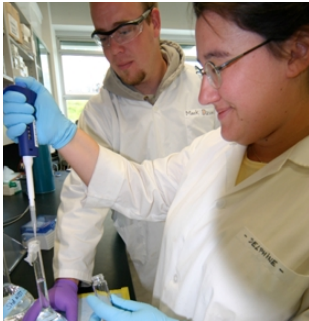


Trent University's Submission to the Rae Review of Postsecondary Education



Monday, November 22, 2004

Submission to the Rae Review of Postsecondary Education

Trent University is pleased to provide the following submission to the Rae Review of Postsecondary Education.

The work of the Commission has the potential of having a lasting impact on the future funding and support for Ontario's universities and students. Trent's submission identifies key issues for consideration by the review panel. These issues include: funding, quality, investing in students, access and differentiation, accountability and deferred maintenance.

1) Funding

Trent University supports a revised funding formula that would fund all eligible students, increase Ontario's funding to the average of the other nine provinces and provide multi-year funding to 2008-09.

- *Formula:* A revised provincial funding formula must reflect the array of universities and their distinctiveness in mission and aspirations. The distinct needs of smaller institutions in Ontario, such as Trent, must be reflective of their commitment to both research and teaching.
- *Differentiation:* Contributing to Trent's success is its commitment to deliver a broad mix of undergraduate liberal arts and science programming in small classroom settings and selected graduate programs in key areas of strength. This model of program delivery, which places students in regular contact with tenured faculty in a physical infrastructure that demands smaller-sized classrooms, is expensive but provides a quality learning experience for students. This is confirmed in student satisfaction surveys.
- *Costs to Trent:* Over time, differentiation grants have failed to keep pace with inflation and unfunded students have threatened the University's ability to deliver its mission. The differentiation grant itself has not been reviewed in some time. Shortfalls in funding for inflation (\$1.8 million) and stranded students (\$1.6 million – undergraduate and graduate) combined, means Trent has a structural deficit in excess of \$3.4 million annually – 5 per cent of Trent's operating budget.

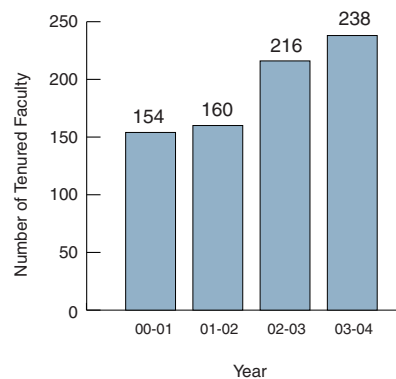
Trent recommends: That the province adopt a revised funding formula to cover university inflation and correct the issue associated with unfunded students and be reflective of Trent's realistic cost of differentiation.

2) Quality

Trent University supports the investment of new provincial funds to enhance the quality of the student experience.

- *Class sizes:* Maclean's magazine consistently ranks Trent among the top 10 in Canada in the categories of first and second year class sizes, and third and fourth year class sizes. The University scored sixth among primarily undergraduate universities in the country for the number of classes taught by tenured faculty. Quality faculty means quality education. In Ontario, Trent leads all primarily undergraduate universities in these quality indicators.

Number of Tenured Faculty Teaching First Year Classes



Source: Maclean's

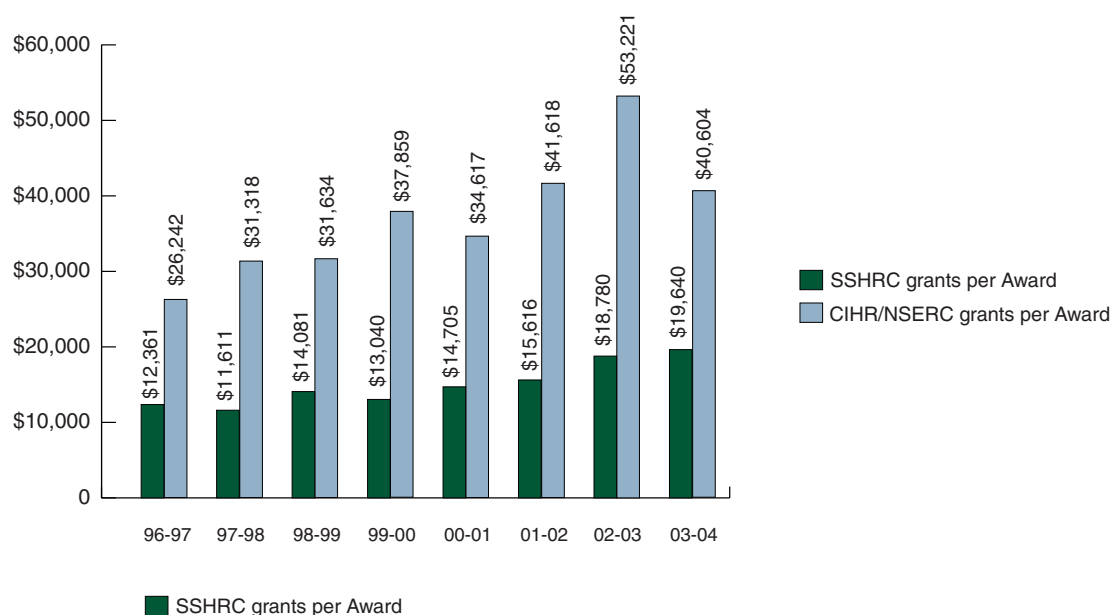
- *Changing composition – the quality threat:* Trent University has witnessed a change in its composition of full and part-time faculty over the past three academic years. In 2001-02, approximately 85 per cent of Trent's faculty composition was full-time while the remaining 15 per cent was on a part-time or contractual basis. In 2004-05, the composition has shifted to 75 per cent full-time and 25 per cent contract or part-time.
- *Trent's added value:* Small group teaching is the foundation for students' contact with full-time professors. At Trent, students receive more individualized attention, which translates into opportunities for them to participate in hands-on research activity, and gain access to scientific equipment and laboratories at the undergraduate level.

- *The teaching and research partnership:* Sustaining high quality research throughout the university system is critical to ensuring a prosperous economy and high quality of life in Ontario. A Canadian leader in generating first-rate research in a primarily undergraduate setting, we know that it is possible to have world class research in every Ontario university. Unlike programs in Ontario's Colleges of applied arts and technology, university education integrates teaching and research. Teaching faculty at universities are expected to conduct research which fertilizes their teaching and lays the groundwork for applied teaching and research. Students benefit from access to faculty who are active researchers. Failure to respect and support this important connection can only erode the quality of Ontario's university system, and deny our citizens access to a first rate education.

As a result of enrollment growth, competition in the hiring of faculty has become an issue. Shortages of qualified personnel continue to be a problem and pose a threat to the quality of this province's university system. While an intensive research reputation aids in faculty recruitment and faculty retention, universities are contending with a shortage of faculty candidates, increased faculty retirements and intense competition for faculty recruitment.

- *National and international research excellence:* Trent has emerged as a leading centre of research excellence in Ontario. Third party surveys confirm Trent's top ranking and our faculty continue to excel in national research indicators. In its 2003 and 2004 rankings, InfoSource Research identified Trent as the "Research University of the Year" among primarily undergraduate universities. *Maclean's* magazine's 2004 ranking noted significant gains by Trent's social science and humanities faculty in federal research grants awarded. Trent also placed first among primarily undergraduate universities for federally-funded medical/science research grants. Research performance adds to the University's national reputation and is a critical factor in the recruitment of new faculty.

SSHRC, CIHR and NSERC Grants per Faculty Awards



- *Priority investments supporting students:* The University's strategic investments continue to focus on enhancing services that add to quality student experiences. At Trent, these priority areas include information technology, library investments and physical infrastructure improvements.
- *Graduate education at Trent:* Part of the equation for high quality education for all students involves graduate programs. Graduate students play a key role in supporting both the undergraduate education and research mandates of universities. Trent has several high quality interdisciplinary graduate programs. Our graduate students are an important part of the research excellence of Trent, while acting as role models for undergraduate students and providing cost-effective, undergraduate teaching assistants. Having a limited number of graduate programs at present, Trent has the potential to contribute significantly to the provincial objective of doubling graduate enrollment by 2013-14. However, many of our current graduate students are stranded. Adding new graduate programs to meet the needs of an innovative economy will require a revised funding formula that covers all new and existing graduate students.
- *Welcoming learning environment:* A central focus of the University's mission is to provide a quality individual learning and teaching environment for domestic, Aboriginal, international and part-time students. Our campus provides students with a sense of place and community, and develops each student's highest potential in a safe, small urban setting. As a leader in Native Studies education, Trent takes pride in creating a welcoming environment for its Aboriginal students and recently celebrated this commitment with the opening of its new First Peoples House of Learning. In addition, Trent has developed a leadership training program for students in residence and makes available a range of athletic programs. Through its award-winning disability services program, over 463 special needs students receive special learning support.

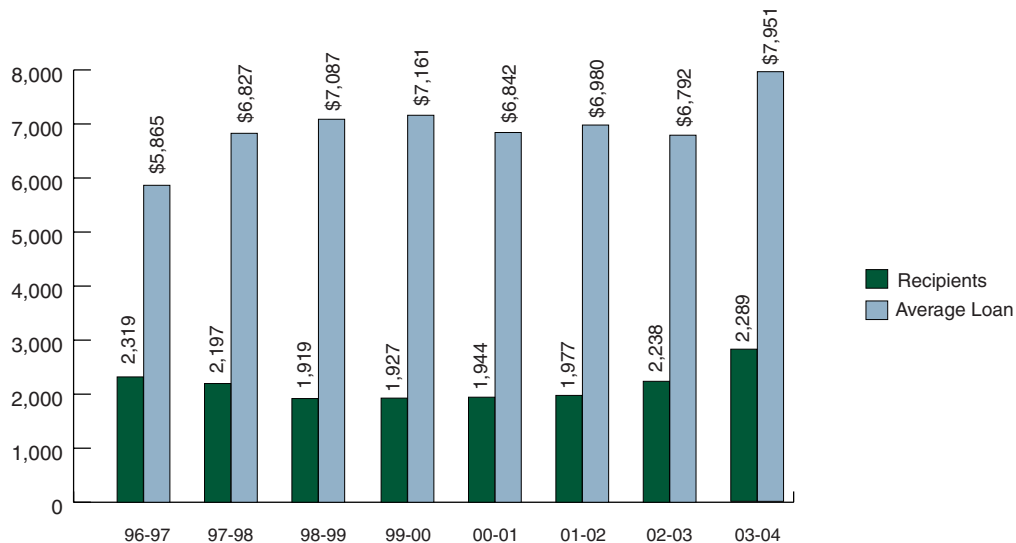
Trent recommends: That funding levels for the university system be adequate to allow faculty to teach undergraduates, to allow universities to train our next cohort of faculty through expansion of graduate programs, and to integrate and sustain our facilities and services.

3) Investing in Students

Trent University supports the seamless delivery of federal and provincial financial aid programs with those offered by individual institutions, encourages the development of student assistance programs that explicitly address the needs of students from the lowest income families, supports a review of education-related tax credits and the Canada Education Savings Grant, and encourages adoption of an adequate provincial aid program for part-time students.

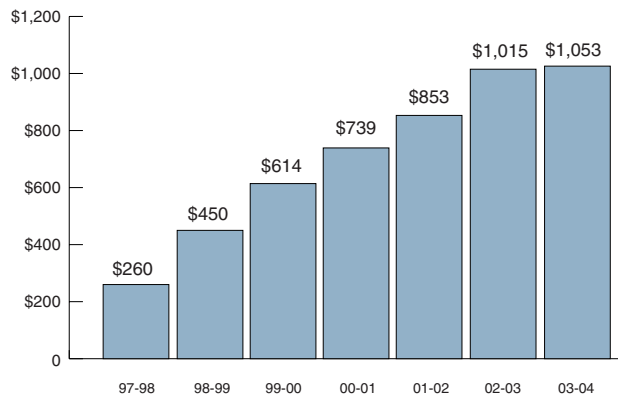
- *Reliance on OSAP:* In 2002-03, many Trent students relied on OSAP loans to finance the cost of their higher education. The loans accounted for approximately \$15 million in 2002-03 and were up 10 per cent from 2000-01 levels of \$13.8 million. With increased enrollments in 2002-03, it comes as no surprise that the number of recipients increased by 13 per cent. The average loan was \$6,792 in 2002-03, down from \$6,890 in 2001-02. A Trent student who is dependent upon OSAP to finance his or her education could leave the University with debt amounting to approximately \$27,000.

OSAP Recipients and Average Annual Loan



- *Improving access:* Trent funded bursaries and scholarships provide students with choice and access to a postsecondary education. Trent is ranked number one by *Maclean's* for the proportion of budget invested in bursaries and scholarships. Spending on bursaries and scholarships continues to be the fastest growing expenditure line in Trent's budget, tripling between 1997-98 and 2002-03 to reach \$5.9 million. Trent spends on average more than \$1,000 in merit and financial-based student aid per full-time equivalent student enrollment (FTE). This reflects Trent's commitment to support students who are academically qualified, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Scholarships and Bursaries per FTE



- Avoiding debt accumulation drives many students to take less than full course loads so that they can work full or part-time – or to stop indefinitely before completing their degrees. Trent is making deliberate investments in student aid and services to help mitigate these trends. Complimentary efforts by federal and provincial financial aid programs should be encouraged.

Trent recommends: That the province work together with the federal government to create collaborative approaches to bursaries, scholarships and OSAP programs, to augment the high investments made by Trent University in direct student financial aid.

4) Access and Differentiation

Trent supports a strongly differentiated university system in the province of Ontario that provides all eligible students with access to a university education and allows for different models of program delivery.

- *Graduate satisfaction:* While a university education carries with it a significant cost, survey research confirms that our graduates are highly satisfied with their university experience. *Maclean's* survey report on graduates' satisfaction with their university experience confirms the value of a university education: 76 per cent of humanities and related graduates and 75 per cent of arts and science graduates believed their university experience was of a significant benefit to their lives.
- *Student choice:* One of the strongest indicators of the quality of the Ontario university system is the variety of programs, approaches and environments it offers students. Providing students with a variety of choices for their university education remains paramount. Some students will pursue their studies in large research institutions that offer academic programs that complement their career goals. Other students select smaller universities such as Trent, with its strong research base, to obtain a broader liberal arts and science education. In securing Ontario's future, it is vital that the range of choices be preserved and maintained and that smaller institutions like Trent remain strong and viable.

- *Student services:* Through its student support services and its college residential model, Trent provides a range of student support services that enhance access and retention. Some of these services are paid for directly by student fees. Research shows these services are key factors in student development, as they contribute to student health and overall wellbeing, and that they prepare students for life after graduation. Student retention can be affected when these services are not available and when waiting lists are extended. In order to sustain these support systems, Trent's students pay fees that are nearly the highest in the province. Even though student services were expanded in consideration of the needs of the double cohort, students continue to carry all of the financial burden for funding athletics, health, housing and food services and for a portion of counseling.
- *Research intensity:* In the category of primarily undergraduate universities, Trent has emerged as Canada's leading research university. The intensive research activity in the social sciences, humanities and sciences enriches the university experience for students and attracts faculty who are leaders in their fields. Intensive research opportunities broaden students' horizons and open new pathways for students to pursue additional graduate work and careers involving the application of research skills.

Trent recommends: Updating the differentiation policy to support the unique circumstances of smaller institutions that are constrained by their physical infrastructure, geography and areas of emphasis.

5) Accountability

Trent University strongly supports the traditional autonomy provided to universities to allow them to deliver distinctive and collaborative programming through a system of local governance and partnerships.

- *Independent program reviews:* In its quest to continue to improve the quality of its programming, Trent voluntarily commits to regular external reviews of both its academic offerings and administrative services. These reviews offer critical insights into program successes and areas for improvement and continuously cite the need for additional investment at the departmental level.
- *Student choice through partnerships:* Trent has proven that joint planning of programs can create new pathways for students. Partnerships, such as those established by Trent and Fleming College, allow each institution to bring forward its strengths. Trent and Fleming have developed highly collaborative and successful Nursing, Forensic Science and GIS programs. The development of joint programs provides students with a continuum of courses at both the college and university level which is the result of an MOU agreement between the institutions. Credit transfer will continue to be a way for students to progress from college to university in many instances. Joint programming and articulation agreements between a specific university and a specific college, however, can provide more certainty to students about possible progression. In addition there is more certainty for the institutions about the level of work that students must attain in order to progress and successfully complete a degree. Such joint initiatives build on the strengths of the respective university and college and allow the institutions to be very responsive to the local community's needs.

Trent questions the wisdom and the need for a central clearing house for credit transfer. Building more expensive bureaucracy is not a good use of public funds. Direct assistance to students who move between college and university, and to the institutions who have developed joint programs and articulation agreements, will result in greater benefits to all stakeholders.

New levels of co-operation have been reached through numerous articulation agreements between Trent University and related colleges and universities. These provide students with options and choices to combine educational experiences. Trent has committed to over 11 articulation agreements with Fleming College as a main partner, but also with Durham, Seneca, Loyalist, Georgian and Centennial colleges. Seven additional articulation agreements are being negotiated with Fleming, Durham, Seneca, Loyalist and Centennial.

Trent recommends: That universities retain their autonomy to define their collaborative strategic directions, and that universities and colleges commit to work on a detailed evaluation and planning of joint programs allowing college students to progress to university studies, and that the government should refrain from establishing a new provincial, credit transfer body.

6) Deferred Maintenance

Trent University supports multi-year funding for a proactive strategy to address facility renewal needs at Ontario's universities.

- *Population growth:* In the last four years, Trent's total enrollment has grown 38 per cent. Trent's own survey research confirms that first-year students decided to attend Trent primarily because of its campus size and a sense of greater safety and community.
- *Double cohort – 'flow- through':* In 2003-04, the University received the second wave of the double cohort phenomena. First year enrollment at Trent increased by 45 per cent directly from the high school system. The flow-through of double cohort students will end in 2007-08.
- *Pressures on facilities and staff:* The flow-through of the double cohort in the coming years will continue to strain Trent's teaching resources and its physical plant. These pressures are most evident in service delivery to students. Increased library usage has placed unprecedented new demands on library holdings and space. A larger number of students combined with increased use of Web-CT by faculty required new investments in additional computer labs and information technology. Space planning and timetabling considerations have challenged the University's ability to reasonably schedule classes and lecture space. Deterioration of the physical plant, together with increased cleaning, maintenance and utility costs, can all be linked to the increases in the student population.

- *Maintenance backlogs:* All Ontario universities have collected deferred maintenance data over the last five years using a common database (VFA) incorporating standard costing models and audit inspection methodologies. The numbers presented are detailed and accurate. The audit completed by the Council of Senior Administrative Officers and the Ontario Association of Physical Plant Administrators in September 2004 estimated the cost of deferred maintenance at all Ontario universities is \$1.5 billion. The audit confirmed that 352 of the 737 buildings on university campuses across Ontario are considered to be in 'poor condition.' The Facilities Condition Index (FCI), a measure of the physical health of a facility, is 0.11 for all Ontario universities. Just to maintain campuses in their current 'poor' condition with an FCI of 0.11 will require annual expenditures in the order of \$260 million per year. Current facilities renewal funding in 2004-05 for universities has been stabilized at just under \$27 million.
- *Trent's challenge – replacement value:* Trent has more than \$27 million in backlogs of deferred maintenance on its 32 operating and ancillary buildings. Many of these buildings are classified as heritage architecture. Applying the facilities condition index, only three of the University's buildings are in excellent condition, six are in fair condition and 23 are in poor condition or in need of immediate repairs. The current replacement value of the University's infrastructure is \$241 million.
- *Breaking the backlog – school board experience:* In 2002, a recommendation contained in the *Mordecai Rozanski Report* of the Education Equality Task Force to increase facility renewal funding to school boards was approved. The recommendation included a provision allowing school boards to use their increased allocations to pay for costs associated with the financing of deferred maintenance repairs.

Trent recommends: That the province of Ontario urgently address deferred maintenance in universities with an approach similar to that adopted for the elementary/secondary system, by increasing the facilities renewal program grant by \$21 million in each of 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08, thereby allowing universities to borrow \$260 million in each of those years. Facility renewal funding levels would need to be reassessed in 2009.

Trent Facts

Enrollment

November 1, 2004 Estimate

Undergraduate

Full-time	6,133
Part-time	1,473
Total	7,606

Graduate

Full and Part-time	209
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Percentage Distribution of Full-time Enrollment by County

Durham	15.0%
Peterborough	14.7%
Metro Toronto	8.7%
Out of Province	6.5%
York	5.7%
Ottawa – Carleton	5.6%
Peel	3.7%

Staffing

October 1, 2004

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Faculty	264	113	377
Staff	352	90	442
Total	616	203	819

Economic Impact – 2003

Peterborough and Surrounding Areas
\$204.5 million

