



COLLEGES | COLLÈGES  
ONTARIO | ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S COLLEGES  
**CREATING A HIGHLY  
SKILLED WORKFORCE  
FOR THE NEW  
ECONOMY**

FALL 2013



As governments examine labour-market training in Canada and the steps needed to produce a more highly skilled workforce, political leaders must place a greater emphasis on college education.

Public colleges are the only academic institutions in Canada that deliver a robust range of career-focused programs and training to all segments of the population. The colleges' labour-market programs, such as Second Career, employment counselling, academic upgrading and apprenticeship training serve more than 160,000 students each year.

Ontario's public college programs are affordable and reach students in all socioeconomic groups – from people who need upgrading in order to qualify for full-time college programs, to university graduates seeking marketable skills.

Graduates of Ontario's 24 public colleges earn credentials that have met the province's rigorous standards for post-secondary education and are valued by employers. College graduates continue to be in high demand.

It has never been more important to strengthen and promote public college education. The province and the country continue to face a serious skills mismatch that is leaving too many people without any hope of finding a good job. That skills gap will widen as new technology and innovations continue to transform the economy and heighten the demand for a more highly skilled workforce.

The country needs a comprehensive strategy to address the skills mismatch. And Ontario's 24 public colleges will be pivotal to the success of that strategy.

## PREPARING PEOPLE FOR CAREER SUCCESS

Ontario's colleges work closely with business partners and experts to develop programs that respond directly to labour market needs in the college communities and the province. Each college has a program advisory committee comprised of business and industry experts to help ensure programs are up to date and effective.

Even in this difficult economy, more than 83 per cent of college graduates find employment within six months of graduation. And more than 93 per cent of employers are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of graduates hired.

Throughout the province, the colleges partner with industries and businesses to produce greater numbers of graduates in careers that are in demand. The partnerships can include everything from research projects to help businesses grow, to support for higher education and training for specific fields.

In 2009, Hydro One entered into a partnership with four Ontario colleges – Algonquin College in Ottawa, Georgian College in Barrie, Mohawk College in Hamilton and Northern College in Timmins – to provide \$3 million in support toward the training of the next generation of energy professionals.

The funds supported scholarships, curriculum development, co-op placements and equipment. A second agreement to provide another \$3 million in funding was announced in 2012. Enrolment and graduation rates from electrical engineering technician and technology programs have doubled at the four colleges since the partnership began.

**“The four colleges have been very effective in attracting more students to their electrical programs, ensuring a stronger workforce for Hydro One and the entire utility sector,” said Laura Formusa, past president of Hydro One. “This is good news for the people of Ontario.”**

Similarly, Durham College in Oshawa has an ongoing partnership with Ontario Power Generation that has been very successful.

In 2010, OPG partnered with the college and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) for a five-year agreement. OPG agreed to provide funding to the college for capital improvements, education programs, equipment, training, scholarships and bursaries.

Some of the success of the agreement can be attributed to the unique nuclear power bridging program. The bridging program allows graduates of Durham College's electro-mechanical engineering technology, mechanical engineering technology, electronics engineering technology, environmental technology, and chemical engineering technology programs – in addition to graduates of other approved three-year advanced Ontario college programs – to directly apply to UOIT's bachelor of applied science in nuclear power program.



Graduates will enter the working world with an understanding of the principles and applications of nuclear power technology, the ability to think independently, to take a systematic approach to problem solving, and to apply skills in teamwork and collaboration.

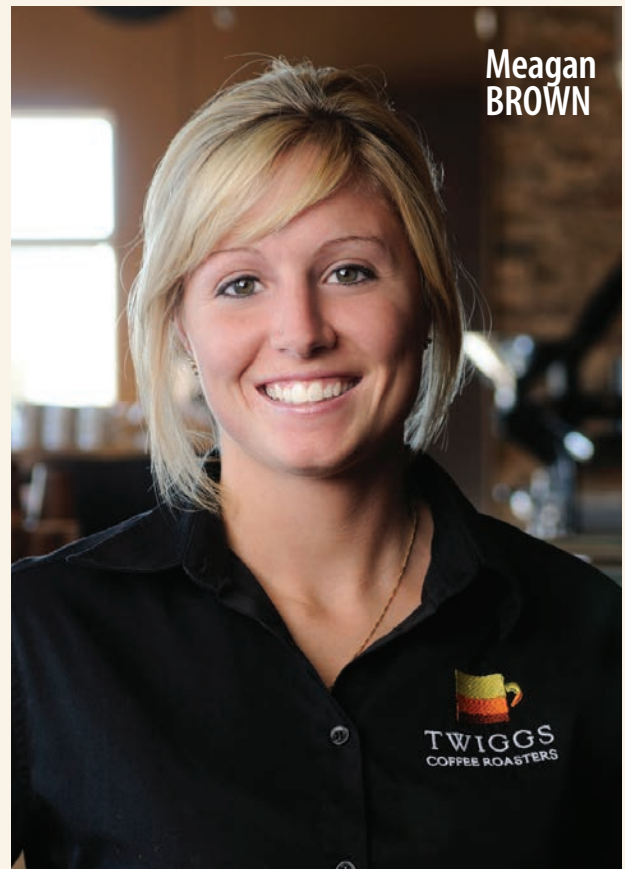
In May 2013, Mohawk College in Hamilton launched a program with one of North America's leading steel fabricators to get ahead of a looming skills shortage and give students a unique opportunity to learn and earn.

Mohawk partnered with Walters Inc. to launch a two-semester mechanical techniques welding and fabrication certificate program. The inaugural class of 11 students work a paid shift once a week at Walters' new plant in Stoney Creek doing structural steel fitting and attend classes at Mohawk's skilled trades campus. Students learn a combination of level one apprenticeship along with health and safety, professional practice, trade math, quality systems, and more.

"We approached Mohawk College about joining forces to help our company get ahead of a growing skills shortage in a critical area of our business," says Walters Inc. human resources manager Marty Verhey. "Together, we're training people for in-demand jobs as welders and fitters and our company gets a great opportunity to assess the talent of potential future employees."

With a range of certificate, diploma, degree programs and in-class training for apprenticeship programs, Ontario's colleges are preparing graduates for a wide range of careers in the new economy.

May 2013 marked the 10th anniversary celebration of the Women in Skilled Trades (WIST) program in general carpentry at Conestoga College in Kitchener.



Meagan  
BROWN

## BIG DREAMS FOR A SMALL BUSINESS

Meagan Brown, of North Bay, has used her college education to become a savvy entrepreneur and business professional.

Brown, who was working at a specialty coffee house after completing her first diploma from Canadore College in recreation therapy, knew she wanted to own and manage her own location someday. She returned to Canadore to study business.

Since completing her second diploma, Brown has single-mindedly worked towards her goal. She operates Twiggs Coffee Roasters' newest locations, with annual sales of more than \$1 million. She has received the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award (2007), a Northern Ontario Business Award of Excellence (2010) and was chosen as one of 200 young leaders to attend the G20 Young Entrepreneurs Summit.

Conestoga was one of Ontario's first partners in the program, which facilitates women's access to employment in non-traditional trades through tuition-free training. WIST training programs at Conestoga in the areas of general carpentry and information technology have provided more than 500 women in the community with a fresh start on a new career. Eighty per cent of the women who complete the program are successful in finding related employment.

**Loyalist College in Belleville took a leadership role developing online apprenticeship curriculum in child development practitioner, developmental service worker, and for food process operator apprenticeships – the latter to help produce new employees for Kellogg's Canada.**

By developing and delivering these and other programs online, Loyalist helps students to increase their knowledge and skills while continuing to work in their careers. In 2011-12, Loyalist had recorded more than 1,800 course registrations provincewide by apprentices for child development practitioner, 800 registrations for development services worker and 121 registrations for the food process operator program.

In September 2009, **Vaughan Scriver** walked through the doors of Fanshawe College in London with his 22-year-old son. The son was there to study police foundations, but Scriver wasn't there just to drop off his kid. This former factory worker was finally going after the education his own family hadn't been able to afford 30 years ago.

At 46, he was going back to school. "I had the grades coming out of high school back in the '80s," he says. "But back then there was no financing." Instead, Scriver did a stint with the navy, worked as a machinist, drove trucks, managed restaurants, joined construction crews, and eventually wound up on the line at Sterling Trucks.



## SUPPORTING THE DECISION TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

In 2006, Theresa Charlebois left a spouse that was physically and emotionally abusive and brought her three young children to the community women's shelter in Sudbury. Upon obtaining housing, she had no choice but to go on social assistance, as her children were young and needed daily care. She was determined not to rely on social assistance, however, and after counselling and some experiences volunteering at the local food bank, she went to Cambrian College to inquire about post-secondary programs.

She was very nervous to return to school as a mature student because so many of the students were younger than her and she had always struggled with school. Immediately, she felt comfortable in the upgrading program because the teachers were so patient. Because the hours were flexible, Charlebois was able to juggle the demands of single parenthood and her schooling. She could afford to attend since the program was free. She earned her prerequisites for the practical nursing program and completed her nursing program in 2009.

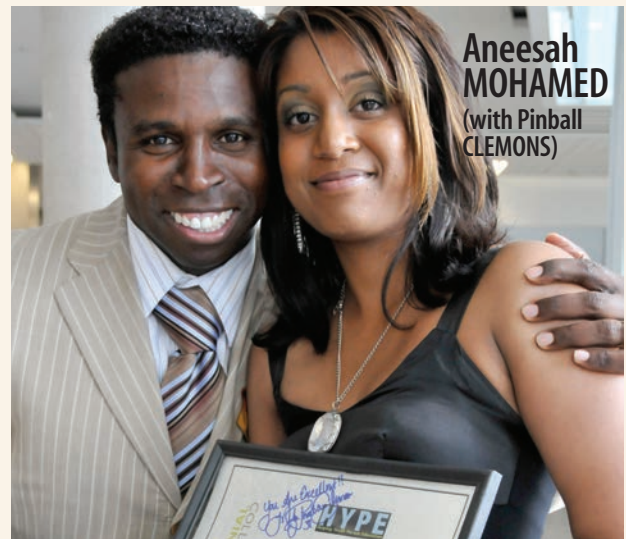
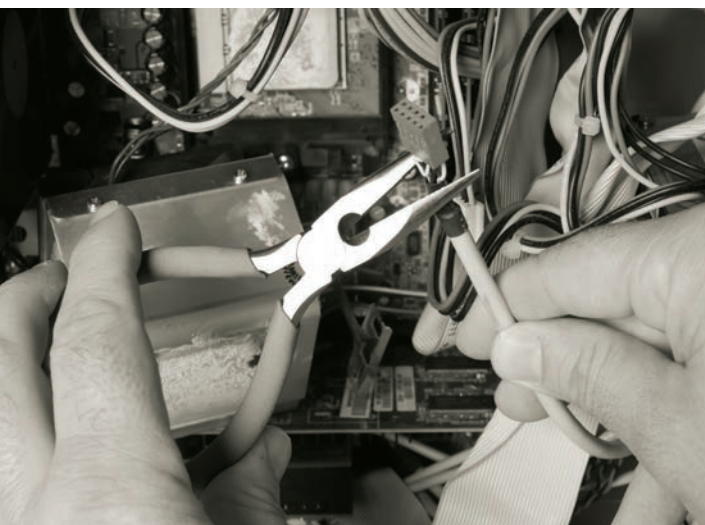
Charlebois secured a position at the St. Joseph's Continuing Care Centre in Sudbury, where she continues to work today.

After 17 years at Sterling he was laid off when the plant closed, and he'd also been injured on the job. He figured there had to be a better way to earn a living. So, with the support of a WSIB retraining program and his eye on a management job, he enrolled in manufacturing engineering technology at Fanshawe College.

Three years later, Scriver is a new man. He completed his post-secondary education with a slew of awards and now has the job of his dreams as site supervisor at Ingersoll's Robinson Solutions. He loves his staff, and they love him.

**Spencer Moyle**, of Timmins, was able to get support to help him train to become a registered electrical technician after he was diagnosed with cancer in 2009.

Moyle had graduated from high school and was preparing to study in the electrical technology program at Northern College when he was diagnosed with cancer. After undergoing a variety of cancer treatments and follow-up procedures, his cancer subsided and he reapplied to Northern in 2011.



## 'HYPE' OFFERS OPTIONS

Aneesah Mohamed is one of the successful graduates of the award-winning HYPE (Helping Youth Pursue Education) program at Centennial College in Toronto. The program helps young people in priority neighbourhoods overcome barriers and return to school.

HYPE provides a six-week, on-campus post-secondary educational experience for young people ages 17 to 29. The program reduces or eliminates barriers to higher education through free tuition, transportation, breakfast, lunch and learning materials. Since 2004, more than 70 per cent of the program's participants have graduated and many have been accepted into full-time studies. Mohamed is one of the graduates who found her way into higher learning through HYPE. With just a Grade 10 education and two children to support, she felt her choices were limited when she was considering her options in 2008. After speaking with an employment counsellor, she entered the HYPE program.

Mohamed completed the HYPE program and successfully made the transition into full-time studies at Centennial College, where she completed the community and justice services program.

"The entire experience changed me as a person," she said. "I had a new confidence in myself, as I was proud that I had finally completed something for myself, and HYPE made it possible."

He worked diligently during his two-year program and maintained a 4.0 average throughout. He demonstrated professionalism and integrity both inside and outside of the classroom and established a respectful camaraderie with his colleagues. It was clear he had the skill set and attitude to succeed in the workplace – he just needed a little help.

As he neared completion of his course, a Northern professor advised him of a potential electrical apprenticeship opportunity and directed him to Employment Options Emploi for assistance. Once he was done school, he was quickly referred to Action Refrigeration, Mechanical and Electrical. Not surprising to all who know him, Moyle was hired immediately and will soon achieve his goal of becoming a registered electrical apprentice in an industry that faces a skills shortage.

## HELPING STUDENTS OVERCOME CHALLENGES

Ontario's colleges offer a range of programs and services for people who need upgrading and support.

Many people are helped by the literacy and basic skills programs offered at the public colleges. These programs, which are free to the general public, provide training in areas such as reading, writing, math and basic skills. They can help people prepare for further education and other goals.

Supports can also include everything from financial assistance to academic upgrading, career bridging for immigrants who need to update their credentials, and other programs and services to help people improve.



## COOKING UP SUCCESS IN REGENT PARK

Paintbox Bistro has the recipe for success – and it starts with empowerment. Helmed by Chris Klugman, a part-time instructor at George Brown College in Toronto, the bustling Regent Park eatery is staffed primarily by former Ontario Works recipients who have received basic kitchen training at George Brown's Chef School.

Equal parts social enterprise and dining destination, Paintbox enables its employees – many of whom are from Regent Park and other marginalized communities – to build the confidence and skills they need to launch new careers in the food and hospitality industry. The restaurant also provides a local hub for community events, while its unique backstory entices diners from across the city to visit the recently revitalized Regent Park.

In Sarnia, **Amanda McKinley** used an academic career entrance program to pursue a new career. McKinley, who has a bachelor of commerce degree, was working on a short contract as a secretary at Suncor. After taking an “exciting” tour of the plant, she decided to pursue a career as a process operator.

However, she needed to upgrade her sciences in order to study chemical production engineering technology. So McKinley, who was just shy of her 30th birthday, enrolled in the academic upgrading program at Lambton College. The course modules allowed her to work at her own pace and she completed her prerequisites in less than a year.

She successfully completed her college training and accepted a full-time position in January 2013 as a process operator in the polyethylene unit at Imperial Oil.

Sault College has been providing training this past year in First Nations communities along Lake Huron to train people for the renewable energy field.

The in-community training has been provided in Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation, M’Chigeeng First Nation and Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation. It helps aboriginal students train for the renewable energy and green construction sectors while staying in their home communities.

The training prepared students for entry-level carpentry and construction jobs and allowed them to earn credits that could be transferred to other post-secondary programs. Of the 89 participants in the program, 70 per cent graduated and 50 per cent are now employed.

Students in the stage management technician program at Collège Boréal in Sudbury recently completed on-the-job training in California and Toronto. The training included participation in the set-up of the Science of Ripley’s Believe It or Not exhibit in Santa Ana.

## FINDING AN APPRENTICESHIP SPOT

Graham Cole had been searching for an apprenticeship opportunity for three years when the Employment Ontario site at Confederation College in Thunder Bay helped him get hired at the CARSTAR Collision Centre. The employment centre pre-screened Cole and helped him prepare for the interview. His resumé was forwarded to CARSTAR, along with a recommendation to hire him.

The centre provided support for Cole’s on-the-job training, and both Cole and CARSTAR have been pleased with the result.







## SECOND CAREER

When the Ontario government announced in 2008 its Second Career retraining program for laid-off workers, the public colleges responded quickly with measures to help ensure the program would succeed.

Colleges identified skills training programs that could best respond to the province's objectives. The colleges actively marketed and promoted the opportunities available to laid-off employees, and Second Career coordinators and advisers were established at colleges to respond quickly to people's inquiries.

The demand for Second Career training at Ontario's public colleges was huge and many people have successfully retrained for new careers.

**Janet Burley** is a single mother in Haliburton who worked at a donut shop for 14 years. Heavy lifting and cleaning contributed to a recurring and permanent shoulder injury. With the assistance of the employment centre at Fleming College, Burley applied for Second Career funding to pursue training in accounting. She completed both accounting and bookkeeping certificates through the OntarioLearn online training while continuing to work part time and being an active volunteer in the community.

When she completed her training, the employment centre at Fleming helped Burley secure a placement in the finance department at Haliburton Community Care. After her placement was completed, they loved her work ethic, attitude and skill so much that she was hired on a part-time basis for another six months. At that point, a coordination job became available with the organization and Burley was the successful applicant. She is now employed full time on a permanent basis and loves her job.

**Kirsten Payne** was laid off at a call centre in 2009, after working there for seven years. Payne, who had a science degree from university, had never found employment related to her field.

She was approved in 2011 to take a Second Career program in human resource management at Georgian College in Barrie. As a result of a placement arranged through Georgian, Payne was hired as a human resources clerk at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in December 2011.

**"I am so very happy," she says. "I am very thankful for the opportunities that have come my way for being introduced to you and Second Career."**



## SECOND CAREER - NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Jovelyn Ramos was laid off from her job in food production just one month after purchasing a home. Disappointed and anxious to find a new start, she learned about Second Career through an employment centre.

With the assistance of her employment consultant, she was approved to study in a Second Career program. She completed academic upgrading and was then enrolled in the practical nursing program at Niagara College.

Ramos graduated in May. She has passed her registration exam and is now employed as a registered practical nurse with Niagara Health System.

"It's a dream come true," she said. "It wouldn't have been possible without Niagara College's Employment and Training Solutions and the Second Career program."

## PROVIDING EFFECTIVE CAREER COUNSELLING

Often, people who are looking for greater career success need counselling and services to help them impress new employers. Employment advisers at Ontario's colleges offer expert advice in everything from resumés and interview techniques to career and education advice.

**Sheila Hu**, of Toronto, found career success through job-coaching assistance at Humber College.

Although her former job as student services coordinator for a private college in British Columbia had been a good one, she was unable to find employment when she moved to Toronto. For the most part, Hu – who was originally from Taiwan – did not get responses to her resumé, and the one interview she had did not yield a job offer. Enthusiastic and open minded, Hu responded well to all the feedback she received from her employment adviser at the college and through workshops. Her resumé was thoroughly revamped and she worked with her adviser on how she could best market herself in interviews.

Hu found a part-time position at a medical clinic and, in March, was offered an excellent full-time position at the College of Family Physicians. "It all started with the resumé," she said. "Once you helped me with that, many people contacted me."

**Brenda Whan** had been working at the same job for 15 years when she decided in 2010 that it was time for a change.

She dropped into St. Lawrence College's employment service in Sharbot Lake and discussed her job plans with the employment counsellors, resulting in a bigger change than she had bargained for. She was asked about the possibility of starting her own business and enrolling in a self-employment course to learn how to run her own business.

Whan hadn't been in school since she was 17 but her counsellors convinced her she could do it. She applied for the Ontario Self Employment Benefit Program and was accepted. There was a lot of work to do along the way – resumé preparation, business planning, application writing, and waiting for approval from many levels – but the employment staff guided her through each step.

Whan is now the successful operator of Your Home in Bloom, a service that combines her love of gardening with her many years of experience in house cleaning.

"I couldn't have done it without you guys," she says of the employment service's supports and programs. "You gave me the confidence and the advice that I really needed to see new possibilities and to succeed. And you also gave me a push. It's the best thing that's ever happened in my working life."



The Workforce Skills Centre at Seneca College in Toronto matches more than 75 skilled immigrants each year with employer partners such as CIBC, TD, Deloitte, the City of Toronto, the Town of Markham, Telus, and many more. It is proven that mentoring improves employment prospects and earning potential, helping skilled immigrants in the community to build their professional network and learn about what they need to enter the labour market.

**Leon Zhou** came to the Seneca Workforce Skills Centre in Scarborough in September 2012. New to Canada and unsure of his employment options, he was eager to learn how to network and find opportunities in his field.

With a bachelor's degree from China and an extensive background in project management, he wanted to find meaningful work that would launch his career in Canada.

The staff at the centre helped him with his resumé and job search preparation. He attended workshops and improved his interview skills. As part of his return-to-work action plan, he was referred to Seneca's mentoring coach, who registered him in the mentoring partnership program – a collaboration between Seneca, TRIEC and other community and employer partners across the GTA that bring together skilled immigrants with established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships.

Matched with a mentor from CIBC in business services, Zhou was able to participate in a mock interview and learn about the entire hiring process in the Canadian business world. He recently got a job offer as an engagement coordinator at a global consulting firm.

"The reputation of this company is outstanding in the industry," he wrote. "I appreciate all the help that you (Seneca) have continuously provided in the past six months."

**As this report demonstrates, people of all ages and from all walks of life have already found success and new opportunities because of the many programs and services available at Ontario's public colleges.**

**Governments must build on these achievements and ensure higher learning responds more effectively to the new economy. More people must get the opportunity to fully reach their potential.**

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE

COLLÈGE BORÉAL

CAMBRIAN COLLEGE

CANADORE COLLEGE

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE

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