Recent Trends and Foreseeable Futures in Canadian Post-Secondary Education

Alex Usher

Faculty of Public Affairs, Carleton University
February 27, 2023
Recent Trends
Total Post-Secondary Enrolments by Sector, Canada, 2000-01 to 2020-21
Total Post-Secondary Enrolments by Sector, Ontario, 2000-01 to 2020-21

ON University FTE
ON College FTE
Total Income by Source, Public PSE Institutions, Canada, in Billions ($2019), 2001-02 to 2020-21

Graph showing income by source from 2001-02 to 2020-21 with categories for government, student fees, and other private income.
Total University and College Income by Source, Ontario, 2000-01 to 2020-21 in millions of real $2020
Total Income Per Student, by Source and Type of Institution, Canada vs. Ontario, 2020-21
International Student as a Percentage of Total University Enrolments, Canada vs. Ontario, 2000-01 to 2019-20
Total Fee Income by Source, Public PSE Institutions, Canada, in Billions ($2019), 2007-08 to 2020-21
For several decades now the very broadest trends in higher education have been about permeability: making programs less compact, more open.
Permeable in terms of **time**

- Shorter programs of study, including micro-credentials
- Asynchronous delivery
- Competency-based education
Permeable in terms of space

- Credit transfer
- Remote learning
- Work-integrated learning
Re-thinking credentials

Credit Transfer

Remote Learning

WIL

TIME

Shorter/Micro

Asynchronous

Competency

SPACE

Re-thinking delivery

Re-thinking knowledge
Shares of Applications by Broad Field of Study, Ontario, 2011-2021
Enrolments, STEM vs. non-STEM, Canada 1992-93 to 2019-20
Non-STEM enrolments, Canada 1992-93 to 2019-20
Enrolments in the Humanities by Discipline, Canada, 2010-11 to 2019-20
Foreseeable Futures
25-64 population as a share of all adults over 25, Ontario, 2002-2043
Projected Change in 18-21 Year-olds, selected Provinces, 2021-2035 (2021 = 100)
Government net debt relative to GDP

Sources: Statistics Canada and Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.
Note: The projection period covers 2022 to 2096.
The Shifting Balance of Global Higher Education
(Projected Enrolments, 2008-2048, in millions)
The End of Abundance, the End of Insouciance
Key Competency for the 2020s: Rapid Collegiality

In times of extreme volatility, the ability of institutions to move quickly is key to survival and success. The key to this in a loosely-coupled institution is to maintain actual consensus not formal consensus. Collegiality is about attitude, not meetings.