

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IN THE POST-SECONDARY  
EDUCATION SECTOR IN ONTARIO**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Theory and Policy Studies  
University of Toronto**

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**Abstract**

There has been little research on the government relations function within the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. This study explores this topic by reviewing the literature and collecting data from key informants in the college, university and government sector, and those who can speak about the sector associations. The study describes how the leaders of colleges and universities in Ontario perceive and conduct government relations, both as individual institutions and as a sector, and analyzes trends and potential implications. The study utilizes a pluralist model of interest group behaviour and applied the hollow-core theory to the policy community and the findings provide compelling evidence that this theory is a useful theoretical framework for understanding the nature of this policy community. This study also provides valuable insight into the hollow-core theory of pluralism. The leadership of individual colleges and universities shares a similar understanding of government relations and engage a similar approach. Individual colleges and universities work independently to lobby for capital funding and work together through their respective associations to lobby for system-wide funding and reforms. Although the presidents of individual institutions continue to lead the government relations function, the trend in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario is to invest additional resources and time in these activities. This study is the first of its kind in Ontario and makes an important contribution to our

understanding of the way leaders in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario perceive and conduct government relations. Implications of the findings are considered and recommendations are made for further research.

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## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Of all the components listed under the umbrella term “institutional advancement,” government relations is the least understood. For most academics, the art of relating the college or university to the political process is a mystery; even worse, it is a mission they view with scorn. A few of them realize that, in today’s world, it is a job someone must do, but the less they know about it, the better they feel (Johnson, 1981, p. 1).

Although the observation above was made almost 30 years ago, it appears to continue to ring true in Ontario. As government has grown even more complex, as revenues and government spending have become scarcer, as public institutions continue to depend on government investments in higher education, as governments introduce additional requirements for public accountability and reporting, and as a dynamic of competition is introduced in government programming, the relationship between government and the post-secondary education sector becomes increasingly important. As the context changes, so too do the efforts of post-secondary education institutions and their associations.

Brown argues that “The story of higher education lobbying is the story of adaptability” (1998, p. 170). While this reference was made to describe the context of the American post-secondary education system, the same may well be said of the experience in Ontario. What do we know about government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario? There is very little literature on this subject. Casual observation suggests that individual institutions and sector associations are more engaged in government relations activities in the post-secondary education sector than ever before, but there exists no real study or evidence to rely on. What is the extent of the post-secondary education sector’s

understanding of the government relations function in Ontario? How do individual post-secondary education institutions conduct government relations?

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins with an overview of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and proposes why this topic is a research priority for those trying to better understand the activities of the individual institutions and the sector as a whole. The chapter then focuses on the purpose of this study and the overall objectives and research questions. It concludes with a discussion of the rationale for this study, and the theoretical framework.

## **1.2 Background of the problem**

In the last 20 years, significant changes or reforms have resulted in a shift in the context of higher education in Ontario. There has been a marked decrease in the public portion of funding levels (ACAATO, 2003), and increased institutional diversification (Skolnik, 1986). Young (2002) also argues that, despite the decline in public funding and the trend in the 1990s toward ‘deregulation and privatization in other areas of government activity, there are some seemingly “contradictory” forces at play in the higher education sector:

In Ontario, state control over higher education has been strengthened with the use of market mechanisms, particularly as they have been utilized in resource allocation (p. 79).

Among the evidence she provides are the key characteristics of seven major policy changes in higher education in Ontario that not only enhanced state control over the

sector, but also introduced market mechanisms, which resulted in a more competitive quality to the process of allocating resources (*ibid.*).

1. Changes in tuition fee policy and regulation meant that fees were allowed to grow substantially for undergraduate programming and second-entry and graduate programs were deregulated completely.
2. Changes to the way in which the province allocates resources and the increased importance of other sources of income for institutions.
3. Changes to the requirements of the dissemination of information to support market needs and performance pay for institutions based on a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure default, graduation and employment rates.
4. The introduction of the Ontario Student Opportunities Trust Fund that offered matching funds for those raised by the institution in private fundraising.
5. The creation of the Access to Opportunity Program (ATOP) that was designed in response to a request from private sector lobby led by the President of Nortel to double the number of computer science and engineering graduates. Under this program the government would match all funds raised by the private sector that lead to the expansion of seats in these program areas.
6. The creation of the Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund that would provide contribution of one-third funding to research projects that have private sector financial support.
7. The introduction of new legislation and related policies that established a process for new private, degree granting institutions and programs. (Young, 2002, p. 93-94)

The policies outlined above, Young argues, substantially and deliberately changed the context of higher education in Ontario – including the role of the state. Although a number of the policy changes highlighted above have evolved and changed over time, it

is this context that has to a large extent helped shift and transform government relations in the higher education sector.

Since Young's review, there have been changes to some of the policies since her review that are worth noting, for instance the ATOP program is no longer in place. One good example of how policy has changed is government changes to tuition fee policy in Ontario. Boggs (2009) provides a very thorough review of changes over time. Boggs documents changes in government policy towards tuition fees in four distinct phases:

1. The period prior to 1998 where colleges and universities were informed by the government as to what they could charge for tuition each year, as a percentage increase over the previous year.
2. The period from 1998-2003 where the Harris government allowed the deregulation of tuition fees for graduate, professional and second entry programs for universities and for "high demand" and post-diploma programs in the colleges (known as "additional cost recovery" programs). Although the government limited year-to-year increases to five per cent, over time significant differences in tuition fees for programs emerged.
3. The period from 2003-2006 when the McGuinty government froze tuition at then current rates until a review of the entire post-secondary education system occurred. During this period, MTCU provided grants directly to institutions to make up for the difference.
4. The period from 2006 to present. After the Rae Review was complete, MTCU announced a new tuition framework that again regulated tuition increases. There

was no effort to roll-back tuition increases, but to simply freeze them where they were and regulate increases thereafter. In essence, previously “regulated” program could be increased by up to a maximum of 4.5 per cent and previously deregulated programs could be increased by up to a maximum of eight per cent (although these fees were limited to two per cent increases per year and no institution could increase overall tuition by more than five per cent in any given year).

Although one might conclude that the re-regulation of tuition in phase four listed above marks the abandonment of the marketization of tuition policy, given that the freeze kept the differentiation that exists between the two categories of programming intact, one might argue that the philosophy is still embedded in tuition policy.

Accompanying and giving rise to these policy shifts are the larger forces of demographics and globalization. Collectively these factors are forcing colleges and universities to compete more aggressively for faculty, staff and students, and funding from both government and non-governmental sources, such as corporations, individuals and the philanthropic sector. The environment is more competitive than it has ever been. One manifestation of this new era of competitiveness is the approach to government relations.

Two trends appear to be emerging. First, individual institutions seem to be more engaged, and in some instances, are beginning to hire individuals or professional firms, or both, to conduct government relations. This includes providing advice on strategy, tactics and approaches related to increasing funds from all sources and positioning PSE

institutions – either collectively or individually – as “partners” with government. Second, it would appear from observation that sector associations are also taking a more aggressive approach to government relations, engaging former political staff and employing professional lobbyists. The function of government relations is not a typical function or part of the core business of academia, but rather it is a relatively new function, not unlike fundraising. How do colleges and universities in Ontario perceive and conduct government relations? This important question is answered in this study.

Currently, there is a great deal of interest in post-secondary education and training in Canada, as all levels of government discuss the need for additional investments in post-secondary education in order to maintain a competitive advantage in an ever-changing, highly-competitive and technology-driven, globalized world. Ontario is no different from other jurisdictions in this regard. This interest, on behalf of the McGuinty government, led to the establishment of a commission of inquiry that advocated for more investment and reforms to the way post-secondary education is governed (Rae, 2005). With the recommendations of the Rae Review before them, the current provincial government, led by Premier Dalton McGuinty, has begun to implement many of the recommendations, calling for additional funding and investments, and even more changes are likely over time (Postsecondary Review, 2005, Constantinou and Drea, 2005). As the policy context in which post-secondary education operates changes, colleges and universities appear to be changing the way they approach government relations, and this is therefore worth consideration and study.

It can be argued that there are three ways in which government relations have come to be viewed. First, that institutions remain highly reliant on government as a

source of funding, while at the same time there is an increasingly competitive quality to the process of procuring public support and government approval for new programming and such. For example, as with most policy fields, the wish lists of the post-secondary sector far outweigh the capacity of the government to fund all projects as there simply is not enough money for all of the projects. For this reason, Ontario's capital expansion project in the 1990s, known as "SuperBuild", meant that project awards had to be made for reasons other than pure merit – as there were no objective measures for qualification and there were more deserving projects than the government could afford to fund. Instead, other "mechanisms" are and were deployed. Jones and Young suggest that both "federal and provincial governments have moved towards adopting policy approaches to higher education that are designed to stimulate competition" (2004, p. 185). Young argues that these policy approaches are intended to make institutions:

...more accountable to their truly vast array of stakeholders; students, employers and the tax-paying public at large, as well as introducing both decentralization and the need for an increase in competition for both public and private funds" (Young, 2002, p. 80).

Young provides an important insight into one of the main reasons for why and how the policy context has changed in such a way as to cause colleges, universities and their sector associations to rethink their approach to government relations and adopt new tactics and behaviours that may situate their institutions as useful instruments in the fulfillment of government policy priorities.

Second, colleges and universities are engaged in a more aggressive attempt to better compete for scarce resources, program approvals and public policy decisions that favour their revenue streams. For example, many institutions are looking to expand their mandates and programs, such as in the case of applied degrees or as part of negotiations around tuition arrangements for non-regulated programs.

Third, colleges and universities are looking to government more than ever as a source of revenue for contract training, service provision, skills training, and research opportunities, in addition to increased general operating support. As many sectors in for-profit world have boosted their government relations efforts in order to secure government policy change that works to their sector's advantage, why should not the PSE sector and its membership? As the post-secondary education sector becomes more competitive, many institutions are considering more aggressive strategies to ensure their own financial well-being. It appears that a number of institutions are coming to the conclusion that if they cannot improve this situation, they will be at a clear disadvantage vis-à-vis other institutions. Furthermore, this competition is not simply about success and achievement, but rather a more fundamentally critical imperative – where those that cannot succeed face extreme financial circumstances and serious operational and programming consequences. As one college president reported, for many, particularly in the northern and rural parts of the province, success in obtaining government support is essential for solvency.

Traditionally, the government relations function in post-secondary education in Ontario has been carried out by the presidents of the institutions talking to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and expressing concerns to

government, usually suggesting that there is a “crisis” in post-secondary education that requires more funding (Jones, 1990). Now, colleges and universities in Ontario appear to be engaged in rethinking their government relations efforts – some with incremental changes and others by charting new ground and investing significant resources. While there is a robust body of research literature about interest groups in general, there has been little analysis of the government relations function in the post-secondary education sector, particularly in Canada. The premise of this thesis is that it is important to understand how this function is understood and pursued by institutional leaders in the increasingly complex and competitive environment. And with the context of the post-secondary education sector in Ontario continually evolving, an examination of the government relations activities of the sector is very timely.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The fundamental purpose of this research is to examine the nature of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between individual institutions and sector associations with government. This study is intended to answer the following overarching questions: How do colleges and universities perceive and understand government relations? How do they conduct government relations? How do colleges and universities in Ontario organize themselves to conduct government relations?

## **1.4 Rationale**

I have always believed that government can be a positive force in society and that attempts to improve the structure and function of government would better ensure good public policy and good public administration. I have spent my adult life learning about public policy and administration. Some time ago, I began sharing what I learned with others interested in public service, and more recently, discovered that an expert understanding of government can assist issues or organizations in achieving their goals. This discovery has fuelled my interest in government relations in the post-secondary education system in Ontario.

Early in my career in the public service, I was posted to the deputy minister's office at the Ontario Ministry of Environment. I was responsible for preparing briefing material for cabinet ministers as part of the cabinet committee process. Over time I developed a real sense for what decision-makers needed to know in order to make an informed decision, in the context of government decision-making processes. Shortly thereafter, I began teaching courses in public policy and administration at Ryerson University, the University of Toronto and York University. This afforded me an opportunity to think about not only the machinery of government, but also how decision-making ought to occur, and to reconcile this with my experiences as a practitioner. After 10 years of working in the public service and teaching part-time, I was offered the position of Chief of Staff to the Ontario Minister of Education and Training. This was a unique opportunity to participate on the political side of government, and to learn first hand about government from a minister's perspective. In conducting my duties, I enjoyed great exposure to system-wide issues in post-secondary education and was

honoured to work with the industry associations and individual institutions. Over the two years I spent in that role, I observed many interests vie for the government's attention. Of particular significance to this study is the experience I gained working directly with institutions in trying to get the government's agenda, as it related to post-secondary education, implemented. Conversely, I was part of, and witness to, the ongoing efforts of individual institutions and their associations in trying to convince the government of the importance of their agendas. After the election of 1999, I chose to take a secondment from the Ontario government and joined Durham College as Special Advisor to the President. In that capacity my role was to coordinate the government relations efforts aimed at convincing the Ontario government to establish a new university in Oshawa. After a year of such efforts, we were successful as the Ontario government provided approval for the creation of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) and \$60m in funding. After spending another year working to start the new university, I left to join Seneca College. The new president had just established a new position of Director of Government Relations and I was the first to fill the role.

In addition to embarking on a plan to move the college's agenda with government forward, I began to think about the function of government relations in post-secondary education in Ontario. As I devised strategies and plans, I began to wonder about what worked and what did not. I thought further about what my "competitors" were doing, or not doing, as it related to government relations. As I considered these and other issues, I realized two things. First, that no one had researched or documented what was happening in the sector. We did not know what individual institutions were doing or what associations were doing as part of their government relations efforts. Second, there

seemed to be increased activity in the area, but no real evidence-based sense of what was occurring. As I considered how I could succeed in advancing my own institution's agenda, and realized how linked the success of the overall sector was to my own institution's success, I wondered about what I needed to know in order to succeed. Believing, as strongly as I do, in the importance of post-secondary education, I wanted a better understanding of how the sector could increase its success in the ongoing competition for resources with the myriad of other requests received by government. Further, I wanted to not only survey and describe the context and activity, but to go further to provide information on best practices – what works and what does not work - as reported by respondents to the study.

This study focuses on the post-secondary education sector in Ontario as a case because provincial jurisdictions are the appropriate unit of analysis when considering post-secondary issues in Canada. In addition to having a well established system of 24 colleges and 19 universities (and two associate members) across the province, Ontario colleges and universities have long-standing provincial advocacy associations that will allow comparison between the collective efforts of associations and those of individual institutions. If we can learn more about the state of government relations activities in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, we will be able to increase our knowledge and understanding of what is taking place in an important jurisdiction.

## 1.5 Objectives and Research Questions

In order to answer the overarching questions guiding this research, this study employed a series of more specific questions to guide the interviews and data collection. They are listed below.

1. How do college and university leaders, government officials (in post-secondary education in Ontario) and those who can speak about sector associations define and understand government relations?
2. How do colleges and universities in Ontario organize themselves to conduct government relations? Who is responsible for the function and what activities and behaviours do they include in the execution and implementation of government relations?
3. What are the participant's perceptions about what works and what does not?
4. In what ways do colleges and universities in Ontario utilize their provincial advocacy associations? How do colleges and universities perceive the role and usefulness of provincial advocacy associations? How do government officials perceive the efforts of these associations?

The research questions guiding this qualitative study assisted the author in designing an interview guide that was used in structuring meetings with key players in the post-secondary education system in Ontario. The data from these interviews provide some important insights into the nature of government relations in post-secondary in Ontario and the ways in which government relations have developed . Further, this study will determine whether the conventional thinking as described in the literature regarding how government relations are conducted in other jurisdictions, is similar in Ontario, and

whether the efforts and investments that institutions and sector associations make are as effective and efficient as possible.

## **1.6 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

In attempting to answer the questions guiding this study, the approach is to address the research questions within the pluralist framework of analysis. The pluralist model describes the arena of public policy being populated by a variety of interests vying for a position to affect favourable outcomes (Pross, 1986; Prethus, 1974b). Pross (1986) discusses the notion of “policy communities” as a grouping of governmental agencies, interest groups, individuals, organizations, and media and academia, that are all part of a particular policy field and are trying to influence it. According to Pross, this grouping is further divided into parts. First, the sub-government, which is the policy-making body responsible for the policy field and is made up of the governmental agencies and interest groups, and second, the “attentive public” which is made up of those who have an interest in the policy field and attempt to affect decisions (Pross, 1986).

The policy community model, founded on pluralist theory, is a suitable framework for this study. In particular, this study will determine whether the “hollow core” theory applies to government relations in post-secondary in Ontario. This theory posits that in any given policy arena, associations that purport to represent individuals or individual institutions are often unable to satisfactorily represent the interests of individual members. As a result, those individual members increasingly conduct activities outside of the efforts of the member organizations (Heinz, 1993; McFarland, 1993).

## 1.7 Summary

As competition for scarce resources increases, and as government and its policy, funding and administrative processes become more competitive, colleges and universities – along with their sector associations – will have to be as strategic and effective as possible if they are going to influence the agenda of government. Anecdotal evidence suggests that historically this has typically been an elite process where the focus of the government relations efforts has been from the presidents for individual institutions and the association head for sector associations. Understanding the current situation more comprehensively, through the systemic collection of data is the primary purpose of this study.

Chapter two will provide a review of the literature, focusing on the five major areas relevant to this study. These include literature focused on interest groups, policy communities and policy networks, how-to books for practitioners, the literature that discusses government relations in post-secondary and the legal environment and context in Ontario. This chapter will draw-out some themes for consideration.

Chapter three provides a description of the research design and methodology utilized in this study. This includes the qualitative methodology, the design of the interview guide, the conceptual and theoretical framework, ethical issues, and potential limitations of the study.

Chapter four presents the data collected for this study. The findings chapter provides a summary of the responses to the meeting requests and summaries of the detailed responses of participants to each of the questions in the interview guides, and includes any additional comments provided in the discussion.

Chapter five presents the analysis of the findings of the study as they relate to the research questions and considers the findings in light of the literature review.

Chapter six will draw conclusion to the study and consider the implications of the findings and offer some advice for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to this study. It will do this by first describing the current state of knowledge about government relations in the post-secondary education sector by highlighting a number of themes related to this topic. It begins first by discussing the literature related to interest groups, then the chapter considers the literature related to policy communities and policy networks. The chapter then discusses the literature related to policy-making and decision-making within the public and broader public sector and then considers the contribution and relevance of “how-to” books or tactical guides related to government relations. The review then turns to the literature about government relations in the post-secondary sector in the United States where much of the existing literature on this topic originates. It then looks at a very narrow, but important body of literature from Ontario. The chapter ends with a review of the literature that defines the legal environment and context in Ontario and makes some conclusions regarding the contribution of the literature to this study, including the areas requiring further research. The gaps in the literature are also highlighted.

Despite an abundance of literature on interest groups and government relations generally, there is very little directly related to the subject of government relations in post-secondary education in Canada. The literature that does have some bearing on this subject can be divided into five categories: First, research related to interest groups or pressure groups generally; second, the evolution of the analysis of interest group and pressure group activities that focuses on policy communities or policy networks; third, research related to articulating an understanding of the policy-making and decision-

making within government and the broader public sector; fourth, literature that is tactical in nature – focusing on questions of “how” to conduct government relations; fifth, literature that deals directly with the notion of government relations in the post-secondary sector in the United States and Ontario. A full consideration of this relevant literature will also consider the legal context within which government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario operates.

## **2.2 Overview of the literature**

The interest group literature assists in understanding what these groups are, and how they function. The historical origins and the typology that aptly describe the evolution of groups on a continuum are very helpful to our understanding of the sector associations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario.

The limits of the literature and the evolution of a burgeoning knowledge of the complexities of the way these groups interact have spawned great interest in the notion of policy communities and networks. This literature proposes that there are complex dynamics that are broader than earlier, more limited understanding of groups. This understanding is just beginning to evolve, and much is left to further research.

The so-called “how-to” literature that advises and provides prescribed principles, approaches and strategy allows some opportunity to benchmark whether college and university presidents’ perceptions of what government relations is, is consistent with conventional wisdom and best practices. In this way, we can indeed measure consistency of understanding and practice. The purpose of this study is not to measure the effectiveness of government relations. Rather, this study attempts to observe and capture

what is happening, how the sector understands it, and some sense of what the participants and those who govern think about what works and what does not. Further research should focus efforts on the idea of measuring effectiveness in government relations. Finally, the remaining literature on post-secondary education in Ontario may enhance our understanding of the context of the system of higher education in Ontario, some of the nuances of system issues, and help us to define the scope of the gap that currently exists in the written body of knowledge.

### **2.3 Interest Groups**

There is no shortage of writing about interest groups and their behaviour; indeed, the literature is rather robust (Austen-Smith, 1993; Brooks and Strich, 1991; Castles, 1967; Coleman, 1987; Duverger, 1972; Ehrmann, 1960; Ellis, 1930; Finer, 1996; Garson, 1978; Grossman and Helpman, 2001; Hogler, 2000; Jordan and Richardson, 1987; Key, 1966; Mahood, 1967; Malecki, 1972; Moe, 1981 and 1980; Ornstein and Elder, 1978; Peterson, 1988; Potter, 2002; Prethus, 1974a, 1974b and 1973; Pross, 1986, 1975; Schwartz, 1983; Thomas, 1993; Thorburn, 1985; Wilson, 1990; Wooten, 1970; Zeigler, 1964). Despite all the thinking that has taken place, there is no consensus on definitions.

Yoho (1998) argues that those studying interest groups have “failed to define the term interest group: and its synonyms in a consistent fashion” (p. 13). Yoho (1998) is astute in his observation that the literature that refers to such groups and their activities does not define nor distinguish adequately between the terms “interest group,” “pressure group” or “special interest group.” They appear to be isomorphic and are used interchangeably. It would be incorrect to extrapolate from Yoho’s work that no one has

attempted to make distinctions between groups; some indeed have. Pross (1995), for example, has suggested that “pressure groups ... are organizations whose members act together, attempting to influence public policy in order to promote their common interest,” and are different from “interest groups” who, in addition to attempting to influence government, are more likely to be involved in activities that are “non political” in nature (p. 257). For the purposes of this research, the term “interest group” will be used. It is perhaps a better choice than “pressure group” because institutions and organized groups in Ontario post-secondary education have not been particularly focused on sophisticated or elaborate government relations strategies and have certainly not been as aggressive as the word “pressure” might suggest.

One way of considering the term “interest group” is to first consider the definition of “politics.” At the heart of the definition of politics is the notion that politics is about “power” (Key, 1966, p. 2) – the power to decide. Inherent in deciding is the notion that there are usually competing interests or positions at play or “compromise” (Ainsworth, 2002; Andelman, 1997; Ball, 1986; Ball and Millard, 1986; Baumgartner and Leech, 1998; Berry, 1977 and 1989). However, in an environment of scarce resources, the way that those interests are resolved or balanced is at the heart of politics. It is, therefore, not incomprehensible that given competing ideas, there are people or organizations advocating their view or position in any given debate. Interest groups are a natural extension of this basic circumstance.

Interest groups are groups of individuals, non-governmental organizations and corporations that organize to advocate a position in order to affect public opinion or convince the government to act or not act on a particular issue or policy. Some are single

issue interest groups, which means they have organized and acted with one specific and narrow idea or objective in mind. The lifespan of these groups can be very short, although this is not always the case. Interest groups can also have a multitude of goals and objectives, some short-term and others long-term, thereby sustaining an ongoing existence (Pross, 1975). Smith (1995) argues that pressure groups are “organizations that seek to represent the interests of particular sections of society in order to influence public policy” (p. 7). Berry (1989) suggests interest groups are simply “...an organized body of individuals who share some goals and who try to influence public policy” (p. 4).

The work of Pross (1986) has made a significant contribution to the understanding of interests groups in general, and in Canada in particular. Pross argues that there are four central characteristics of interests groups that must be understood. The first is the notion of continuity of existence because of a formal organizational structure. The idea is that such groups exist, and organization, rules, protocols, and processes perpetuate their existence. Second, interest groups must have the capacity to aggregate, articulate, and represent the interests of those they profess to represent. Third, interest groups have, as a focus of their efforts, the political arena where their intention is to influence decision makers within government, both political and administrative. Fourth, a defining characteristic is that interest groups are interested only in affecting the decisions of government and not exercising the responsibility of government. Pross argues that within these characteristics of interest groups are four different types: institutionalized, mature, fledgling, and issue-oriented, typologies that further help to define their stage of development and focus of their efforts (1986, p. 119).

One factor that appears to permeate most of the early literature on interest groups was not so much who or what they were, but what they did and why they were increasing in numbers. In an attempt to answer the question about the proliferation of interest groups, Pross (1986) suggests that researchers have taken two different approaches – “those who sought general environmental explanations, and those who argued that the expansion of group activity constitutes a *reactive spiral*” (p.171). The notion of a “reactive spiral” suggests that groups and group positions on public policy matters engender the formation of others. That is to say, if one group forms to support an initiative, it is not unlikely that another will form to advocate against it. As the debate intensifies, this reaction may well be cause for another group to form, join in, and so on. Pross suggests that the proliferation may be caused by an increasing number of people in society who are “angry” about government action or inaction, or simply an increased number of people organizing into groups to “place demands on government,” often because they seek an alternate distribution of government resources (presumably for altruistic reasons) or to “serve” the interests of their members more directly (Paltiel, 1982, p. 172). A third explanation derives from the work of Paltiel (1982) who argues that government encourages the establishment of interests groups because they are a convenient construct for interaction and aggregation of opinion. Each of these seems accurate and offer a fair description of why groups have evolved.

What we know less about is why these groups proliferated. The best explanation must lie in the notion that as government has grown more complex, and as interests in the not-for-profit and profit sectors have expanded, so too has the effort to organize interests and engage in interest group activities. Perhaps the best explanation is that interest

groups and their tactics are successful to different degrees and those that choose to try and influence government decisions have engaged in this tactic.

The implications of the proliferation of interest groups are multi-fold. In support of the proliferation, debate is clearly enriched by the presence of thoughtful representation, particularly for those interests in society that may not otherwise be well represented to government. Paltiel argues that this may be seen as enhancing democracy (Paltiel, 1982, p. 198). Detractors argue that the proliferation of interest groups may result in the removal of the valued role of the average citizen, the backbench member and of parliament itself, from the arena of influence. This, detractors argue, means that only the interests of the “economic elite” will prevail because those interests are well represented and financed (Paltiel, 1982, p. 199). Moreover, I have argued that there are significant ethical considerations about the tactics employed by interest groups as they move along a continuum of behaviours and tactic choice; from less aggressive to more aggressive. This raises other issues regarding the health of democracy and political institutions (Constantinou, 2002).

Much of the literature on interest groups attempts to document their rich history, and their increasingly important role in government decision making (Almond and Viba, 1963; Clemens, 1997; Crawford, 1974; Jordan and Richardson, 1987; McConnel, 1970; Wooten, 1970; Zeigler, 1964). While this body of work has made a very useful contribution, the research has evolved beyond simply trying to define what interest groups are. Considerable effort has been spent trying to analyze what interest groups do and how they do it (Ainsworth, 2002; Bacharach and Michell, 1981; Bacharach and Lawler, 1981; Bailey, 1991; Banfield, 1993; Banting, 1991; Burgerman, 2001; Castles,

1967; Deakin, 1966; Downie, 1992; Duane, Townsend and Bridgeland, 1984; Gamson, 1975; Garson, 1978; Grossman and Helpman, 2001; Mahood, 1967; Mawhinney, 2001; Miller, 1987; McCornick, 1981; Moe, 1980; Pierce, 1992; Rivers, 1974; Sandler, 1992; Swartz, 1983; Smith, 1995; Stone, 2001; Wilson, 1990; Zeigler and Baer, 1969). Knight (1991) purports that interest groups have essentially two functions – political and non-political roles. The political role involves aggregating opinions and communicating them to the public and government as well as interpreting the implications of government action or non-action on particular issues. The non-political role of interest groups involves member services and can include such things as professional development, continuing education courses, professional journals, magazines or other communications media.

A number of comparative studies have enriched our understanding of the role and function of interest groups (Ball and Millard, 1986; Duverger, 1972; Ehrmann, 1960; Presthus, 1974a; Presthus, 1974b; Smith, 1993; Stone, 2002; Thomas, 1993; Willetts, 1982). Some have considered the implications of interest groups in international relations or particular policy matters (Grossman, 2002; Keck, 1998; Mannheim, 1994). One thing that has become abundantly clear is that despite certain contextual issues within which interest groups are forced to operate, they are a real presence within Western democracies (such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada) and warrant consideration and study. The future of interest group analysis may lie in the theoretical framework of policy communities and networks, This seems to have become a popular theoretical approach.

Lowery (2005) argues that most interest groups are “organized interests” because most are not groups, but rather institutions such as firms, other governments and post-secondary institutions. He argues that:

When lobbying on their own behalf, these institutions pursue relatively narrow corporate interests rather than the collective interests of members, whether they are individuals, as in a environment group or institutions, as in a trade association (Lowery, p. 3).

Lowery argues that there are four reasons to explain why organized interests lobby. First, organized interests lobby if they are concerned with issues of “public sight” – those that concern the public interest. Second, most lobby because they need to influence a policy outcome. He describes these organized interests as “short term visitors to the policy process”. Third, Lowery suggests that the explanation given by some authors that lobbying is often undertaken for “non-rational” reasons and undertaken mostly because it has been utilized in the past, is a weak and deficient explanation. He suggests that given the professionalization of lobbying and the ensuing costs, organizations do not engage in these activities unless they see potential benefits (p. 9). Fourth, lobbying is often driven by multiple goals, some short and others long-term, and that it is rarely simply focused on one win, but rather has an ongoing agenda.

#### **2.4 Policy Communities and Policy Networks**

Although the concept of “policy networks” has been around for almost half a century, the salience of the concept as a form of analysis has only been felt in the last 25 years (Marsh, 1990, p. 4). When the concept first emerged, it was based on a critique of

the pluralist model that tried to characterize the relationship between government and interest groups. As subsequent research has suggested, we have learned more about the dynamics between groups and about choices of tactics and behaviours because of the activities of other groups in the sector. The impact of this development to the analysis of government relations in Ontario's post-secondary education sector requires further consideration.

Colleges and universities in Canada have for much of their histories been members of organized interest groups – the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO), now known as Colleges Ontario (CO), and the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and their national counterparts, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), respectively<sup>1</sup>.

Holyoke (2003) has done some interesting research in the United States and argues that location or context affects choice of lobbying tactics and strategies. While this conclusion appears obvious, it is an important contribution to our understanding about whether strategies are simply transferable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, or situation to situation. Holyoke developed and tested a model about the decision regarding choice of lobby strategies, based on a series of interviews with lobbyists between 1997 and 1999. His conclusion was that there were significant differences in lobbying strategies, including the amount of lobbying on a particular issue, based on jurisdiction. In addition to this contribution to the notion of whether or not lobby efforts

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<sup>1</sup> In the last few years, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are more aggressive government relations efforts being made within the post-secondary sector by both individual institutions and their provincial advocacy associations. This notion will be discussed later in the context of the interview data and in the section of the thesis that deals with its analysis.

are “venue specific”, he was also able to test whether the expectation of opposition to a particular lobby effort was a real variable in deciding whether to lobby and how in a particular jurisdiction, determining that it indeed is a factor. Holyoke finds that there are three major reasons why lobbyists chose to lobby within a particular venue. First, he suggests that pressure from membership about particular issues will force their efforts to focus on making one’s clients and bosses happy. Second, he argues that the “access a lobbyist enjoys within a particular venue” is also a key variable regarding where to put lobbying efforts (Holyoke, p. 12). And third, Holyoke argues that the “array of other interest groups concerned with the same issues that are also attempting to influence the policy” is another factor that requires strategic decision-making about where to put scarce lobby resources (Holyoke, p. 12). His study concluded that:

...my results suggest that interest groups may concentrate their efforts in a venue, or venues, where the array of players is more sympathetic. In unfriendly venues, interest groups may engage in pro-forma lobbying, reserving their greatest efforts for venues in which the cards are not stacked against them (p. 12).

Hansford (2004, p. 172) argues that groups select a “target” for their lobbying efforts as part of an early strategic decision:

When an organized interest participates in the policy process, it has to make a series of tactical decisions. This decision process begins with the organized interest choosing the policy venue, or set of venues, in which to focus its lobbying efforts. For example, the interest could opt to lobby

Congress, the courts, a federal administrative agency, or some combination of these venues.

Given that Canada has a federal system of government, and that the constitutional responsibility for post-secondary education is at the provincial level, it seems logical that the provincial industry associations focus their efforts primarily on the provincial government. What will be of particular interest is what “targets” those associations choose, why they choose these targets and how those choices may have changed over time.

## **2.5 Policy-Making and Decision-Making within the Public and Broader Public Sector**

There is a robust and growing body of literature on the subject of public policy and administration in Canada and elsewhere. Many books and basic texts have been written about the basic structures of government (Campbell and Pal, 1994; Campbell, Pal and Howlett, 2004; Doern and Phidd, 1992). These books illustrate the structures, processes and key players of government, and how they have changed over time (Doern and Phidd, 1992; Dye, 1984; Hall, 1983; Howlett and Ramensh, 2003; Jordan, 1981; Kemp and Weehuizen, 2005; Lindbloom, 1968 and 1959; Milward and Laird, 1996; Osborne and Gaebler, 1993; Savoie, 1999). Some of the research focuses on the role of financial matters and accountability (Lloyd Brown-John, 1988 Strick, 1999; Doern and Phidd, 1992) whereas other studies focus on the politics of public policy (Soroka, 2002). There are many theories about how policies are created and decisions are made (Banting, 1991, Bedard and Lawton, 2000; Birnbaum, 2000a; Lane, 1983; Wildavsky, 1979).

Much research is also being conducted on how policies and programs are delivered, and how delivery is changing (Aucoin, 1995; Borins, 1995).

Birnbaum (2000) argues that there are four misleading assumptions about higher education policy scholarship and policy-making:

1. “It is possible for policy makers to agree on the nature of policy problems and therefore on the kinds of research they would find most helpful;
2. policy scholars are not now engaged in policy-relevant research;
3. policy makers are not now influenced by policy scholarship; and,
4. increased attention by policy scholars to producing and disseminating policy-relevant research would improve policy-making” (Birnbaum, 2000b, p. 2).

Of particular irony is that the sector has continually come to government with “crises” (Jones, 1990); expecting immediate action to quell impending doom, and, as Birnbaum argues, “Expectations that policy scholarship should have immediate and dramatic effects on policy are unrealistic” (Birnbaum, p. 3). Yet those same institutions whose own processes and internal politics mean they often are slow in responding and changing, expect instantaneous reaction from government and policy-makers.

One of the evolutions of public administration is to incorporate more “scientific management” and other lessons from the private sector and management science to public administration and other initiatives of government (Aucoin, 1995; Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). One example of this is the move to formula-based funding so as to make funding, enrollment driven. Barnettson and Boberg (2000) argue that critics of this formula approach to funding post-secondary education – as in the case of Alberta’s “formula-based budgeting”—suggested that tying funding to students creates “inter-

institutional competition for the basis of allocations (e.g., students, programs, physical plants) but provides no incentive for the institution to improve functioning” (p.7).

Grossman (2007) argues that for advocacy organizations to succeed within national policy making in the United States, they must become what he calls “taken-for-granted” position advocates in policy debates (p. 8). He further argues that, “policymakers seem to find the list of participants in any given policy area rather obvious”. Such groups are often considered as “the usual subjects”, and that policy makers want to justify or legitimate the process of policy-making by including outside interests. How their choice of who gets to participate and who does not, obviously affects the outcomes.

In essence, policy is what government does or does not do. It is embodied in statements, position papers and white papers, budgets, correspondence, legislation, regulations, guidelines, approvals (or denials thereof), speeches, press releases, actions and inactions, and so many other ways in which governments choose to communicate or act. In simple terms, governments make decisions in at least three ways – top down, bottom up, or some combination thereof. Further, what we do know very clearly is that government does not exist in a vacuum. It lives in an ever-changing world that is increasingly complex and is made up of a plethora of interactions with the world outside it. The arena is also growing more complex, filled with an ever more competitive mix of players and institutions, each searching to influence the actions of government. It is because of this complexity that a whole industry has grown around more professional representation in the form of lobbyists and government relations professionals. With that, a growing literature on how to conduct such activities has emerged.

## 2.6 Tactical Guides and *How To's*

There is a great deal of literature that might be categorized as "*how-to*" books that prescribe means and methods for achieving success in organizing interests and lobbying government (Alinsky, 1989; Bardach, 1972; Burgerman, 2001; Chekki and Toews, 1985; Dubs, 1989; ETFO, 1999; Falconer, 2001; Freelen, 1980; Hall, 1974; Hunnius, 1971; Kome, 1989; Mack, 1989; Sarpkaya, 1988; and Toal, 1989). Many of these guides attempt to extrapolate trends in behaviour or "best practices" that can be shared and applied across issues and jurisdictions. This group of publications seeks to enlighten readers as to the potential role and influence of interest groups in the political system and provide them with the tools to organize and affect change. Hall (1974) even goes so far as to provide sample constitutions for groups so that they can organize more easily as well as press releases, in order to make external communications less daunting. Most of these books focus on the British or American context. Increasingly, interest groups themselves are publishing guides to provide members with a better understanding of their role and mobilize efforts locally; particularly around election time. (ACAATO, 2003; CRIAW, 1991; ETFO, 1999).

Some authors devote considerable effort to discussing how lobbying should not be done. One such author, Miller, argues that there are four common mistakes made by organizations that interact with government (Miller, 1987, p.125). First, many interest groups are victim of the "friends in high places syndrome." Miller argues that there is a false reliance on thinking that knowing someone "high up" in government will mean that one will get what he or she wants. Second, interest groups commonly fall into the trap of

the “eat your way out of trouble syndrome” thinking that “largesse” can substitute for well-planned and conducted research and advocacy. Third, many groups misunderstand the structure and function of government, for example, mistaking the British Parliamentary system for that of the American system. Fourth, the “act now, think later syndrome” is a typical pitfall for some interest groups. Here, Miller suggests that it is dangerous to bring issues or requests to the government before they are well thought out and researched. The danger is that without careful consideration about how the government might react, results may be very different from those desired, and issues can take on a life of their own.

Hein (2000) argues that interest groups in Canada are increasingly using litigation as a tactic to achieve their political ends and that Canadians can no longer afford to underestimate the impact of interest group litigation, as it is changing the very style and substance of politics in Canada. Hein points to an increase in interest group litigation as a result of the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He suggests that there is great room for “Charter Canadians” to advance their issues through the courts and that Canadians should consider the impact on democracy and politics in Canada. Indeed, there ought to be concern if the role of Parliament is diminished over time as the courts fill policy voids. Hein also argues that interest groups who have employed many other techniques to advance their causes and have had to go to the courts to achieve their goals cannot be blamed for this trend. As he suggests, groups can and should use all available tactics to achieve their goals, including the courts.

Dolmage (1992) argues that “increasing numbers of interest groups are exerting pressure on educational decision makers, and that when such groups are excluded from

the policy-making process they are becoming more likely to use litigation to force policy change” (p. 314). Perhaps one of the most significant findings about the resolution of conflict is the notion that interest groups are no longer willing to accept the decisions of those in authority or those who occupy traditional positions of power – such as elected officials – but rather are willing and capable of taking their disputes to the courts to seek resolution there.

As Zeigler and Jennings argue, in reference to school boards, elected trustees do not govern, but rather act in a legitimating function to the policy recommendations of senior administrators. What this means is that rather than representing the public, “boards are likely to become spokespersons for the superintendent to the community” (Zeigler and Jennings, p. 250). Given the increasingly important role of the expert in policy areas, and considering the assertions of Zeigler and Jennings, one must be careful to monitor this important and increasingly powerful player (the expert) in the political arena. By doing so, we can work to ensure that average citizens and the democratic process are not subverted, or their roles so eroded that they no longer have meaning (Bedard and Lawton, 2000; Greene and Shugarman, 1997; Moodie, 1970).

Some authors not only describe how to lobby, but issue a call to arms; some as an invitation to participate regardless of the cause, and others to entice citizens to join a particular movement and work together to advance a particular cause. An example of a call to arms to a particular cause is the work of Kenyon, who argues that an effective arts lobby is critical to the future of the arts in Ontario (Kenyon, 1992). Competition for funding has increased, and lobbying efforts have become more sophisticated. Competition for the attention of government for “policy” issues has also increased. This

is an important observation for the Ontario post-secondary education context given that individual colleges, more so than universities, deal with government on issues and lobbying efforts that seek to influence government decision making policy and approval decisions.

Kome (1989) argues for additional lobbying efforts related to women's issues. She suggests that women should demand access to power and direct involvement in decision making to advance women's issues and their perspective. One way that Kome seeks to make the world of interest advocacy less intimidating is to break down the activity of lobbying into smaller components. She advocates taking on smaller parts, with the understanding that something must be done and that one person can make a difference.

There is also a body of literature that is quasi-academic and more mainstream or "popular." It resembles a "tell-all" approach that reveals scandalous behaviour or which simply casts the activity of lobbying in such a light (Crawford, 1974; Malvern, 1985; Sawatsky, 1987). These books are for the most part informative and entertaining, speaking mainly to specific personalities and instances. They have contributed to our understanding of the activities of the government relations sector and its evolution, particularly in the case of Sawatsky's detail of the Canadian scene. What Sawatsky does do very well, albeit with a tendency towards sensationalism, is introduce the personalities in the Canadian scene who started and built government relations businesses. His portrayal of the lobbyists and their origins is an important contribution to our understanding of the history and evolution of the sector. Referring to lobbyists primarily as "backroom boys" furthers the notion that there is something unethical about lobbying.

Sawatsky then goes on to highlight the numerous friends of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney who was particularly good at rewarding loyal friends with patronage, and access to senior government officials for government contracts. In particular he talks about Frank Moores, former premier of Newfoundland who he credits for creating Government Consultants International Inc. in Ottawa and spawning a government relations industry in Canada. (Sawatsky, p. 3) Perhaps their most notable contribution is in further sullyng the reputation of the business of government relations. Perhaps this is justified, as they are often documenting the behaviours of those less savory. The implications of such accounts have done much to feed a predilection of the public to hold negative views of the government relations sector. This critique is not intended to be a condemnation, but rather an observation.

## **2.7 Government Relations in the Post-Secondary Education Sector in the United States**

A number of studies, mostly doctoral dissertations, have focused on government relations efforts in the United States. In terms of national studies, Prothro (2001) looked at the effectiveness of various lobbying strategies in state legislatures as perceived by state government relations officers within public institutions of higher education. Prothro reported that the two most effective lobbying strategies were first, to have influential constituents or champions contact legislators, and second, to have representatives of the institutions make personal presentations to legislators. Her recommendation to post-secondary leadership was to develop comprehensive state-level relations plans that included these most effective lobbying tactics and strategies.

Knorowski (2000) studied the post-secondary system within Illinois as a case study in interest group activities, looking specifically at the application of various models of pluralism. The study examined the higher education sector at the state level using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and conducted a detailed study of two specific policy cases within that policy domain. In particular, the study looked at how the policy domain operated as lobbying entity, and how the 181 higher education institutions interacted among each other. It compared these findings with how the policy domain operated at the state level, as contrasted to how previous studies suggested the domain operated at the federal level. Knorowski argued that interests “polarize because there is no centralizing actor bringing the opposing interests together, representing and coordinating their respective interests and interactions (2000, p. ii).” She concluded that the case revealed that multiple models of pluralism do emerge within higher education in Illinois. In some cases “cooperative pluralism” (when opposite interests come together within a domain to work to achieve their policy goals) and in other cases the “hollow-core” theory of pluralism applies (when primary representative associations are unable to adequately represent the interest of members, they seek to represent their own interests independently).

Ferrin (1996) studied the activities of in-house lobbyists for colleges and universities across the United States. To date, in-house lobbyists for colleges and universities have not been the source of much study. The study consisted of 20 in-depth interviews with in-house lobbyists at universities across the United States, along with 10 university presidents from among the twenty states where the in-house lobbyists were from. In addition, Ferrin used data from a comparative study from 105 in-house lobbyists

at colleges and universities to compare and contrast attitudes and responses to other types of lobbyists. Ferrin concluded that in-house lobbyists are part of a “powerful new emerging profession” who not only represent their institutions, but also “have some input in defining their institutions’ goals” (p. ii).

Van Eyck (1995) argued that there are numerous tactics that college and university administrators could use to try to affect government policy, all of which are similar to those available to other actors in other policy fields. These potentially highly successful techniques included:

Gathering diverse experts, selecting a defense and/or offense, remaining flexible, flooding legislative offices with communications, meeting with local newspaper editors and legislators, distributing fact sheets to constituencies and involving campus publications (Van Eyck, 1995, p. iii).

Garcia (1995) used the Office of Government Relations at the University of Texas System as a case study to better understand the government relations function in post-secondary education. While narrow in scope and focus, the study is an interesting look at how one institution conducts government relations and the types of strategies and tactics that are employed. Much of what Garcia found was that Government Relations officials used many of the same techniques as other lobbyists and best practices in government relations professions.

Key (1993) provides an interesting analysis and measurement of the potential influence that higher education lobbyists had on the members of the 1992 Kentucky General Assembly. Specifically, Key looked at the influence these lobbyists had on state

appropriations to the eight four-year public universities in Kentucky. This study was particularly interesting because it surveyed both the members of the Assembly as well as the presidents of the universities and looked at their perceptions and opinions about the influence of lobby efforts on funding decisions. In the study, legislators reported that the most effective representative of the university was the president, and the important function of lobbyists was in the provision of information, data and facts. The least effective activity was high pressure tactics and “entertainment”, such as meals and tickets to sporting events (Key, 2000, p.1).

Helms (1993) studied government relations activities in the community college sector in the United States. She interviewed six community college leaders in North Carolina and Washington, D.C. and six congressional actors in Washington, D.C. and came to four conclusions. First, she concluded that to lobby Congress effectively requires an ongoing effort. Second, college leaders are potentially the best advocates or lobbyists for the college. Third, members of the board of governors are not perceived by congressional actors as the best representatives of the college for purposes of lobbying, often because they are not as knowledgeable as they should be. And fourth, college leaders do not effectively communicate the importance of the college to the members of the congressional district, thereby not drawing effective arguments for why the constituents and constituency benefit from further investments (Helms, 1993).

Mayes (1989) conducted a similar study of the Tennessee state universities. Mayes found that the shared view of post-secondary education officials who were the institution’s lobbyists and legislators was that the provision of facts and data was the single most important function of the post-secondary education lobbyist. There were,

however, considerably divergent opinions from the two groups of respondents. Lobbyists considered district level lobbying more effective, whereas legislators preferred to meet at the state capital level. Lobbyists believed that “entertainment” resulted in better treatment by legislators whereas legislators rejected the idea outright. Mayes speculates that one might wonder whether this is the politically correct response or their true feelings. Another interesting finding was the difference between Senators and House members. Senators responded that “one-to-one” communication was the most effective lobbying effort and House members argued that testimony at House hearings was most influential.

Caswell (1988) examined the opinions of administrators in the Dallas County Community College District about their perceptions of strategies to improve funding in the face of a veto of a 7% increase in community college funding by the state’s governor in 1987. The results of the study were interesting; the administration of the colleges within the district felt that government relations should be on the top ten list of priorities, as effective government relations activities provided a return on the investment. Further, there was significant support for other more aggressive tactics for government relations including economic impact studies, public opinion polls, increased legislative advocacy, and the establishment of a political action committee.

Patricia Brown (1985) examined the relationship between higher education institutions and state government by use of a nation-wide survey of 300 colleges and universities in three Carnegie classifications. Brown found that most administrators with prime responsibility for government relations occupied very senior positions within the institution, but in most cases juggled other responsibilities. These lobbyists used similar

techniques and tactics as lobbyists representing other interests groups. Brown postulates that there are three different models that institutions use to organize their behaviour to conduct government relations (p. 11). First is the network organizational method. The network organizational method, as defined by Brown is “one in which several officials of the institution along with either the president, the government relations coordinator or both are participants who lobby for the institution” (p. 11). The second model is the presidential organization method in which “the president is the predominant and nearly sole participant who lobbies for the institution. The third model is the coordinator organizational method which is “the one in which a government relations coordinator in conjunction with the president are the major participants who lobby for the institution” (p. 11). What is most interesting, for purposes of this study, is the finding that there were differences in the way in which institutions organized themselves to conduct government relations and these differences were dependent on the type of institution. For example, doctoral institutions used a network model. Comprehensive institutions used both the network and coordinator model and the two-year institutions use both the coordinator model and the presidential model. Brown (1985) also found that the size of the institution matters. This categorization is a useful structure against which to characterize the results of this study.

Philips (1991) studied efforts in the Nevada post-secondary education system aimed at affecting government decisions relating to increased investments in quality improvements. Philips concluded that the arguments that were most effective with state and federal officials revolved around student financial aid and civil rights. This seemed to resonate with the legislators included in the study. The study also found that, although

there are many individuals and institutions involved in government relations, there were very few officials who focused their full-time efforts on the government relations function, most had other substantive responsibilities as well. Philips provides two major conclusions. First, she argues that "...many groups are involved in the analysis and development of lobbying issues and strategies to solve state higher education problems." (p. 204) Second, she finds that "there are few administrators in the state that focus their full time efforts on federal initiatives; most carry out this function along with other administrative responsibilities" (p. 207).

One of the most significant contributions to the literature in the United States in this field is the work of Cook (1998). In fact, Cook's study is the only comprehensive work that focuses on the higher education sector that considers such things as:

- the culture of the sector;
- the efforts of associations and individual institutions (and the inherent benefits and consequences of unified and non-unified efforts at presenting consensus to government); and,
- the choice of lobbying techniques across associations and individual institutions.

Although the research is based on the higher education sector in the United States and primarily looks at college and university efforts to lobby the federal government, there are many relevant findings that should be highlighted here.

In terms of the culture of the sector, Cook argues that:

Higher education has always thought of itself as a national treasure, a public good whose value should not be questioned. Historically, its leaders believed that politics is a dirty business, one unworthy of a lofty enterprise like higher education” (Cook, p. 3).

Much of the role of government relations, outside of the associations to which particular institutions belong, has focused on the president of the college or university. Cook argues that the president is typically a product of academia and full of the culture and mentality of the institutions that they have come from and now lead (Cook, p. 119). At the heart of the culture in academia is the notion of collegial decision making. The road to consensus is a long and sometimes painful process, and coming to conclusions as a group so that they can go to government with a unified voice or a consensus is often time-consuming and tenuous. One official was quoted as saying:

Higher education’s difficulty is coalescing internally. One Dupont Circle<sup>2</sup> is a fudge farm because, within twenty-four hours after the association makes an agreement, some college will protest they weren’t consulted, and it comes unglued. The associations seem to be lined-up and going in the

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<sup>2</sup> Dupont Circle is a traffic circle, neighborhood, and historic district in Northwest Washington, D.C. In addition to its ambassadorial residences, and other high-priced apartments and condominiums, Dupont Circle is home to some of the nation's most prestigious think tanks and research institutions, including the Brookings Institution, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Eurasia Center, and the Peterson Institute. One Dupont Circle is the building that houses the American Association for Higher Education and a large number of related associations.

same direction, and then you say, 'Forward, march,' and they go off in four different directions. (Cook, p. 120).

The other example of the mentality of the sector towards government relations efforts is embedded in the notion that the facts, or preponderance of evidence about what the sector needs, ought to be enough to convince government officials to agree to the sector's demands. Increasingly, the evidence has shown that this technique has not worked and institutions and their associations are engaging in different strategies and behaviours (Cook, 1998).

Just because an association communicates to government with one voice does not necessarily mean that it is guaranteed. And simply having more lobbyists, is also not a guarantee of success. Clearly, there are some benefits to an increased number of individuals and associations speaking to government about the role of higher education, and fundamentally it stands to reason that, where possible, a unified voice would be more powerful than disparate opinions; however, there must be some point at which additional associations diminishes and exacerbates the problem (Cook, p. 87).

Two researchers have attempted to quantify the return on the investment in lobbying for federal educational earmarks in the United States. de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002) argue that data collection issues are to blame for the lack of such studies. They argue that there are four reasons explaining this:

- It is difficult to measure lobby expenditures.

- Many government policies lack identifiable pecuniary returns and as a result it is difficult to discern which outcomes have been influenced by lobbying efforts and which have not.
- Since institutions typically employ multiple instruments or tactics to conduct lobbying, such as grass-roots efforts, it is difficult to quantify expenditures, especially where efforts and costs are not publicly disclosed.
- It is difficult to control for the “intrinsic quality differences” among competing lobbyists (de Figueiredo and Silverman, p. 1-2).

The authors used a statistical analysis to attempt to measure the returns of lobbying for earmarks<sup>3</sup> and they conclude that two things affect success. First, the amount of earmark funding is mainly determined by the presence of a medical school, graduate programs, overall departmental rankings, the institution’s lobby efforts and its representation in Congress. Second, institutions located in districts that are represented by elected members on the House Appropriations Committee (HAC) and Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) receive “enormous” returns for their lobby efforts. They concluded that the average return to lobbying for the average, well situated university (as above), results in an 11-36 times its expenditure on the activity (de Figueiredo and Silverman, p. 30). This makes lobbying a very attractive endeavor for universities in the United States, particularly for those that can work to replicate the conditions for success. As a result,

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<sup>3</sup> Earmarks, as they are known in the United States, are provisions made by Congress to direct monies to specific projects, or to direct specific exemptions from taxation or required fees to specific projects or organizations.

there is a proliferation of lobby activity in the United States, and an increase of university support of Political Action Committees<sup>4</sup> (Cooke).

## **2.8 Government Relations in Post-Secondary Education in Ontario**

There is some literature that makes reference to government and government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and Canada (Arthurs, 1987; Axelrod, 1982; Beach and McInnis, 2005; Cameron, 2001; 1991; Collins, 1995; Corry, 1970; COU, 1982; Courchene, 2001; Davenport, 1996; Frederick, 1978; Jones, 1998a; 1998b; McKillop, 1994; Monroe-Blum, Duderstadt and Davies, 1999; Riddell, 2003; Stewart, 1970; Stenton, 1992). Government relations as a distinct activity has grown significantly and has become a sophisticated business. As Sawatsky wrote in 1987 “...the fastest-growing area of corporate development in the United States and elsewhere in the world was not economics, law, labour relations, production, or marketing – but public affairs” (Sawatsky, p. 350). As this evolution has occurred in most sectors in the economy, it appears, at first glance, very little has changed in the way colleges and universities have organized and conducted government relations in Ontario. In terms of higher education in Canada, no statistics regarding lobbying activity are currently available. There are, however, some figures relating to such activity in the United States. Jeffrey Brainard reported that “in 1999, 182 academic institutions employed independent lobbyists, up from 150 in 1997, according to a Chronicle review of the lobbyists’ disclosure reports filed with Congress.” Further, he reported that “...at least 29 of the

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<sup>4</sup> Political Action Committee or PAC is the name commonly given to a private group, regardless of size, organized to elect political candidates. Legally, what constitutes a "PAC" for purposes of regulation is a matter of state and federal law. Under the American *Federal Election Campaign Act*, an organization becomes a "political committee" by receiving contributions or making expenditures in excess of \$1,000 for the purpose of influencing a federal election.

242 universities that employed no independent lobbyist but maintained their own Washington offices with full-time staff members” (Brainard, 2000).

The work of Jones (1991a) is one of the few contributions directly relevant to the questions inherent in this study and contributes much to the understanding of government relations and interest group activity in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. Jones employed a pluralist framework to examine whether and how faculty members and associations affiliated with the University of Toronto impact government policy. This contribution is most significant not only because it is the first of its kind in higher education in Canada, but because it does two important things; first, it recognizes that individuals and groups in higher education do try to influence policy and have an impact; and second, it concludes that the traditional approach to considering the relationship between universities and government is “overly simplistic” and requires further consideration (Jones, 1991a, p. ii). According to Jones, the notion of managerialism as a framework of analysis is particularly useful, but has limited value in accurately describing university-government relations (Jones, 1991a, p. 4). Jones suggests that managerialism, which as a political theory, focuses on “...the formal structural and functional relations between an institution and government” is inadequate, as it assumes a certain limited formality in the relationship and autonomy (Jones, 1991a, p. 4). He argues that pluralism, albeit an imperfect tool for analyzing and understanding the nature of that relationship, offers better insights (Jones, 1991a, p. 4). It does so by moving beyond the “formal structural and functional relations between an institution and government, to the political behaviour of individuals and groups and the influence of their influence on government decision-making and policy (Jones, 1991a, p. 5).

In the context of studying political behaviour of faculty members and pressure groups at the University of Toronto and how they may or may not influence Ontario government policy, Jones (1991a) came to three important conclusions. First, faculty at the University of Toronto play what he calls a “special” role within the political process. He suggests that some provide services to government which can encompass research and advice on “a wide-range of policy matters and different policy communities” and that this participation can be of benefit to individual faculty, the institution they represent as well as the government.

Second, Jones finds that there are some “university-based groups” that attempt to influence government policy, that some of these groups are members of the “sub-government” in the policy community, and that these groups differ in membership and organizational capacity (Jones, 1991a, p. ii).

Third, Jones concludes that university-government relationships are “far more complex than any previously published research on this topic would suggest (Jones, 1991a, p. ii). In many ways, the work of Jones guides the research of this study. Following his notion of using the pluralist framework of analysis, and expanding its application to the study of the sector as a whole to include both colleges and universities, a better understanding of the perceptions of the leadership in the sector and their approach to government relations can be achieved.

Trick (2005) considers the politics of university-government relations in Ontario, and argues that the methodologies used for explaining the evolution of public policy in this sector are “eclectic” and leave many gaps unanswered and issues related to the “institutional basis of policy development - in the form of interest groups, government

agencies, statutes, regulations and the like – are therefore under-explored (p. 69). Using document analysis and interviews to consider “how ideas and institutions shaped the Ontario government’s relationship with the province’s universities between 1985 and 2002.” (Trick, 2005 p. ii) Trick suggests that a synthesis of “institutionally-based models of continuity and change” is necessary in order to “explain how commitments made during the development of the Canadian welfare state fared during a period of fiscal retrenchment and economic globalization” (p. iii). Two other factors are also relevant to this study. First, Trick states that, although Coleman and Skogstad argue “tightly closed” policy networks tend to be “highly durable”, but breakdown over time into a variety of pressure groups advocating their own interests, this was not the case in his own research. He postulates that:

We found evidence of a closely related phenomenon: as new government priorities emerged (notably research and deficit reduction), government bodies from outside the normal COU-ministry network made policies that affected universities, so that the government side of the policy network became more complex over the period of this study

Two lessons may be taken from this finding. First, in the case of universities, a more complex government context may have been a contributing factor to the evolution of government relations efforts by both COU and individual institutions, Second, one of the reasons that the policy community in post-secondary education in Ontario continues to be so “tight” is that the leadership of the institutions and COU either do not see the need to expand the membership or participation, or they are cognizant of this experience and do not believe that there is benefit in attempting this approach again. Although much of the

*how-to* literature suggests that these types of tactics are useful, clearly there are some circumstances when they can be effective and when they are not.

Trick suggests that in the early 1990s, COU “attempted to open up the established policy network” by “creating two new interest groups to advocate on behalf of universities” . He states that they “did not meet their stated objectives” because poor planning and “competition with each other” were key factors that led to abandoning the approach. Trick concludes that it is difficult to determine whether this approach failed because of the unique circumstances or whether it is more a function of “the politics of government-university relations” (p. 370-371). Either the differences of opinion among the partners in such an alliance may have contributed to a lack of success or the sheer difficulty agreeing to, and maintaining “mass support” for an agenda were too difficult.

Both Jones (1991a) and Trick (2005) emphasize that the relationship between government and the university sector is more complex than previously thought. Further, they suggest that we move our understanding from one where we characterize the relationship between the institutions and government as a structured, hierarchical one to one that accounts for the dynamics of the relationships and structural elements found in the broader reality of policy communities.

## **2.9 Contextual and Legal Environment**

If there is one truism about government relations, it is that every issue or campaign is different and highly subject to contextual issues. Not only do the political systems within which the issue is situated greatly affect the approach and strategy, they also affect the nuances of the characteristics of a particular issue or policy objective and

the individual players. Although the literature has begun to explore some of these nuances, our understanding is still very embryonic.

The government of Canada introduced the *Lobbyist Registration Act* in 1989 to primarily establish a public registry of lobbyists. The thinking behind the introduction of the *Act* and the public registry is that lobbying is a legitimate activity and should not be discouraged or overly regulated. Rather, by introducing a public listing of organizations and corporations that are trying to influence government decision-makers – and including in the listing the name of the individual and firm that is representing each organization, the veil of secrecy that has characterized lobbying and government relations would be eliminated (Canada Lobbyist Registration Branch, 2000). In 1998, the Ontario government introduced its own *Lobbyist Registration Act* that is virtually identical to the federal statute (Constantinou, 2003). Both acts include significant fines for non-registration or the registration of misleading information. In addition to the latter *Act*, the legal context relevant to the conduct of government relations are Ontario's *Members' Integrity Act, 1994* and the Federal *Conflict of Interest Act, 1999*, both of which attempt to outline basic principles of conflict of interest and attempts to codify behaviour appropriate to a member of provincial and federal parliament respectively. The only other relevant legislation is that of the *Public Service Act* which relates to both the federal and provincial parliaments and attempts to codify behaviours for public servants, such as conflict of interest and post-employment guidelines, and the federal *Accountability Act* passed in 2006.

These *Acts* are relatively new and their impact is not yet fully known. In general terms, the idea of simply raising the curtain on the activity makes a great deal of sense.

The heart of the criticism of the endeavour is that it occurs behind closed doors. In theory at least, if the activity is legitimate – and there is no reason to suggest it is not – then simply disclosing information should remove much of that criticism and support a level playing field.

The notion of a “unified voice” is one that has long been held as a great asset in Ontario to the post-secondary lobby. However, it appears that the value of consensus building and the perceived value of consensus have been off-set by the new competitive environment. The longstanding reality is that consensus is a compromise where sometimes the interests of some are lost in the compromise. As a result, it appears that individual institutions are increasingly acting on their own or with a sub-set of others to advocate to government differently. There is no doubt that with increased differentiation in Ontario post-secondary, there is a rising feeling that individual efforts are necessary. In the last two years, we have seen the establishment of two new groups – the Association of Canadian Polytechnic Institutions (latter Polytechnics Canada) and a yet-to-be named organization of Greater Toronto Area presidents of colleges. At the time of writing these groups have just hired their own lobby firm to advocate to government the issues they feel are specific to them. Clearly these subsets of CO members feel that their association does not fully represent their interests and that by organizing themselves differently, they can achieve their specific goals and objectives.

## **2.10 Summary of Themes of the Literature**

There are a number of themes that ought to be considered as we reflect on the contribution of the literature to our understanding of the topic. In terms of the literature

on interest groups, clearly much has been done to enumerate their typology and to describe and explain their behaviour. In doing so, authors such as Pross and Prethus have done much to contribute to our understanding. One of the major themes that evolves from their work is that interests organize and compete to influence government, and their form and function differs depending on a myriad of factors related to things such as size and age. The utility of this body of literature has evolved as the study has broadened its consideration to employ a “policy community” or “policy network” approach. Guided by the work of researchers such as Atkinson and Coleman (1992, 1989), the analysis is expanded and more concerned with the implications of the interaction of groups with other groups and the impacts of the activities of entire “groups” or “communities” of interested parties on others.

After reviewing the literature that attempts to describe what is occurring, there is another body of literature that attempts to describe how practitioners might practice government relations. The body of knowledge, referred to as “how-to” literature, does a great deal to elucidate the readers about how government relations ought to be conducted and highlights best practices. While much of the information is generic and should apply to government relations in the post-secondary sector, none of it does this specifically. Much of it is not Canadian literature and, again, while many of the principles apply, the systems of government are sufficiently different that they provide little specific counsel for the Canadian context.

The literature in most jurisdictions is consistent on one theme – since the role of interest groups is significant, increasing and needs to be better understood, further research is necessary (Atkinson and Coleman, 1992; Ball, 1986; Bentley, 1967,

CRCERPF, 1991; Canadian Study of Parliament Group, 1989; Coleman and Jacek, 1989; Coleman, 1987; Hayes, 1981; Paltiel, 1982; Seidle, 1993). The literature on government relations in post-secondary in Ontario as quite limited and leaves the reader with more questions than answers. It is upon this existing but limited literature that this research is built.

## **2.11 Summary**

This chapter began first by discussing the literature related to interest groups, policy communities, policy networks, and discusses the policy-making and decision-making within the public and broader public sector . The contribution and relevance of “how-to” books or tactical guides related to government relations was then discussed, followed by a consideration of the literature about government relations in the post-secondary sector in the United States where much of the existing literature on this topic originates. The very narrow, but important body of literature from Ontario was one of the focal points of the review. The chapter ended by looking at the literature that defines the legal environment and context in Ontario and then made some conclusions regarding the contribution of the literature to this study, including the areas requiring further research.

The next chapter provides a detailed review of the findings of the research design and methodology of this study. What was uncovered by this review is that there are significant gaps in the literature, and a study of government relations in the post-

secondary sector in Ontario could make a necessary and important step forward toward filling that void.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research design used in this study and begins with a brief overview of the post-secondary education system in Ontario to set the context for the study. This is followed by a review of the purpose and the research questions guiding this study, a general review of the overall design and parameters, a detailed discussion of the interview guides that were used in data collection, and a discussion of the participant selection rationale and data collection and recording. The methodological assumptions, the limitations of the study, the ethical issues and considerations are also described

### **3.2 Overview of the Post-Secondary Education System in Ontario**

Pursuant to Section 93 of Canada's Constitution, the responsibility for education lies with the provincial governments. Ontario's post-secondary education system includes public and private institutions, including publicly assisted colleges and universities, as well as private colleges and universities (although private universities have only been recently allowed). For purposes of this study, only the publicly assisted colleges and universities will be described.

#### *3.2.1 The College System in Ontario*

In the 1960s, Ontario's Minister of Education, the Honourable William G. Davis announced the government's intention to create a system of post-secondary education

that was different from the universities (Skolnik, 2004). On May 21, 1965 in the Legislature he stated that Ontario would have a “new level and type of education” that would ensure that the government would provide career-focused educational opportunities for all. (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, p. 6) This addition to the education system would “fill in a gap” in a system of education that would take all students from kindergarten to the post-graduate level, and was not intended to be “universities by another name” (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, p. 6-7; Jones, 1997). As an add-on to the existing systems of elementary, secondary and university level organizations, these community colleges were to have the following responsibilities:

- Provide courses of types and levels beyond, or not suited to, the secondary school setting;
- Meet the needs of graduates from any secondary school program, apart from those wishing to attend university; and
- Meet the educational needs of adult and out-of-school youth, whether or not they were secondary school graduates. (Ontario Department of Education, p. 5-16)

The colleges were intended to focus on needs specific to their local communities, and 19 were opened in 1967 with additional emphasis added to their original responsibilities:

- They must embrace total education, vocational and avocational, regardless of formal entrance qualifications, with provision for complete vertical and horizontal mobility;
- They must develop curricula that meet the combined cultural aspirations and occupational needs of the student;

- They must operate in the closest possible co-operation with business and industry, and with social and other public agencies, including education, to ensure that curricula are at all times abreast, if not in advance of the changing requirements of a technological society; and,
- They must be dedicated to progress, through constant research, not only in curricular but in pedagogical technique and in administration. (Ontario Department of Education, p. 32).

Over time the system evolved, additional colleges were established and other campuses were opened throughout Ontario as the system thrived and enrollments grew. At the time of writing, Ontario's college system consists of 24 publicly assisted colleges, which includes three Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning (ITALs) and two French-language colleges (Colleges Ontario, p. 1).

Many colleges have more than one campus location, and as a result, students can take full-time and part-time courses at more than 100 locations across the province. The mandate of the college sector is to offer applied education and training so that students gain skills for jobs. Colleges Ontario reports that there were 150,000 full-time students, 350,000 part-time students, and 6,700 international students enrolled in college programs across Ontario in 2008 (Colleges Ontario, 2009).

A number of other important events in the history of the college system are of particular interest. First, in 2000, the Ontario Government passed the *Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act*, which allowed colleges to apply to offer degree programs and second, in 2002, when the Government passed the *College of Applied Arts*

*and Technology Act* which, *inter alia*, allowed for more autonomy and responsibility for programming, and led to the creation of a “self-regulatory mechanism for quality assurance and improvement (Colleges Ontario, 2007, p. 1). In 2005, Bob Rae lead a review of post-secondary education in Ontario, with the province responding with the Reaching Higher Plan for post-secondary education. This resulted in, among other things, an investment of \$6.2 billion and the creation of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) that would “provide valuable advice to the province on the evolution of the system” (Rae, p. 15).

Colleges offer certificate programs, (which take one year or less), diploma programs (which take two or three years), apprenticeships and certification programs (for skilled trades such as a carpenter, chef, or welder), and bachelor’s degrees of an applied nature (four years). The average cost of tuition is \$1,900 for a diploma, \$2,500 for a graduate certificate, and \$4,200 for an applied bachelor’s degree. (Colleges Ontario, 2009) On average, colleges typically receive approximately 42% of their revenues from operating grants from the provincial government and approximately 20% from tuition fees paid for by students, and revenue from ancillary fees and other revenue sources equal approximately 14%.

### 3.2.2 *The University System in Ontario*

Ontario has 21 publicly funded universities.<sup>5</sup> Universities offer undergraduate programs leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees, including master’s and doctoral credentials, continuing education programs, diplomas and certificates. The province’s

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the 21 publicly funded universities in Ontario, Royal Military College of Canada (RMCC) is a publicly funded university in Ontario, but does not receive funding from the provincial government.

universities also offer distance and part-time programs, as well as those offered jointly by colleges and universities under special arrangements that allow students to earn a university degree and a college diploma at the same time.

### *3.2.3 Funding of Post-Secondary Education in Ontario*

A significant portion of the funding for colleges and universities in Ontario is provided by the provincial government in the form of operating and special purpose grants. The level of the grant is a result of a “negotiated” agreement on the size of program offerings. In the university system the amount of money provided is related to the nominal cost of operating the programs, reflected in the enrolment-based formula that is built upon the notion of “basic income units” (BIUs) that are weighted according to program. As long as the average of these BIUs stays within a “corridor” of 3% above or below the negotiated level, the individual university is free to establish its own program mix and level of participation (COU, 2009; Clark, 2002, p. 34). In the college system, the funding formula is designed similarly, however growth is a factor that is rewarded (Jones, 1997).<sup>6</sup> The expansion funds associated with the double-cohort and more recently with graduate expansion have shifted some of these issues and clearly changed the impact of program growth on funding. For example, while the universities are currently lobbying for fundability, the government is currently maintaining somewhat different funding envelopes for masters and doctoral enrolment expansion in the final phase of its expansion initiative and therefore steering growth by program level. At the time of writing, MTCU is currently working with the sector to update the formula to

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<sup>6</sup> In the summer of 2009, the province introduced a modified funding framework for colleges in which the operating grant is collapsed with nine other special purposes grants and made more enrolment sensitive in an attempt to mirror more closely the university funding model.

acknowledge some of the concerns of colleges and to meet the changing needs and realities of the sector. And as with most sectors, funding is consistently a priority interest and its discussion with government. (Jones, 1997)

#### *3.2.4 The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario*

Pursuant to recommendations of the Rae Review, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) was established in 2006 as an independent agency funded by the Ontario government, via the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. HEQCO has a very broad mandate to ensure that there is continued improvement of the post-secondary education system in Ontario by ensuring that the following three key components are monitored:

1. quality in the sector;
2. access to postsecondary education; and,
3. accountability of postsecondary educational institutions.

The Council is responsible for monitoring and reporting on performance measures, as well as conducting research and providing guidance on improved quality in the postsecondary education system and other issues requested by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario).

#### *3.2.5 The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board*

The Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) makes recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on applications to offer degree programs from new and existing private Ontario degree-granting

institutions, out-of-province institutions, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and all others not authorized to award degrees by an Ontario statute. The role of the PEQAB is to:

- review all applications for a ministerial consent
  - determine the criteria and procedures for program quality assessments and organization reviews;
  - undertake such reviews;
  - create program quality assessment panels, organization review panels and advisory committees;
  - undertake research as appropriate;
  - provide recommendations to the Minister on applications; and,
  - address any other matters referred to the Board by the Minister.
- (Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board).

### **3.3 Organization of the Sector**

All Ontario colleges are members of Colleges Ontario, and all publicly supported universities are members of the Council of Ontario Universities. A brief introduction to each organization is provided below.

#### *3.3.1 Colleges Ontario*

Colleges Ontario (CO) is the advocacy and outreach association of Ontario's 24 Colleges which consist of 21 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) and three colleges that have been designated as Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning (ITALs). In general, the role of Colleges Ontario is to "advocate for policy improvements and measures that will help produce the skilled workforce that is needed to

strengthen Ontario’s competitive advantage” (Colleges Ontario, 2009). Colleges Ontario describes its function as a sectoral association as providing four essential functions:

- advocacy and communications;
- research and policy development;
- information co-ordination; and,
- professional development.

Colleges Ontario is financed by all member colleges, on a voluntary basis, with dues assessed according to enrolment.

In terms of governance, the General Assembly of Colleges Ontario consists of all Board Chairs and College Presidents and is responsible for setting the strategic direction for the association. The Committee of Presidents (COP) is made up of all college presidents and is responsible for:

- making recommendations on system-wide policy direction to the CO Board of Directors;
- addressing strategic system-wide operational issues; and,
- overseeing system-wide operation units and special projects that may be initiated (College Compensation and Appointments Council).

The Colleges’ Compensation and Appointments Council (CCAC) is responsible for “reviewing and recommending to college boards, through Colleges Ontario, compensation levels and terms & employment, for presidents and administrative staff.” (Colleges Compensation and Appointments Council). The Council is a provincial

agency, established pursuant to the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*, and consists of a minimum of eight and a maximum of 15 members (including the chair). The Council is accountable to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and responsible for:

- Governance: the appointment and reappointment of external members to colleges boards of governors and assisting with Colleges' governance issues.
- Human Resources; collective bargaining with the academic and support staff unions and related human resource management responsibilities for the colleges, including insured employee benefits.
- The Premier's Awards which annually honour outstanding graduates of the community colleges.
- Other duties as assigned by the Minister. (College Compensation and Appointments Council)

### 3.3.2 *Council of Ontario Universities*

Monahan (2004) does a tremendous job of capturing the role and evolution of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) in his recently published history of this organization. The COU was established on December 3, 1962 as the "Committee of Presidents of Provincially Assisted Universities and Colleges of Ontario" (Monahan, p. 1). In 1966 a formal constitution was adopted for the renamed "Committee of Presidents of Universities of Ontario, and amended in 1971 to rename the Council of Ontario Universities. The mission of COU was and is to

Promote cooperation among the provincially assisted universities of Ontario, and between them and the government of the province, and

generally, to work for the improvement of higher education for the people of Ontario (Fallis and Rose, 2008, p. 1).

In terms of membership, those eligible to sit on the COU are the executive heads of the provincially assisted universities in Ontario that grant degrees and a senior academic appointed by the Senate of each institution, known as an Academic Colleague (Fallis and Rose). Monahan (2004) describes the role of COU as to be the “one voice” for the university sector in both attempting to shape the system of higher education in Ontario, but to also protect the autonomy of institutions (p. 1). There are a significant number of affiliate bodies that form part of COU. These often number as many as 25 affiliates and include organizations of vice-presidents responsible for administration, academics, research, etc. along with deans, registrars, directors and other relevant and necessary functions (Clark, 2002, p. 38). Advocacy is coordinated by the COU’s Committee on Government and Community Relations and through the Ontario University Public Affairs Council. In Clark’s description of COU’s role in advocacy he writes:

COU is strictly non-partisan and does not endorse or financially contribute to political parties. COU deals with government, primarily through established channels with ministers and their public servants (Clark, 2002, p.39).

As noted above, all publicly assisted colleges and universities in Ontario belong to either CO or COU and work through their sector association as the main vehicle for government relations for sector-wide issues. While the history of COU has been captured by Monahan, there has not yet been anything written to document the history of CO. As

a result, there is no written record that details the workings of CO and their evolution. The first contribution to this understanding will be the observations and contributions of participants in this study as they reflect and consider how the work of CO, as it particularly relates to government relations, has evolved and changed over time. One thing that this study will try to reveal is the extent to which the two associations work together. At the time of writing, CO and COU are the only organizations that lobby the provincial government on behalf of institutions. They are, definitely “taken for granted” interest groups. Such groups are those that the government has decided to automatically engage as part of decision-making, and it is a given that they would be involved in negotiations related to any policy change that affected their interests.

An interesting debate has emerged about the roles of CO and COU. The question arises, are these two sector associations lobby groups or advocacy groups? Ian Clark, former President of COU has argued that the mandate of COU is threefold; advocacy, self-management and advice to government (2002). In his 2002 essay, Clark summarizes the history, structure and function of COU and the evolution of the balancing act between these three priority functions. Only a few university presidents agree with Clark that COU does not conduct “lobbying” as defined by provincial and federal legislation, and that as a result, they argue that COU is not required to register as a lobbyist under either jurisdiction’s legislation. Whether these groups are lobby or advocacy associations is more an intellectual debate than a practical one, as in the end, even through advocacy, the association’s main purpose is to convince government to give them more money and to get government to do or not do what is in the associations’ best interests.

### 3.3.3 *The Beginnings of Government Relations*

Jones (1997) considers the evolution of the relationship that the sector has had with government, and argues that there was a move from a “sectoral approach to a macro-level policy”. He suggests that:

From the mid-1970s, the funding and regulation of higher education had been split between two levels of authority within government. The level of government funds available to the two sectors had always been determined by cabinet through its traditional budget exercises, but during most of the 1960s and early 1970s the sectors were usually given what the sectors said they needed. As the importance of higher education began to diminish in political terms, the relationship between what the sectors wanted and what the government thought was appropriate became far less direct. No longer the priority it once was, the locus of control for determining the level of financial support for higher education gradually moved away from the sectors and into the much more complex and politicized arenas associated with macro-level policy areas competing for scarce public resources. While the institutions and relevant interest groups seemed to have limited influence over the level of government support, the sector continued to be the focal point for discussions of regulation and resource allocation.

The work of Jones and Young (2004), Young (2003), and Dill (1997a and 1997b) are the most directly relevant observations in the literature that attempt to explain why changes in government policy and policy-making have led to a change in the way the sector organizes its government relations activities. This changing context has resulted in colleges and universities placing greater emphasis on government relations as a necessary

component of sectoral and individual institutional behaviour. Young (2002) summarizes her thesis by saying:

Ontario provides a case study in marketization that demonstrates its use as a conceptual tool in elucidating the ways in which governments employ market mechanisms to assist it in the allocation of resources without forfeiting complete control over university systems. Despite its overuse or excessively liberal application, the notion of marketization permits an understanding of recent university finance policy change in Ontario not afforded by the notion of privatization. With this understanding, it is possible to see recent policy changes as embodying a compromise between academic autonomy and the total forfeiture of the power of the state in an atmosphere of general distrust of government control over western socio-economic life. (Young, 2002, p. 99)

This helps to explain why government relations has become so necessary and prevalent in post-secondary education policy-making in Ontario. Clearly if the government is creating a context within which individual colleges and universities must “compete” for funding and approvals, then institutions will attempt to respond accordingly.

### **3.4 Research Questions**

The fundamental purpose of this research is to examine the nature of government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario and to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between individual institutions and sector associations with government. Further, this study will inform those in leadership positions in the sector of the activities and best practices of other individual institutions and the sector as a whole.

The study is designed to answer the following overarching questions:

1. How do colleges, universities, government officials (in post-secondary education) and those who can speak about sector associations define and understand government relations?
2. How are colleges and universities organized to conduct government relations? Who is responsible for the function and what activities and behaviours do they include in the execution and implementation of government relations? What works, what does not?
3. In what ways do leaders of colleges and universities utilize their provincial advocacy associations? How does the leadership of colleges and universities perceive the role and usefulness of provincial advocacy associations? How do government officials perceive the efforts of these associations?

### **3.5 Research Design**

This study explored government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, by studying how colleges and universities in Ontario organize and conduct government relations, both within their own institutions and on a sector-wide basis.

Colleges and universities, while both focused on higher education, are very different types of institutions. Colleges in Ontario are agencies of the Crown and have modest autonomy (compared to universities). Universities in Ontario are not-for-profit private corporations that enjoy considerable autonomy. Including both colleges and

universities in this study would allow for a comparative analysis of government relations in these two components of the Ontario system.

Given that there is some literature available regarding this topic in the United States and the United Kingdom, the study could have been enlarged to collect and include comparative data from those jurisdictions. This was neither appropriate nor feasible. Although the structure of government in Canada is similar to the United States, Canada is a parliamentary democracy and the United States is a republic. Both Canada and the United States have federal systems whose constitutions divide the responsibility for governance between a federal and provincial or state level. On the face of it, this would make for a good comparison between the two systems. Both have constitutions that similarly divide up jurisdictional responsibility for higher education and research systems, and given that there are two levels of government, both countries have multi-lateral government relations. There are, however, significant differences between Canada's parliamentary system and that of the American presidential system, and these make direct comparison less useful.

In terms of including the United Kingdom in this study, there are also weaknesses. Although Canada's own parliamentary system of government was based on the British system, the United Kingdom has a unitary government structure that does not further divide the responsibilities of government between federal and provincial jurisdictions. So although the United States and the United Kingdom have systems of government similar to Canada, the differences are sufficiently material as to exclude them from this study. Focusing on a single system in detail allows for a detailed analysis of the system in a way that would be lost when the emphasis shifts to a comparative

analysis. Further, focus on the provincial level for analysis is the appropriate level of analysis in Canada and because post-secondary education is the responsibility of the provinces.

The design chosen for this study is qualitative. Locke writes that “the working assumption is that people make sense out of their experiences and in doing so create their own reality (in Bussey, 2001, p. 14). In qualitative research, understanding both the content and construction of such multiple and contingent realities are regarded as central to answering the question, “What’s going on here?” This study seeks to answer this question. An Interview Guide was designed by the author and reviewed by an expert reference group consisting of two public opinion and market researchers who are industry leaders in Canada. After the guide was reviewed, it was pilot tested with two government relations professionals who did not participate in any other aspects of this study. They were sent a copy of the interview guide and asked to provide feedback about the clarity and relevance of the questions, and then the questions were refined based on this feedback. The interview guide was used to engage selected key informants in a conversation about their perceptions and experiences in the post-secondary education system in Ontario. It consisted of a series of questions that framed the discussion with all participants, but allowed for digressions and discussion, and allowed the participants to add to the conversation. Creating such an opportunity allowed for a more open discussion. This gave respondents the comfort they needed, so that they would be honest and forthcoming about what they and their organizations were doing in government relations. This would not have been the case if participants were simply sent a survey to

fill out, or if the researcher asked questions without encouraging a discussion (Gay and Airasian, 2002).

### **3.6 Site and Participant Selection and Rationale**

Data for this study was obtained from interviews with key personnel in the college and university sector in Ontario. The interviews included college and university presidents, along with government officials (past and present), both elected and non-elected, and individuals who could speak about sector associations. In all, 27 interviews were conducted.

The choice of institutions included in this study was based on two major factors – location and size. Every effort was made to ensure that respondents represented colleges and universities that were both urban and rural, northern and southern, large, medium and small. It was very important to ensure that smaller cities and rural regions of the province were included as well as the larger urban centres in order to reflect an important difference between the urban and rural context. For example, in a smaller rural college, there may be one MP, one MPP and one mayor that represents the constituency that includes that college or university, but in an urban setting, there may well be a number of campuses that have a number of MPs, MPPs, mayors, and councilors. Further, a more isolated community, with a less diverse economy and with only one college or university, presents a very different environment than a large urban centre where the economy is more diversified, and there exists numerous post-secondary institutions. Cities were selected to represent all regions and relevant location factors in Ontario, and both the college and university from these cities were included in this study. This allowed for

some comparative analysis and controls for location and size. In addition, care was taken to ensure that the sample of college and university presidents included presidents who were long-serving as well as presidents who were newer to the position. This would ensure that there were individuals who were in the position long enough to have some historical context, as well as ensuring that those newer to the position, who might have a different approach, were also included. The concern was that if the sample was not representative of both perspectives, it would be a potential methodological weakness. Where individuals or institutions declined to participate, substitutions were made by selecting a college or university that was similar in size and geographic location.

In addition to colleges and university presidents, individuals who could speak about the sector associations were also invited to participate. These included Colleges Ontario (CO), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC), the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). As already noted, these advocacy associations were established with government relations as one of their main functions, and there is a significant amount of activity conducted by these associations at the sector-wide level. The assumption was that informed perspectives about these advocacy associations would provide an important perspective on government relations in the sector as a whole, but also that they could contribute to our understanding the work of individual institutions.

This study also included government officials, past and present, as part of the list of those that were invited to participate in the meetings. The first tranche of invitations included one current and one former minister, deputy minister and assistant deputy minister responsible for the post-secondary file at the provincial level in Ontario.

A convenient (stratified) non-random sample of presidents of ten colleges and ten universities was created. A letter of request (Appendix D) was mailed by Canada Post to each of the presidents as part of this sample list on December 1, 2007 outlining the details of the study, ethical review approvals and requesting an interview. Most leaders responded during the period from December 5, 2007 to January 12, 2008. Of the 26 requests for meetings, five responses were received in writing via Canada Post, 15 were received via email and three via phone. In three cases, the author had to follow-up with a phone call, as per the ethical review protocol, to ascertain whether the invitee would agree to participate. A script for follow-up phone calls was created for just such circumstances, and used accordingly (Appendix F, I, L, O).

In cases where the request was met favourably, an interview was immediately scheduled at a time and place convenient for both the interviewer and interviewee. In one instance the request was delegated to a subordinate. In this case, the author followed-up with the person to whom he was directed and an interview was immediately scheduled, again, at a time convenient for both the interviewer and interviewee. In cases where the request was not met favourably, then a substitute from another institution that had not yet been included in the original list of invitees, was invited to participate.

All interviews occurred between January 5, 2008 and May 5, 2008. Four of the meetings were conducted by telephone and all others in person. With only one exception, all those interviewed allowed the author to use a recorder in order to assist with accuracy and note-taking. The interviews were approximately one to one hour and 30 minutes in length. Digital recordings were used to ensure the accuracy of the interview notes and then stored on CDs and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the author's home office. All

of the letters of consent were either mailed to the researcher in advanced or provided at the time the meeting was scheduled.

### **3.7 Data Collection and Recording**

Ten college presidents were asked and all ten agreed to participate. Eight of these meetings were done in person and two were conducted via telephone. Ten respondents is a very robust sample of the total population of 24 colleges. With two exceptions, all of these meetings took one hour to complete and consisted of a thorough discussion of the interview questions. In two cases, the meetings went approximately one and one half hours. All of the respondents allowed the author to record the interview session so as to assist with note taking. In all cases, the respondents spoke about issues after the recorded portion of the interview was over. This occurred because even though the interview had ended, usually the respondent wished to continue talking or wanted to add something further to their responses. The respondents were quite forthcoming and in almost all cases, were openly grateful for the opportunity to discuss this issue.

Twelve university presidents were asked to participate in this study and eight agreed to do so. Those university presidents who declined to participate cited “time constraints” as their reason for not participating. The eight meetings were completed in the last week of April and the first week of May, 2008. Eight is a very robust sample of the total population of 19 institutions and provides this study with a strong base upon which to draw conclusions. Not unlike the college interviews, these interviews took between one and one and one half hours each to complete, and virtually all respondents indicated that they very much anticipated seeing a copy of the findings of the study. Six

of the university presidents made an unsolicited offer to discuss the findings at the appropriate time, and were grateful for the opportunity to talk about this subject. Four university presidents asked if they could call to discuss government relations matters and they considered potentially hiring a government relations professional. Two of the meetings with university presidents were conducted in person and the other six were conducted via telephone.

Four individuals who could speak about the sector associations were approached to participate, and those who could speak about ACCC and AUCC declined suggesting that they did not believe participating in the study was appropriate given that the sector associations engaged the federal government only and do not participate in the Ontario political system. Because these sector associations did not lobby the provincial government in Ontario, and given the focus of this research was government relations in Ontario, they chose not to participate. Those who were approached to speak about CO and COU were very enthusiastic about participating, and did so at length. In both cases, these individuals offered to provide any materials or further information as requested, and were both consulted on an ongoing basis as the project proceeded. Each of these interviews took close to one and one half hours to complete. Both individuals went to great lengths to provide thoughtful answers and to clarify their points, and were very forthcoming with their responses. They both expressed great interest in the findings.

The intent of the study was to include the perspectives of both elected and non-elected senior government officials, current (at the time of writing) and former occupants of these positions. A number of senior government officials were approached about participating. Some cited “time constraints” as the reason for declining the request. The

elected individuals who were invited to take part in this study included members of the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party.

Included in this study are interviews with three former ministers (one from each political party, as above), one former deputy minister, two assistant deputy ministers and one director.

All of the government officials, both elected and non-elected, who agreed to participate were very forthcoming, and gave much more time and effort than was expected. Each of these interviews took between one and one and one half hours to complete. Only one of these was conducted by phone, all the others were in person.

### **3.8 Interview Guide**

A short, open-ended set of questions (Appendix A, B, C) that form the interview guide were designed for this study. My experience as a former government official and as a lobbyist in the government relations sector afforded a good sense of the issues and types of questions that ought to be pursued. The questions were intended to encourage the respondents to “get talking”. As Creswell (2005) and Merriam (1998) have suggested, the use of such instruments assist the researcher in gaining depth of understanding and rich information. The intention of this approach was to create a forum where the respondents would go beyond the questions and engage in a discussion, thereby not limiting their responses to the parameters of the questions.

To achieve triangulation, three distinct groups of individuals were included in this study to ensure that these very different, but equally important perspectives were included in the research. Gay and Airasian (2000) state that triangulation is “a form of

cross validation that seeks regularities in the data by comparing different participants” to identify recurring results (p. 252). Included in the study were college and university presidents, government officials (Minister, Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister and Director) and those who could speak about the sector associations. As a result, the survey instrument used with each group is slightly different. The reason for this is quite straightforward; the survey does attempt to capture all of the participants’ understanding and definition of government relations, but obviously colleges, universities and their sector associations actually conduct government relations. Conversely, government officials are on the receiving end of the government relations efforts of colleges, universities and their sector associations, and are decision makers, not those that seek to influence the decision. So where the survey for college and university presidents asks “how do you conduct government relations?” the survey for the government officials would not have such a question. The actual survey documents are included in Appendix A, B, and C. The questions for college and university presidents are identical, and the surveys for government officials are very similar, with the exception that they are focused on ascertaining the respondent’s impression of effectiveness of the efforts of colleges, universities and associations.

Establishing validity and reliability was also of paramount interest in this study, and as Merriam notes, this can be achieved “through careful attention of the study’s conceptualization and the way in which data were collected, analyzed and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented” (Merriam, 1998, p. 200) In order to achieve internal validity to ensure that the findings were consistent with reality and capture what was occurring in the policy network, peer examination was used. (Merriam

1998) That is, two colleagues who are government relations professionals and familiar with the sector were asked to make comment on the findings as they emerged. Neither of these two individuals was working in the sector during the time the research was being conducted, and neither participated in the study as respondents. And to ensure confidentiality, the identities of the respondents were not shared with these two individuals.

The theoretical framework guiding this study and the questions in the interview guide are based on the hollow-core theory of the pluralist model. Based on this theory, the questions were designed to determine whether in this policy community, the associations that purport to represent individual institutions adequately represent those interests of the individual institutions and if not, whether they conduct activities outside the efforts of member associations.

The research questions were aimed at determining the utility of the pluralist framework of analysis in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. In particular, the questions help to frame a discussion that assisted in determining if the hollow core theory is the best descriptor of how interest groups behave in this sector. The questions are also grounded in the literature.

### **3.8.1 Question #1**

All groups were asked the same first question related to ascertaining their understanding of the definition of government relations. This also included a request for examples of the kinds of activities and tactics that would be included in their definition. The primary purpose of this question was to determine if the various groups of

respondents consider or understand government relations in the same way. If there was a differing opinion of what government relations is, it may explain why behaviours or tactic choices are different. The idea behind asking for a definition is to determine what respondents include and do not include. This would shed some light on whether they view the activity as a broad one or narrow. Did respondents see this as an activity conducted with all levels of government or simply the provincial government? Did respondents see government relations as simply “lobbying” or did it include a broader list of tactics? By asking not only those who conduct government relations – the college and university presidents and those who could speak about the sector associations, but also those on the receiving end – those in government, we were likely to get both perspectives on the function and then be able to compare and contrast these perceptions. This allowed me to determine whether the characterization of the leadership in post-secondary education as being quite unsophisticated at government relations was accurate or not. And further, this allowed for a comparison between what the literature says about government relations, what it includes as “best practices”, and what was reported by participants in this study.

### **3.8.2 Question #2**

The second question for the college and university and association sectors focused on where the responsibility for government relations lies within the organization and how the organization is structured to conduct government relations. The notion was that choices in this regard would reveal either inherent biases about the definition of government relations or may simply be a function of the resources available. The

literature tells us that the president has historically been the person who conducts government relations in the post-secondary sector, and this question allowed me to determine if this was accurate. Further, where there are others who advise, coordinate or assist with government relations, understanding who they are and how they fit in with the organizational structure was useful and informative. And to the extent that were additional persons participating in the government relations functions, who are they and what implications, if any, were there for the potential success of the activity and for public policy? Did only the larger colleges and universities have the resources to be able to afford such a function?

### **3.8.3 Question #3**

The third question revolved around determining what is the thrust or main focus of a government relations effort for an institution or sector. Respondents were prompted with the following options; finance and funding, policy, governance reform, program approvals, business development (contract training, projects, etc.) and system-wide reforms. Respondents were also able to suggest other reasons if the above did not adequately represent the thrust of their efforts. The only literature that pertains to this topic outlines how government relations in the post-secondary sector in the United States is focused primarily on increasing financial returns for the college. In particular, in the United States, post-secondary institutions have hired lobbyists, both as employees and as consultants to pursue earmark funding. While this study does identify that the differences in the political systems in Canada and the United States are sufficiently significant that a direct comparison is not appropriate, we can still benefit from knowing the extent to

which finance and funding is the main focus of government relations efforts in Ontario. Are there any differences between institutions in this regard? Asking this question to the government officials as well helped to validate what I heard from the college and university presidents, and consider if there were any differences between what the individual institutions were asking for and what the sector associations are pursuing.

#### **3.8.4 Question #4**

In question number four, respondents were asked to share their definition of success for government relations. In this regard, it was interesting to determine first, how well goals and objectives were enumerated, and second, the extent to which government relations efforts were measured and benchmarked. The connection between goal identification, behaviour and tactic and measurement ought to be a fascinating look into the way key individuals and institutions consider their government relations efforts. The extent to which individual institutions plan, monitor and measure their activities will help to determine how “sophisticated” their government relations efforts are. Further, in order to monitor and measure, one requires a detailed plan with clear goals and objectives. To what extent did individual institutions or sector associations have such detailed plans? Much of the “how-to” literature talks about the value of establishing clear and precise goals and objectives and the value of measuring against the achievement of such goals and objectives. The purpose of this question was to get a better sense for the way in which these activities were monitored and measured.

### 3.8.5 Question #5

Question number five asks respondents to reflect on whether their government relations efforts have changed over time. This is important to assist in developing the understanding of how the key players in the sector viewed the circumstances in the post-secondary education sector and how they responded in terms of their government relations efforts. The connection between how they saw the environment and how they adjusted behaviours and tactics yielded considerable insight into behaviour in the sector. Much of the literature discusses how interests and interest groups react to one another and their changing context. It was useful to determine the extent to which respondents perceive their context to have changed, and how they chose to adjust according to their understanding of the contextual change.

### 3.8.6 Question #6

Question six asked respondents to describe the lessons they have learned from their government relations efforts. The question was designed to focus on the connection that participants drew between behaviour, tactic and outcome. The responses informed this study as to the extent to which the advice and best practices outlined in the “how-to” books is followed or practiced by individual institutions and sector associations. Also, being able to compare what those who lobby think compared to those who are lobbied is valuable in completing an in-depth understanding of government relations in the post-secondary sector.

### **3.8.7 Question #7**

Question number seven asked respondents to consider what, if any, differences exist between the college and university sectors as they relate to government relations. Again, this was an opportunity to determine their sense for how well the other institutions did in regards to government relations, and to determine whether their understanding and assumptions about what others were doing is consistent with reality.

### **3.8.8 Question #8**

Question number eight was designed to uncover attitudes held by presidents of colleges and universities about the effectiveness of the industry associations. This assisted in determining what presidents thought the sector groups were doing and should be doing, but also whether presidents believed that they were achieving their goals. And further, if there are reasons for a disconnect, it provided some insight into why the presidents thought that they did not achieve their goals, and what they should be doing differently.

### **3.8.9 Question #9**

Question number nine asked respondents to consider whether the efforts of sector associations have changed over time. This provided an opportunity to again determine the sense presidents had for the context and the bigger picture, and how the sector did or did not respond.

The survey instrument for government officials was similar, but did contain subtle, but important differences compared to the instrument used for the colleges and

universities. In question two, instead of being asked what was the thrust of their government relations plan?, government officials are asked to make comment on how successful colleges and universities have been at influencing government policy in the same areas. Officials were comfortable enough to talk about their assessment of behaviour and tactics in the aggregate, and others may have considered using examples to highlight extraordinary examples of success. In either case, this insight was extremely valuable to the understanding of government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

After each interview, the researcher listened to the recording, ensured the accuracy of the meeting's notes, and conducted a thematic analysis by creating charts of the responses. This analysis involved four distinct phases. First, the researcher identified key words and phrases used in the responses and identified and recorded their use. Second, every attempt was made, both during the meeting and while listening to the recordings, to capture the way in which questions were answered, examples given, and discussions progressed. This too was captured in the charts. Third, after creating charts with all of the key words, phrases and discussion from the respondents, the researcher compared the responses from college and university presidents, government officials and those who could speak about sector associations, identifying themes, differences and similarities. The final part of this approach was to consider what was said in the context of the available literature.

### **3.10 Limitations of the Methodology**

The qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because such an approach is suitable when the purpose of a study is to better understand any phenomenon and to gain more in depth information about something, such as this, that may be difficult to measure in a qualitative manner (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Patton, 1990).

One of the challenges inherent in this type of project is the extent to which key informants would be forthcoming and honest about their activities. College and university presidents may perceive that they would be divulging key information about internal strategies to their “competitors”. The best way to mitigate this is to design the questions and prompts in such a manner that they are sufficiently generic (Gray and Guppy, 2003). In so doing, the key informants are not asked to speak in detail about specific tactics or efforts unless they are so inclined. And by also guaranteeing anonymity, this created an environment where clearly the participants felt comfortable, as they not only responded fully to each and every question, they also provided the type of detail that demonstrates authenticity. That, coupled with the fact that so many of the responses were consistent across groups of respondents, suggests that this was indeed not an issue.

Qualitative research is a completely acceptable approach to inquiry (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 1990). The qualitative approach embodied in this project enabled the researcher to gain more insights by allowing informants to shape their responses. The one-on-one meetings are a better format for allowing individual participants to reveal their opinions and perceptions about the topic of study. Every effort has been made in

the design of the questions to shape the interview discussion so as to minimize any bias the interviewer may have towards a particular viewpoint or conclusion.

One of the potential difficulties may be with the professional role of the researcher himself. I am an active participant and member of the government relations effort in the post-secondary sector, and as such, informants might not be comfortable with sharing too much “intelligence” for fear that their competitive advantages may be revealed. As well, I bring certain assumptions about the behaviour of individuals, institutions and the sector associations to the study. To ensure that none of the researcher’s potential biases negatively affected the interview guide, an advisory group made up of leading professionals in the survey research sector, was consulted when designing the survey instrument. Further, the use of the expert panel helped to ensure that the questions were phrased in such a way as to ensure they were effective in addressing the questions that guide this study. The questions were also pilot tested to ensure the utility of the interview guide. Both these measures helped to ensure content validity of the interview guides. Great attention was also paid to the issue of construct validity, which is a common criticism aimed at researcher bias or subjectivity. Yin (2003) suggests a number of measures be incorporated to minimize the risk of research bias. First, this study used multiple sources of data that allowed the researcher to confirm the findings, thereby strengthening the reliability as well as the internal validity of the study. Second, Yin argues that having a draft of the analysis reviewed by a key informant would also minimize issues related to construct validity. Although the findings were not formally shared with individuals who participated as respondents in this study, three of the members of the dissertation panel are key players in government, the college

sector and the university sector. Their ability to review the methodology of the study and its findings at every stage further minimized researcher bias. (Yin, 2003)

One possible advantage of my role in the sector was that, since I played a senior role in government and now in government relations, I was well-known to the informants and was able to provide a level of comfort to ensure a “safe” environment, along with written commitments regarding the notes of the meetings.

Because government relations can and does occur at all levels in an organization, choosing to interview only the presidents and the key individual responsible for government relations may be perceived to be narrow or limited in scope. The choice of president and “senior government relations official” as key informants in each institution was a reasonable choice for two reasons. First, the president and senior government relations official is likely to adequately understand and represent the activity that is occurring at all relevant levels within the institution. This is particularly true when correspondence prior to the interview (Appendix D) encouraged them to consider these issues. Second, as much of the literature suggests, government relations at the post-secondary sector occurs at the highest levels, specifically, involving the Office of the President and the president or senior government relations official themselves (Sirluck, 1977). As the data showed, it is not unusual in the university sector for Deans of various schools such as medicine, engineering, law or education to engage in lobby efforts on behalf of their own school, outside of the overall efforts of the university as a whole. Through the interviews it became evident that in the current environment, university presidents reported that they are aware of the activities and are often part of the planning

of such efforts, but feel that the Dean of a particular school may be the best proponent.

One university president said:

In the end, universities are made up of different schools. Often we put the Dean of the particular school forward as the face of a pitch for a funding for program approvals or capital. We do this as part of our strategy. They are very passionate and often compelling advocates for their schools. These are leaders in their own right, and we can capitalize on this. The key is to ensure that they are working with you and not going off on their own. Given how sensitive and complicated the environment is, I find now, more than ever, Deans are working within a framework and not competing with the other schools and doing end-runs around the president.

Another university president said:

One of the jobs I did before becoming president is Dean of a particular school at the university. And when I was Dean I knew that although there were some competitiveness issues within the university, when we looked outward we had to have one face and one ask. So when the president decided my school would be a focus of our government relations efforts, I was the face, but the president was not far behind. It was good experience for me and it seemed to work.

As with any decision about the scope of a project and methodology, decisions have to be made about what is reasonable to include and what is not. This study is no exception. Tough decisions were made about the number of participants and what level they should represent within the organizations. As the results were analyzed it became

evident that the president is indeed the appropriate person to include in this study and the focus on these respondents completely suitable.

Some might argue that the scope of the study should have been expanded to include other provinces within Canada in the spirit of completeness and for comparison purposes. Given that there is very little literature on this subject and that provinces are considered the appropriate systems of study or units of analysis, a first examination of government relations in Ontario is a reasonable limitation to make (Jones, 1993).

Given the objectives of this study, the decision was made not to interview other possible members of the policy community such as student leaders and union heads. Even though this may be perceived as a limitation, it is my experience that student groups and unions do not conduct government relations with individual institutions and associations. While they are legitimate players in the policy arena, a first review of the sector did not require their inclusion. Further research ought to expand this scope and this will be discussed in Chapter Five.

### **3.11 Ethical Issues and Considerations**

Throughout the design and conduct of this study, ethical issues and the rights of participants were of paramount importance. In addition to the types of consultations with experts in survey research mentioned above, and working under the supervision of a Faculty Thesis Supervisor, the researcher completed the ethical review process of the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, as well as obtaining approval of the Ethical Review Board of the University of Toronto prior to embarking on this research. The Ethics Review

Board approved the ethical protocols (Protocol Reference #21429) on December 20, 2007 and the researcher began mailing requests for participation in the surveys.

A letter was sent to all potential participants describing the parameters of the study and participation (Appendix D, G, J, M). They were informed that participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. After individuals agreed to participate they were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix E, H, K, N). One college president asked that the study undergo the ethical review process of that college prior to their participation. The researcher requested an expedited process that would consist of the submission of the University of Toronto ethical review protocol documents and consent letter as a substitute for providing the college with new documentation. The Chair of the committee consented to such an expedited process, the documents were submitted and approval for the president to proceed with participating was granted.

As part of this qualitative interview guide, paramount in the design was the participant's ability to be comfortable knowing that their comments as part of the process would be anonymous. In order to get respondents to talk openly, they were promised that there would be no attribution of any comments. So such guarantees were built into the process and commitments were given not to ever quote or present material in such a way as to make identification possible. Only the researcher and the Thesis Supervisor were privy to the data collected, and consistent with the conditions of the Ethical Review Board's consent, the data disguised and kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure part of the researcher's home office. All data and thesis work that are maintained electronically are protected by a firewall.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology used in this study. First, this chapter provided an overview of post-secondary education in Ontario, and a discussion of the organization of the sector. Second, the chapter provided a review of the research questions and research design, a discussion of the site and participant selection and rationale. Third, the data collection and recording, the interview guide, data analysis and limitations of the methodology were discussed. And finally, the chapter included a discussion of the potential limitations of the methodology and the ethical issues and considerations. The next chapter will present the research findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Research Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the data that was collected for the study. The first section of this chapter provides a review of what the respondents reported, and then considers these findings in the overall context of the research questions guiding this study.

As described in Chapter Three, the fundamental purpose of this study is to examine the nature of government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario and to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between individual institutions and sector associations with government.

The study was designed to answer the following overarching questions: How do colleges and universities perceive and understand government relations and how do they conduct government relations? How do colleges and universities in Ontario organize themselves to conduct government relations? In order to answer these questions, this study used a series of more specific questions that guided the interview and data collection. They are listed below.

1. How do colleges, universities, government officials (in post-secondary education) and those that can speak about sector associations define and understand government relations?
2. Who is responsible for the function and what activities and behaviours do they include in the execution and implementation of government relations? What works, what does not?

3. In what ways do colleges and universities utilize their provincial advocacy associations? How do colleges and universities perceive the role and usefulness of provincial advocacy associations? How do government officials perceive the efforts of these associations?

#### **4.2 Presentation of Data and Review of Responses**

This section will present the data by respondent groups and then compare and contrast the responses from participants in different groups. First, the responses from college and university presidents will be presented, followed by the responses from the government officials and those that can speak about sector associations. After presenting the findings, some analysis will be offered.

#### **4.3 Definition of Government Relations**

Question 1 asked: *How do you define government relations? What are some examples of the activities and tactics you would include in your definition of government relations?* In addition, there were two other parts to Question 1. Participants were asked “what percentage of their time do they spend on government relations?” as well as whether or not they purchase tickets to political fundraisers.

In defining government relations, all college and university presidents provided a virtually identical set of responses. In fact, there were no differences in the responses between the college presidents, the university presidents, government officials and those that can speak about sector associations. All respondents indicated that the most

important component of government relations is “relationships” and “partnerships” with government. Most respondents indicated that the definition is broad and that it can encompass many things, but nevertheless attempted to provide a succinct version in order to answer the question. Some used the phrase “broad category” or “massive enterprise” and others “vague” to describe the scope of the concept. Virtually all respondents tried to convey the notion of a relationship being a “two-way street” and used phrases such as “interaction”, “collaborative approach”, “two-way communication”, “any dealings with government”, “a series of things” or a “mechanism” to articulate their meaning.

Some suggested that government relations was “advocacy” or “meetings with government officials” or “how institutions and government interact” and the clear intention of their definition was to encapsulate the notion that organizations engage in government relations in order to convince the government to do or not do something. Only a few respondents used the word “lobbying” as part of their definition, whereas those who did mention it, seemed to consider it more of a tactic than part of the definition of government relations. In a number of instances where the words “lobbying” and “advocacy” were used interchangeably by respondents, the interviewer asked if there was a difference between the meaning of the two words. In only a few cases was the respondent adamant about there being a real difference. In such cases these respondents suggested that “advocacy” was essentially “the sharing of information or data” and “lobbying” was a tactic that was a more aggressive attempt to convince or persuade government that included others things beyond “information” or “data”. Government relations was defined in such a way to mean that it was a purposeful activity, one that was deliberate and intentional, and whose outcomes were important to the organization.

A number of respondents argued that the best way to conduct government relations is to “make your needs and aspirations known to government” so that governments will understand your goals and objectives and hopefully be a part of realizing them. The respondent who was the most adamant about this approach to government relations suggested “how can government help you if they don’t know what you want and what the community wants?” The inference is that the better an organization can articulate its needs and aspirations, the better the business case for such a project, and the more that project is supported by the larger community or serves a “public interest”, then the more likely government would support it when the time came to provide or award contracts or support. One college president said:

I like to get our government officials on campus. I want them to be part of the life of the college. They have to feel like they belong here, that we are *their* college. If they feel like they own us, then they will take a greater interest and advocate on our behalf. We need them to be our champion at Queen’s Park. What’s better than having an elected official trying to get the government to do more for you? With that kind of help, we can’t help but succeed.

The majority of respondents also included the notion of trying to identify the needs of government as part of their definition of government relations. That is to say, they argued that the best way to engage in government relations is to spend time understanding the needs and priorities of government and then work to align your own organization’s abilities or programs with those needs and priorities. Some argued that the real genius in government relations is to anticipate the needs of government and to adapt

accordingly. In such cases, respondents argued that organizations should not simply “ask for money” but rather make their capacity to deliver “solutions” to government priorities known.

Participants were also asked “what tactics would you include in your definition?” Only one third of respondents provided detailed answers to this part of the question even when prompted. Respondents did not provide any sense as to why they found this part of the question difficult, or why they chose not to answer it; they simply focused on broader issues in the first part of the question and did little to respond directly to the second part of the question.

Those that did attempt to answer this part of the question indicated that “communications” and “information sharing” are key tactics in government relations and used examples to illustrate their response. One college president said:

I try to call the MPP’s office at least once every ten days or so, sometimes to share information, other times to seek their advice. Often I just call for any old excuse, simply to stay in touch and so they don’t forget us. This way I get to know them and they get to know me, and they can’t say I only call when I want something. Besides, I always learn things about the people involved in issues or about the issues themselves. This helps inform my decision-making. I figure I need their information as much as they need mine.

A university president who raised the idea of information sharing reported:

I often send information to the MPP so that s/he keeps well informed of our issues. I will write him and her a note to share my thoughts on the

federal budget, on issues that are before the media, or even share academic research with him and her on issues that I think s/he should be aware of. What this does do is keep her and him thinking and helps inform his and her deliberations. I am not just the president of a university, but I am an informed member of the community and s/he should know what I think about things.

Another university president indicated that the idea of “communications” and “information sharing” was not only an end in itself, but also a means to an end. S/he cited the following example as part of his/her answer to the second half of the question:

I don't simply communicate or share information because it is good to do so. I do it because along the way, we are establishing and nourishing a relationship. There was a case in our community where a particularly unpleasant incident occurred on our campus. I was able to share information about the incident so that there was no surprise for the MPP. When the incident made the papers, the MPP had my notes and suggested remarks. They knew as much as we did about what happened and were able to answer media questions and constituent concerns. In fact, as I shared information throughout the day as the incident occurred and as the authorities responded, the MPP and their office actually gave us good advice as to how to handle it and who to talk to in the media. The MPP (and their office) really appreciated being kept informed and they appreciated being able to help shape our response too. In the course of the way we handled that incident, we not only dealt with an issue intelligently, but we built trust in our relationship. There is nothing like being in a crisis to bring people together. We have continued to approach problems this way.

Another interesting point about the responses is that, although the respondents defined government relations as an activity that involved all levels of government, most used examples of their activities or tactics at the provincial level and not federal, regional, municipal levels of government. Only one college president talked about and gave examples of involvement at the federal level.

A majority of respondents think of government relations primarily as involving the provincial government, in particular MTCU. Some make reference to the municipal and federal governments, although these levels of government did not figure prominently in their activities. (This became evident because examples provided rarely used reference to municipal or federal levels of government, without being prompted). There also seemed to be a gap between what they said ought to be included, and what types of activities they were engaged in. Real life examples seemed to more limited. For example, one college president described government relations as “a multitude of behaviours and tactics wrapped up in a detailed strategy and roll-out of activities.” The president went on to say that:

Good government relations should include such things as ‘third party endorsements, letter writing campaigns, information briefs, public speaking, town halls and information sessions, mobilization of community leaders and politicians from other levels of government and finally, meetings with political staff, bureaucrats and elected officials throughout government.

Yet in the two examples provided by this same president, complex problems and ambitious goals were paired with a government relations effort that essentially involved

trying to get a meeting with the Minister of MTCU. In many of the examples provided, this gap between what was suggested should be involved in the activity and what was actually undertaken was common. Based on the interview responses, it appears that college and university presidents conceptualize government relations as something quite broad, and discuss it as such, yet do not conduct government relations in a complex or sophisticated manner.

Government officials and those that can speak of sector association provided more detail and longer answers to the question of defining government relations. A former minister defined government relations as “advocacy for your own institution and sector. Working to maintain or change policies, aimed at staff or politicians.” S/he went further to say that government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario is characterized by lobbying done by individual institutions and industry associations. S/he suggested “calling it ‘advocacy’ is like ‘pre-owned’ for used cars. They are the same thing.” A government official defined government relations by stating that:

Government relations is a process of developing relationships and connecting needs and wants of the sector, and suggested that it was also the attempt to raise the profile and influence decisions made by government. Some activities are formal – institutional activities, events, committees, and some are less formal – dinner, quasi-social events, outreach to political staff.

Another government official defined government relations as:

...the mechanism one would use, formally and informally to build a relationship with government. Because of the relationship, you can discuss issues in a safe place and you can build on the relationship to push agenda items. Government does the same thing so it can push its agenda based on that relationship.

Another government official defined government relations as:

A broad category, all about relationships – many and deep. Advocacy, sharing of information, showcasing, educating government. PSE does lots to get you to their events.

Some respondents went beyond the idea of “relationships” in their response to defining government relations:

Where an institution tries to influence the direction of public policy, whether individually or collectively. This includes directed meetings, media, aligning activities with government priorities and interests, and includes other layers beyond the senior executive.

One of the respondents who could speak about the sector associations defined government relations as “relationship building – can’t do it without a good relationship.”

This association head went on to argue that:

Understanding the government agenda and being able to mesh multiple objectives so that they are in line with their needs and priorities. Educating your own members to help them understand the 'art of the possible' because simply having logic on your side does not always work.

This person went on to say that:

Aligning objectives, building stakeholder groups that help you build clout, do things with politicians that are not necessarily strictly about your agenda, but about relationship building. Don't have to constantly hammer them on your agenda all the time. Relationship building is key.

Another person who could speak about sector associations said that government relations is:

Working with government, rather than lobbying. More government money is the objective. The members of the association are not mere supplicants. The relationship should be based on formulas, not adopting a confrontational posture.

This same person argued that:

PSE in Ontario is not a political priority for the public and political payoff is not as high for the government as with other sectors. PSE in Ontario has a weak political position but a strong policy position.

“The key to good government relations”, this same person argued, was to be “seen by the public and the government as a strategic partner.” S/he argued that the association must have a “trust” relationship and needs to be “evidence-based” to be able to make the right case to government. Further, s/he suggested that it is important to be present at fundraising events “in a responsible way” and that “care must be exercised” in this regard. Further, it is important that the bureaucrats be “briefed up” on issues in an attempt to build “mind share” with the political and bureaucratic parts of government. When prompted to define the phrase “mind share” they said that it was “getting them to think like you do, or see things the way you do. A shared understanding of an issue.” They went on further to say that “communication is important. Ideas are not self justifying. Associations must present solutions not just problems.” Clearly there are many similarities between respondents on the definition but, as noted below, the amount of time they spend on the activity differs greatly.

#### **4.4 Definition of Government Relations – Analysis**

College and university presidents shared the same definitions of government relations, basing their responses on the notion of “relationships” being at the heart of the definition and activity. What is particularly interesting is the notion that only a very few used the word “lobbying” to describe their activities, opting for “advocacy” as a descriptor of their activities. Consistent with the literature (Cook, 1998), it appears that college and university presidents that participated in this research, are uncomfortable with the idea of “lobbying” and see it more as a tactic than as part of the definition, and that there is a negative connotation to the function that makes them uncomfortable, or at the

very minimum, they are more comfortable with their activities as being described as “advocacy”.

#### **4.5 Percentage of Time Spent on Government Relations**

College presidents provided a broad range of responses regarding the percentage of their time spent on government relations. The lowest was 5% and the highest was 70%. The average of the responses was 28.5%. Three of the ten respondents were women and they reported that they spent 20%, 50% and 70% of their time doing government relations. There was no trend related to geography or size – northern and rural and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) colleges, large -medium and small reported a similar range. That is, the presidents of colleges and universities in smaller communities do not report spending more or less time on government relations than those that represent institutions in bigger communities. As well, there is no correlation between proximity to Queen’s Park and the amount of time spent on government relations. So being closer or further does not mean that a president spends any more or less time on government relations. The only difference that is apparent is that they may conduct government relations slightly differently – spending, for example, more time on the phone if they represent a college or university that is “far” away from Queen’s Park and more time in face-to-face meetings if they are within a short commute.

Respondents struggled to quantify the amount of time that they spent on the activity. The reactions of the participants suggested that the question might not have been contemplated before. Each of the respondents indicated that they have never taken the time to quantify their efforts before, and genuinely had no sense of the amount of

time they spend doing it. After considering the question for a while, many said that the amount of time spent doing government relations ebbed and flowed. Depending on the time of year, or whether they were engaged in supporting a project application, the time varied. There may be unique circumstances at each college that dictate the amount of time and effort “necessary” or the expectation of the amount of time and effort necessary. These circumstances could include everything from funding and financial pressures, capital projects, local political circumstances (i.e. some are well represented by powerful ministers (which may require more or less involvement) and others could have the opposite. One college president said: “In my job I do what I need to do, and it seems that lately I have to do a lot of government relations.”

The amount of time devoted to government relations seemed to relate to the enthusiasm that a president had for the function. Some seemed to be enamoured or had a sense of personal importance in the idea of dealing with the political people, rather than the perceived importance of the activity. One college presidents said:

Government relations is a function most naturally conducted by the president of the institution. After all, who else at the college would be appropriate for a minister to deal with?

For some it seemed to be a “sexy” or exciting activity and for others a necessary evil.

One university president reported:

Whether I like it or not, government relations is an increasingly important part of my job, just like fundraising. I don’t like having to suck-up to

politicians, or ask people for money, but we desperately need the support and money, so I do it.

So depending on how they saw the function, they did more or less of it. Some presidents, like other senior managers generally, tend to micro manage and others, are more hands-off. In some cases colleges are thinly staffed and they do not have anyone else to do government relations. It may also be true that some may not be able to accurately estimate the amount of time they spend on this activity. There is no way to determine whether those presidents that have staff spend less time on government relations personally. From the discussions, it appears that those that do have staff report are as engaged and spend about the same amount of time as others, or closer to the average amount of time as in the case of the college presidents. They may be utilizing their time more effectively by focusing on more value-added activities or may simply be involved in more activities, spreading their time over more projects because of the assistance of staff.

Clearly, the interview data show that presidents are the prime focus and primary player for government relations efforts in colleges, and virtually all of those interviewed have little to no permanent support for the function. Further, it is also evident from the interviews that college presidents say that they are spending more time on the activity than in the past. There is no obvious correlation between time spent and “success”. That is, just because a president spends a great deal of time doing it, does not mean that they are doing it right or to great affect.

College presidents reported that they spent considerably more time conducting government relations than the university presidents. When university presidents were

asked how much time they spend doing government relations, the results were very different from the college presidents. All respondents, with one exception, reported they spent between 15-20% of their time doing government relations. This is indeed very different from their counterparts in the college system. Like college presidents, university presidents struggled to quantify the amount of time, but were fairly confident when giving their answer. When the issue of the difference between the two sectors was raised, a few of the respondents suggested that perhaps the difference has something to do with the greater relative autonomy universities enjoy compared to the colleges. One university president said that: “government relations is a necessary evil. But I guess if we are going to get public funding we are going to have to engage in trying to convince the government to give us more.”

Alternatively, some college and university presidents suggested that the strength of the political position of the university and the university’s ability to exert influence on government officials may account for this difference. The college presidents suggested that the university presidents spend less time on government relations because they do not have to – that the system is predisposed to favour the university sector and as such, is better funded and better positioned to succeed in achieving their aspirations. Many university presidents suggested that they had no idea why there was any noticeable difference in responses and only “guessed” that the difference might be related to the status of the colleges as crown agencies. The idea being, if the university sector has a greater capacity to influence government, then they need to spend less time on government relations. Almost all the college presidents believe the university has an advantage over the college in government relations, and fundraising in general. The

college presidents participating in this study spend more time on average on government relations than university presidents. What is also true is that, whether it is the college or university sector, presidents spend a considerable amount of their time doing government relations.

Those that can speak of sector associations were not asked how much time they spent on government relations, but they were presented with the findings. In each instance, these individuals indicated that the individual institutional president would be best positioned to determine what effort and resources were needed to provide an effective government relations effort for the particular institution and its own context and circumstances. These individuals suggested that it is not the amount of time that matters, although it does have some relevance, but rather how strategic and effective government relations efforts are that should matter most. Each suggested that work through the association was the most effective approach, and that those who operate “outside” the association, diffuse the efforts and the impact that the association can have. Both individuals said that “singing from the same song book” was the most effective way to influence government and avoid “divide and conquer politics.” One reported that the sector association had met with a political staffer in the Minister’s office at MTCU and presented a position on behalf of the association. After some time had passed, the association followed-up with the same political staffer to inquire why more progress on the issue had not been made. The political staffer indicated that a number of presidents had either called, or suggested when they were consulted that the presidents are divided over the issue. As a result, the political staffer said “it is hard enough to convince the Minister to take a decision when the sector is united, but close to impossible to do so

when they are not all on the same page.” Both individuals indicated that it is not simply a function of the credibility of the association that is at stake in building a good working relationship with government, but also the capacity of the association to affect change with government and achieve their government relations goals. When I prompted both individuals about the fact that the two associations have never worked together in trying to influence government, they both responded that the association heads now meet somewhat regularly and joint efforts are not inconceivable.

#### **4.6 Percentage of Time Spent on Government Relations – Analysis**

The literature tells us that college and university presidents are the prime actor in government relations, and this is consistent with the interview data collected for this research. Clearly college and university presidents are the main players and devote a considerable amount of their time to the function. Participants clearly had not thought about the amount of time that they spent on the function. And they also report that they are spending more time on the function than in the past, citing the increased scarcity of resources in government, resulting increasingly competitive efforts on behalf of other institutions and associations, and the increased complexity and politicization of government. As one college president said:

It is not simply who has the best idea any more, or who is ‘connected’. Rather, it is about much more than that. Being clever in today’s reality means much more than that.

The literature tells us that it is an elite function, often kept secret and involving very few other people within the college or university (Brown, P., 1985; Cook, 1998; Cook and Arnold, 1996; Crawford, 1981; Mayes, 1989). Very few of those interviewed have staff supporting the function, which is also consistent with what the literature tells us.

There does not appear to be an obvious correlation between time spent on the function and “success”. That is to say, just because a president spends a great deal of time doing it, does not mean that they are doing it “right” or to great effect. In this case, practice does not necessarily make perfect, but rather, may simply perpetuate any bad habits or ineffectual behaviours and tactics. In this study, there is no inherent judgment made of whether what the time presidents report they spend is too much or too little, but rather the emphasis has been on collecting the data.

The fact that college presidents spend more time than university presidents on government relations is a fascinating finding. Why this is the case is not clear. Logic might suggest that because universities are more autonomous than colleges, they may require additional efforts to convince governments of further investments, but this, according to many of the respondents is not the case. Rather, many participants in this study have suggested that universities are better positioned to conduct government relations and as a result spend much less time doing it. There does not appear to be any discernable difference in the quality of the efforts between college and university presidents.

Alternatively, college presidents could be simply feeling the funding pinch more severely and have made a conscious attempt to try to improve their situation, and as a result, spend more time doing so. In the extreme cases where respondents in the college

sector reported that they spend 40%, 50% or 70% of their time on government relations – with no discernable difference in the way they define government relations than those that reported a lower percentage – it is almost incomprehensible that so much of a president’s time would be devoted to one function on a consistent basis.

If presidents from both colleges and universities report a similar understanding of the activity, how can there be such a significant difference in the amount of time they report they spend on the function? The answer may well rest in the differences in the mandates of colleges and universities and the president’s understanding of their role. The mandate of the colleges directly relates to serving local needs and working with the local community in partnership to deliver education and training. This outward-looking view may result in presidents spending more time working with local partners, which would include government. As one college president reported:

We chase government because we have to. Otherwise, all the money will go to universities. We have to work harder than the universities otherwise the college sector – and our students – will suffer. We have to work hard for every dollar we get, whereas the universities operate as though they are entitled to their funding – because it seems they are!

The three respondents who reported such high percentages were not from the biggest colleges, but did represent medium and small colleges in different regions of the province. There is nothing in the literature that can assist us in understanding what the connection, if any, there might be to size of the community and institution to the amount of time a president might allocate or have to allocate in order to succeed in terms of their government relations efforts. One college president reported that:

Small town presidents do not have to work as hard as big city presidents, because in the small towns these institutions are the only game in town and there are lots of opportunities for local MPs, MPPs and Mayors to take ownership of these institutions and promote them. In the big city, the college means less to the community in the overall scheme of things.

Presidents who chose to spend more time on this function may simply be responding to their own assessment of what is necessary in their own unique set of circumstances, or that of their Board. In such cases, unique circumstances may be declining enrolments, or a higher than typical reliance on “soft money” contracts for specialized programming, such as in the case of funding for aboriginal student services and programming supports.

#### **4.7 Buying Tickets to Political Fundraisers**

When college presidents were asked whether they buy tickets to political fundraisers, all ten indicated that they do. Each respondent seemed uncomfortable admitting that they do purchase tickets. This was reflected in their body language, their facial expressions and tone. One college president said that purchasing tickets and attending was “a necessary evil” and that s/he wished s/he did not have to do it, but because their competitors were doing it, s/he should too. Also too, s/he indicated that because politicians and their staff push them to buy tickets, it is very difficult to say no. S/he suggested it was “part of the game and that “it goes with the job.” Some indicated that being there is not important, but being absent is a problem. Respondents suggested that attendance at these functions not only further relationship-building, but increases the frequency of interaction, and most importantly, is about supporting the particular

politician. The notion is that the relationship building efforts would result in a mutually supportive relationship. One college president said that:

My board and my students will understand if I spend a few thousand dollars a year on tickets to political fundraisers if I am able to secure favourable decisions and millions of dollars for capital projects and programs. It is a simple case of a reasonable return on investment or cost-benefit analysis. Participating in the so called 'political' part of government is neither good nor bad, but rather simply a necessity. It's the way things get done. I have been to those functions, believe me, nothing nefarious happens. Attendance is simply about being supportive, being there, being top of mind.

When university presidents were asked whether they buy tickets to political fundraisers, more than half of respondents indicated that they do not buy tickets because it is "inappropriate". With only one exception, all respondents indicated that they do attend political fundraisers, but that others pay for the tickets (such as board members, donors or their government relations consulting firms). One university president indicated, that they bought the tickets personally, and did not use university money because they believed it would be "wrong" to do so. One respondent indicated that attending a political fundraiser under any circumstance would be inappropriate and s/he does not engage in the activity. There was definitely a palpable discomfort displayed by both college and university presidents when asked this question. This is consistent with prevailing opinions documented in the literature of lobbying as back-room, unethical activity and behaviour, as described in the American literature (Cook, 1998). When those who reported they were opposed to buying tickets to political fundraisers were probed as

to why the behaviour is “wrong” “inappropriate” or “unethical” respondents said that neither public funds nor tuition dollars should not be used for “such things.” One university president suggested that:

In a system such as ours, where ‘public’ institutions dominate the landscape of post-secondary education, a president should not have to spend public money, or the money of their students to meet with and discuss issues with a public officials, and should certainly not have to engage in ‘political activities’ to adequately represent their institution and their interests.

The former ministers included in this study suggested that “who” attended a political fundraiser was not an important factor in future dealings with government or in decisions government would make. This should be some comfort to those presidents who reported that they were concerned that if they did not attend, their absence would be noticed and affect future dealings with the Minister in question. Indeed, all of the former ministers suggested that fundraising is an “uncomfortable” part of the job and that, while they agree they could be easily accessed for a short conversation, that no real work occurred at such events and that their future dealings were not influenced in any way by support or attendance. All the ministers reported that they wish they did not have to do any fundraising, as it made some feel they were entitled to special treatment, and created a perception that they were beholden to those who were donors. One former minister suggested that perhaps political staff or “fundraisers” might be more likely to assist donors to arrange a meeting, but that actual decisions would not be influenced by

participating in fundraisers. One minister recounted an event that highlights the expectation of entitlement or special treatment:

I had a meeting scheduled with a university president to discuss future capital expansion issues on their campus. As per normal protocol, I also asked one of my political staff to attend, along with two relevant staff from the ministry who are responsible for capital financing. The university president brought his vice-president of facilities, the dean of the relevant school in question, and a member of their board of governors. This board member sat right next to me so I could see his lapel pin. It was one of the pins that the political party gives to its largest donors. Worse than that, he started his introduction to me by saying that he was a major donor to, and fundraiser for, my political party. First of all, I don't think giving money to a political party is a bad thing. But to be so gauche as to raise it with me in a meeting such as this, and to expect that it should matter, is not only wrong, but offensive. I don't make decisions based on who gives money to my campaign or the political party. I also felt very uncomfortable in front of my ministry staff. The idea that I or my decisions can be bought makes me very mad. I was angry and hated the meeting. Bringing that man actually had the opposite outcome – I was more guarded and more uncomfortable with making a favourable decision for fear that it might look like I was biased by such interventions.

Those who could speak about sector associations were not asked this question specifically, but both responded to other questions by saying that the associations do purchase tickets to political fundraisers because they see it as an important tactic in relationship building and core to the function of the association. Neither of the individuals expressed any issue with the activity, but did recognize that some of the

association members do. Both reported that buying tickets to political fundraisers were completely acceptable tactics in government relations, but cautioned that the association does not and can not attend every event, but do so when the associations feels it most appropriate and certainly for the major fundraising events for the Minister of MTCU and the annual Premier's dinner.

#### **4.8 Buying Tickets to Political Fundraisers – Analysis**

There is a stark difference between how college and university presidents responded to this question. The data are quite clear – college presidents see attendance at political fundraisers as a key part of their government relations activities and most university presidents do not. What limited literature exists on this is based on the situation in the United States and it does not make a distinction between universities and “community colleges”. Further, as discussed in Chapter Two, the system of government, funding arrangements, and political culture is quite different. As a result, the American system does not provide for an appropriate comparison. Still, the observation that American university presidents do not participate and do not like to participate has some bearing on an attitude that might be shared. Cook (1998) suggests there is a shared culture among the leadership in post-secondary education. They are academics, not necessarily fundraisers or lobbyists, so why would we expect that they would naturally be interested in, comfortable with, or good at government relations? One explanation for the difference between college and university presidents is that college presidents are more likely, because of their mandate to be working in their communities and responsive to those needs. That may lead to a similar mind-set to their understanding of the

relationship they should have with government. It may well be that the increase in the importance of political fundraising has resulted in greater pressure from fundraisers for attendance from representatives from the post-secondary education sector. The basic reasoning may be as simple as this, college presidents realize that the arena is getting more competitive, and that a more aggressive approach is necessary, and in most cases, their limited expertise in government relations, leads to more “political” behaviour. They equate attending fundraisers as “political” and as a result, they attend.

But what explains the difference between college and university presidents? The literature in the United States suggests that university presidents are more “elite” members of society and their institutions more removed from society in general. This may contribute to their discomfort with the activity and may also support their positioning of the university as “autonomous” or more removed from the political or government system. When one of the university presidents in this study was asked why there was such a demarcation between the college and university presidents, they responded by saying that university presidents had “higher morals” than college presidents who would “sell their mothers if they could make a dime.” Another university president said that “the colleges never saw a mandate they didn’t like.” It may simply be that colleges see working with government as no different as working with their community partners, and that they are desperate for money, and used to having to get greater approvals from government (as compared to the university sector). College presidents are more likely to expect to have to work with government. And if times are tougher, based on their responses as part of this study, college presidents are likely to

spend more time conducting government relations. As one college president stated “We do what we have to do to get the job done. The colleges are used to being creative.”

The responses above clearly suggest that the college and university presidents view each other as playing different roles in terms of government relations and on different playing fields.

#### **4.9 Responsibility and Structure**

Question 2 asked *Who is responsible for government relations in your organization? How is your college or university structured and organized to conduct government relations?* In response to this question, all college and university respondents indicated that the president is the main person responsible for government relations. Of the college presidents who participated in this study, only one respondent has a senior person dedicated to the function, and two had senior people who have government relations in their job description along with Advancement, Communications and Marketing, and Alumni Relations. All of the college presidents indicated that they would characterize the president doing “strategic” or “high level” government relations and others doing more “operational” or “*pro forma*” government relations. When prompted to explain the terminology, they indicated that “strategic” referred to high level dealings at the most senior levels of government and “operational” referred to ongoing committee work with counterparts, often via a committee structure established by MTCU through CO.

When prompted as to why they did not have a senior-level position supporting the function, most indicated that it was because the president performed the function. A

number of respondents indicated that they did not think they could justify the resources being spent on the activity, when there were increasing pressures on the “core businesses” of the college. One respondent indicated that the college does not have one because the local MPPs (especially if they were cabinet ministers) would be offended and angry by such a hire. This college president argued that MPPs would advocate for the college and that additional assistance would not be necessary. As the “how-to” literature documents, this however suggests a narrow and simplistic understanding of how government works. As the literature suggests, the idea of a champion within government is a good one, and would certainly help forward an issue or project.

But not all members of government, even cabinet ministers, get everything they want. Even how the project is presented to the willing champion is an important strategic consideration. Further, government relations may appear to simply be about having access to the right person and asking for something. In some cases, setting the preconditions for an “ask” is critical to success. Such things as building public support, enabling third party supporters, ensuring bureaucratic and political staff are supportive, creating a real business plan and connection between what you want, and solving a problem that the government is facing is also very challenging. The nuances associated with the execution of the function are plentiful and dynamic. All of the so called “how-to” literature suggests that government relations is more complicated than one might think. So a simplistic understanding within the sector may well explain the choices the leadership of the college and university sector have taken. One college president indicated that they would be hiring a senior person within one year because they realize they need the function and support.

In terms of college presidents, one president reported that s/he is the only person that does anything related to government relations, one president reported that they had a senior person on staff solely responsible for the function and eight of ten reported that they have hired an external lobby firm for support in the recent past. None of the college presidents reported that they had hired an “advisor”<sup>7</sup> to support their government relations decision-making. Three out of eight university presidents reported that they had government relations “advisors” on staff. Two university presidents reported having government relations offices with staff. All university presidents reported that they had hired government relations consultants in the past for various terms and projects. Only one university responded by indicating that their institution has a vice-president level position dedicated to the function. Since the time of the interviews, two additional university presidents have hired a senior person into a newly created position that will focus exclusively on government relations, and two colleges have hired a new Director-level position responsible almost exclusively for government relations.

As part of question 2, college and university presidents were also asked if they hire external lobbyists and all but two presidents indicated that they hire external lobbyists. Respondents indicated that they were primarily hiring the lobbyists to get access to government decision-makers and strategic advice. Some indicated that the lobbyists were additional hands and acted like a secretariat – arranging meetings and preparing briefing material – because they did not have staff to do so at the college or university. The vast majority of college and university respondents said that they hired lobbyists to advocate for capital projects. Most indicated they struggled with the idea of

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<sup>7</sup> The Term “advisor” refers to someone who is hired to provide advice to the president, not to actually conduct government relations or attend meetings.

having an external lobbyist versus an in-house lobbyist. One university president indicated that they chose to seek a great deal of advice in support of the university's government relations efforts, but did not want to pay for it or have someone on staff. All college and university presidents reported that, although they may have additional resources from time to time to support the government relations functions, the president is the key player.

#### **4.10 Responsibility and Structure – Analysis**

As the literature suggests, the function is indeed conducted by the president, and in most cases with little or no professionalized support. Generally speaking, the presidents of both colleges and universities reported that they believed that there is a correlation between the resources invested in government relations and the financial return to the institution. While many of the respondents report that they hire external lobbyists as necessary, very few have permanent internal resources dedicated to government relations. The fact that there are only a few colleges and universities with internal resources dedicated to government relations, with a very few noted exceptions, is a product of two factors. First, presidents at colleges and universities believe they can do it, and are doing it well. Second, in the college sector in particular, presidents reported that they could not afford to have an investment in a “non-core” business. If this is indeed the case there are two major concerns. First, that because presidents are not necessarily government relations professionals, they may not employ the most efficient and effective approaches to conducting government relations. This means a president may be spending too much of their time conducting government relations, and not only

not getting the results they should, but also they are not engaged in other important presidential duties. Second, the danger is that only the bigger colleges and universities will be able to afford internal resources dedicated to government relations and will probably exacerbate the funding inequalities that already exist, as the “rich” get “richer”. While none of the participants quantified the return on their investment in government relations, those that did make this correlation reported that they did get a return that they believe warranted the investment, and were convinced that persistent efforts in this regard would have future returns as well. One college president reported that:

This function yields financial return, but remember, often the monies we receive simply flow through to program priorities. In doing so, it frees up other monies that we would have spent on the function. The key is to reinvest those monies in government relations to continually allow us to benefit from having the function. The problem is, we are so desperate for money, when some does come free, everyone wants to get their hands on it and apply it to our many priorities.

A university president reported that:

Our investment in government relations is to ensure that we maximize every possible opportunity with government and that we always put our best foot forward. After all, reputation also yields results. The way government sees us and their impressions of our capacity for excellence will yield real, tangible results.

The notion that some will be capable of greater financial independence and their own individual capacity to influence government may even make it more difficult for CO and

COU to find consensus and put consistent positions to government. One government official reported that:

There already is an example of this inequality. Anyone who really understands government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario knows that the University of Toronto already has a unique position of influence. There are lots of reasons for this powerful position, but one is that they have the resources to employ serious people to conduct the government relations function. In many ways they don't need to belong to COU as there won't be any policy brought forward that does not benefit the U of T. In my day, at Cabinet meetings when we brought PSE issues to the table, the Premier would ask "what does the sector think of this? What does U of T or Rob Pritchard think of this? If Rob had a problem with it, we were sent back to adjust our proposal or rethink it. Often times an item didn't get to Cabinet without Rob Pritchard knowing and having spoken to the Premier directly.

Approximately half of the college and university presidents interviewed as part of this study stated that they perceive a correlation between the effort and resources spent on government relations and resulting success in securing additional funding. The college presidents in particular explained the amount of their time spent on government relations as necessary to the financial success of their college.

There are certainly public policy implications of such a trend. If organizations are going to compete for scarce government funding, then they are going to have to invest in the function by including dedicated and professionalized staff. Without such an investment, the individual institutions and the sector as a whole will be the weaker for it,

and will not achieve their goals and objectives. One college president at the end of the interview for this study, said:

Clearly we need professional support and directions, if this interview has accomplished one thing for me, it is that I now realize this is more complex than I thought and I cannot do this alone anymore.

Two weeks later a job ad appeared in a national newspaper for a director-level position in government relations. Since then, two others have followed. It is also a commentary on both how complex government has become and how competitive the sector and its relationship has become. While government officials are quite adamant that government is open to all participants, clearly some are putting more resources into the relationship. Despite the apparent necessity and trend toward more investment into the government relations function, making such investments also raises the ethical issue of public institutions using public resources to lobby the public purse for more public resources.

#### **4.11 Major Thrust of Government Relations**

Question 3 asked: *What is the major thrust of your institution's government relations efforts?* Eight out of ten college presidents indicated that funding was their most important priority. Two out of eight reported that capital funding was their key priority (followed by funding). All of the other potential areas of lobbying interest – governance reform, program approvals, and business development - were mentioned in passing, but they did not have anywhere near the interest or the priority that operating funding and capital project funding had. Although individual respondents made the

distinction between operational funding and capital project funding, it was obvious from the conversation that they really meant the same thing – “we lobby for money (operating dollars) via CO and capital (for our own building expansion) ourselves.” Each individual college president has some other area of interest that they put some effort into, but there was no pattern. Based on their responses, the college presidents seemed to be much more concerned about “system” issues than the university presidents did.

University presidents, with one exception, indicated that funding and finance was their most important priority. Similarly, respondents reported that capital funding was their key institutional priority. Interesting that, save two respondents, university presidents did not list “policy” as a close second place as did the college presidents. University presidents perceive the arena for capital project funding to be a competitive activity and worthy of individual efforts. All university presidents see a lobby effort as necessary otherwise they would not get capital dollars. And from the tone of their responses and the definitive way they were delivered, there was no doubt in the minds of university presidents as to why they were engaged in government relations. It is about getting more money for their institutions.

#### **4.12 Major Thrust of Government Relations - Analysis**

There seems to be two elements to government relations in the college and university sector. Individual institutions compete against one another for capital dollars, and institutions band together to lobby through their associations for operational funding and system wide issues and reform. While this may seem intuitive, until now there was no research evidence to support this description. This finding is not unexpected, and

follows that organizations that get money from government would attempt to convince government to give them more.

It also follows logically that individual college and university presidents would work to convince government to fund their own projects or capital needs on their own and then work as a group to convince governments to put money into shared issues such as funding rates or system-wide issues.

#### **4.13 Defining Success in Government Relations**

Question #4 asked: *How does your organization define success in government relations? What works? What doesn't? Please think of a recent example of what has worked well and what has not worked well.* All college and university presidents indicated in different ways that they do not measure their government relations efforts in a formal way. That is to say, that they do not usually establish a series of metrics that establish benchmarks for particular initiatives and monitor and evaluate their government relations efforts on an on-going basis. When prompted though, they did discuss their understanding of success. In most cases, respondents indicated that success is “getting what you want.” In almost all cases, respondents indicated that getting what they wanted was “money” for funding. In most cases, the “money” or “funding” is related to a capital project. Most college presidents, after indicating that they measure their efforts by determining whether they “got what they wanted”, paused and admitted that the other parts of government relations are difficult to measure. They were not making any real efforts to measure and evaluate it. Much of government relations – the relationship side,

and other goals related to building credibility, exposure, reputation building, etc. are all more difficult to measure than a concrete outcome such as getting what you want.

Both individuals who could speak about the sector associations reported that the associations invest more effort in detailed plans and reports, mostly to meet an expectation of their governing boards using such reports as an accountability tool rather than measures to affect behaviour and strategy. The two individuals responded only briefly to this question, both suggesting that the sector associations try to develop detailed plans and then, where possible, create realistic measures of those plans, and chart their activities and outcomes. Both suggest this level of detail is new to the sector associations and is not without challenges. In particular, one suggested that:

Trying to measure something as nebulous as the effect of government relations efforts on government decision-making is extremely difficult. How can we possibly know which single factor or combination of many factors affected the outcome? We can say we know, but in the end, it is as much about judgment and supposition as it is about a certainty. Government relations is as much an art as it is a science. We operate in an environment of imperfect information, with a constantly changing context and many players in and outside of government, and we try to participate in the sector and try to impact and influence it. Doing it is tough enough, being able to determine what worked, and how well and measure it, is even tougher. This isn't an excuse for not taking the time to measure things. We are making great progress in that regard.

Generally, university presidents indicated that building good relationships pays off. In basic terms, the respondents indicated that healthy relationships were key to

success. In particular, respondents indicated that aligning with government priorities is the best way to succeed. The typical response from university presidents was “don’t attack your partner” and “don’t simply ask for money”. One university president said that:

The challenge of establishing relationships with government officials is the quick rate of turnover of politicians and civil servants. Just when you get to know them and you have a healthy relationship built, they move. That’s why we often have to hire lobbyists to help us. We are essentially buying access to an existing relationship, hoping to accelerate our relationship. Further, the lobbyists can help us ensure that we don’t make any missteps along the way as we try to build our own relationships. Even though government officials move around a great deal, if you have pissed one of them off, it doesn’t matter where they go, they can still affect your level of success.

Another university president said that:

Building a good relationship is usually a goal in and of itself. But if that is where it stops, then your government relations efforts have not produced outcomes that are what the institutions need. While it is nice to have lots of friends, if those friends don’t amount to anything more than good company, then they aren’t yielding the kind of results that the university really needs. So while it is hard to measure ‘good relationships’, if you aren’t getting money or the other specific goals that you have set out for your institution from these relationships, then you really do not have good relationships. Good relationships are symbiotic and mutually beneficial.

There is no question that the perception is that there are some goals and objectives that are easy to measure, but knowing exactly what delivered that success is more difficult. Having said that, just because setting specific goals and objectives and measuring them is difficult, does not mean that it should not be done.

Government officials and those who could speak about sector associations were also asked about their perceptions of success in government relations. Question 3 asked government officials and those who could speak about sector associations “*You have observed the behaviour of individual institutions and sector associations. What government relations efforts work and which do not?*” Generally speaking, government officials and those who could speak about sector associations responded that building good relationships pay off. In particular, respondents indicated that aligning with government priorities is the best way to succeed. A number of the government officials and those that could speak about sector associations suggested that the presidents have to think “politically” but in no way act in a partisan fashion. All government officials and those who could speak about sector associations responded by saying that both the political and bureaucratic sides of government should be part of the government relations activities and that often presidents just “go to the top.” This is not always perceived to be the best move.

In terms of what does not work, government officials and those that could speak about sector associations had similar responses as the college and university presidents. The most common response was “do not attack your partner” and the rationale provided for this is that it does not bode well for the relationship and trust. One former government official said that “While we expect some disagreement in the best of

relationships, open and frequent bickering is “not healthy and counterproductive.” The following sentiment, made by a government official, was typical of what government officials and those that could speak about sector associations reported as part of the interviews:

Too many institutional leaders and associations make the cardinal mistake in government relations – they simply ask for money or complain that they need more money. This does not work. Do not simply ask for money, but suggest to government that you have solutions to their challenges. We have an agenda in government, show me how you can help us attain our goals.

A number of respondents also suggested that individual institutions and the sector should not fight with government in the media, as that, they argued, only works in rare occasions. Having open fights with government, this former minister argued, “puts a great deal of pressure on the government and often takes away from the government’s agenda and planned timing. Such behaviour does not win friends or sympathy in government.” One former minister suggested that:

College and university presidents did not appreciate the size of the investment that government has made in post-secondary education in Ontario. I have never heard anyone at the doorstep when I canvass mention the investment the government has made. There is no political pay-off for the investment. In fact, people think the institutions are well funded – they are actually seen as wealthy. What colleges and universities ought to do is try to help the public understand what the government is doing. Don’t buy an ad saying ‘we like the government.’ Rather, we

appreciate a letter of support or using your quotes in communications materials (press releases).

Another former minister suggested that being proactive works. Spending time convincing the minister and ministry that there is a problem and that you are able to suggest a solution is a useful exercise. Government, they argued, appreciates the idea of being treated with respect and prefers to work collegially. The Council of Ontario Universities, they argued, had a “superiority complex” and the government was made to feel as though they were wrong all the time. They were dismissive in saying “we can’t be wrong all the time.” This former minister said that there is a difference between board members from colleges and universities, and those that are elected, such as school boards. These trustees have a right to represent their constituency by speaking out publicly. Governments, they argued are more vulnerable on other issues, such as elementary and secondary school or health care, whereas this is not the case for post-secondary. As a result, they argued, the same approach not only does not work, it would do damage to the relationship. This former minister suggested that it is best to work with government to find solutions. As for attending fundraisers, this former minister said that college and university personnel should go, but not pay with college money. They said that:

Going is important and as minister I would know who came – and it matters. It is wrong to support a politician as partisan. There is follow-up when people request a meeting. There is access accomplished this way.

Another former minister had the exact opposite opinion about attendance at political fundraisers. They argued that:

No taxpayer money should be spent on political fundraisers. It's unethical and overplayed. Presidents would be better to have a reception at Queen's Park. That would make it easy for us to come to them.

A former government official suggested that it is best to:

Use quiet persuasion and where possible if you can help a government see potential to do good and be seen to do good, this is seen as a victory for all. In addressing issues related to how aggressive a college or university can be. Think of wealthy benefactors – you don't attack them publicly for not giving you enough money, do you? The best way to build a relationship with government is to remain positive. A strategy that involves attacking government does not work.

Specifically, this former government official referred to a campaign that the Council of Ontario Universities was running a few years ago that purported that Ontario funding to universities in Ontario was 10th out of 10 lowest of the provinces in Canada. A campaign, he suggested, that says "you treat us badly" is not going to work with government. When college presidents, who made similar arguments to government, were asked about the rationale behind this campaign, most suggested that "it is a simple and compelling fact." As Cook (1998) suggests, simply putting facts to government, as one might do in a paper or dissertation, does not work to convince government to agree and take action. As many of the government officials reported, there is indeed more to government relations than the production of facts.

Another government official indicated that the best way to approach government is to put pressure on all levels. All staff, they argued had to be nurtured as moving forward requires both bureaucratic and political support and influence. Just going to the minister or deputy minister does not work. Government relations, they argued, “takes time and resources.” Another government official argued that government has become “increasingly political” and suggested that “what works is where the sector understands where its real leverage is.” They suggested that government and the sector should strive for “win-win” solutions. They also indicated that there was a human element to the relationship. In particular, they argued that as government officials “we are people, and we think about who are the people we would like to spend time with. If it is always going to be unpleasant, we won’t be available to take calls and have meetings – we have lots of offers from people who are pleasant to have lunch with.” In response to the question regarding what does not work, this government official indicated that going over the minister’s head to the premier is often a very bad strategy. All presidents say publicly that “they want a transparent process for the allocation of capital dollars, but they all end up going over the bureaucrat’s heads and go to the political offices.” People, they suggested, remember this type of behaviour.

Another former government official reported that successful government relations are equal to “coherence and persistence.” The example this former government official used was that of tuition deregulation in the early 90s. They suggested that the universities said to the government “if you are going to reduce the grant, let us raise tuition. Colleges, on the other hand, were more ambiguous about this approach as they were concerned about access issues. This former government official also suggested that

having a prominent or powerful cabinet minister in your riding is also helpful and whining to the local media is not.

#### **4.14 Defining Success in Government Relations - Analysis**

Much of government relations, such as the relationship building component and other efforts to build credibility, exposure, reputation and branding, are all more difficult to measure than concrete outcomes such as revenue generation. Unfortunately, there is very little has been done by any of the college and university presidents to establish metrics to benchmark and evaluate or measure the outcomes related to the goals and objectives. Granted, many of the key components of government relations – things such as relationship building and exposure to government officials are difficult things to measure. It appears that much of the efforts go without some sense of achievement beyond some intuitive evaluation. This means that we do not have a full sense of whether these expenditures are worth the effort, or if alternate or more effective tactics or behaviours should be implemented. When pushed to better understand what works and what does not, the presidents seem to reduce their explanation to human-level, commonsense understandings of how people relate to one another. For example, “would you want to do business with someone who was always attacking you?”

There were no differences in responses either between or among college and university presidents. As suggested by Pross (1975 and 1986) interest groups can be relatively well established, but still lack some elements of a fully developed or effective group. This means, according to Pross (1975 and 1986), that some interest groups can be successful, but likely function at less than an optimal level or their full potential. The

data suggest that we do not know much about whether colleges, universities and their sector associations are successful or not, and that almost all have important work to do in better understanding the efficacy of their government relations efforts. Some of the good advice provided by government officials referenced above, as to what works and what does not, ought to contribute to this understanding.

#### **4.15 Government and Those Who Could Speak About Sector Association**

##### **Perceptions on Success in Government Relations**

Government officials and those that could speak about sector associations were asked *How successful have colleges/ universities been at influencing government policy?* All government officials and those that could speak about sector associations indicated that individual universities and COU have been more successful than individual colleges and CO at government relations. Most indicated that universities and the COU were more successful in general, and some indicated that they were more successful at advancing funding and finance issues via their government relations efforts in particular. Many attributed this to a position of power and autonomy for universities. Most seemed to think that this might be changing, that CO is narrowing the gap. Most participants were asked if universities were more successful as a result of their superior efforts in government relations or if it were simply easier for universities and COU to exert influence because of a privileged position. Almost unanimously, government officials and those that could speak about sector associations responded by indicating that it was mostly their influence based on factors other than government relations efforts and skills.

Such factors include things such as their relatively longer history and more affluent and powerful alumni.

One former minister indicated that they were aware that the Premier consulted the Chair of COU at the time before making a final decision on appointing a minister for MTCU. This particular minister indicated that COU had a constant presence in government but CO did not. They even remember COU coming to see them when they were in opposition, but CO did not. This minister indicated that there was a big difference between the government's knowledge about and exposure to COU issues compared to CO. This minister said that the government had a "love-hate" relationship with COU. This minister recalls that the president at the time always pushed the issue of autonomy "even when it didn't have relevance to the discussion at hand." This same minister indicated that the Council on Ontario Universities had "a big influence" on capital spending and tuition policy, and did not even remember working with Colleges Ontario. This minister reflected back saying they did not:

I didn't see Colleges Ontario as a major player at all. Our government needed the Council of Ontario Universities and the universities and they were more successful at government relations than Colleges Ontario and the colleges.

Each of the former ministers responded by saying they resented the attitude of COU. "They treated us like infants" they reported:

They would ask for more money and pat us on the head as if to say 'don't worry your pretty little heads about such important matters, we know what

to do with the money. We don't have to be accountable, we are universities!

Each of the former ministers used the words “egos” and “arrogance” when describing the universities’ attitudes towards the minister and the government. The college presidents, were described by former ministers as “insecure”, “uncertain” and “less sophisticated” in their dealings with government.

#### **4.16 Government and Those Who Could Speak About Sector Association**

##### **Perceptions on Success in Government Relations – Analysis**

Government officials and those that could speak about sector associations were consistent in their perceptions on the government relations capacity of COU. Clearly these respondents believe that COU is more sophisticated and “higher level” than Colleges Ontario. It was difficult to determine whether COU was seen as more sophisticated because the respondents viewed the membership and leadership as more sophisticated or whether they indeed were more sophisticated at government relations. As one of the government respondents said about the university presidents “They are so smart!” it makes one wonder if the assessment of their capacity is coloured by the impression that government officials and those that could speak about sector associations have of them.

As for the “love-hate” relationship that seems to exist between the government and COU, it is difficult to separate out motivations from actions. Do governments capitulate because universities have a monopoly in degree granting and status? Or do they get money because they are indeed more sophisticated in convincing government to

do so? It appears likely that governments invest in post-secondary more because governments believe that such investments are good, and less so because the sector is particularly capable of convincing them to do so. Further, colleges and universities are situated in constituencies throughout the province that represent voters and play some level of prominence within the community. Perhaps the best explanation is that it is often politically the right thing to do, to support these institutions and, in particular, to support universities who have a more influential alumni who could put pressure to bear if there are not sufficient spaces for their children to attend.

#### **4.17 Changes in Government Relations Efforts of Individual Institutions Over Time**

Question 5 asked: *Have your government relations efforts changed over time?*

All college presidents responded with a “yes” and indicated in different ways that there has been change in their government relations efforts over time. College presidents used phrases such as “intensified”, “aggressive”, “integrated”, “proactive”, “more committed” and “systematic” to describe how their efforts have evolved. The presidents seemed to be proud of their increased involvement. The one phrase that was universally used by every president was “more sophisticated”. A number of respondents indicated that they were “paying more attention to it” than in the past, and although the others did not use this language, it was apparent that many of the respondents meant the same thing. A number of college presidents suggested that the reason for the change is that the sector and the individual presidents within it understand government relations more than in the past. As a result, they are not only more interested in doing it, but also more able to employ more

sophisticated methods and approaches. Another college president suggested that individual colleges and the sector as a whole are doing two things “better” now than ever before. This college president suggested that the presidents have become better at developing an integrated approach to issues relating to government, instead of dealing with issues on a case-by-case basis. College presidents and the sector as a whole have become better at being proactive about issues; not just in identifying them early, but by dealing with them sooner and in an integrated way. Another college president suggested that the extent to which a college president takes on a particular approach to government relations is more likely based on their personality than anything else. Others suggested that the circumstances facing a particular college are even more likely to shape the approach to government relations than any other factor. One president suggested that in a particular crisis that his/her college faced, the government relations efforts had to change dramatically, and that since the crisis has passed, alternative approaches have been employed. One president argued that “we believe we can change things now and we have become empowered and emboldened to try more and do more.”

With one exception, all university presidents indicated that the government relations efforts of their institution have changed over time. University presidents argued that the efforts of their institutions became more “sophisticated” as the circumstances and context evolved and required a different approach. University presidents used phrases such as “intensified”, “aggressive”, “integrated”, “proactive”, “more committed” and “systematic” to describe how their efforts have evolved. In each case, respondents seemed quite definitive and adamant that change had occurred and that such change was in keeping with what was necessary in order to “stay in the game”. Examples of such

change included; more regular meetings with government officials and politicians, more photo-ops and events, and having government officials attend more university events.

When university presidents discussed their approaches and how those approaches evolved, the university presidents seemed to be a little insecure about their activities and how those activities relate to what their colleagues are doing. One university president said “I am as active as my colleagues are in terms of government relations, as far as I can tell. What can you tell me about what they are doing?” A long-serving university president said:

I have been doing this so long, I have lost track of what I am doing relative to my fellow presidents. What I do seems to work, but it sure would be nice to know more about what the others are up to. Maybe it's time for a primer for me. I will enjoy reading the results of this study.

The university presidents appear to be very aware of what their colleagues are doing, but relatively unsure of the efficacy of the efforts. Most asked the researcher what others were doing and, when informed, many of the respondents seemed deflated and lamented a lack of expertise and more sophisticated activity. One university president said “Wow, I had no idea they were doing all that type of activity. I guess it's time we got our act together.” Another university president summarized his/her response as follows “we now know the activity is more complex than we thought and that we now realize that this requires a professional expertise that we do not possess.” Another university president suggested that his/her university did not really “do” government relations before and now they are “more fully seized of its importance.”

The university presidents believe that individual institutions and the Council of Ontario Universities have become more engaged in government relations efforts and that those efforts are more “aggressive” and “sophisticated.” What is also interesting is the notion that they believe change has occurred, agree about what that change is, but base their assessment of what the effect of that change is on anecdotal rather than evidence-based data. That is to say, none provided any concrete outcome to prove their assertion that the new approach is working. While the interviewer did not ask if the change they described is “better” or if they have evidence that it is producing results, all the respondents offered some assessment. One university president stated that “We have changed how we are doing government relations, and it is working. We are seeing results.” When asked to enumerate what those results were, the university president said “Well, people see us differently. We are in the game now.” They believed that the more “aggressive” and “sophisticated” approach in the way institutions and their association conducts government relations was the right thing to do, and that it is working, but have not formally studied or measured it. It is very interesting that a group of individuals who are more likely to appreciate a more scientific approach and research methodology, and would typically make evidence-based arguments, would rely on a less than formal evaluation of such an important activity (Cook, 1998). University presidents typically have been faulted with having government relations efforts that are based on the notion that “here is the evidence to support our argument – fund us.” (Cook, 1998) It was also quite interesting that regardless of whether university presidents were newer or had been around for a relatively long period of time, they all agreed that there had been change in

the approach to government relations and that the efforts of their individual institutions and the sector association have evolved.

There seemed to be a widespread sense amongst both the college and university presidents that not only have the circumstances changed but the sector's response to it has changed. This has bolstered their resolve to be part of it, to more formally engage in government relations activities and to invest more time, effort and resources. Although virtually all believe that the environment they are operating in has changed, and that their "competitors" are doing things differently, their response is to be more active themselves (i.e. spend more time than in the past), attend fundraisers or hire a government relations consultant. In all of this "talk" about "more sophistication" there was no discussion about greater planning, monitoring or evaluation.

Question 4 for government officials and those that could speak about sector associations asked: *Have government relations efforts of individual institutions and associations changed over time?* All government officials and those that could speak about sector associations reported that the government relations efforts of individual institutions and associations have changed over time. Government officials acknowledged a more "sophisticated" and more "aggressive" approach and effort, particularly by the associations. As for individual institutions, government officials reported a varied and mixed quality of effort. One government official acknowledged that colleges and universities with government relations professional on staff had more consistently sophisticated and successful approaches they were more likely to succeed because they "understand the culture, how things work and speak the language." Government officials characterize activities as associations trying to bring unified

messages to government and members in both college and university sector breaking away with their own agendas, particularly when lobbying for their own capital projects. All respondents acknowledge that CO has become much more a “government relations” organization with changes in leadership. Further, they sighted the two most recent leaders as having taken the organization in a very positive direction. So the role of Colleges Ontario as an interest group changed and this was a significant change to the policy community.

One former minister indicated that hiring David Lindsay as the President and CEO of Colleges Ontario was a move to “become a mature association with serious advocacy.” David Lindsay was very politically active in the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and had been Chief of Staff to Premier Mike Harris from 1995 to 1997. Lindsay was credited as being a masterful political strategist and one of the architects of the Common Sense Revolution that saw Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario win two successive provincial general elections in 1995 and 1999. Lindsay helped College Ontario become more focused on government relations and lobbying, and he introduced a number of initiatives that helped the individual institutions do the same. For example, he encouraged each college to establish Local Campaign Advocacy Teams (L-CATs) to ensure that there were individuals at each college that would help coordinate the activities of the whole sector. Further, he also hoped that having a small team of people at each college designated to focus on government relations and lobbying, would make up for the fact that only one college had a senior person dedicated to the function. This did improve coordination and information sharing, but the challenge with the process was that those designates had other responsibilities

such as marketing, communications, alumni affairs, etc. in addition to these duties and expectations. Lindsay also convinced the Committee of Presidents to provide additional funding to run a post-card writing campaign and advertising campaign that was focused on bus shelters in the vicinity of Queen's Park that said that a college education was "education that's worth more." The intent of the campaign was not only to convince legislators that a college education is worth funding at higher rates, but to also get the community engaged and thinking about the issue. The post-card campaign had a very positive response and the advertisement was clever enough to earn media coverage that further brought attention to the issue.

A former minister indicated that s/he would have "gone nuts" if a small town college or university hired an external lobbyist, particularly if they had a local cabinet minister in the riding. The idea is that a public institution should not have to pay public monies and tuition dollars on government relations help if the local MPP is a cabinet minister and can champion the causes of the institution within the government. s/he also suggested that if you need government relations help (e.g. if you do not have a local minister willing to advocate on your behalf), an institution should "buy it."

One government official reported that government relations have changed in Ontario. For example, they suggested that the Council of Ontario Universities sees government as a partner and that relations have become closer. "We micro managed colleges" they said, but "universities are autonomous – they are an influential bunch, in a totally different league." Another government official indicated that Colleges Ontario is doing "interesting stuff" and is "more focused on government relations at the highest level." This same government official indicated that s/he does not like it when colleges

and universities hire consultant lobbyists because “it all comes out of the grant” and the “idea that I fund you to hire someone to talk to me about more money is offensive.” This official also said that CO seems to be using third party advocacy (the use of other organizations and individuals outside of institutions, the association and the sector as a whole to advocate on their behalf, such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce) more and that this is a “good strategy to build support in the public as well as political support.”

A former government official said that one of the reasons that colleges have not been more successful in government relations is because “they have never seen a mission they didn’t like.” This is, s/he argued, one of the things that we ought to admire about colleges, but “it does, sometimes get in the way of clear and concise government relations messages and campaigns.” This former government official indicated that in the early 90s COU would “butt heads” more often with government than it currently does.

One government official said that hiring Paul Genest to lead COU was very much like CO hiring David Lindsay – this was “a clear recognition that government relations had to be taken to the next level. Paul Genest, in addition to being a Ph.D. in philosophy, was also a former lobbyist for Bell Canada, a political advisor to two federal health ministers and the Director of Policy and Research for then Prime Minister Jean Chretien. By hiring an ex-lobbyist and political operative, COU was going to play in the big leagues.” One university president suggested that “Paul Genest *gets it* (emphasis added by author), he speaks their language, he understands their rules – he knows where the bodies are buried.” This, s/he argued, meant that “The gloves are off. We are going to be as competitive as any sector to ensure that Ontario’s universities get the money they deserve.” Another university president said “it is not enough to have people who

understand government lead us into the next few years, we need people who understand politics. That's where battles are won and lost. If CO is going to employ a politico (David Lindsay), then we must do so as well.”

#### **4.18 Changes in Government Relations Efforts of Individual Institutions Over Time – Analysis**

Clearly from the responses of those included in the research, there has been change in the way the sector conducts government relations, and in basic terms, it has become more aggressive and “political”. Both college and university presidents believe that there not only has been change in the context within which they operate, but that there has been a change in the way individual institutions and their associations conduct government relations. In responding to this, college and university presidents have begun to do things differently, and, in some cases, spend more of their own time on the function, hiring external lobbyists and in some cases, attending fundraisers. One university president said “I don't like the idea of going to fundraisers, but I have started going, but only when the tickets are donated to the university.” The data indicates that the college and university presidents believe that they need to be more strategic and “political” in their government relations efforts in order to compete with other institutions and interests. As one university president suggested “I guess if we don't get more aggressive, some other sector is going to get our money.”

#### 4.19 Lessons for Government Relations

Question 6 asked: *What have you learned from your experience in the area of government relations?* The college presidents had very different responses and all provided examples of “Do’s” and “Don’ts”. Most of the advice was commonsensical and very general. Many of the university presidents suggested that the university sector was not as sophisticated at government relations as it could and should be, arguing that government relations was more complex than the sector admits. A college president suggested that the college sector was a “neophyte” when it comes to government relations and “has a lot of growing-up to do.”

One college president suggested that government relations is a “forever deal”, something that is on-going and must be part of everything the college does. Another president suggested that “the role of the president is critical” and that “I didn’t think it would be as big a part of the job as it is.” This same president suggested that the best approach to government relations is to step back and reflect about your activities and then “consider the motivations of government and how your college can fit into those interests and priorities.” Another college president suggested that a key to success in government relations is to build a positive relationship with government officials by becoming a “supporter, friend, and ally.” This president went on to suggest that “government” ought to include civil service staff or “bureaucrats” and that one should be sure “not to go over their heads” by always seeking a meeting with the minister. Another college president suggested that members of the sector have to “begin thinking more politically.” This college president argued that “the system is less predictable and more political than people want to admit.” S/he went on further to suggest that colleges should be more

responsive to political masters and their priorities. This college president hired a lobbyist to help with their aspirations for capital funding and they revealed that hiring the lobbyist was 75% to create the right environment for the college's proposal and 25% for access, connections and lobbying efforts.

Another college president was more negative than the others. This president suggested that what s/he learned was that colleges do not understand government or government relations. S/he also argued that government relations is a difficult endeavour because the elected actors are always changing. Another college president suggested that s/he learned that college presidents do not speak to government with one voice and as a result, the sector has suffered for it, and its collective desires are not met.

The university presidents responded in a similar way to the college presidents. One university president suggested that in relations with the government, the university should always "Take the high road, stay strategic and be a true partner." s/he continued by saying that:

The more we can expose government to our partners and our partners to government the better our cause will be understood. Imagine if students, community leaders and businesses are all talking to government about how to improve post-secondary education in Ontario. Imagine how hard it would be for government to say "no" to our ideas and asks.

Another university president said having a presence is critical to success in government relations. The sector, s/he argued "would be really easy to ignore if we don't have a presence. It is too important to take a risk in their understanding if we are not there to shape and influence the way they see the sector and the world." Another university

president said that “persistence pays off. Even good ideas and good projects need help. We are here for the long haul and should behave as though we are. Burning bridges is a dangerous game.” In terms of being there for the “long haul”, another university president said that:

Individual institutions and the university sector as a whole must have an analytic capacity so that we can build trust into the relationship. By having data, we can influence to the discussion with facts and data. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities does not have much in the way of policy capacity and we can outsmart them.

Another university president said that “constant contact is necessary, and that means having an in-house lobbyist and an external lobbyist to ensure that you are always there and abreast of every nuance that is occurring.” One other university president argued that in order for the university to be successful in its government relations goals requires that:

The entire organization to understand what they are and to live and breathe them every day. This is not really lobbying. By making government aware of your aspirations you are simply giving them the full picture. It is more like ‘advocacy’ than lobbying.

Another university president said that “Government relations is at the heart of it very simple – put yourself in their shoes. How would you like to be treated? What would work from their [the government’s] perspective?”

#### 4.20 Lessons for Government Relations - Analysis

Much of what is reported by the respondents who participated in this research is consistent with what the “how-to” literature suggests they ought to be doing. But there appears to be a gap between what the respondents say ought to be done and what they do. This is evident when we look at the differences between what they say works and does not, and then consider the examples provided, then talk with government officials who charge them with not adhering to the very lessons they espouse. For example, one university president said:

Government relations is about a two way exchange of information and that constant contact and sharing is absolutely critical to a healthy and successful relationship. Rarely does a day go by that I don't talk to the key players in government, either on the phone or at events.

When asked about what does not work in government relations, one government official said:

This particular university president always calls to complain, is always looking for the “inside scoop” but never really shares with us. Good relationships are based on mutually beneficial exchanges, where each gets something. I am a public servant, so I will always listen to the complaining, and try to answer questions honestly, but this attempt at a relationship is really not working. In fact, to be really honest, it annoys me more than anything else and I am not inclined to go out of my way to help. As a professional civil servant, I try to separate my personal feelings from what I know is right for the institution, and how I feel about this person, because I believe that the institution and the students should not

suffer just because this person doesn't know how to work with government. I wish they could sit in my shoes and see what it's like to hear complaints and be pumped for information.

The data suggests that there may be some gap between the theory underlying the responses and the practice of government relations as it is implemented and practiced by some leaders in the sector.

What also is clear from what the respondents say and what they do not say is that they attribute great significance to success and failure in government relations. That is, getting what they want from government is the difference between a successful president and a failure. One college president said; "My board of governors measures my success on their impressions of how well I appear to do government relations, and my bonus is very much tied to those impressions."

So it seems that winning and losing are high stakes in government relations in post-secondary in Ontario, so much so that many are placing great emphasis on the function in terms of their own time and resources. They perceive and have reported that they are changing such that there is greater emphasis and more strategic and aggressive approach than ever before.

There also does not appear to be a way that successes and failures are shared to enable the evolution of best practices. There are always government relations firms who are interested in expanding their client base, that occasionally reach out to the sector, but do not offer any customized training or advice. Also too, even at the conferences of their sector associations, there is little in the agenda to suggest that the association is there to help train or educate members to do government relations better. Interestingly,

organizations that are in the business of educating and training students, have not yet realized the need to educate and train their members in government relations in a major way. When they have made such attempts, it has not been done in a formal way. When those that could speak of sector associations were asked this directly, they both reported that this would be forthcoming in future conferences and workshops held by the associations, and that they hope the evidence of this study would form the bedrock of future training and education.

#### **4.21 Differences and Similarities in Government Relations between the College and University Sectors**

Question 7 asked: *Do government relations differ between college and universities in Ontario? If yes, how?* College presidents unanimously responded by saying that government relations is significantly different between the college and university sectors. The difference that was most often cited was that universities are “better” at government relations than colleges, and the college presidents identified six reasons: First, their autonomy gives them a better bargaining position vis-à-vis colleges. That is, having a history of greater autonomy and also having more distance from government relative to the colleges (who are Crown Agencies), gave them more freedom and respect. Second, they can hold the government “hostage” because the government cannot be seen to be restricting access to “well healed, middle class students”. This political influence, the college presidents argued, cannot be underestimated. Third, most key decision-makers in government and the private sector are university graduates and not college graduates. College presidents argued that this gives the universities an

advantage because these graduates understand the university system better, were pre-disposed to favour the university sector and not the college sector, and to think less of it. Further, college presidents argued that the graduates were also powerful and successful and this allowed them to exert influence on government on behalf of their alma mater or the system generally. Fourth, college presidents suggested that the universities were better at government relations because they have been around longer and as a result there is greater familiarity with what they do, and greater acceptance of the importance of their mission. Fifth, college presidents insisted that because universities are “better funded” they have the kind of resources to invest in this type of activity. A number of college presidents suggested that colleges are struggling to just keep up with core business and do not have resources available for “such luxuries” as dedicated government relations staff. And sixth, college presidents indicated that one of the most significant reasons that they perceive universities to be “better” at government relations than colleges is because the universities “sing from the same songbook.” That is to say that the university sector communicated in a unified way, with “one voice” to government, ensuring that messages were clear, concise and consistent. When prompted to explain more about this, college presidents went further to say that the reason that the college sector is not as effective is that the college sector does not do this. In fact, most concluded that the college sector did this quite badly.

The university presidents had very different responses. Half of the university presidents responded by saying “no”, that government relations does not differ between colleges and universities, and the other half indicated that they “didn’t know enough about the sector or what they are doing to answer”. None of the university presidents

responded by saying “yes.” One university president argued that the relationship that exists between the college and government and the university and government, in terms of governance, is not a “distinguisher” and that government relations was equally difficult for both colleges or universities. Four university presidents suggested that they assumed that because the colleges are crown agencies, the relationship and the way they conduct government relations was not any different, but they were not sure. One university president responded by saying that there was no difference in the way that government relations was conducted between the two sectors, but that the only difference between the two was their missions; “colleges are portrayed as job related, skills related and responsive and universities were about the long term. This means that the difference is that of entrepreneurs and learners.”

What was most fascinating is that although the question does ask for the one sector to compare themselves to the other, the college presidents seemed to define themselves by comparison to the university sector. The university presidents did not seem to know very much about the colleges at all. College leaders felt they were competing with the universities but the university leaders did not pay much attention to the colleges and what they were doing.

#### **4.22 Differences and Similarities in Government Relations between the College and University Sectors – Analysis**

As described above, there appears to be almost unanimous agreement amongst the college presidents that the university sector does government relations differently than the college sector. The university presidents, on the other hand, seem to either disagree or be

unaware about what the college sector is doing. Colleges and universities approach government relations in a similar way. In basic terms, individual institutions lobby for their own capital projects and they use their associations to lobby for operating grants and some system-wide issues. And when the government officials were asked this same question, they reported that there were differences, but when probed, it appeared that the differences were minor. That difference being the university sectors' ability to communicate to government with one, unified and consistent voice as opposed to the college sector. The respondents did not really highlight the differences that exist between the cultures and mandates of the two different institutions, nor did they make mention of the different types of students who attend.

#### **4.23 Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Sector Associations**

Question 8 asked: *What are your perceptions of the effectiveness of efforts of CO and COU in government relations in post-secondary? Please explain and elaborate.* All college presidents responded by saying that they thought that the efforts and effectiveness of CO at government relations was “getting better” and that CO was more “sophisticated” at government relations than in the past. All college presidents indicated that CO “has come a long way” and that they are on the “right path” to continue to improve over time. The examples that college presidents used to support the assertion above can be divided into two broad categories. First, all college presidents highlighted the change in leadership and its impact on the organization, and second, some spoke more of the activities of the organizations. A number of college presidents said that CO was “becoming more structured around government relations”, suggesting that the two most

recent leaders had particular skills in that area. Others used phrases such as “good and getting better”, “huge leap forward”, “improving”, “effectiveness is increasing”, “more strategic”, “evolution”, “were not thinking politically before”, “significant change”, “more emphasis on government relations” and “improving relationships with government”. One college president rhetorically asked if after making more investments in this function and moving in this new direction (focusing on more sophisticated government relations), “are we better off?” They answered the question by saying colleges are operating on a more level playing field vis-à-vis the university sector and there is more recognition amongst the public and government officials about college issues, but that the university sector continues to be the “all star team in the NHL and we (the colleges) don’t even play hockey.” All of the college presidents indicated that although there is great progress and significant forward movement, there is “considerably more work to do” and that “we are not there yet. All in all, there appears to be considerable “interest” amongst the college presidents about a more aggressive and more sophisticated government relations effort.

One of the major themes that related to the comments above had to do with leadership. Every single college president reported that CO had been transformed when David Lindsay became President. College presidents argued that ACAATO (as it was then known) was not a lobby organization, but rather an association of colleges that worked with government in a “perfunctory way”. College presidents indicated that the choice of David Lindsay, former Chief of Staff to Premier Mike Harris, was the beginning of an organization that “did government relations” and “competed more aggressively for government dollars and public opinion.” All of the college presidents

indicated that the change in leadership and director for the organization was long over due and that it was “the right thing at the right time.” College presidents reported that by hiring a former senior political staffer and Deputy Minister, CO took “a big step forward” to begin to “act more like a lobby organization than an old boy’s dinner club.” College presidents also argued that recruiting the current President, who had previously lead the Wine Council of Ontario, with a background in creative advertising, was again another strategic decision to move the association into an even more competitive position. The college presidents did not want to disrespect the leadership of the past. One president suggested that she was a “product of the time” and that she “met the expectations of the Committee of Presidents at the time, but that times had changed and CO had to change.”

University presidents were more circumspect and negative about the efforts of their industry association. Moreover, they were also quite adamant of their opinions about COU. About half of university presidents expressed negative and critical view of the work of COU, arguing that COU is not very effective and could do much better. The remaining university presidents were more positive, and suggested that the Council of Ontario Universities was effective and getting better. University presidents who were positive about the work and role of the Council of Ontario Universities said that they (COU) played an important role is supporting the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities’ policy capacity – which they argued had been significantly diminished during the Harris years.

University presidents who were not positive about COU and its effectiveness suggested that one of the main challenges is that achieving consensus is very difficult and that consensus often does not serve members very well. As a result, many individual

presidents and institutions go out and either do their own government relations, or contradict the messaging of COU. This, they argued made COU less effective. The notion here is that if a sector is united, as the “how-to” literature suggests, along with the responses of participants in this research, then their capacity to speak with one voice would likely have a greater impact on government. Other similarly minded university presidents suggested that given the diversity that consensus was an “elusive concept” and “the hardest part” of running COU. One university president said “Consensus in COU is almost impossible. At best, we can probably just try to ensure everybody gets something at some point and that we don’t kill each other.” Another university president said:

The challenge with COU is that we agree to work together and sing from the same song book and then we don’t. I think every institution is, in their own way, desperate for money and ambitious for success to the point that harming the coalition or the consensus is always a secondary consideration. Can you blame them? We all have real needs and boards that expect us to deliver. Often we put our own institution’s needs ahead of others’ needs and the needs of the system as a whole.

Those university presidents who were more positive about the effectiveness of COU reported that COU was most effective on “global” issues, those related to overall system information issues. In such cases, these university presidents suggested that the function that COU provides in providing material, information and statistics to MTCU was an important function and one that COU did very well. But these same university presidents indicated that COU was not very effective on all other fronts. One university president reported that “despite all the faults of COU, it’s still better to have it than not.”

#### **4.24 Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Sector Associations – Analysis**

There is, as reported above, a marked difference between the way college presidents and university presidents responded to this question. College presidents seemed quite pleased with recent changes in leadership and direction of CO. This may mean that the college presidents were unhappy with where CO was and attribute many of the shortcomings of the sector to the association's limited success at government relations. They equate the success of the sector to the ability of CO to function effectively in conducting government relations. The university presidents are split on the usefulness of COU, suggesting that COU is either not very effective, and could do better, or that COU is indeed useful and improving in its capacity to conduct government relations. Government officials report that the sector associations are doing a "satisfactory" job, but that if distinctions are to be drawn, COU is more effective than CO, but that CO is narrowing the gap. Based on the way they describe the associations, government officials support the idea that government relations is changing in Ontario.. The government respondents suggest that rationale for more "success" for the university sector is not necessarily that they do government relations any better, although they do tend to speak with a more unified and consistent voice than the college sector. It may still simply be that they occupy a privileged position within society and have some advantages over the college system. So if the sector occupies a higher priority on the government's agenda, and as a result is more likely to receive better funding, then perhaps it is due to other factors than simply the way they conduct government relations. One example used to illustrate this point is the notion that while both the college and university sector like to engage alumni in their efforts to convince government of their

cause or needs, the alumni of the university sector, given that the system has been around a lot longer, are more successful and powerful than the alumni of the college system. The college system alumni are still young, and are only now starting to mature and amass wealth and power. Add to this, as some have suggested, the predisposition of government officials who virtually all went to university, and the predisposition of society in general to view the university sector as the highest order of education and thereby requiring prominence and funding. These factors may explain their relative success over the college sector.

A number of university presidents did say that the switch in leadership from Ian Clark to Paul Genest was a deliberate move to go beyond simply producing compelling data, which COU always did quite well. The idea, as one university president said was to accept that “We always produced good data, but government did not always fully appreciate it or act upon it. We had to turn good data into good politics so as to not have volumes of numbers sitting on shelves at MTCU.” Many college presidents admitted that Colleges Ontario did not, until recently, produce much data, let alone any compelling data. Much of this has to do with the significant difference in the size of the budgets of the two associations, as COU has a substantially higher budget and can afford more staff to collect and analyze data.

#### **4.25 Government Relations Efforts of Sector Associations Over Time**

Question 9 asked: *Have the efforts of the associations changed over time? If yes, how so?* All college presidents responded by saying that they thought that the efforts of CO had changed over time. All college presidents reported significant change in

behaviour, tactics and orientation. Virtually all used the phrase “more sophisticated” to describe the change. All were very enthusiastic about the new direction and progress to date. All reported a dramatic change in the last two leaders and suggested that the organization was long over due for such a change. All described the recent change in leadership as a move to get the organization thinking more politically and less like a “club” or “secretariat.” The current leadership is seen as another critical move and change with emphasis now also on marketing of the sector to the broader public. All college presidents report that CO is taken more seriously by government officials and is getting “important” results.

The responses from university presidents were quite mixed. A number of the newer university presidents indicated that they were not in a position to judge whether the efforts of COU have changed or not. Most suggested that the function of government relations is typically the purview of the president and as a result, prior to being president, they had little to no exposure to the activities of COU. One university president reported that COU is an “advocacy group that does lobbying” and that they were not aware of any changes over time. This university president argued that COU has done “what it always has done”, but did not elaborate on their impressions of what that is. Another university president argued that:

[COU is] in the business of “information sharing” and that “although some people, including Ian Clark himself [former COU President], say that all COU did was advocacy, Ian Clark and COU are lobbyists. Anyone that thinks he wasn’t, doesn’t understand the role.

This same university president argued that “COU does not really have the resources to do government relations as it should be done” and that they think it should do more.

One university president suggested that COU has not traditionally had the formal expertise to do government relations effectively and that is why they have hired a “more political” person to lead the organization. This same university president said that COU was a “data organization” and not a “lobby organization.” Another university president summed up their response to the question in one phrase. They stated that COU is “more sophisticated” than before. Another university president suggested that the Canadian system is stymied because it tries to always ensure that “everyone has the same” and that for Canada’s post-secondary sector to flourish, it must not only allow differentiation to occur it must actually encourage it. As a result, this university president argued, COU as a reflection of this thinking, was too caught up with trying to always reach consensus and this “harms the efforts and effectiveness of the organization and the member institutions.” Another university president stated that the effectiveness of COU is a direct function of the leadership (of the chair), suggesting that “strong and powerful personalities have resulted in a strong and powerful COU – and vice versa.” One suggested that the leadership of the President has dramatically affected the ability of COU to be effective. In particular, they stated that “Ian Clark was more of a deputy minister or mandarin and Paul Genest is more of a political strategist or lobbyist.” The idea behind the move was to, in the words of one university president “to make COU more aggressively competitive, we have to get more political. And in hiring a former political advisor, hopefully that will give us the edge in doing so.’

#### **4.26 Government Relations Efforts of Sector Associations Over Time – Analysis**

The college presidents are more united in reporting that the association has deliberately changed its approach to government relations, whereas the university presidents are less clear, as described above. Interestingly, the responses of government officials are consistent with what the college presidents have reported. Government officials report that there has been change in the behaviour of the industry associations, both of them. Although many of the government officials are new to the Ministry, they still report that they believe there has been a change from the past. This is an interesting observation, but suggests that either they have observed change even within a short period of time, or simply that this is the generally accepted opinion about how behaviour has changed from the past. It appears that institutions and associations are more engaged and more strategic and aggressive about their government relations efforts. The important question remains, are they any more effective and successful than they were, or is an increased effort and investment simply what is needed to simply maintain the status quo? Certainly additional research is needed to answer this question.

#### **4.27 Summary**

This chapter outlined the data that were collected as part of the study. This chapter presented a review of what the respondents reported and some basic observations about how they reported what they did.

As above, there are areas of notable similarities and differences between college and university respondents and between the presidents and government officials and those that could speak about sector associations. The next chapter will consider these

findings in the overall context of the research questions guiding this study and provide some additional critical analysis.

This research was undertaken to contribute to a small body of knowledge that exists about government relations in the post-secondary sector. In collecting and analyzing this data, it is obvious that there are activities in this area that are considerable, whether it is focused on an individual institution's activities or that of the sector associations. More institutions are investing more time and money in the function, although it continues to be largely driven by the presidents of colleges and universities. Both institutions and associations are changing the way they approach the function. It seems that there is little in the way of a shared sense of best practices, beyond the intuitive notions of the main participants about what works and what does not work. Ideas of success too remain rather intuitive, lacking a deliberate monitoring, enumeration and measurement.

Government officials share a common sense of what works and what does not, and suggest that both sectors have much to learn, but hold great hope for improvements based on evidence of new directions and change. Not only do institutions and the sector need to reflect on their efforts, but government too must consider how it interacts with the sector to ensure that there are not any biases that permeate, or that mitigate any of the negative public policy implications that there may be of having only those that can "afford" the function succeed. In short, we know more than we did about how government relations is done and is changing. In this regard, the evidence gathered and reported has done much to clarify what we may have thought about government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. The next chapter will provide further

analysis of the data relative to the research questions guiding this study, and conclude with a discussion of possibilities for further research and recommendations for the individual institutions, for the sector associations and for the sector as a whole.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Summary and Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a review of the first four chapters of this research study. In doing so, this chapter will be divided into five sections. First, this chapter will review the purpose of the research. Second, the questions that guided this research will be considered. Third, this chapter will summarize the research design and methodology utilized by this study. Fourth, this chapter will present an overview of the findings and analysis, consider these findings in the overall context of the research questions guiding this study and fifth, will present the conclusions of this study, including some discussion about how the findings relate to the theoretical framework, along with some thoughts about future research aimed at filling gaps in our knowledge.

### **5.2 Purpose of the Research Study**

The purpose of this research was to contribute to a very small body of knowledge that exists about government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario. A study of this nature had not been undertaken prior to this research. The researcher's intent was to obtain a detailed picture of what is happening within the sector in Ontario from the perspective of the key players in individual colleges and universities, within their sector associations and from the perspective of government officials, past and present, political and bureaucratic. In particular, this study sought to answer the following broad questions: How do colleges and universities perceive government relations? How do

colleges and universities in Ontario organize themselves to conduct government relations?

In order to answer these questions, this study used a series of more specific questions that guided the interviews and data collection. These are listed below.

1. What does the literature tell us about government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario, Canada, and in other jurisdictions?
2. How do the leadership of colleges and universities understand the structure and function of government?
3. How do colleges and universities organize themselves to conduct government relations? How are colleges and universities organized as individual institutions? How are colleges and universities organized as provincial advocacy associations?
4. Are there differences in the way that colleges and universities organize themselves for, and conduct government relations?
5. How do colleges and universities utilize their provincial advocacy associations? How do colleges and universities perceive the role and usefulness of provincial advocacy associations? How do associations approach government relations?
6. Have colleges and universities changed their approach to government relations over time? If yes, in what ways?
7. How do officials within government view the efforts of individual institutions and their representatives to affect government decisions? Have they observed any changes?

In setting out to answer these questions, an interview guide was developed (Appendix A) and interviews with key personnel in the college, university, government and those who could speak about sector associations were conducted. The detailed findings were described and presented Chapter Four. Determining what the responses mean in the context of these broad and specific research questions, is the focus of this chapter.

### **5.3 How does the leadership of colleges and universities understand the structure and function of government?**

The literature suggests that college and university presidents traditionally do not have a good understanding of the structure and function of government, and as a result, are not good at government relations. (Cook, 1998) Further, Cook suggests that the presidents perceive government relations as an activity that is too political and beneath them, something that is inappropriate for the university to engage in. She and others (Clark, 1981; Dewey, 1998; Garcia, 1995; Key, 1993; Scott, 1991; Slinker, 1988) suggest that the presidents see government relations in simplistic terms.<sup>8</sup> Two main themes that emerge from this literature is that the presidents think that government relations is “political” and consider it in pejorative terms and that government relations is an elite activity that involves only the highest levels of government. As many of the respondents suggested, this is indeed a major reason why presidents engage reluctantly, and are not as effective as they might otherwise be. With the addition of government relations

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<sup>8</sup> This attitude is not uncommon among senior business leaders who consider government relations about “who you know” and believe that the solution to most problems can be found by talking to the Minister (Mack, 1989).

professionals, whether as in-house lobbyists or as external consultants, this attitude and ultimately the behaviour and outcome may change for the better.

The data from this study suggest that college and university presidents in Ontario share a similar understanding of the structure and function of government. It appears that college and university respondents accept that the context for government relations has grown more competitive and that more aggressive approaches are necessary. This is clear from their responses. What is also clear is that none of the respondents provide any rationale for why the context has changed, they only recognize and report that it has. It may simply be that they are reacting to the outcomes rather than trying to explain or understand them. That is, if they see a call for proposals and they submit and are not successful, or in instances where a college or university is awarded capital expansion dollars and there was no call for proposals at all, then they conclude that the environment is more competitive or that more sophisticated approaches are necessary. What is less clear is why there is a gap between their understanding of how complex government relations is and the simplicity of their responses. College and university presidents say government relations is complicated, but do not necessarily adopt complicated or sophisticated<sup>9</sup> approaches to conducting government relations. So how can they expect to succeed or achieve their goals and objectives? They concede that they must hire some assistance at particular times to help with their efforts, but, for the most part, manage the function themselves and do not use extensive planning, monitoring and measurement to determine the effectiveness of their efforts and expenditures. Further, they continue to perceive government relations as simply an elite activity and as a result spend most of

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<sup>9</sup> The notion of “sophistication” comes from the so-called “how-to” literature that suggests a continuum of government relations tools available to organizations.

their time trying to communicate to only the highest levels of government, and typically, mostly to the provincial government, at the expense of efforts aimed at municipal and federal governments. Further, they also place an enormous emphasis on the political part of the political-administrative dichotomy.

According to the literature, placing an emphasis on the political side of government is not uncommon. It is, however, potentially problematic, as this is not always the best way to achieve one's government relations goals (Bailey, 1991; Dubs, 1989; Hall, 1974; Hojnacki and Kimball, 1999; Malloy, 1999; Moloney and Jordan, 1996; Olson, 1965; Richardson, 2000; Sarpkaya, 1988; Schriftgiesser, 1951) Not all government relations goals are achieved by meeting with the Minister. Rather, the literature suggests that it is often better to meet with bureaucrats to ensure that ideas are developed in such a way as to ensure that they will be acceptable to the bureaucracy when the minister raises the idea discussed at the meeting. Also too, increasingly it seems that governments are managed by "the centre", where decisions are made in the office of the Premier or Prime Minister, and as a result make advancing change more complex. As well, increasingly there seem to be individuals that are neither part of the bureaucracy, nor elected officers or political staff who advise politicians. Often these members of the so called "kitchen cabinet" are extremely influential in advising a politician. Sophisticated government relations campaigns must realize the role that such advisors play and include them in their efforts to influence public policy outcomes.

There is no science here as to what can go to the minister directly or what must not. It is dependent on the judgment of the government relations professional. Getting this wrong can mean the end of an idea, regardless of how good it is.

It appears from the findings of this study that college and university presidents have a basic understanding of the structure and function of government. Clearly from the examples that they used, and the off-the-record conversations they shared, their knowledge exists mostly on the personality-side of government. That is to say, that they are less likely to understand the nuances of the machinery of government, than they are to be good judges of character and to be able to establish good working relationships. In some cases, it appears that respondents are not sure about what is happening necessarily, but they know that something is happening, and that they should be “part of the game”. To be effective, government relations efforts must build in a more detailed sense of the structure and function of government, so that a policy might be influenced when it is drafted at a cabinet submission, not after when it is being implemented, as at that point it is much more difficult to alter. If the sector has a better sense of the processes beyond simply “talking to the minister” there may well be more opportunities where policy can be more naturally or appropriately influenced.

#### **5.4 How do colleges and universities organize themselves to conduct government relations? How are colleges and universities organized as individual institutions? How are colleges and universities organized as provincial advocacy associations?**

Although there is scant literature about the Ontario post-secondary education sector, the literature in the U.S. is more robust. This literature suggests that colleges and universities conduct government relations in two ways. First, individual institutions organize their own efforts to convince various levels of government to provide their

institution with funding for capital projects and earmarks. In doing so, the president of the college or university is the primary player, and most often acts as the “face” of the institution. (Cook, 1998) Increasingly, colleges and universities in the U.S. are employing both in-house lobbyists and external lobbyist to coordinate their activities. Typically, the president is the most senior individual, and there is either a vice-president of government relations or a director. These are often one-person operations, but larger, more aggressive colleges and universities have additional staff, and some with offices in the state capital or in Washington D.C. (Cook, 1998). Some, such as Cook (1998), have argued that government relations staffing strategies must be the result of detailed analysis of contextual issues (Cook, 1998). While others such as Brown (1985) and Williams (1986) have suggested that legislators report that the president and in-house lobbyists are more effective than external lobbyists. Second, the literature does show that colleges and universities in the U.S. do organize themselves to lobby on shared goals and objectives (Cook, 1998).

The Ontario findings are consistent with the American research literature in this area. In terms government relations, colleges and universities in Ontario are similarly structured to their counterparts in the American system. The president is the key person responsible for the function. In only a few instances are there others whose sole responsibility is government relations. In a few additional instances, there are individuals who have government relations as part of their responsibilities, typically added to public relations, marketing, communications, and alumni affairs. Colleges and universities both take a similar approach to the way they organize to conduct government relations. If it relates to an individual institution’s specific goals and objectives, especially related to

capital projects and program approvals, the institution lobbies on its own behalf outside of the sector association. If the goal of the college or university is system-wide issues and overall operational funding, they work with the sector association to advance these issues. Within this approach, this study also provides an important finding. Despite what the best practice literature suggests about “speaking with one voice”, the preponderance of the evidence is that all respondents – college and university presidents, government officials, elected representatives and those who could speak about sector associations – suggest that participants in the sector do not do this as well as they might, citing the universities are better at it than the colleges, but not by much. From the responses to this study, it may be surmised that universities are more likely to agree on issues and speak with one voice because their range opinion on issues is narrower. That is to say that they are more likely to agree on issues because they and their mandates are sufficiently similar, and their tradition of autonomy means that government affects them to a lesser extent than the college sector. Although there is no shortage of differences of opinion within COU, and the recent emphasis by some large research universities to have government further differentiate them in terms of their mandate and funding suggests that their differences will increase, it seems respondents to this study suggest that, until recently, universities did this better than colleges.

The hollow-core theory holds true as a valid descriptor of what occurs within this sector. Simply put, individual organizations will go out on their own and lobby outside of the efforts of the sector association when they do not feel that the sector association is representing their interests adequately enough. The data show that colleges and universities will lobby for their own interests when they perceive the sector association

does not represent their interests, or when they are engaged in a competitive process for capital dollars.

Colleges and universities organize themselves into sector associations on provincial and federal lines. The colleges in Ontario have created Colleges Ontario (CO) to lobby the provincial government and the Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC) to lobby the federal government. The two do not work together in lobbying, but do share information and data about the sector. Five institutions in Ontario (Conestoga, George Brown, Humber, Sheridan and Seneca), one in Alberta (SAIT) and one in British Columbia (BCIT) have created Polytechnics Canada to lobby Ottawa for applied research monies for their institutions, but this group is embryonic and their working together is just now evolving (Polytechnics Canada). For instance, they have completed a transfer agreement between members, and have hired a full-time Chief Executive Officer and Director of Policy to begin lobbying efforts at the federal level. The universities in Ontario have created the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) to lobby the provincial government, and the universities and colleges of Canada created the Association of Universities and Colleges (AUCC) to lobby the federal government. A group of thirteen large research universities in Canada (known as the G13) had joined together to lobby Ottawa for research dollars. These include the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, the University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, Université Laval, McGill University, McMaster University, the Université de Montreal, the University of Ottawa, Queen's University, the University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo and the University of Western Ontario. This effort largely occurs very separate from any other efforts, although there is a lot of benchmarking and data sharing.

In the college sector, the ACCC and CO do not do much work together, although they do share some data and information on the sector. In the university sector, the federal and provincial sector associations (AUCC and COU) cooperate to a greater extent than their equivalents in the college sector, particularly in sharing information and data on the sector. The college and university sector associations to date have not worked together at the provincial or federal level in their lobby efforts. It is unclear as to why this is, but it may simply be that associations view their prime stakeholder as one level of government or another, and respect the mandates of others. That is to say, CO and COU are provincial-focused associations and ACCC and AUCC are Ottawa-focused associations and each respects the other's mandate and jurisdiction. And perhaps simply there has not been a tradition of working together, until perhaps circumstances warrant such action. To date, they have not seen it either necessary or beneficial.

### **5.5 Are there differences in the way that colleges and universities organize themselves for, and conduct government relations?**

The literature is not particularly helpful in answering this question, because the literature is primarily American and does not distinguish between community colleges and universities, and as a result, there is little that we know about whether differences exist between the two different types of institutions. In the context of this study, there does not appear to be any significant differences between the way colleges and universities organize themselves to conduct government relations. The only differences are very minor. For instance, there are more universities that have senior individuals responsible for the function than at the college level, but only marginally. At the time of writing, six presidents in both colleges and universities have hired senior in-house individuals to manage and advise on government relations. Also too, three recent presidential hires in colleges and universities consisted of individuals who are former elected officials, one federal cabinet minister and one former mayor, and one individual who had senior experience in government as both Chief of Staff to the Ontario Premier and Secretary of Cabinet.

Both the colleges and universities work with their associations to lobby the government for more operational dollars and for issues of a system-wide nature, and both abandon their associations when their own capital or programmatic priorities warrant that they lobby on their own. All college presidents and most university presidents reported that they planned on employing external lobbyists to help with such efforts; this has already started happening.

One thing that may be different is that university presidents appear to utilize alumni to a greater extent in their lobby efforts. Given that universities have been around a lot longer than colleges in Ontario, the university sector does indeed have more alumni, and certainly more that have achieved financial success and occupy positions of power. University presidents are more apt to have alumni “pick up the phone” to voice concerns over impending issues or attend meetings with government officials. This is certainly a useful tactic that the college sector is only beginning to employ. A more strategic use of alumni or third-party advocates is certainly a best practice that should be used by the sector as a whole.

**5.6 How do colleges and universities utilize their provincial advocacy associations? How do colleges and universities perceive the role and usefulness of provincial advocacy associations? How do associations approach government relations?**

Here again, there appear to be negligible differences between colleges and universities. The data reveals that individual colleges and universities pursue their own specific interests related to capital projects primarily, and to a much lesser extent, to specific program and projects. Where individual institutions see benefit in banding together and using their sector association, is to advocate for operational monies and over all system-wide issues, and this is done through CO and COU. Colleges and universities appear to do this to the same extent. College presidents appear to have a higher regard for the effectiveness of CO, and report that they feel as though there has been continued improvements in their leadership, approach and effectiveness, arguing that the CO is

becoming more “strategic” and “political”. And as reported in Chapter Four, university presidents have quite disparate opinions on COU.

The sector associations currently approach government relations in a very similar way, and both approach government relations in manner consistent with that of how individual institutions approach government relations. It is reported that association heads advocate for operating dollars and system-wide issues. In both cases, they are described by the respondents to this study as becoming more “strategic” and “political”. In this regard, government officials also feel that the associations are evolving and engaged in more aggressive tactics and behaviours. Both associations utilize most of the behaviours and tactics described in the tactical and how-to literature, but have never been particularly aggressive, and certainly have never behaved in very publicly adversarial ways. As with most industry associations, members do complain that they do not have their unique needs met by the actions of the association which tries to balance the needs of many members.

In terms of their focus, both sector associations deal almost exclusively with the provincial governments, opting to allow their national bodies to lobby at the national level. In terms of Colleges Ontario, this remains completely true, although individual members do report lobbying the federal government. In terms of COU, it is reported that there are a few instances where they have made representations of Ontario’s interests to the federal government, primarily in the areas of research funding, but these are a limited number of instances.

## **5.7 Have colleges and universities changed their approach to government relations over time? If yes, in what ways?**

The literature in the U.S. suggests that post-secondary institutions in the U.S. are becoming more aggressive, hiring presidents with a perceived capacity for the function, hiring both in-house and external lobbyists, many establishing offices in their state capitals and in Washington D.C. (Cook, 1998). According to all respondents in this study, there have been changes to the approach colleges and universities have made to government relations. College and university presidents, along with current and former government officials all agree that colleges and universities and their associations have become more engaged and aggressive as it relates to government relations. Individual institutions are hiring lobbyists both in-house and external consultant lobbyists, and have attempted to be more “aggressive” and “proactive” in their government relations efforts. Individual institutions and sector associations are more engaged than ever before, although not a great deal of effort has gone into measuring value for effort.

The best explanation for why this has occurred is the notion that as government policy and programmatic features changed and included less formulaic distribution mechanism for monies, so too did behaviour. And as some have anticipated this changed and acted, others have seen the reactions of other presidents and have in turn, reacted themselves. As one university president said “When you see your colleagues “staffing up the function” what is one supposed to do but keep up?” What we do not yet know, and ought to be the subject of future research is the extent to which these efforts have provided an adequate return on investment.

**5.8 How do officials within government view the efforts of individual institutions and their representatives to affect government decisions? Have they observed any changes?**

There is very little literature on this topic. The “how-to” literature proposes general advice for practitioners of government relations, and as stated previously, there is very little that is specific to post-secondary education, particularly in Canada. The one study of significance to this question is Key’s 1993 study of the influence of the higher education lobby on members of the Kentucky General Assembly. Key found that politicians viewed university presidents as the best advocates for the institutions and that external lobbyists were not the best representatives for the institutions they were hired to represent, arguing that they lacked the legitimacy of the full-time university representative. Further, Key found that politicians also reported that they did not like the use of “entertainment” in the form of tickets and meals as a way of accessing and influencing decisions. Lobbyists who participated in the study, however, reported that it was one of the most useful tactics and behaviours to get time with politicians (Key, 1993)

Government officials who participated in this study were very forthcoming with their comments about institutions and the sector in general. All government officials and those that could speak about sector associations indicated that individual universities and COU have been more successful than individual colleges and CO at government relations. Most indicated that universities and COU were more successful in general, and some indicated that they were more successful at funding and finance in particular. Many attributed this to a position of power and autonomy for universities. Most seemed to

think that this might be changing, that CO is narrowing the gap. One government official said:

Colleges Ontario, until recently had been run as though the presidents were like a committee of Deputy Ministers who would express great consternation every now and again as to funding levels - as deputy ministers might within government. This would be done with a sternly worded letter or some passive-aggressive behaviour, but always in the context of great deference to their political masters. Lately, the new Colleges Ontario recognizes that not only must colleges act like they are more autonomous, they must do so in the full knowledge that in order to compete they must ramp-up their game and get more aggressive and creative. Now you wouldn't know the colleges are actually crown agencies – these guys have started to lobby like everybody else. And good for them for doing so. Maybe now their issues will be heard.

Most participants were asked if universities were more successful as a result of their superior efforts in government relations or if it were simply easier for universities and COU to exert influence because of a privileged position. Almost unanimously, government officials and those that could speak about sector associations responded by indicating that it was mostly their influence based on factors other than government relations efforts and skills.

## **5.9 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to examine government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. This study was the first systematic and academic

review of the perceptions of the leaders within the system who participate in government relations, and a first attempt at identifying and describing tactics and behaviours and organization. Most importantly, this study has made a contribution to the understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and to the literature. As well, the results of the study may inform key participants in the sector.

The study also provided an opportunity to reflect on the utility of the pluralist model of interest group behaviour and applied the hollow-core theory to this policy arena. Was this model useful in describing the behaviour of interests and interest groups in the sector? This model proved to be a good basis for analyzing the data. The findings suggest that this theory is a useful theoretical framework for understanding the nature of the policy community. This study also provides valuable insight into the hollow-core theory of pluralism, which posits that interests will band together for purposes of advocating when it is in their interest to do so, but will go off on their own in instances where their interests are not being met by the activities of the group, or simply act on their own when it is in their own interests to do so. Two important conclusions can be drawn from this study.

First, consistent with the pluralist and hollow-core theory, the post-secondary education sector in Ontario is made up of individual interests, in the form of individual institutions, and interest groups, in the form of a collection of those individual interests in sector associations, aimed at achieving common goals and objectives through education, government relations and advocacy. These interests operate in a pluralist way, competing for scarce resources along with other interests and groups and separately as individual institutions when the associations do not provide for their needs and it is in their interest

to do it alone. In the case of the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, there are only two groups that formally represent the collective interests of the individual institutions – CO and the COU. Based on the data collected as part of this study, individual institutions will join with others to conduct government relations as part of CO or COU when they believe it is in their interest to do so, and act on their own when they believe that their needs are not adequately met by participating as part of the group, or that they have a greater chance of success if they act alone. This is precisely as the theory posits.

CO and COU have attained the status of the “taken for granted” interest group as described by Grossman (2007), as the provincial government views individual colleges and universities, and their association as constituents or stakeholders that they must work with and do work with almost exclusively, and certainly to a much greater extent than any other individuals and groups.

Many of the college and university presidents, those that could speak about sector associations, and government officials did not refer at all to the role of unions or student groups in government relations and policy making. One might have expected that these groups would have played at least some role in the provincial policy network. When prompted to address whether these groups are involved in government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, their involvement was dismissed as extremely limited and described as “tangential”. One university president said that:

Students are described as our reason for being and the rationale for all that we advocate for. It’s for the students, after all. But beyond that, students have neither been an effective lobby nor have they been brought in to be a

real part of policy-making. Part of the problem is that the dominant student group – the CFS – is too radical and does not want to work together and compromise. They are too idealistic and left-wing. So because we can't work with the CFS, we look for more reasonable individuals. Occasionally we drag one along to a meeting to make people in government uncomfortable, but they are really not part of the relationship and decision-making.

One of the government officials said that:

Governments like to include students in photo-ops because it enhances the message that we are trying to get out. But for the most part, beyond some tokenism on committees and consultations, the student perspective is limited. I guess we figure we can surmise it ourselves, or that, some of us remember that some student groups, like the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) are more likely to seek to create havoc or pursue unrealistic goals and objectives and that is simply not productive or conducive to our objectives. Who wants a protester to distract from the intended purpose of a photo-op or policy announcement. They are not really involved in a meaningful way in government relations or policy-making. It's too bad, they should be, but that is not our tradition.

One former Minister suggested that:

If students realized that they have a capacity to effect change, but that they have to approach government differently, they would see change. As it is, we dread working with them because they don't really want to be realistic. In fact, they have become like the unions, they could have more power too, but they chose to take an adversarial approach to everything and as a

result are not a real partner in higher education policy-making. Don't they know you attract more bees with honey than vinegar? Government decision-making suffers when all the rightful partners are not genuinely included. They don't have to abandon all their principles when they join us and participate in government, but that's how they see it. You can't get everything thing you want all the time, but if they were a part of it, over time they would see that they get more of what they want by being included, that simply from shouting from the outside.

Further, the organization and behaviour of individual institutions and groups is quite clearly defined in the responses from the participants. In the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, individual colleges and universities engage in government relations, in similar fashion, to lobby the government to achieve their own capital goals and objectives, but invest resources and time into working with their sector association to lobby government for system-wide issues and operational dollars. It is important to note that the key players represented in this study are the main players in this discussion, as other important stakeholders such as students or unions play almost no role. Therefore, this is consistent with what Trick (2005) calls a "closed policy network," and with what Pross refers to as highly institutionalized pressure groups. As the data suggests, the policy community in higher education in Ontario is indeed quite "closed" and does not have, as Howlett suggests, a "large discourse community" that includes many diverse interests that are fully engaged by government. (Howlet, 2002, p. 241) While a couple of the respondents to this study mentioned the absence of real student participation in this policy community, none of the respondents to this study made any real reference to opening up the participation to any of the unions or faculty associations. As it stands the

data indicates that there is no eagerness to expand the network to include participants representing other interests. While unions and students are modestly active in advocating for their interests to government, and while student groups tend to be invited to participate in some consultations, these groups do not have a real and ongoing role in this policy community and are at best shouting from the outside. Among the respondents who participated in this study, there appears to be no indication of any genuine interest on behalf of the government, individual colleges and universities or those who could speak about sector associations, to do anything to better include, in a real way, these interests in their government relations efforts. The parties involved in the ongoing negotiation and dialogue about post-secondary education in Ontario appear to be quite entrenched in the tradition of a “closed” community and are not likely to change this behaviour. As Trick (2005) suggests, one of the potential downsides of this “closed” elite approach is a lack of creativity. While the data suggests that the post-secondary education sector in Ontario may be evolving in terms of its approaches to government relations, they are indeed engaged in trying to influence government decision-making. In this effort, the presidents and the associations are essentially competing amongst themselves, institution by institution, sector by sector for resources and policy decisions.

By studying the post-secondary education sector policy community in Ontario, and applying the hollow-core theory of the pluralist model, this allows for an analysis and better understanding of behaviour, outcomes and decision-making. One of the things that can be concluded from the data is that the model is a helpful theoretical framework for analysis. The role of the state it seems, in this context, is to continue to engage a narrow group of elite participants in closed and ongoing dialogue and relationship, with

extremely limited exceptions to this perpetual negotiation. There is no literature to suggest that student groups have had even marginal influence on government decision-making in Ontario, although Young has provided evidence of influence from the business sector in a policy area (Young, 2003). The choice of who was selected to participate in this study was based on the notion that the very nature of this policy community is such that there are a limited number of key players. The presidents of institutions, government officials (both elected and non-elected) and those that could speak about sector associations engaged in government relations were included in this study. This choice was directly impacted by the work of Pross and the policy community literature.

Individual institutions and sector associations do have a shared understanding of, and approach to, government relations. Although there are some differences between the colleges and the universities, for the most part, these institutions and sector associations engage in the same tactics and behaviours. The extent to which individual institutions and sector associations are becoming engaged is consistent with the literature from the United States where the function is better established (Cook, 1998). Although, as noted in the Methodology Chapter, the United States is not a great comparator for a number of reasons, the attitudes towards government relations as a function is clearly similar. Clearly, presidents of colleges and universities do feel similarly about the function. They normally are the focal point of activity and they are spending an increasing amount of time on the function.

While it does raise some questions, ideally the governmental arena must be made up of a healthy competition that forces interests and organizations to make their best case, and then the duly elected decision-makers weigh the public interest in coming to

conclusions and compromises about the allocation of scarce resources (Atkinson and Coleman, 1992). At the heart of the notion of pluralist theory is the idea that interests compete to influence government policy and funding. Groups that attempt to do this are called “interest groups” or “pressure groups” (Pross, 1975). Such groups have a number of basic functions. The most important of these are: interest articulation (communicating their position to governmental decision-makers); interest aggregation (where diverse member opinions are negotiated into positions on issues); political communication (the transmission of information to decision-makers and back to their members and often the wider public); participation in the rule-making function (where interest groups work hand-in-hand with bureaucrats and politicians to work about technical and complex issues); and legitimation (where groups confer legitimacy and support on the political system by virtue of their participation and interaction with government). According to Pross (1975), these groups include: business groups (those representing the private sector such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business); non-business groups (those representing unions or not-for-profit organizations, such as the Canadian Labour Congress or the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops); institutionalized groups (those groups that are permanent, well-established and organized, and have an on-going relationship with government); and issue-oriented groups (those groups that coalesce around a single issue, lack the institutionalized groups organization and permanence, and cease to exist when the issue has been dealt with). These groups tend to organize themselves to work with the level of government that affects them (Pross, 1975).

Further, these groups tend to exist within a field of public policy with a “constellation” of other participants such as government agencies, other pressure groups,

corporations, institutions, the media, think tanks, academics, and individuals (Pross, 1975). Pross (1975) states that these policy communities are divided into two parts which include “sub-governments”, which are comprised of a lead government agency and a very small group of interests that are included and consulted on government decision-making on a daily basis, and the “attentive public” which consists of the other actors referred to above who are engaged to differing extents and care to influence government decision-making, but are not part of the inner circle of on-going negotiation and consultation with government.

Using this taxonomy, CO and COU are clearly institutionalized groups that are focused on the provincial level of government. Pross states that institutionalized groups have five specific characteristics. First, institutionalized groups “posses organizational continuity and cohesion” (Pross, 1975 p. 10). In this regard, such groups are defined by formal organizational structures and processes, for both the delineation of work responsibilities but also communications within and outside the organization. Both CO and COU certainly possess these characteristics. Both have very formal structures that incorporate governance features and hierarchical function responsibilities. There are numerous committees both within the organizations and the sector, but also within government that representatives of the sector association and the sector itself, that characterize much of the ongoing relationship. In addition to the regular preparation of briefs and reports and the public relations and communications efforts that both associations engage in.

Second, Pross states that “institutionalized” groups “have extensive knowledge of those sectors of government that affect them and their clients, and enjoy easy

communications with those sectors”. This is entirely true of both CO and COU as both are quite expert in understanding how the government regulates and affects their institutions and their students, as well as being intrinsically entangled in government policy-making .

Third, institutionalized groups have a stable membership and “generally acquiesces in the policy directions taken by career and elected leaders” (Pross, 1975, p. 10). With the exception of the odd new member, which does not happen very often, the membership of both sector associations is extremely stable, as every institution in the sector belongs, and once they belong, the experience to date is they do not leave. Although a number of presidents of colleges and universities who participated in this study mused about leaving their respective sector association, each conceded that it was unlikely. Some have gone off and created new associations, such as the G10 or Polytechnics Canada, because “the sector association just does not represent our specific needs”. Although these are both organizations aimed primarily at lobbying the federal government, as one college president suggested:

Their creation does put pressure on the provincial sector associations to continue to realize that they must continue to strive to meet the needs and changing needs of all their membership, not simply the lowest common denominator.

As another college president suggested,

While some of the membership sounds-off once and a while about not getting their money’s worth, they won’t leave because they do see value in membership, and at the heart of these leaders is an sense for the overall public good. And frankly, I don’t think anyone has the stomach to leave.

Another component of this element of Pross's description of institutionalized groups is the notion that ultimately they acquiesce to the decisions taken by government officials. The data from this study was very clear. Although the sector does enjoy a certain autonomy from government, the universities even more so than the colleges, each believes that in the end, they must live with government decisions. As one university president suggested:

We might not like a decision of government, and we might mobilize members and influential alumni to lobby against it, but in the end they won't be any act of rebellion. It's not the Canadian way.

Certainly a number of those interviewed as part of this study used the phrase "live to fight another day" when responding to the notion of an unfavourable decision.

Fourth, Pross argues that:

Operational objectives are concrete and immediate and that general philosophies are usually broad enough to permit each group to bargain with government over the application of specific legislation or the achievement of particular concessions" (Pross, 1975, p. 10).

In many ways, the best way to describe the way the role of CO and COU has evolved is to say that these sector associations work with the government to determine how they are regulated. In both cases, whenever an issue arises, committees within the sector are established to "bargain" the application or implementation of government decisions, and this is certainly a common feature of the relationship (Clark, 2002).

Fifth, institutionalized groups will put “operational objectives” ahead of any “particular objective”. The notion that Pross suggests is that such groups will not risk the “credibility” of the organization on a particular issues, but will rather concede in order to live to fight another day. This, he argues, means that institutions will utilize a slightly more narrow range of lobby tactics so as not to employ any methods that might disrupt relations with the government too much and harm the long-term capacity of the group to perform its advocacy function (Pross, 1975, p. 10-11). This too is a very apt description of the operational history of both sector associations. As one of the individuals who spoke about sector associations suggested:

It’s too simplistic to think of every issue as a battle ground where one side must win and the other side must lose. While we would like to “win” on every issue we engage with government on, we are extremely cognizant of the government’s position too. While we like to believe the public wins when the sector wins, we know the government must balance what they do with us against other priorities and pressures. We are engaged in this relationship for the long run and must take a long-term view of success. Besides, what is the other option? End our relationship with government? Stop receiving government funding? This is not an option, so we are stuck with one another and we better get along and make it work as best we can.

In many ways it seems the health of the relationship is more important than any one negotiation or outcome. There is no doubt there have been times when the leadership and/or membership of the sector association has not been happy with the government over a particular decision, but clearly each side recognizes that they must get over their feelings about a particular issues or decision, and continue to work together. If they do

not, future decisions of government will not benefit from their participation, and neither side appears to want that.

A number of college and university presidents argued that they felt that their sector association sometimes “forgot” what their role was. One college president suggested that:

Sometimes these people forget they are a lobby organization. They are so ensconced with government they almost think they are part of government and not there to influence them. In many ways I believe that government does this on purpose – engaged the sector so much so that they lose a sense of what their original purpose is. After being so engaged with people, you lose the will to be aggressive towards them. They should never forget the association is there to fight with government to get what our members need, not get into bed with them.

As Sirluck (1977) suggests:

A university’s “secondary” relations with government must involve an element of conflict – if not of persons then at least of interests – because even while the parties are working together their responsibilities differ greatly.

Because institutions and sector associations are “stuck” with one another, in the end, they must indeed realize that maintain a positive on-going relationship, otherwise what is the alternative?

Both sector associations are engaged in numerous committees established by government to address issues and are consulted regularly. Both sector associations articulate and aggregate interests, engage in political communication and rule-making

with government, and legitimation. Individual colleges and universities have chosen to create provincial sector associations to attempt to influence the provincial government. As the hollow-core theory of the pluralist approach suggests, these individual institutions work together as a group where it is in their interest to do so, and separately on their own when their interests are not met by the sector association or where the position the sector association takes to government is not adequately reflective of their circumstances. One college president said:

Most of the time COP can come to a consensus on an issue and that consensus does enough to adequately reflect all the interests of the association, or the position is not significant enough to warrant any action other than complicit support. But in some instances the issue is too important to ignore, and either an opposing position must be articulated, or separate efforts to achieve some alternate end must be undertaken. In these cases our college will break ranks with the group, establish our own position and seek out to influence change on our own and in our own interest. It's not that we do not want to play nice with our colleagues in the association and "speak with one voice", it is because we have no choice and I owe it to my community, to my board and to my students to put our interests first. After all, we can't always accommodate everyone in consensus decisions and sometimes you let it go, and other times you can't, because that would be an abdication of my fiduciary duties as president of the college.

Beyond occasions when consensus decision-making leaves an individual institution feeling as though their interests are not being met, the findings suggest that there are

instances when individual institutions compete for capital dollars because that is the way that the program is designed.

What can be said with reasonable certainty from the findings is that presidents lobby through CO or COU on issues where the distributional issues between “competing” institutions are settled or predetermined. For example, college and university presidents are aware that increases in the operating grant will almost certainly be distributed by the formula, so working through their sector association would most likely result in their institution getting a fair or predictable portion of the pie. The same is true for increases in tuition fees and facilities renewal, with rare exception, such as Fair Funding for universities (Trick, 2005). It follows logically then that a college or university would not hire a lobbyist or spend internal resources lobbying for these issues over others that are more specific to the particular institution. And the corollary is that presidents lobby where there are no well established distributional rules or formulas, or where the government’s distributional behaviour may be harder to predict. Capital funding is the most obvious of these, but one might also include recent decisions about the distribution of funding for new graduate spaces for the university sector. One college president suggested that:

If the government continues to having funding programs for things like capital, where the success criteria for decisions appears to be political in nature, what do you expect us to do except spend more time and effort in government relations? If decision making was more predictable or formulaic, then we would not have to spend as much time at government relations. It’s that simple.

As suggested above, it follows logically that if there are more programs or funding delivered through more “marketized” mechanisms, and the government’s distributional behaviour was more difficult to predict, the more likely institutions would engage in independent lobbying outside of the efforts of their sector association. Also, as the interests of individual sectors and institutions become more diverse, the more likely individual institutions will engage in their own lobby efforts. For example, as the university sector considers a further differentiation between research universities and others, or when some colleges seek to establish polytechnic status, it is likely that the move to more independent lobbying will continue. And as such, the sector associations will find it more difficult to represent their members as their interests grow more and more diverse.

The government relations literature is clear about one point – government relations is an important function for any organization or sector that is largely regulated or funded by government (Mack, 1989). The function, given increased competition for funding in all sectors, is more important than ever, and as above, this is also true for colleges and universities. More than ever, individual institutions and sector associations are engaged in the activity, and there is a body of best practices that can be borrowed and modified from other sectors. As Hiebert (1991) and Sawatsky (1987) have suggested, there are more lobbyists than ever and the profession has grown in numbers as government has grown in complexity.

One of the important findings of this study is that the participants believe that more attention and in many cases resources need to be devoted to government relations in order to secure more public resources. One college president said that when questioned

by a member of the academic faculty as to why resources were being put into government relations when they could not afford to put more money into the classroom, s/he responded by saying “We can’t afford not to do this. In the end, this will bring more money to the classroom.” These broader public sector organizations are using public monies or tuition dollars to convince the government that they should have more public dollars. There are ethical issues associated with using public money to lobby government. The question of whether public organizations should use public money, or tuition money, to lobby the government that provides the money is a very real one. As one university president said “The notion of using public money to lobby government for more public money is immoral and simply unethical.”

While it would be ideal if this did not require significant expenditures of “public” resources, as a society, it is in the public interest to have as competitive a policy discussion as possible and a healthy competition between choices. It is also in the public interest to have interests well represented so they can make the best case they can to government. This may well be a simplistic characterization, as there is varied representativeness and many interests are not included or involved to the same extent. The issue then becomes, is this a level playing field? In the case of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, it appears that the bigger institutions are better able to afford to have dedicated professionalized resources to perform the function, and, although there is no study to prove this, the respondents that participated in this study believed that they were getting a fair return on their investment in government relations, and were moving, in some cases, to increase it further. One university president said:

We have hired someone to guide our efforts in government relations and we believe we are getting an adequate return on our investment. More than an economic return, it adds greatly to the perceived value of our brand with government. This helps ensure our relationship is relatively positive and efficient. We may expand the compliment of staff dedicated to the function even further.

In the past, perhaps those institutions and sectors that consistently succeeded did so in a simpler time, when government was smaller and simpler. The criticisms enumerated in the literature of the “good old days” were many, not least of which was that the “old boys network” (Castles, 1967; Cragg, 2000; Harrison, 1988) ruled who won and who lost. So what has occurred is that government has gotten bigger and more complex, and monies have grown scarcer, thus making competition for resources more challenging. Add to that the evolution of a professionalized function (Sawatsky, 1987) and a lobby industry, and you have a very visible manifestation of the above. And given the oft expressed concerns about the lobbyist as operating unethically in “back rooms”, there is good reason for concern.

This trend may also be coupled with a trend toward increased institutional differentiation in the post-secondary sector (Skolnik, 2003). In order to compete for funds, institutions have to make a case that they have unique needs, requirements and programming, such that the government will chose to fund them and not another. One of the overarching concerns is that government relations is often a zero-sum game. Simply put, money for one institution often comes at the expense of others, either in that sector or from other sectors.

Some contributors to the “how-to” literature are quite clear about what makes for successful government relations in general, but concede that the combination of tactics and behaviours necessary for success will differ with each individual case (Mack, 1989). Although there is little literature and few best practices that is specific to the post-secondary education sector, there are best practices in government relations that have emerged (Dubs, 1989; Hall, 1974; Kome, 1989; Mack, 1989). One of the clear lessons from this literature is that if individual institutions or associations are going to be successful at government relations, they ought to consider the application of these “best practices” from the literature as they devise their own approach to a particular goal or outcome. One such best practice that the post-secondary education sector ought to better employ is the notion of communicating to government with one voice. Both the “how-to” literature and the responses from government and sector association participants in this study are consistent in suggesting that this is the best way to convince government of the importance of the issue to the sector as a whole. As one government official said:

The extent to which the sector can speak with one voice limits the government’s ability to utilize “divide and conquer politics” where the government can play one interest off another, or simply dismiss the sector as ‘not knowing what they want.’

Another best practice identified in the “how-to” literature is the notion of creating alliances of other interests, organizations and third parties that will support and advocate for the interests of post-secondary. The post-secondary education sector ought to consider working to develop those alliances and consider doing more to increase the

public's awareness of issues so as to build a base of public support that should result in pushing the sector's issues higher on the government's agenda. As one college president said:

We didn't start an "education that's worth more" campaign because we needed to convince the government that a college education was important, we did it to get the general public to think the same and to convince government to invest more in the college sector. We have to stop focusing solely on telling government they should spend more money on us. Rather we have to convince the public that they should put the pressure on the government to spend more on the colleges. By doing so we are creating a political will that will make it very difficult for the government to ignore us. This is a very new tactic for us – this is part of the way CO is changing.

The literature suggests that organizations give careful consideration to what a particular lobbying campaign ought to look like given their unique circumstances and the context within which the individual or organization operates (Mack, 1989). The literature suggests that "campaign advocacy" should be adopted by the institution or the sector as their approach to government relations (Mack, 1989). As the name suggests, it is an amalgam of a specific, focused effort with a start and end. As Kirk (2008) has argued, there are five elements to a typical lobbying campaign. First, there is a desire or need for change. This may include an individual or sector association identifying a policy, regulation or legislation that they believe ought to be introduced, changed or removed. Second, interests should present a "solution" to government that is "win-win-win" for both the interest making the proposal, the government and the public. Third, a typical lobbying campaign should include what Kirk (2008) calls "complexity". By this she

means that because problems can be complex in nature, approaches should recognize this reality and include a variety of tactics such as third party endorsements, detailed analysis and demographic data, meetings, communications documents, grass roots campaigns, letter writing, appearance before committees, and new media techniques, to name just a few. Fourth, a typical lobby campaign should include patience and persistence, as the wheels of government can move slowly and building support for initiatives can take considerable time. And fifth, Kirk (2008) argues that a typical campaign also requires a sense for what realistic outcomes out to be considered as “wins” or as she suggests “qualified wins” which allows for the notion that outcomes are rarely complete wins for either side, but include some element of compromise. The findings are interesting in this regard. First, most respondents did mention many of the tactics listed by Kirk (2008), but the examples or cases they used to illustrate their understanding and activities did not include very “complex” lobbying campaigns. Second, the outcomes were never really well defined in any of the examples provided by respondents to this study. For example, many reported that their measure of success in government relations was “getting what we want”, but none of the respondents demonstrated any more detailed notion of what that meant. What if an institution asked for \$40m for a capital project and only received \$25m – is this success or failure? As Kirk (2008) suggests, colleges, universities and their associations should give additional consideration to the definition of success as part of their government relations plans.

## 5.10 Future Research

Cook suggests that it is tough to determine the effectiveness of government relations and lobbying efforts. She argues that it is “difficult to assess the impact of activity on public policy decisions” (Cook, p. 183). It is difficult to know if it works, but at the same time it is difficult to prove that it does not work. And given the importance of the outcomes, one might be reluctant to find out that it does work by not being successful in achieving one’s goals, such as securing capital funding. In order to determine with greater certainty what works and what does not, cases studies that focus very specifically on nuances are needed. Evidence of which particular tactics work in which particular instances would be very helpful. For instance, is it better to use third party advocacy to develop an awareness of funding issues, or should an institution or sector employ tactics that focus on crisis outcomes that would occur because of a lack of additional government funding? Or perhaps an institution or sector might consider threatening a government with an outcome, such as program cancellations or campus closures. The likelihood of this working would depend on a number of factors, such as the timing of an election, the impact of the closure on a community, whether or not the local MPP is a member of the government are all factors that must be considered on a case-by-case basis. All of these types of approaches are real and common in government relations, but the extent to which they can be successful, particularly in post-secondary education, depends on a multi-factoral analysis (Baumgartner and Leech, 1996; McDonald, 1999). The tactics are fairly well known, but when they work is less clear. For example, an institution that constantly “cries wolf” about negative impacts and threatens closures that never occur may find little success in the tactic. Another institution who has never

engaged in this tactic, may find success, particularly if there is high unemployment in the area the institution serves, and if it is in a key riding for the government as they near an election. Only after a number of these case studies are developed will there be a better sense of specifics of what works under which circumstances. We may never know with absolute certainty what works and what does not, because government relations and lobbying is made up of nuances, and in any given scenario a plethora of factors exist. Knowing each of these and their relation to each other is an impossible task. Analysts and pundits who try to explain why something occurred or did not occur often try to bring the response down to a simple pronouncement. This may well provide great insight, but for the most part it is probably overly simplistic. Pronouncing on the single reason may make for great sound bites on television, but do not bear academic rigour and scrutiny. Government relations is complicated and may well be more art than science (Mack, 1989). Despite the extent to which the “how-to” literature goes into great detail to identify all tactics and behaviours, the combination of efforts applied to the nuances and complexities of a situation are innumerate, and difficult to anticipate and prescribe. There may well be instances where an individual or group may be credited or blamed with a policy outcome. But more often than not there is a confluence of factors that contribute to an outcome. Perhaps the best practices of the most successful practitioners are those who are constantly adjusting with every change in nuance as they go forward, affect and react to their surroundings. If the conduct of lobbying and government relations is a function of subtleties, studying it and deconstructing its nuances is even more valuable. But only through continued research, reflection and the development of

case studies will a body of knowledge that will help to demystify the activity and better inform our understanding be developed.

While this review of the situation in Ontario is a valuable contribution to the literature, it would be desirable to expand this study to include the other provincial jurisdictions within Canada and also consider efforts aimed at the federal level of government. As well, it would be appropriate to go beyond the scope of this study and, through the use of case studies, consider the effectiveness of tactics and behaviours to the extent that this is possible. In this way we would know more about what is happening in other jurisdictions and we would learn more about the policy networks, communities in other provincial post-secondary sectors. This would allow for comparative analysis and add to our understanding of policy development in Canada. Filling in this gap with research done on post-secondary in jurisdictions within Canada would be a logical evolution from this study and an important contribution to the literature.

Further work should also look more deeply at the post-secondary sector as it relates to the other sectors in comparative perspective. Some other sectors, such as health care have a growing literature (Leatt and Mapa, 2003). Considering multiple policy fields in comparative analysis would be very useful in determining whether different sectors behave similarly or not. Further, extended research by political scientists in conjunction with higher education scholars on policy networks and communities and their application in post-secondary in Ontario and other jurisdictions would also be helpful to understanding the sector. A formal, joint approach to the study of government relations in the post-secondary sector would be an excellent pairing of the disciplines and

the application of the policy community and policy network literature, resulting in rich research.

### **5.11 Recommendations**

Both the literature reviewed as well as the data collected as part of this study provide clear conclusions and best practices in one area in particular - presidents of colleges and universities, and not external lobbyists, should continue to be the face of their institution's government relations and lobby efforts. As Cook suggests "Higher education is an "independent thinking lot". It is less slick. It looks more real." (p. 185) It appears from the findings of this study that government officials perceive that president and other internal college and university staff are seen as "more real" and add legitimacy to the function. As one former minister reported:

The president is the best person to advocate on behalf of the college or university. These are real people not hired guns who schlock tobacco today and defense contracts tomorrow. The only problem with this is that they are not very good at the strategic part or the political part. But if a good government relations person sets up the contact, assist with crafting the message and the ask, then there ain't no more genuine and legitimate face of the college or university. And if they bring along a student – it's tough to say no. They may be nutty professors in tweed jackets, but they are genuinely motivated to help students. These are the type of people I want to work with and develop win-win-win solutions.

One of the government officials who participated in this study said the following:

The other guys – the hired guns who are external lobbyists – give me the creeps. You feel like you are being professionally manipulated. These are snake oil salesmen. They only believe in what their clients are paying them to believe in. They don't have a commitment to anything or anyone except their businesses. They trade on favours and use their relationships with politicians to make money. They make me uncomfortable. So much so I don't even meet with them. I don't have to so I don't. If their clients want to meet, I am happy to do so, but I don't meet with external lobbyists.

Best practices in the literature suggest that government relations has grown more complex and requires more sophisticated approaches. In this regard, the post-secondary education sector ought to seek out such advice or supports to assist with the government relations needs, but clearly the findings suggest that the presidents or other internal staff are best to remain the face of their government relations and lobbying efforts. One former government official reported:

The emerging reality of in house lobbyists gives me some comfort. I wish they didn't need them, but they do. They understand our language, they understand how to help the machinery work and often can be an important buffer between the two parties – the president and the government. I get a great deal out of talking to them and I know they find our conversations useful too. It is as though we conspire to get things done. We each go back to our people and try to make things work. Without them, there would not be as much communication, as I am unlikely to talk to the presidents as much and have the same kind of candour. There is a need

and value in having not only a person who “gets government”, but someone who is not the president. There is a role for a working level effort. That level though does have to be senior enough to speak with authority, have credibility and be able to either make decisions or be able to access a decision instantly. If there is a gap at the president’s level and his and her representative is not simpatico, or if the government relations person cannot deliver what s/he says he can deliver, their credibility and capacity to be trusted and to negotiate is greatly hindered.

Another former government official reported that:

External lobbyists are less credible and although they are expert in how government works, I am less interested in working with them. Especially when the “celebrity lobbyist” is on the case – they are radioactive and I don’t like working with them. It is a “Catch-22, if you don’t work with them, it gets back to the minister or premier, if you do and you can’t deliver what they want, it gets back to the minister or the premier. So I have developed a policy that I avoid dealing with them if at all possible. I have a blanket policy that I don’t meet with lobbyists. I do meet with in-house lobbyists from the college and university sector, because as far as I am concerned, they are college or university employees.

One other area of best practice that has only been utilized in a significant way in the last twenty years is the use of third party advocates. As Mack (1989) and Cook (1989) suggest, this is a very effective way of getting issues on the public’s agenda and building support for ideas within the government. If one were to apply this to the post-secondary education sector in Ontario by engaging employers, students and parents, this could be a

very effective way to get college and university issues onto the public agenda and thereby garner additional government support and resources. As one former minister reported:

I was a member of provincial parliament for a long time and I don't recall, in all my years of canvassing door to door during elections, anyone saying "you need to put more money into post-secondary education". If you engage citizens, particularly the middle class parents, they will talk about their concerns about the increasing costs associated with post-secondary education. But it won't be the first thing out of their mouths. It's not the thing that gets them angry at the door. Elementary and Secondary education, the economy, taxes, health care and even the environment. But never has anyone ever said "we've go to do something about this" when I have knocked on their door during an election.

From the responses to this study, college and university presidents seem to be fully engaged in conducting government relations, but perhaps a little unsure about all aspects of the function. Clearly they share an understanding of government relations that is consistent with what the literature says it is. They also devote considerable time and resources to the function, but their responses suggest that although they are fully engaged they are a little unsure about the function. As one president suggested:

As a president I think I know what my colleagues are doing in government relations and lobbying, but I am not sure this is true. I always have the sense that somewhere, on any given occasion, one of my colleagues is doing something under the radar, employing some advantage that is not universally shared, meeting behind the scenes and making some kind of deal. And I don't know that it is happening, but I think it is. I also am at a loss to explain how some of my colleagues get capital project approved

when there is no public call for proposals. Why do some get and others do not? I suspect we chalk it up to “politics” but I have to compete with this and I don’t know what “this” is. So I figure I should be doing more government relations and lobbying, and I hope to God it works.

Cook (1998) suggests that there are two predominant reasons for this feeling. College and university presidents are not familiar with how government and politics works, so they are not as comfortable in their assessment and understanding of the situation and in their resulting actions or reactions. There is also a perception that government relations and lobbying contain a political element and involve nefarious or unethical activities and this is anathema to their approach to leadership. The literature also suggests that more must be done to plan, monitor and evaluate government relations activities (Mack, 1989). But what is also needed, as suggested above, is more research directly related to this sector and these activities. In so doing, a body of literature can be developed that, through case studies and comparative research from other jurisdictions in Canada, further our understanding and better inform the activities of practitioners.

Upon reviewing the best practices from the literature and reflecting on the data collected as part of this study, there are five areas for consideration for key players in the post-secondary education system in Ontario that might improve their likelihood of success in government relations.

The literature and the data from this study suggest there are a number of things that should be considered the key underpinnings of government relations in the post-secondary education sector and an appreciation for the complexity of the function and efforts to make government relations part of the overall organization. First, Individual

institutions should accept that government relations is an increasingly complex function and adopt the appropriate expertise for the function. The literature and responses from participants in this study suggest adequate supports for the function includes staff and resources and that these are in most cases lacking. As part of this, there ought to be two major operational and structural considerations. There should be a separate function, ideally reporting directly to the president. That is to say that a senior employee at the Vice-President or Director level be responsible for government relations. The other more common model is to have the person who is responsible for the dedicated function report to a vice-president, external relations. This appears to be most successful where the vice-president is the government relations practitioner and not simply someone to whom the government relations practitioner reports, thereby eliminating the likelihood of nuances being lost as information passes up and down the chain of command. A few of the respondents who have senior officials responsible for government suggested that if the president is going to continue to be the main player, the president is best served if the function reports directly to him or her. It should be an executive function; a senior person ought to have primary responsibility for the activity. This will afford the individual credibility to speak on behalf of the institution and to represent the college or university at the most senior levels of government.

Second, as for hiring external lobbyists, the data from this study suggests that they have a role and function and there may be instances where they should be included in a government relations strategy. This does not mean that everyone should go out and hire a lobbyist, or that simply bringing in “lobbyists” would solve our problems and improve our positions. As Cook notes:

As the number of players in the communities have grown, it has become more and more difficult to avoid fragmentation and friction within them. The fragmentation of interests has contributed to the difficulty of creating coalitions and working collectively. Because so many groups tend to cancel each other out, leaving public officials to make their own independent choices without as much reflect group preferences as these would be if fewer groups were involved (Cook, 1998, p. xvi)

The use of external lobbyists in a prudent and calculated fashion for focused purposes appears to be the best advice from participants in this study.

Third, the “how-to” literature and the data from this study suggests that every effort should be made to imbed government relations throughout the whole organization. Government relations efforts should also focus on educating senior executives, faculty and staff to build a culture that thinks and acts consistently in a way that supports the government relations priorities of the college or university. Rogue employees or partners are extremely problematic. Efforts at consistency are key. Inconsistency allows for “divide and conquer” politics and dilutes the work of the entire team. As the government officials who participated as part of the study suggested, when the message to government is not consistent and unified, it is much less effective. As one former minister said, “if they are divided and don’t know what they want, how are we to react? When in doubt, reward the intelligent ask.”

Fourth, if one of the major reasons for engaging in government relations is to improve partnerships in government and the availability of resources to the institution, then the best advice from respondents to this study suggests that institutions and the

sector association consider working with other ministries within the Ontario government beyond the MTCU. Further, institutions and the sector associations should consider working with other levels of government in a much more open minded and thorough and methodical way. There are, they argue, other opportunities for partnerships and recourse at all levels of government. Usually colleges and universities think only of their traditional funders, and often less so of municipal, regional and the federal government and the broader public sectors.

Fifth, individual institutions and the sector associations should set aside false notions of competition amongst themselves, because the reality is, the post-secondary education sector does not compete with itself, but rather, it competes with other policy sectors such as health care, the environment and social welfare. All are worthy priorities indeed. The “how-to” literature and the participants in this study suggests that the two sector associations representing the post-secondary sector in Ontario need to work together, to the extent possible, to forward a unified and systems approach to government so that the system functions better to support the goals of teaching, training and research. This might also include working with unions and student organizations as well, where appropriate.

The more we understand interest group activity, particularly in this policy field, the better we can utilize strategies for success. By developing an understanding of best practices unique to this sector, institutions and the sector as a whole will be better able to serve students and society. This may be best achieved if, where appropriate, colleges and universities work together with students, student groups and relevant unions to develop joint strategies for government relations. This should result in both increased

government support and better government decisions and public policy. While this may be ambitious or naïve, there may be instances where it can work and be a legitimate and effective strategy to advance the cause of post-secondary education with government.

## **5.12 Conclusion**

The post-secondary education sector in Ontario must consider the context within which institutions and the sector as a whole operates, and determine what type of approach to government relations is most appropriate. Undoubtedly, the context has changed and institutions and their sector associations are reacting to this change. At the time of writing, the university of Ottawa hired a former federal cabinet minister as president, Queen's University hired a former provincial cabinet minister to lead their government relations in an office in Toronto, and Seneca College hired a former Chief of Staff to a Premier and Secretary of Cabinet as their president. Is this simply a reaction to what has been described by many respondents as a necessity based on an increasingly complex and competitive environment where there is increased marketization of programs and distributional issues between institutions are not settled?

While this study provides an important glimpse into government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, and the utility of the pluralist model as a theoretical framework for analyzing the policy community, more research is needed. The study provides insight into the perceptions of the leadership within colleges, universities, government and those who could speak about sector associations. This study has provided some important insights into government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. This study plots institutional and sectoral activity in this

policy community, and finds that there are discernable patterns of behaviour consistent with the hollow-core theory of pluralism.

The participants in this study expressed an eagerness to learn more about what was happening in government relations across their sector and to improve, where possible, the effectiveness of their government relations efforts. This enthusiasm was based on two particular factors. First, the participants expressed great interest in knowing the answers to the questions guiding the study. Each requested a copy of a summary of the findings, and quite a few requested a copy of the entire study. Second, the participants also expressed an interest in better understanding how they were doing relative to their colleagues. As one president said:

I will be very interested in the findings. It will be a chance for me to understand if I am reading the context right, acting appropriately and understanding whether we are adequately resourced to succeed, especially relative to my colleagues.

Another president said:

I hope we discover we are not using our associations to their full potential, because I think there is more we can do together, but no one at the table of presidents agrees with me. Perhaps this study will give us the evidence we need to change our behaviour.

This study should encourage scholars and practitioners alike to consider the efficacy of the state of government relations in Ontario. More must be done to evaluate the performance of government relations efforts and investments. As one college

president reported “we know very little about whether what we are doing in government relations is working. We think it is, but we really have no idea.” A university president suggested:

Until we professionalize the monitoring, evaluation and measurement of the function, it won't be known if what we are doing really matters, or simply plays to our feeling of aggrandizement – as though playing in government circles is *the big leagues*. And we have to be careful not to confuse activity with results. Engaging in government relations can keep you very busy, and working with government can be hugely time consuming. But we have to ensure that we do not lose sight of our purpose – the results we need for our university.

One former government official suggested that:

Most of the presidents are lousy at government relations, but in the end, they are good people with a good cause, and our job is to see beyond all the glitz and do what is in the student's interest and the public interest. Sometimes it is hard though, because a sexy idea and good sales pitch is hard to resist and everyone wants to back a winner.

Another government official said “Some presidents get it and others don't. The problem in post-secondary is that the ones that don't get it, *really* don't!” Further research ought to be conducted to begin to delve further into this area of study. Not only will this increase our understanding of government relations in the context of the post-secondary education policy community in Ontario, but also the government relations practices of the sector.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Semi-Structured Interview Guide for College and University Presidents

#### *Information collected before the interview*

- Name of individual: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Interview Questions:**

1. How do you define government relations? What are some examples of the activities and tactics you would include in your definition of government relations?
2. Who is responsible for government relations in your organization? How is your college and university structured and organized to conduct government relations?
3. What is the major thrust of your institution's government relations efforts?
  - a. Finance and funding
  - b. Policy
  - c. Governance reform
  - d. Program Approvals
  - e. Business development (contract training, projects, etc.)
  - f. System wide reforms
4. How does your organization define success in government relations? What works? What doesn't? Please think of a recent example of what has worked well and what has not worked well.
5. Have your government relations efforts changed over time?
6. What have you learned from your experience in the area of government relations?
7. Do government relations differ between the colleges and universities in Ontario? If yes, how so?
8. What are your perceptions of the effectiveness of efforts of ACAATO and COU in government relations in post-secondary? Please explain and elaborate.
9. Have the efforts and tactics of the associations changed over time? If yes, how so?

## Appendix B

### Semi-Structured Interview Guide for those that could speak about Sector Associations

#### *Information collected before the Interview*

- Name of individual: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Interview Questions:**

1. How do you define government relations? What are some examples of the activities and tactics you would include in your definition of government relations?
2. Who is responsible for government relations in your organization? How is your college and university structured and organized to conduct government relations?
3. What is the major thrust of your institution's government relations efforts?
  - a. Finance and funding
  - b. Policy
  - c. Governance reform
  - d. Program Approvals
  - e. Business development (contract training, projects, etc.)
  - f. System wide reforms
4. How does your organization define success in government relations? What works? What doesn't? Please think of a recent example of what has worked well and what has not worked well.
5. Have your government relations efforts changed over time?
6. What have you learned from your experience in the area of government relations?
7. Do government relations differ between the colleges and universities in Ontario? If yes, how so?
8. What are your perceptions of the effectiveness of efforts of ACAATO and COU in government relations in post-secondary? Please explain and elaborate.
9. Have the efforts and tactics of the associations changed over time? If yes, how so?

## Appendix C

### Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Current and Former Government Officials

#### *Information collected before the Interview*

- Name of individual: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Interview Questions:**

1. How do you define government relations? What are some examples of the activities and tactics you would include in your definition of government relations?
2. How successful have colleges and universities been at influencing government policy in the following areas?
  - a. Finance and funding
  - b. Policy
  - c. Governance reform
  - d. Program Approvals
  - e. Business development (contract training, projects, etc.)
  - f. System wide reforms
3. You have observed the behaviour of individual institutions and sector associations. What government relations efforts work and which do not?
4. Have government relations efforts of individual and associations changed over time?
5. Do government relations differ between the colleges and universities in Ontario? If yes, how so?
6. What are your perceptions of the effectiveness of efforts of ACAATO and COU in government relations in post-secondary? Please explain and elaborate.
7. Have the efforts and tactics of the associations changed over time? If yes, how so?

## Appendix D

### Draft Letter to be sent to College and University Presidents

*OISE Letterhead*

Dear XXXXX:

#### **RE: Doctoral Research – Government Relations in the Post-Secondary Education Sector in Ontario**

I am writing to seek your consent to be interviewed as part of my doctoral research. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. My dissertation will examine government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and my supervisor is Dr. Glen A. Jones.

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine how colleges and universities in Ontario conduct government relations. The data for the study will be collected through open-ended interviews with key informants such as yourself in 10 colleges and 10 universities in Ontario. The selection of informants is based on a convenient, non-random sample of presidents of colleges and universities. The choice of institutions is based on two major factors – location and size. It is very important to ensure that smaller cities and rural parts of the province are included as well as the larger urban centres. It is also thought that you have much to contribute to a better understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. In addition, I will also conduct similar interviews with officials from key post-secondary associations such as Colleges Ontario (CO), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC), **the Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC)**, and senior provincial government officials.

This subject matter has not been studied in a formal way and I believe that this research will make a much needed contribution to the literature and to our understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario.

The interview questions have been pre-tested with college and university personnel similar to yourself in non-participating colleges and universities. The interview should take 45 minutes to an hour to complete at a location convenient to you by mutual agreement. I will be conducting the interview and taking notes. I prefer to audio tape the interview to ensure accuracy of the notes. The tapes will not be transcribed. If you are uncomfortable with this it is not necessary. Please note that

participation is completely voluntary and that responses will not be evaluated or judged. You are free to decline to answer any questions during the interview and you may end the interview at any point and may choose to withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences.

The research proposal has been through an ethical review process. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and that every effort will be made to ensure that responses are anonymous. No individual, college or university, institution or official will be identified in the data reported. Responses may be identified by generic positions. For example, “senior administrators have divided opinions on...” All data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of my dissertation. I may also choose to include the findings from the data in other publications or public presentations.

I will also inform you by letter when the thesis is completed and approved and you may have a summary of the thesis at that time should you request a copy.

Attached is a consent form. Please complete the form and I will collect it when we meet for our interview. If you have any questions regarding this project or the format of the interview, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My supervisor is also available to answer any questions you might have at any time. His contact information is as follows:

Dr. Glen A. Jones  
Professor and Associate Dean, Academic  
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
of the University of Toronto  
252 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1V6  
Phone: (416) 923-6641 ext. 7837  
Fax: (416)926-4741  
[gjones@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:gjones@oise.utoronto.ca)

My contact information is below. Please address any correspondence intended for me to the following address:

**Peter P. Constantinou**  
**486 Greenock Drive**  
**Maple, Ontario**  
**L6A 1M6**  
**Telephone: (905) 303-8790**  
**Fax : (905) 303-8108**  
**Email: [peter.constantinou@rogers.com](mailto:peter.constantinou@rogers.com)**

I hope that you will agree to participate in the study as I believe that it will generate some interesting and important data regarding government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Peter P. Constantinou

## Appendix E

### Draft Consent form for Meetings with College and University Presidents

Date

To the Participants in the Study,

The purpose of this doctoral research is to better understand how colleges and universities conduct government relations in Ontario.

During the interview, I will ask you questions about government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. As the interview proceeds, I may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and the reasons you believe the things you do. After the interview, I will write brief notes that will be used to assist me in remembering the surroundings of the interview (i.e., characteristics of the site).

If you agree, please sign the letter below. By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

You are welcome to contact the Office of Research Ethics at: [ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca) or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

#### Consent:

I agree to be interviewed as part of a doctoral dissertation project being conducted by Peter Constantinou under the supervision of Dr. Glen Jones regarding government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario. I understand that I will be asked questions about my perceptions of government relations in post-secondary in Ontario. I understand that the data collected during this interview will be incorporated into the dissertation and that my responses will be kept confidential and that every effort will be made to ensure that responses are anonymous. No individual, college or university, institution or official will be identified in the data reported. In addition to the data being used for the dissertation, I may also choose to include in other publications or public presentations.

I note that I am free to terminate this interview at any time and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or judgment. **Should I choose to withdraw at any time, all data will be destroyed upon notification.** I may also choose not to answer any question in the interview. At no time will my responses be judged or evaluated and I will be at no

risk of harm. I may also request that any information be eliminated from the project. Finally, I am free to ask any questions about the research and my involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings.

I understand that all data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the author's home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the dissertation. **I understand that participant names will be deleted from interview documents and replaced with code numbers. This applies to both hard and electronic copies of all data. The listing of code numbers and the documents that contain the codes will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets. The electronic versions will be kept on separate hard drives on separate computers with both firewalls and password protection.**

<p>Peter P. Constantinou, Candidate, Theory and Policy Studies The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Telephone: (905) 303-8790 Fax : (905) 303-8108 <a href="mailto:peter.constantinou@rogers.com">peter.constantinou@rogers.com</a></p>	<p>Dr. Glen A. Jones Professor and Associate Dean, Academic The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Phone: (416) 923-6641 ext. 7837 Fax: (416)926-4741 gjones@oise.utoronto.ca</p>
--	--

I fully understand the above terms and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to participate:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you would like a copy of the summary of the final thesis when completed and approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audiotaped \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you wish to review a copy of my interview notes: \_\_\_\_\_

There are two copies of this letter – please sign both. Keep one copy for your files and I will keep one.

## Appendix F

### Script for Telephone Follow-up Call for College and University Presidents

Hi, my name is Peter Constantinou and I am following up with you regarding a letter I sent you dated XXXX requesting your participation in a survey for my doctoral dissertation research. Have had an opportunity to consider my request?

If yes, then could we please arrange a time that works for your schedule? I am happy to meet at a location that is convenient to you. May I remind you that the interview should take us 45 minutes to an hour to complete. I will be conducting the interview and taking notes. I would like to audio tape the interview also to ensure accuracy of the notes. If you are uncomfortable with this, it is not necessary. Please note that you are free to end the interview at any point and you are free to withdraw your participation in this study at any time. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the research and your involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings of the study.

The research proposal has been through an ethical review. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential. No individual, college or university will be identified in the data reported. Responses may be identified by generic positions. For example, “senior administrators have divided opinions on...” All data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of my dissertation.

If you agree, I will collect the completed and signed consent form just prior to the start of our interview.

If no, then I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me. Best wishes.

## Appendix G

### Draft Letter to be sent to those who could speak about Sector Associations

*OISE Letterhead*

Dear XXXXX:

#### **RE: Doctoral Research – Government Relations in the Post-Secondary Education Sector in Ontario**

I am writing to seek your consent to be interviewed as part of my doctoral research. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. My dissertation will examine government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and my supervisor is Dr. Glen A. Jones.

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine how colleges and universities in Ontario conduct government relations. The data for the study will be collected through open-ended interviews with key informants such as yourself in 10 colleges and 10 universities in Ontario. The selection of informants is based on a convenient, non-random sample of presidents of colleges and universities. The choice of institutions is based on two major factors – location and size. It is very important to ensure that smaller cities and rural parts of the province are included as well as the larger urban centres. It is also thought that you have much to contribute to a better understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. In addition, I will also conduct similar interviews with officials from key post-secondary associations such as Colleges Ontario (CO), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC) and senior provincial government officials.

This subject matter has not been studied in a formal way and I believe that this research will make a much needed contribution to the literature and to our understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario.

The interview questions have been pre-tested with college and university personnel similar to yourself in non-participating colleges and universities. The interview should take 45 minutes to an hour to complete at a location convenient to you by mutual agreement. I will be conducting the interview and taking notes. I prefer to audio tape the interview to ensure accuracy of the notes. The tapes will not be transcribed. If you are uncomfortable with this it is not necessary. Please note that participation is completely voluntary responses will not be evaluated or judged. You are free to decline to answer any questions during the interview and you may end the

interview at any point and may choose to withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences.

The research proposal has been through an ethical review process. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and that every effort will be made to ensure that responses are anonymous. No individual, college or university, institution or official will be identified in the data reported. Responses may be identified by generic positions. For example, “senior administrators have divided opinions on...” All data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of my dissertation. I may also choose to include the findings from the data in other publications or public presentations.

I will also inform you by letter when the thesis is completed and approved and you may have a summary of the thesis at that time should you request a copy.

Attached is a consent form. Please complete the form and I will collect it when we meet for our interview. If you have any questions regarding this project or the format of the interview, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My supervisor is also available to answer any questions you might have at any time. His contact information is as follows:

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Professor and Associate Dean, Academic  
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
of the University of Toronto  
252 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1V6  
Phone: (416) 923-6641 ext. 7837  
Fax: (416)926-4741  
[gjones@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:gjones@oise.utoronto.ca)

My contact information is below. Please address any correspondence intended for me to the following address:

Peter P. Constantinou  
486 Greenock Drive  
Maple, Ontario  
L6A 1M6  
Telephone: (905) 303-8790  
Fax : (905) 303-8108  
Email: [peter.constantinou@rogers.com](mailto:peter.constantinou@rogers.com)

I hope that you will agree to participate in the study as I believe that it will generate some interesting and important data regarding government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Peter P. Constantinou

## Appendix H

### Draft Consent form for Meetings with those who could speak about Sector Associations

Date

To the Participants in the Study,

The purpose of this doctoral research is to better understand how colleges and universities conduct government relations in Ontario.

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If you agree, please sign the letter below. By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

You are welcome to contact the Office of Research Ethics at: [ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca) or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

#### Consent:

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I note that I am free to terminate this interview at any time and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or judgment. **Should I choose to withdraw at any time, all**

**data will be destroyed upon notification.** I may also choose not to answer any question in the interview. At no time will my responses be judged or evaluated and I will be at no risk of harm. I may also request that any information be eliminated from the project. Finally, I am free to ask any questions about the research and my involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings.

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<p>Peter P. Constantinou, Candidate, Theory and Policy Studies The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Telephone: (905) 303-8790 Fax : (905) 303-8108 <a href="mailto:peter.constantinou@rogers.com">peter.constantinou@rogers.com</a></p>	<p>Dr. Glen A. Jones Professor and Associate Dean, Academic The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Phone: (416) 923-6641 ext. 7837 Fax: (416)926-4741 gjones@oise.utoronto.ca</p>
--	--

I fully understand the above terms and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to participate:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you would like a copy of the summary of the final thesis when completed and approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audiotaped \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you wish to review a copy of my interview notes: \_\_\_\_\_

There are two copies of this letter – please sign both. Keep one copy for your files and I will keep one.

## Appendix I

### Script for Telephone Follow-up Call for those who could speak about Sector Associations

Hi, my name is Peter Constantinou and I am following up with you regarding a letter I sent you dated XXXX requesting your participation in a survey for my doctoral dissertation research. Have had an opportunity to consider my request?

If yes, then could we please arrange a time that works for your schedule? I am happy to meet at a location that is convenient to you. May I remind you that the interview should take us 45 minutes to an hour to complete. I will be conducting the interview and taking notes. I would like to audio tape the interview also to ensure accuracy of the notes. If you are uncomfortable with this, it is not necessary. Please note that you are free to end the interview at any point and you are free to withdraw your participation in this study at any time. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the research and your involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings of the study.

The research proposal has been through an ethical review. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential. No individual, college or university will be identified in the data reported. Responses may be identified by generic positions. For example, “senior administrators have divided opinions on...” All data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of my dissertation.

If you agree, I will collect the completed and signed consent form just prior to the start of our interview.

If no, then I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me. Best wishes.

## Appendix J

### **Draft Letter to be sent to current and former Government Officials at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

*OISE Letterhead*

Dear XXXXX:

#### **RE: Doctoral Research – Government Relations in the Post-Secondary Education Sector in Ontario**

I am writing to seek your consent to be interviewed as part of my doctoral research. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. My dissertation will examine government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario and my supervisor is Dr. Glen A. Jones.

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine how colleges and universities in Ontario conduct government relations. The data for the study will be collected through open-ended interviews with key informants such as yourself in 10 colleges and 10 universities in Ontario. The selection of informants is based on a convenient, non-random sample of presidents of colleges and universities. The choice of institutions is based on two major factors – location and size. It is very important to ensure that smaller cities and rural parts of the province are included as well as the larger urban centres. It is also thought that you have much to contribute to a better understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. In addition, I will also conduct similar interviews with officials from key post-secondary associations such as Colleges Ontario (CO), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC) and senior provincial government officials.

This subject matter has not been studied in a formal way and I believe that this research will make a much needed contribution to the literature and to our understanding of government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario.

The interview questions have been pre-tested with college and university personnel similar to yourself in non-participating colleges and universities. The interview should take 45 minutes to an hour to complete at a location convenient to you by mutual agreement. I will be conducting the interview and taking notes. I prefer to audio tape the interview to ensure accuracy of the notes. The tapes will not be transcribed. If you are uncomfortable with this it is not necessary. Please note that participation is completely voluntary and that responses will not be evaluated or judged. You are free to decline to answer any questions during the interview and you

may end the interview at any point and may choose to withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences.

The research proposal has been through an ethical review process. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and that every effort will be made to ensure that responses are anonymous. No individual, college or university, institution or official will be identified in the data reported. Responses may be identified by generic positions. For example, “senior administrators have divided opinions on...” All data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of my dissertation. I may also choose to include the findings from the data in other publications or public presentations.

I will also inform you by letter when the thesis is completed and approved and you may have a summary of the thesis at that time should you request a copy.

Attached is a consent form. Please complete the form and I will collect it when we meet for our interview. If you have any questions regarding this project or the format of the interview, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My supervisor is also available to answer any questions you might have at any time. His contact information is as follows:

Dr. Glen A. Jones  
Professor and Associate Dean, Academic  
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
of the University of Toronto  
252 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1V6  
Phone: (416) 923-6641 ext. 7837  
Fax: (416)926-4741  
[gjones@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:gjones@oise.utoronto.ca)

My contact information is below. Please address any correspondence intended for me to the following address:

Peter P. Constantinou  
486 Greenock Drive  
Maple, Ontario  
L6A 1M6  
Telephone: (905) 303-8790  
Fax : (905) 303-8108  
Email: [peter.constantinou@rogers.com](mailto:peter.constantinou@rogers.com)

I hope that you will agree to participate in the study as I believe that it will generate some interesting and important data regarding government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Peter P. Constantinou

## Appendix K

### Draft Consent form for Meetings with current and former Government Officials at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Date

To the Participants in the Study,

The purpose of this doctoral research is to better understand how colleges and universities conduct government relations in Ontario.

During the interview, I will ask you questions about government relations in the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. As the interview proceeds, I may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and the reasons you believe the things you do. After the interview, I will write brief notes that will be used to assist me in remembering the surroundings of the interview (i.e., characteristics of the site).

If you agree, please sign the letter below. By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

You are welcome to contact the Office of Research Ethics at: [ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca) or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

#### Consent:

I agree to be interviewed as part of a doctoral dissertation project being conducted by Peter Constantinou under the supervision of Dr. Glen Jones regarding government relations in the post-secondary sector in Ontario. I understand that I will be asked questions about my perceptions of government relations in post-secondary in Ontario. I understand that the data collected during this interview will be incorporated into the dissertation and that my responses will be kept confidential and that every effort will be made to ensure that responses are anonymous. No individual, college or university, institution or official will be identified in the data reported. In addition to the data being used for the dissertation, I may also choose to include in other publications or public presentations.

I note that I am free to terminate this interview at any time and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or judgment. **Should I choose to withdraw at any time, all data will be destroyed upon notification.** I may also choose not to answer any question

in the interview. At no time will my responses be judged or evaluated and I will be at no risk of harm. I may also request that any information be eliminated from the project. Finally, I am free to ask any questions about the research and my involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings.

I understand that all data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the author's home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the dissertation. **I understand that participant names will be deleted from interview documents and replaced with code numbers. This applies to both hard and electronic copies of all data. The listing of code numbers and the documents that contain the codes will be kept in separate locked filling cabinets. The electronic versions will be kept on separate hard drives on separate computers with both firewalls and password protection.**

<p>Peter P. Constantinou, Candidate, Theory and Policy Studies The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Telephone: (905) 303-8790 Fax : (905) 303-8108 <a href="mailto:peter.constantinou@rogers.com">peter.constantinou@rogers.com</a></p>	<p>Dr. Glen A. Jones Professor and Associate Dean, Academic The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Phone: (416) 923-6641 ext. 7837 Fax: (416)926-4741 gjones@oise.utoronto.ca</p>
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I fully understand the above terms and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to participate:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you would like a copy of the summary of the final thesis when completed and approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audiotaped \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you wish to review a copy of my interview notes: \_\_\_\_\_

There are two copies of this letter – please sign both. Keep one copy for your files and I will keep one.

## **Appendix L**

### **Script for Telephone Follow-up Call for current and former Government Officials at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

Hi, my name is Peter Constantinou and I am following up with you regarding a letter I sent you dated XXXX requesting your participation in a survey for my doctoral dissertation research. Have had an opportunity to consider my request?

If yes, then could we please arrange a time that works for your schedule? I am happy to meet at a location that is convenient to you. May I remind you that the interview should take us 45 minutes to an hour to complete. I will be conducting the interview and taking notes. I would like to audio tape the interview also to ensure accuracy of the notes. If you are uncomfortable with this, it is not necessary. Please note that you are free to end the interview at any point and you are free to withdraw your participation in this study at any time. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the research and your involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings of the study.

The research proposal has been through an ethical review. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential. No individual, college or university will be identified in the data reported. Responses may be identified by generic positions. For example, “senior administrators have divided opinions on...” All data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office and will be destroyed five years after the completion of my dissertation.

If you agree, I will collect the completed and signed consent form just prior to the start of our interview.

If no, then I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me. Best wishes.

## Appendix M

### **Draft Letter to be sent to current and former Government Officials at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

*OISE Letterhead*

Dear XXXXX:

#### **RE: Doctoral Research – Government Relations in the Post-Secondary Education Sector in Ontario**

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## Appendix N

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Thank you in advance for your participation.

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Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please initial if you would like a copy of the summary of the final thesis when completed and approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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