

# Annual Report 2016-17

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# Message from the Board Co-Chairs



This is an exciting year for the postsecondary system and one in which Ontario's colleges celebrate their 50th anniversary. Throughout these past decades, postsecondary education as a system and the relationship of colleges and universities, has evolved to one of collaboration and partnerships. As postsecondary leaders

serving on ONCAT's Board of Directors, it really has been a pleasure to be involved with an organization committed to not only supporting the partnership aspirations of institutions, but also involving students and government in a collective effort to expand student mobility across this province. We're incredibly proud of the progress ONCAT

has made to date, serving students by facilitating work on postsecondary pathways flexible enough to prepare them for the unique demands of Ontario's changing economy.

In providing opportunities for colleges and universities to collaborate, it has been a truly gratifying experience to see the work toward an effective system for student mobility in this province come to fruition. Aside from projects to develop transfer pathways and equivalencies in Ontario, ONCAT continues to support a growing body of research and initiatives to sustain an integrated approach to student mobility, to build partnerships among postsecondary institutions, and to develop consistent standards to facilitate transfer, maintaining a high quality of academic success. ONCAT has been a catalyst in broadening the discussion of student mobility in Ontario. ONCAT enabled initiatives have supported the more than 55,000 students who transfer annually among our institutions. ONCAT is also taking an active role in the burgeoning discussion around a Pan-Canadian transfer community.

We are proud of ONCAT for its advocacy on behalf of students across Ontario who are looking for more out of their postsecondary education – who are pursuing multiple credentials, diverse skillsets, and complementary experience. In speaking to our students, we are aware that they view access to different types of education as an invaluable asset, and essential to their success in the knowledge-based economy. ONCAT's work in support of a more integrated system for mobility in the Ontario postsecondary community serves this need while contributing to a more efficient use of public investment.

As both of our terms come to a close, we would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge all those who have played an instrumental role in ONCAT's success. We would first like to thank the Government of Ontario for recognizing the importance of ONCAT's past accomplishments and future potential for postsecondary education in Ontario, and recommitting their support for this work. Their continued investment in student mobility makes meeting student needs for an efficient and flexible postsecondary system

an attainable goal. We would like to thank Glenn Craney, ONCAT's former Executive Director, for his vision, and friendship. Glenn played an instrumental role in helping to lay the foundations for developing a credit transfer system in Ontario. We would also like to thank Lia Quickert, interim Executive Director, for her leadership this past year, and the rest of the secretariat for their unwavering commitment and dedication. We offer both Lia and the team our



**Tim McTiernan**

President & Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Ontario Institute of Technology

congratulations on their continued good work with the postsecondary community. We would like to thank our partners on the board for their cooperation and support. And lastly, we offer our appreciation and thanks to our colleagues at Ontario's colleges and universities. Your hard work, and perseverance to serving students is at the core of all of ONCAT's success.



**Glenn Vollebregt**

President & Chief Executive Officer,  
St. Lawrence College



# Message from the Executive Director

What an exciting year for postsecondary! It's the 50th anniversary of the Ontario college system, coinciding nicely with Canada's 150th celebrations. There is no doubt that since the creation of colleges back in the 60s, Ontario's postsecondary system has evolved and grown, and we are so pleased to be a part of it. The history of collaboration

among the colleges and universities has allowed us, as an organization, to help develop and foster different types of partnerships and relationships among our 45 publicly assisted institutions, allowing students the flexibility to be mobile in order to plan their own enhanced learning experience.

Always working towards our goals of reducing barriers to transfer through institutional collaboration to improve student experience, ONCAT hosted a series of events this year to broaden the scope of credit transfer in Ontario and to serve natural networks within the postsecondary community. We held our ONTransfer.ca day, bringing together our large network of transfer advisors to share best practices and discuss ways of improving the system. We met with our Northern Institutions Pathways Steering Committee with the goal of improving transfer networks in northern Ontario communities, and our Francophone and Bilingual Institutions Advisory Group to address the needs of students moving between francophone institutions. And we're working on expanding our MOU with our jurisdictional partners across Canada, to include newly-established provincial bodies.

We've seen important progress in projects that improve student mobility in Ontario this year. We continue to work with eCampusOntario to collect online and continuing education courses that reside on our database and flow

through to their website. More recently, we've partnered with the Ontario College Application Service to deliver a new fast-track application process for transfer students, which provides them with a more seamless approach to applying into a college, with a goal of expanding with our university partners. And we also continue to support the development of transfer agreements for all directions of transfer.

Looking forward, we're pleased to announce that we've received a renewed mandate from the government of Ontario, and we couldn't be prouder. We're planning to use this vote of confidence to move forward with initiatives shifting our focus from the rapid growth of an early stage transfer network to developing and sustaining the frameworks and practices that will bring credit transfer in Ontario in-line with stable, mature systems elsewhere in the country. We've already started this shift with the implementation of transfer committees to sustainably maintain and develop transfer networks. To better serve our developing role in Ontario's postsecondary ecosystem,



we developed a new brand identity, and have embarked on a strategic exercise this year to overhaul the way ONCAT and ONTransfer.ca interact with our stakeholders.

Our successes would not have been possible without the guidance and vision of our former Executive Director, Glenn Craney. In October, we were sad to see Glenn move on, undertaking the role of Assistant Deputy Minister within the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development of the Ontario government. During his time at ONCAT, Glenn worked extensively with our membership to develop transfer credit policies and practices to enhance student mobility and change the culture of credit transfer. He was instrumental in helping to lay the foundations for Ontario's developing credit transfer system, and will be sadly missed by the community. We wish Glenn well in his new role, and appreciate having another champion in the sector.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize our Board of Directors for their continued support. Their guidance and insight has helped to move the credit transfer

agenda forward. In particular, I would like to acknowledge both of our co-chairs, Glenn Vollebregt, President and CEO of St. Lawrence College, and Tim McTiernan, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology whose tenures are both coming to an end. We thank you for your service and leadership these last few years, and wish you continued success.

Finally, on behalf of all of us at ONCAT, I'd like to thank all of our partners, including our 45 college and university members for their continued support as we grow and develop to serve Ontario's budding postsecondary transfer community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Quickert', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Lia Quickert**

ONCAT Executive Director (Interim)



# Why Mobility Matters

At a time marked by new technologies that are impacting all disciplines, economies, and industries, Ontario's workforce must be equipped with the skills and opportunities needed for the jobs of today, and tomorrow. There is increasing demand for a postsecondary education (PSE) system that delivers:

- **Greater choice, options, and pathways;**
- **Improved student success, attainment & satisfaction;**

- **Increased focus on personalized learning; and**
- **Demonstrable return on investments (financial, resources, and time).**

As recognized by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and outlined in the September 2016 Mandate letter, success that serves all Ontarians will require a focus on seamless employment and training systems, increased access and participation, and a highly skilled

workforce. An Ontario that is adaptable to fast-paced change in labour market needs, technology shifts, and social, economic and environmental forces, necessitates a new kind of PSE experience – one that brings together the strength of students, colleges, universities, private career colleges, labour, employers and other service providers. Exploring new pathways that connect diverse learning experiences will also help to empower traditionally marginalized groups.

**“a new  
kind of PSE  
experience”**

## Who We Are

Established in 2011, the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) is a government-funded organization created to enhance academic pathways and reduce barriers for students looking to transfer among Ontario’s 45 public colleges and universities. As a member organization, ONCAT works with those institutions to develop transfer credit policies and practices to ease student mobility.

ONCAT’s activities are **part of the Ontario government’s commitment to the development of an integrated education system that maximizes opportunities for student success**. Collaboration is at the root of these efforts, and as one of the few organizations in Ontario that brings together all actors in PSE, ONCAT is uniquely poised to help deliver critical value to the entire sector.

## Strategic Priorities

Students will experience ease of mobility among publicly assisted PSE institutions.

- Students will experience reduced barriers when transferring, which will help them to graduate.
- There will be increased and improved collaboration among institutions (colleges and universities) regarding transfer opportunities and articulation.
- Stakeholders will have improved awareness and knowledge of transfer opportunities, outcomes, and progress.

## Our Partners

Algoma University

Algonquin College

Brock University

Cambrian College

Canadore College

Carleton University

Centennial College

Collège Boréal

Conestoga College

Confederation College

Durham College

Fanshawe College

Fleming College

George Brown College

Georgian College

Humber College

La Cité collégiale

Lakehead University

Lambton College

Laurentian University

Loyalist College

McMaster University

Mohawk College

Niagara College

Nipissing University

Northern College

OCAD University

Queen's University

Royal Military College of Canada

Ryerson University

Sault College

Seneca College

Sheridan College

St. Clair College

St. Lawrence College

Trent University

University of Guelph

University of Ontario Institute of  
Technology

University of Ottawa

University of Toronto

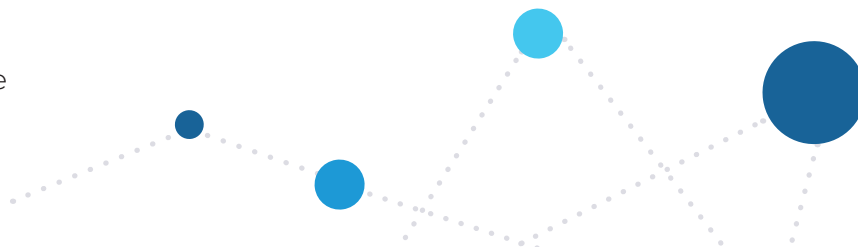
University of Waterloo

University of Windsor

Western University

Wilfrid Laurier University

York University





# Students First

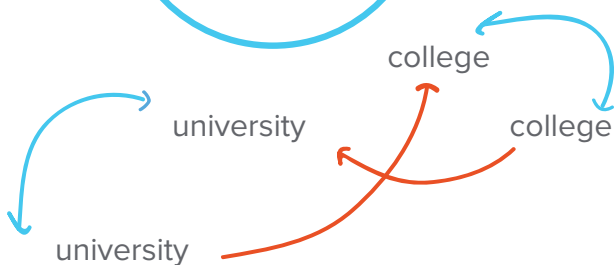
## What is a transfer student?

A transfer student is someone who has completed a course, some courses or an entire program at one institution and wants to continue their postsecondary education at another.

55,000+

Students Transfer  
Every Year in Ontario

## Every Direction of Transfer Counts



## Why Do Students Transfer?

- » Wish to switch programs
- » Institution isn't the right fit
- » Personal circumstances
- » Want additional postsecondary studies

## Popular Areas for Transfer

- » Business
- » Social Sciences
- » Liberal Arts
- » Engineering
- » Health



## What is ONTransfer.ca?

It's a free website managed by ONCAT where students interested in mobility can see what courses and programs will transfer. The website has information from our membership consisting of all of Ontario's 45 public colleges and universities.



# College? University? Or Both?

ONTransfer.ca caters to those students thinking about their postsecondary journey.

High school students can combine college and university studies to tailor their education by searching the Program Transfer Guide.

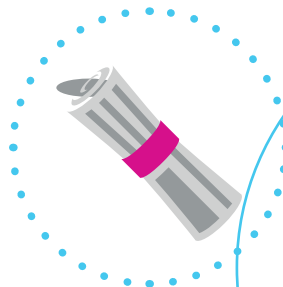


Students at a college or university thinking of changing schools can search the Course Transfer Guide to see what credits they can take with them.

Students who have finished a college or university program and want more can search both the Program Transfer Guide and the Course Transfer Guide to explore their opportunities.



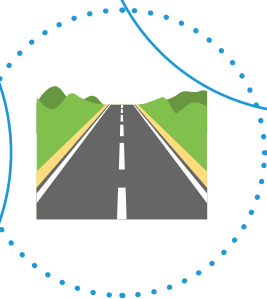
The Program Transfer Guide hosts **1,700** Block Agreements which leads to **800,000** individual opportunities to transfer.



Over **84%** of diploma graduates have a pathway into a degree without the use of broad-based admissions policies.

Almost **25%** of degree students have a pathway into a similar degree.

Almost **60%** of diploma students have a pathway into a similar diploma.



The Course Transfer Guide has **more than 166,000** course equivalencies.

## Keys to Success



Providing leadership in creating a culture to support student mobility in Ontario


Providing students with accurate and comprehensive information about the transfer process

## 1 in 2

Students Consider Transferring (COU)

## All Institutions Are Now Tracking and/or Posting:

- Block transfer agreements;
- Credit transfer policies, and are participating in the defining and implementation of best practices to ease transitions for students;
- Data on how many students transfer, as well as their success rates;
- Diploma-to-diploma and degree-to-degree pathways for students in high demand areas; and
- Course-based equivalency information.



“The more we  
continue to build that  
scaffolding around the  
pathways...the easier it’s going  
to be for learners to see this  
system as something they can  
be part of, in a way that is  
productive and important”



– Dr. Joyce Helmer, Curriculum Specialist and  
lead for teaching, learning and innovation  
initiatives at FNTI in the Tyendinaga  
Mohawk Territory (project 2014-28)





# Building on Shared Resources

*ONCAT continues to work with students & stakeholders to ensure that there is a better understanding of the transfer and mobility opportunities, outcomes, and progress afforded by our system.*

## Bringing Our Identity Full Circle

In Fall 2015, ONCAT launched a branding strategy in order to improve how we differentiate and explain who we are and what we do as an organization. The project included a number of key milestones, moving from research and engagement, to strategy, design, and then activation.

As a result, throughout the process, ONCAT and Trajectory, the agency contracted to help facilitate this process, connected with staff and stakeholders, including students, administration at institutions, industry partners, and others, through a combination of interviews, surveys, presentations, and focus groups.

We also developed a Brand Advisory Committee comprising of ONCAT board members, institutional partners from both colleges and universities, and members of the student advisory group.

A year later, after ample research and engagement we are very pleased to have launched new images for both ONCAT and ONTransfer.ca.

**oncat**  
Ontario Council on  
Articulation and Transfer



**caton**  
Conseil pour l'articulation  
et le transfert – Ontario

• ONCAT  
bilingual  
extended

 **oncat**

• ONCAT short

 **ontransfer.ca**  
by oncat

• ONTransfer.ca

*All available in English and French, in colour, black, and white*

## Platforms for Collaboration

In June 2016, ONCAT led a strategic planning and governance discussion with our PCCAT colleagues (BCCAT, ACAT, NBCAT, SaskCAT and other institutional partners), to map out PCCAT's future endeavours. In September 2016, Pan-Canadian partners gathered in Manitoba for the WestCAT meeting to discuss topics including the expansion of the 2014 MOU to include other provincial transfer organizations, which we're pleased to announce has since been completed; exploring technological solutions to increase compatibility and information sharing among the provinces; and opportunities for an inter-provincial approach to Articulation Committees.

March 2017 marked ONCAT's 3rd ONTransfer.ca Day, which brought together administrators from almost all colleges and universities across the province to Toronto for discussions on the technical aspects of credit transfer, and to share tools and resources. The focus this year was on data, communication, mobility culture, and more broad operational challenges and opportunities.

We are also pleased to welcome over 300 participants from all levels of Ontario's PSE community to ONCAT's 6th annual Student Pathways in Higher Education conference. The conference gives participants the opportunity to share best practices in developing student opportunities for transfer, as well as hear from other national and international credit transfer professionals.

## ONTransfer.ca Website Redesign

As ONCAT's flagship service, the ONTransfer.ca website continues to be maintained and developed with the goal of providing students with a central access point for all information on credit transfer in Ontario. After an initial website review and gathering of student feedback through focus groups, we are proceeding in the process of modernizing the website user interface.



**Apply  
Now**

button to will appear on certain  
ONTransfer.ca site searches this spring,  
taking interested students directly to  
the OCAS website for the respective  
pathway.



**270,000+**

session visits to  
ONTransfer.ca from April  
2016 to March 2017

**100%**

**institutional profiles**  
(45 institutions) finalized &  
posted on ONTransfer.ca!

Enhanced search methods are being explored so that students can better filter and find the information they require. This includes the integration of databases with OCAS and OUAC, and discussions with the other CATs to share information for students looking to transfer among provinces.

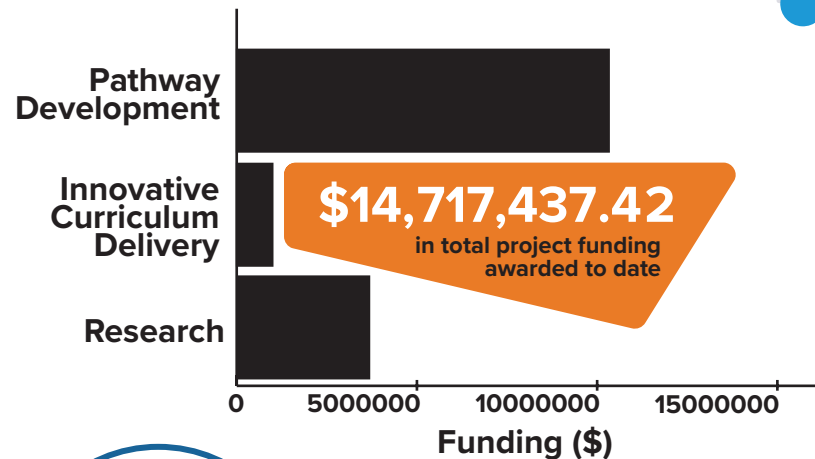


# Mobility Infrastructure

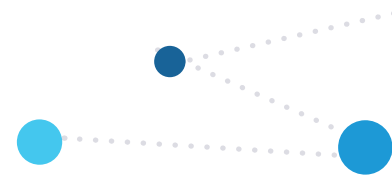


*Innovation and research is key to moving the credit transfer system forward, and ONCAT is committed to developing and facilitating the implementation of such efforts to enhance student mobility.*

This year we saw a record 74 applications for our Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for new postsecondary Innovative Curriculum Delivery Projects, Pathway Development Projects, and Research Projects on credit transfer in the province of Ontario. Additionally, **40 new** final reports for research and pathway development projects were posted to the ONCAT website; these are significant learning resources to the sector, serving to bring together examples, tools, and experiences on credit transfer and articulation. As assistive tools in this important process, ONCAT released *Final Report Guidelines* and *Handbooks* for ONCAT-funded research and projects.



To view the reports, please visit the Project and Research sections of the ONCAT website.



## Pathway Development

In 2016-17 **14 new** pathway development projects were added to the previous 130 ONCAT has supported through the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund since 2011.

**13 new** innovative curriculum delivery projects were also funded. These projects help in the advancement of a more seamless PSE system in Ontario through the development and implementation of strategies to enhance student mobility, expansion of opportunities for students to transfer, and increases in postsecondary collaboration.

ONCAT is also seeking to support initiatives already underway by transforming selected pathway committees into long-term, discipline-based Transfer Committees that meet regularly to discuss curricular trends and changes, any impacts of these on student transfer, and the possibilities for creating new opportunities for students.

## Knowledge Gathering

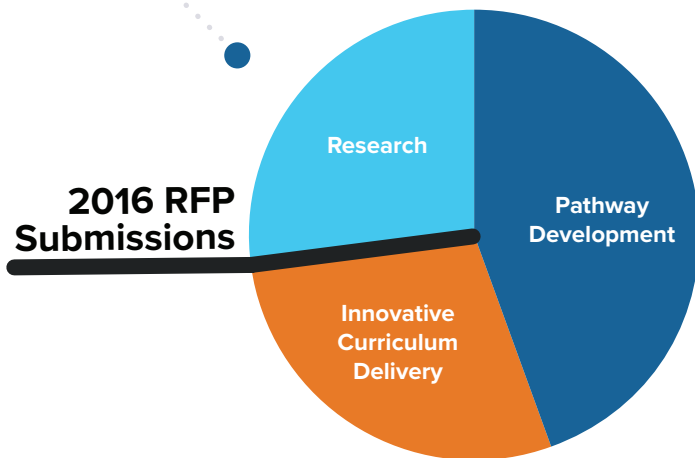
Knowledge gathering develops more robust indicators of our success, both as an organization and a province, with respect to credit transfer, and helps us measure success against system-level goals. Some of the research we are leading and supporting:

**“ This year  
74 we saw a record  
applications for  
our Project Requests for,  
Proposals (RFPs)**

- A total of **13** research projects were funded in the 2016-17 RFP process.
- The Student Experience Survey continues to be active on ONTransfer.ca, collecting data to better understand the experience

of students prior to, during, and after the transfer process, as well as feedback on the ONTransfer.ca website.

- To compliment the quantitative data from the online survey, six student focus groups were conducted on the transfer experience in 2016.

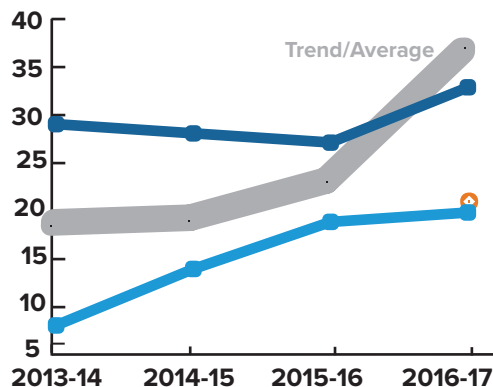


- We are working with OCAS on a *Student Mobilization Project*, with OUAC as a partner, to gain insight into the various program pathways transfer students are seeking to access. The creation of a data dictionary has begun to provide a common set of definitions for the project and stakeholders.

## Learning Outcomes

Enhancing the conversation on Learning Outcomes (LOs) is an important step in facilitating transfer between and

## Number of RFP Submissions



among institutions and credentials. As such, ONCAT continues to support research and pathways projects that have a focus on learning outcomes, including several that are building software tools to automate the

comparison of course and program outcomes.

ONCAT's multi-year *Learning Outcomes for Transfer Publication Project* is well underway with its team of Ontario and international scholars. This venture aims to critically assess the conceptual foundations, assumptions, and implications of using LOs for the purposes of postsecondary credit transfer and student mobility. ONCAT also plans to create a new LOs online resource to coincide with the redevelopment of the ONCAT.ca website.

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# Pathway for Remediation

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At the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), one of our focuses is on advancing institutional innovations that support collaboration and student mobility. An exciting type of pathway development that has recently emerged out of this area of emphasis has been Pathways for Remediation.

While different institutions may have different versions of this concept, referred to by varied terms, generally these are pathways wherein students who are struggling academically and are required to withdraw from a given university program, are able to take up study through a partnering college. Upon successful completion, the

students can transition back to the university to complete their degree. These “boomerang” pathways, are paving the way for novel outlooks on student mobility, through the lens of access.

Entering university can be an equally exciting and challenging experience for many students. As such, not totally uncommon is the case that a student may end up being required to withdraw from studies due to academic performance. Failure to succeed is often due to academic (ex. different learning needs, lack of study skills, poor time management, etc.), social, and/or personal barriers (ex. long commutes, need to work, family commitments, anxiety,

stress, etc.), with marginalized groups disproportionately impacted by such factors.

Many institutions have policies that prevent readmission of a student until a certain suspension period has been complete, but few have remedial mechanisms to address difficulties before returning to studies. Left unattended, such external issues can greatly decrease the chances of students earning a credential.

With these realities in mind, in 2015 three project teams from six of ONCAT's member public colleges and universities in Ontario – Trent and Fleming, UOIT and Durham, and Seneca and York – set off to create pathways that redirect suspended students, through programs that balanced the need to support academic progress, with retaining credits earned.

Efforts in Trent & Fleming's 2015-34 project centered on 1-1 college to university equivalents. In this way there would be no need for a summer bridge/off-term study. Collaboration

between faculty and administration at all stages was key to this success.



***“At the end of the day, an academic journey does not have to be a linear path”*** - Hailey Wright, Trent University Coordinator of Articulation and Transfer Pathways, and Co-Lead Coordinator of project 2015-34.

Trent course outlines were shared with Fleming, and joint faculty meetings were held to discuss course pedagogy. Beyond this process enabling “great student success models”, Hailey Wright, Trent Coordinator of Articulation and Transfer Pathways, and Co-Lead Coordinator of the project, also found it to be a “really good opportunity to strengthen our institutional relationship”.

The remediation pathway also maintained three distinct entry points: traditional Fleming recruitment and admission processes, Trent’s redirect upon application, and Trent’s suspension redirect process. Wright, shares that, “having diversity in students’ level of learning...is important, in particular in foundation programs...[and for] ensuring there is viability in the program”.

At a time when postsecondary education is increasingly vital to building opportunities and success for all Ontarians, programs that are responsive and flexible are more important than ever. Supporting students when their goals or needs change, means facilitating and building pathways

for greater mobility. “The definition of a **traditional student in the way that we have envisioned it for the last several decades has really changed**, and I think university and college structures are starting to catch up and support that. It’s an exciting time for students, and the work through ONCAT and ONTransfer.ca, to help institutions do the work that we’re doing, is really important”, reflects Wright.

Ultimately, unconventional routes through postsecondary education, like those provided by retention pathways, empower students to obtain the academic education best suited for them.





# Committees

## Data Advisory Group

Developed from the Credit Transfer Accountability Framework (CTAF) Working Group, this body acts as a critical sounding board and assists in the development of initiatives to collect, analyze and disseminate data on credit transfer and student mobility in Ontario.

## Francophone and Bilingual Institutions Advisory Board

A working group of member representatives from francophone and bilingual institutions, to better understand and address the particular contexts and challenges of those institutions. Comprised of nine public francophone or bilingual institutions in Ontario, including affiliated or confederated institutions: Collège Boréal, Collège



Universitaire Dominicain, Collège Universitaire Glendon, La Cité collégiale, Université de Hearst, Université Laurentienne, Université d'Ottawa, Université Saint Paul, Université de Sudbury.

### **Learning Outcomes Steering Committee**

A working group of member representatives who are developing a better understanding of the role of learning outcomes in the credit transfer process and how they can improve existing and future pathways.

### **Northern Institutions Pathways Steering Committee**

A working group of member representatives from small and northern institutions, to better understand and address the particular contexts and challenges of institutions based in the north. The Steering Committee includes four universities (Algoma, Lakehead, Laurentian, Nipissing) and six colleges (Cambrian, Canadore, Boréal, Confederation, Northern and Sault).

### **Student Advisory Board**

Comprised of students, the board provides advice on the on-going operational activities of ONCAT, and advises on the development of new ideas and initiatives to enhance and support student mobility, including credit transfer information products.

### **Transfer Committees**

Comprised of representatives from a specific discipline (English, History, Engineering, Game Education, or Business), drawn from the colleges and universities that offer at least one credential in that field of study. They act as a platform for information sharing and discussion on student mobility in the discipline. ONCAT has continued to engage with our members to bring in further participants, with the result that **20 new members** have come on board. We have also engaged representation from both industry and the accreditation body for our Engineering Transfer Committee.

# Board of Directors

**Tim McTiernan (Co-Chair)**

President and Vice-Chancellor, UOIT

**Glenn Vollebregt (Co-Chair)**

President and CEO, St. Lawrence College

**Lynn Casimiro**

Vice-President Academic and Student Success, La Cité collégiale

**Donna Church**

Vice-President Academic, Academic Affairs, Lambton College

**Chris Fernlund**

University Student Representative

**Cindy Hazell**

External Representative

**Rhonda Lenton**

Vice-President Academic and Provost, York University

**Susan McCahan**

Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education, University of Toronto

**Terry Papineau**

External Representative

**Luke Speers**

College/University Graduate Representative

## Ex Officio Members of the Board

**Karen Creditor**

Chief Executive Officer, Ontario College Application Service

**Peter Gooch**

Senior Director, Policy and Analysis, Council of Ontario Universities

**George Granger**

Acting Executive Director, Ontario Universities' Application Centre

**David Porter**

Chief Executive Officer, eCampusOntario

**Lia Quickert**

Interim Executive Director, ONCAT

**Bill Summers**

Vice-President Research, Colleges Ontario

# The Staff Team



**Executive Director, Lia Quickert (Interim)**  
**Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Director**



**Operations Director, Alana Wiens (Acting)**



**Communications & Events Coordinator, Sonia Chwalek**



**Finance Manager, Peter Ssekiziyivu**



**ONTransfer.ca Manager, Rose Chan**



**Operations Coordinator, Amy Oziel (Interim)**



**Project Lead, Nicole Fallon**



**Project Officer, Lena Balata**



**Project Officer, Rebecca Roibas**



**Senior Policy Analyst, Sarah Fuchs (Acting)**



**Special Project Assistant – Data Projects, Melinda Cheng**

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*www.oncat.ca | www.ontransfer.ca*  
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*180 Dundas St. West Suite 1902, Toronto, ON M5G 1Z8*

*ONCAT is funded by the  
Government of Ontario*