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Archived - 2014 Mandate letter: Training, Colleges and Universities

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Dr. Reza Moridi
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
900 Bay Street
Third Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Moridi:

I am honoured to welcome you to your role as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the

work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services to our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, you will work to help Ontario become North America's leading jurisdiction for talent, skills and training. You will collaborate with colleges, universities, municipalities, training organizations, community organizations, employers, students — and across government to help Ontario develop a modern, forward-looking postsecondary education sector.

Your ministry's specific priorities include:

Helping People Choose their Path

- Introducing Experience Ontario, a new program to give recent high school graduates valuable work experience. I ask that you lead the implementation of this program, working closely with the Minister of Education.
- Working with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to extend the Youth Jobs Strategy. You will explore how best to support youth employment after the Youth Employment Fund ends.
- Working with the Ontario College of Trades to improve apprenticeship completion rates and enhance access to apprenticeship and the trades in Ontario.
- Continuing to recognize and meet the needs of diverse groups of learners, including Franco-Ontarians, Aboriginal Peoples, first-generation students, persons with disabilities and students with special needs through an equitable system of supports. I ask that you give Ontarians the support they need to be successful in our economy, including help as they transition from high school to postsecondary education and the workplace.
- Leading work to ensure that timely and relevant labour market information is available to support government, institutions, students, families and employers as they make important decisions about education, training and hiring.

Ensuring an Accessible, High-Quality and Sustainable Postsecondary Education System

- Balancing government stewardship of postsecondary education with institutional leadership. Your goal is to continue to build a postsecondary education system that is both high-quality and sustainable. I ask that you strengthen transparency and accountability between the government, institutions and the public.

- Focusing on key outcomes for students, institutions and the economy. You will work with our sector partners — including colleges, universities and employers — to assess key outcomes, including the labour market readiness and success of graduates. I ask that you recognize the unique roles that Ontario's colleges, universities and private career colleges play in fostering our province's diverse talent and future prosperity.
- Working with postsecondary institutions and the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario to improve the consistency and availability of institution-level and system-level outcome measures. These measures will help inform the allocation of graduate spaces, updated program approval processes and the implementation of a reformed funding model for universities. Your goal is to drive differentiation in the postsecondary education sector and to uphold the government's commitment to accountability and transparency.
- Building on the success of the 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant, continuing to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of student financial assistance.
- Considering the new outcome measures and ongoing initiatives when developing the next tuition framework and the next round of Strategic Mandate Agreements, to be implemented for 2017-18.
- Ensuring that the new Ontario Online initiative is able to offer online courses for credit, beginning in 2015. Your goal is to improve system quality and increase options for students.
- Continuing work with the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer to enhance student pathways and reduce barriers for students who want to transfer among Ontario's 44 publicly funded postsecondary institutions.
- Working with the Minister of Finance and our partners in the university sector to improve the sustainability of university pension plans to support greater sustainability in universities.
- Working with institutions to bring focus to efforts to attract international students to Ontario and to institutions' internationally offered programs. I ask that you strike a balance between the benefits and challenges associated with these new forms of partnerships.

Building Ontario's Integrated Employment and Training System

- Ensuring our employment and training system connects job seekers with employers and helps Ontarians find the jobs that are right for them.
- Working collaboratively across government to strengthen relationships and improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of employment and training services.
- Working with ministers and President of the Treasury Board to determine how best to reallocate funding from the least effective employment and training programs to the most effective. You will ensure that programs are providing the best results for clients and are meeting the needs of Ontario's labour market.
- Collaborating with the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy and other relevant ministers to focus resources on those who need them most — including persons receiving social assistance, persons with disabilities, the long-term unemployed, Aboriginal Peoples, newcomers and at-risk youth — as part of the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy. You will continue to engage a broad range of stakeholders and partners, including municipalities and service delivery agents, throughout this work.
- Continuing to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities on the development of flexible policies, programs and services that respect and respond to the diversity within Aboriginal communities.
- Introducing a new, more consistent approach to assessing clients' unique barriers to employment and tracking clients' journeys through the system.
- Providing customized workplace training programs that will give individuals relevant work experience in high-demand occupations.
- Working with the ministers of Education and of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade to ensure that, where appropriate, people are referred to bridge training, language instruction and other forms of adult education — and can transition between adult education and the integrated employment and training system.
- Building on the momentum of Ontario's first summit on Talent and Skills in the New Economy. You will regularly convene representatives from the business, labour and academic communities to build

partnerships and foster collaboration. I ask that you convene the next summit in early 2015.

- Implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of a new Canada-Ontario Job Grant. The grant is an employer-driven approach to help Ontarians gain the skills and training they need to fill available jobs.
- Continuing to work with the federal government on the future of federal support for skills training. You will seek fair federal policies in areas such as the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement. You will also preserve Ontario's ability to improve employment and skills training programs to meet the needs of unemployed Ontarians and employers.
- Continuing to support the success of the College of Trades. You will ensure the appointment of a Special Advisor to review the college's application process and scope of practice of trades — including how this scope relates to enforcement.
- Measuring and reporting on results to ensure accountability and transparency across the employment and training system.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation of the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the broader public sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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