

**IAN D. CLARK**

**DAVID TRICK**

**RICHARD VAN LOON**

# **A C A D E M I C R E F O R M**

**POLICY OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING  
THE QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS  
OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION  
IN ONTARIO**

Queen's Policy Studies Series  
School of Policy Studies, Queen's University  
McGill-Queen's University Press  
Montreal & Kingston • London • Ithaca



Publications Unit  
Robert Sutherland Hall  
138 Union Street  
Kingston, ON, Canada  
K7L 3N6  
[www.queensu.ca/sps/](http://www.queensu.ca/sps/)

All rights reserved. The use of any part of this publication for reproduction, transmission in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or storage in a retrieval system without the prior written consent of the publisher—or, in case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence from the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency—is an infringement of the copyright law. Enquiries concerning reproduction should be sent to the School of Policy Studies at the address above.

***The preferred citation for this book is:***

Clark, I.D., D. Trick, and R. Van Loon. (2011). *Academic Reform: Policy Options for Improving the Quality and Cost-Effectiveness of Undergraduate Education in Ontario*. Montreal and Kingston: Queen's Policy Studies Series, McGill-Queen's University Press.

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Clark, Ian D., 1946-

Academic reform : policy options for improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of undergraduate education in Ontario / Ian D. Clark, David Trick, and Richard Van Loon.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-55339-311-5 (bound).—ISBN 978-1-55339-310-8 (pbk.)

1. Higher education and state—Ontario. 2. Educational change—Ontario. 3. Universities and colleges—Ontario—Finance. 4. Higher education and state. 5. Educational change. 6. Universities and colleges—Finance. I. Trick, David II. Van Loon, Richard J., 1940- III. Title.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	xi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Aim of This Study.....	1
Our Argument.....	2
Outline.....	3
Conventions and Sources .....	5
1 THE CASE FOR REFORM.....	7
The Nature of the Policy Challenge .....	7
Academic preferences and the principal-agent problem .....	7
Ontario’s impressive record and the risk of complacency .....	8
Reactions to the analysis in <i>Academic Transformation</i> .....	10
Trends in the Quality of Undergraduate Learning .....	10
Returns to post-secondary study: Is there a higher education bubble? .....	10
Cognitive development and economic growth .....	12
Growing concern about undergraduate teaching and learning .....	13
Trends in the Cost-Effectiveness of Ontario’s Undergraduate Teaching Model.....	15
Cost trends in North American higher education.....	15
Trends in per-student teaching by full-time faculty in Ontario.....	17
The unsustainable 40-40-20 model and the teaching- research nexus.....	19
Faculty compensation and collective bargaining in Ontario ....	20

- Trends in Information and Communications Technology ..... 22
  - New service and content providers..... 22
  - Promises, pitfalls, and ongoing change ..... 23
- Applying Principles of Public Sector Reform to Higher Education ..... 27
  - Fiscal outlook..... 27
  - Principles for public sector reform ..... 28
  - The challenge of differentiation ..... 30
  - Our policy analysis approach..... 32
- 2 LEARNING FROM OTHERS..... 35
  - Studies by International Bodies ..... 35
    - The United Nations (UNESCO)..... 35
    - The World Bank..... 36
    - The OECD..... 37
  - Studies Commissioned by Governments ..... 38
    - The Bradley report in Australia and the Browne report in England ..... 38
    - The Plant report in British Columbia and the O’Neill report in Nova Scotia ..... 41
    - Studies by government bodies in the United States ..... 42
  - Studies by Higher Education Research Centres ..... 44
    - Think tanks in Australia, the UK, and the US..... 44
    - Research centres in Canada ..... 47
    - Ontario government initiatives to strengthen higher education research..... 48
    - The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) ..... 49
  - Studies by University Associations..... 51
    - The Council of Ontario Universities..... 51
    - Student associations in Ontario..... 52
    - Faculty associations ..... 54
  - Common Themes from Reform Recommendations ..... 55
    - Options for strengthening higher education research in Ontario..... 57

3	INSTRUMENTS FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	59
	Teaching Improvement and Assessment.....	60
	The scholarship of teaching and learning.....	61
	Using learning technologies .....	62
	Teaching support centres .....	63
	Curriculum reviews, high-impact practices, and optimal mix of class sizes.....	64
	Faculty engagement.....	66
	Student course evaluations.....	68
	Faculty performance review .....	70
	Options for encouraging teaching improvement in Ontario.....	71
	Options for improving teaching data in Ontario.....	72
	Academic Standards and Quality Assurance .....	73
	Degree standards and qualifications frameworks.....	73
	Quality assurance in Ontario universities .....	74
	Options for strengthening Ontario quality assurance .....	75
	Assessing Outcomes in Undergraduate Education .....	76
	Employment success and graduate surveys .....	76
	Student satisfaction and the UK National Student Survey .....	77
	Student engagement and the Ontario NSSE survey .....	77
	Student experience and the Australian CEQ survey.....	79
	Assessment of learning outcomes.....	80
	Options for assessing learning outcomes in Ontario .....	82
	Performance Measurement and Public Reporting.....	82
	Performance measurement and reporting in the UK.....	83
	The Voluntary System of Accountability in the US.....	85
	Common data reporting in Ontario.....	86
	Performance plans and reports in Ontario .....	87
	Performance measurement and reporting in Australia .....	88
	Options for strengthening performance measurement and reporting in Ontario .....	89
	Performance Funding and Accountability Agreements.....	90
	Accountability instruments .....	91
	Mission-based compacts and performance funding in Australia .....	92

Multi-Year Accountability Agreements in Ontario .....	93
Options for strengthening accountability agreements in Ontario.....	93
Summary of Findings and Implications for Ontario .....	95
Options for HEQCO’s role.....	96
4 THE NEED FOR A PLAN.....	99
Ontario’s Exceptional Reticence .....	100
The 1960s design.....	100
The government prerogative in system management .....	100
A tradition of across-the-board policies.....	101
Time for more explicit planning.....	102
Elements of a Plan.....	103
A space for every qualified student.....	104
An education that is worth having.....	105
Projecting Overall Demand for Baccalaureate Education.....	106
Enrolment demand and attainment .....	107
Graduate and Professional Spaces .....	108
Quality.....	113
Sustainable Funding for Access and Quality.....	114
Pathways to Create More Opportunities for Students.....	115
Options to Meet Growing Student Demand.....	120
Associate degrees and student demand .....	120
Private universities .....	120
Expanding college baccalaureate degrees .....	121
Creating teaching-oriented universities.....	121
5 THE CASE FOR NEW UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTIONS .....	123
Why a New Model Is Needed.....	123
The GTA needs more spaces than GTA universities can supply .....	123
Students need options other than mega-campuses.....	126
Planning for new baccalaureate institutions.....	128
How Teaching-Oriented Universities Would Fit into Ontario’s Higher Education System .....	128
Desirable Characteristics of New Teaching-Oriented Universities.....	132

	The Financial Case for New Universities: Smaller Classes, Lower Tuition .....	134
	Professional Requirements and Innovation .....	138
	Inviting Better Proposals.....	139
6	FUNDING ONTARIO’S UNIVERSITIES .....	143
	Raising More Revenues from Students.....	144
	Revenue maximization for universities, provided that access is maintained.....	144
	Consumer protection against oligopolistic pricing .....	146
	Social inclusion .....	146
	Implication: continued tuition regulation .....	147
	Raising More Revenues from Private Donors .....	148
	Controlling University Inflation .....	149
	Structural Options to Provide High-Quality Education at Reduced Cost .....	152
	Setting the balance between teaching and research .....	152
	Focusing the teaching budget on student learning .....	155
	Achieving student goals while reducing unnecessarily long programs.....	157
7	LESSONS FROM OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS.....	161
	Common Problems, Different Answers.....	161
	European Systems.....	165
	Germany .....	165
	Nordic systems .....	167
	England .....	172
	Background: The system in 2010.....	173
	Lord Browne and the Independent Review .....	178
	The implementation.....	180
	Lessons from England .....	182
	Australia .....	183
	Introduction .....	183
	The current system.....	184
	Problems: What is Australia fixing? .....	187
	The reforms .....	188
	Lessons and missing pieces .....	192

The Alberta System.....	194
Overview .....	194
Quality assurance.....	196
Transfer system.....	197
Lessons from Alberta .....	198
The British Columbia System.....	199
Overview .....	199
Some history.....	200
The system today.....	200
Quality assurance.....	203
Transfer system.....	204
Lessons from British Columbia .....	205
The Nova Scotia System.....	206
Overview .....	206
Some history.....	207
The system today.....	207
Quality assurance.....	209
Challenges .....	210
Lessons from Nova Scotia.....	211
United States.....	212
Introduction .....	212
Accreditation.....	213
The Florida system.....	214
The Minnesota system.....	217
The New York system.....	219
The California system.....	223
Lessons from the United States .....	227
Conclusions: Lessons from Other Jurisdictions.....	228
8 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF OPTIONS.....	233
One Set of Options.....	234
System plan.....	234
Teaching-oriented universities .....	234
Two-year academic credential.....	234
Three-year baccalaureate.....	234



New formula for the operating grant for existing universities .....	235
Teaching enhancement funding tied to multi-year agreements .....	236
Tuition policy .....	236
Negotiated target for university inflation.....	236
Collective bargaining framework .....	237
Information collection and dissemination.....	237
Encouraging teaching improvement.....	238
Strengthening quality assurance.....	238
Strengthening higher education expertise.....	238
Process for Consultation and Implementation.....	239
The Courage to Begin.....	239
NOTES .....	245
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS .....	265
REFERENCES .....	273
ABOUT THE AUTHORS .....	287
INDEX .....	289