

# Ontario Liberal's Post Secondary Bias is Unfair - John Harris, President, Harris Institute

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, May 31, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Liberal government of Ontario treats private colleges unfairly while misleading the public about the performance of publicly funded colleges.



“Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe”.

H. G. Wells (1866 – 1946)

Full disclosure: I have operated a private college in Toronto for 29 years; served on Advisory Boards at Humber College for 7 years and Ryerson University for 4 years; was a Task Force member for 4 years for Dianne Cunningham (former Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities) and have established two unprecedented educational partnerships in the UK.

Private colleges have contributed to Ontario's economy since 1871. There are currently over 500 regulated private colleges in Ontario delivering essential training in more than 900 programs. Graduates of private colleges save Ontario taxpayers over \$1 billion a year in educational subsidies and the colleges pay more than \$90 million in business and payroll taxes.

As a member of Minister Cunningham's Task Force from 2001 to 2005, I urged the ministry to publish what I believe are the most valuable statistics for prospective post secondary students - 'the percentage of graduates working in their field of study'. At that time the ministry published the percentage of graduates working in any field six months after graduating and included no disclaimer that they were not necessarily working in their field of study. This misled the public about the outcomes of all post secondary programs and the job market reality.

Now, 12 years later, the ministry has begun publishing the percentage of private college graduates 'working in their field of study'. Private colleges pay Forum Research to assemble the statistics and the ministry publishes the results. This information will vastly improve the outcomes of the sector and will be extremely valuable for students choosing schools, programs and career paths in the future.

Recently published ministry statistics for the publicly funded colleges in Ontario still prominently feature the percentage of graduates working anywhere six months after graduating. Although Forum Research collects 'field of study' statistics for the community colleges, the ministry does not publish them. This information should be made public.

The government of Ontario also opposes 'Post Graduate Work Permits' for international graduates of private colleges but supports them for international graduates of publicly funded institutions. The C.D. Howe Institute states, "The potential pool of international students is limited because international students in private career colleges cannot obtain a work permit". This is unfair and detrimental to Ontario's economy.

As well as this inequitable treatment, the ministry punitively over-regulates private colleges with excessive and costly administrative requirements because of a small number of colleges that have

failed. Examples are the mandatory requirement for Audited Financial Statements from all private colleges regardless of size and the ineligibility for claiming HST input tax credits, which is a direct cause of higher tuitions. On multiple occasions I have needed both the provincial Ombudsman and corporate attorneys to deal with unwarranted disruptive treatment by the ministry.

The ministry's abrupt closure of Everest College in 2015 created unnecessary disruption for 3,000 students and faculty at a cost to Ontario taxpayers of \$7.4M. There would have been no disruption and minimal cost if the ministry had simply prohibited the college from admitting new students and required it to complete the training of current students.

It is essential students; parents and taxpayers demand that Premier Kathleen Wynne and Minister Deborah Matthews treat both public and private post secondary schools equally. To express concerns about these issues contact:

Kathleen Wynne, Premier  
Kwynne.mpp@liberal.ola.org

Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)  
mhunter.co@liberal.ola.org

About [Harris Institute](#)

Harris Institute ranked best school of its kind for a 6th year in the 'Media Arts Education Report' and it is the only school outside the US in Billboard Magazine's 'Top 11 Schools'. It has the lowest 'Student Loan Default Rates' of any post secondary school in North America and is the only college that offers graduates full scholarships for university degrees.

The college has the highest percentage of award winning faculty of any school and its graduates have won or were nominated for 246 awards in the last two years. An unprecedented partnership with the University of the West of Scotland enables double Diploma graduates from Harris to also earn Master's Degrees in a total of 32 months.

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