic fee of \$3,228.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities provides about \$1.6 billion in grant funding to the colleges each year. Ontario spends the least amount of money of any province in Canada per student on college education.

The audit also explored partnership agreements between Ontario's public colleges and for-profit private career colleges. These private colleges are favoured by international students because they are located in the Greater Toronto Area and able to provide a pathway to public college credentials and immigration. However, many of these partnerships could have had operating deficits if they did not receive international student tuition revenue from the partnerships.

"The Ministry should assess how the increasing reliance on international tuition fees could impact post-secondary education in the longer term," said Lysyk.

The audit report contains 26 recommendations for improvement.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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