

Ministry of Training,
Colleges and Universities

Ministère de la Formation
et des Collèges et Universités



Minister

Ministre

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 326-1600
Facsimile (416) 326-1656

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone (416) 326-1600
Télécopieur (416) 326-1656



May 29, 2003

Mr. Dale Patterson
Chair
Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board
9th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale".

Dear Mr. Patterson,

This letter is to inform you of recent policy decisions that have been made in relation to the *Postsecondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, (PSECE Act) and the implications these decisions may have for the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (the board).

Over the past few months, the ministry has been approached by a number of institutions seeking to either amend existing legislation in order to expand their degree granting authority or to obtain new legislation to offer degrees in Ontario. This has raised a number of significant policy considerations for the ministry, particularly with respect to whether the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities will support private bills for institutions seeking new legislation or amendments to existing legislation for degree granting authority or whether institutions should be required to seek a ministerial consent.

Under the PSECE Act, an institution seeking new degree granting authority, or changes to its current degree granting authority, has the option of applying for ministerial consent or seeking an act (or amendments to an existing act) of the legislature. In accordance with the PSECE Act and its regulations, an application for ministerial consent is subject to a review of the board and (for private institutions) is required to provide student protection measures. An institution seeking new legislation, or amendments to its legislation, is not currently subject to either of these conditions.

Given the differences in these two paths, and the commitment of the government to ensuring quality degree programs and the protection of student financial investment, I have made the following decisions:

- 1 I will support private bills with *amendments* to existing legislation for degree granting authority that meet the following criteria:
 - the institution has had legislation in place for a minimum of 10 years;
 - the organization and proposed program(s) are reviewed by PEQAB and receive a positive recommendation;
 - new programs will undergo regular reviews, e.g., PEQAB, OCGS, Undergraduate Review Program Audit Committee;
 - institutions are required to include provisions in legislation requiring them to adhere to similar student protection measures as are required of private institutions that go through the ministerial consent process;
 - a private institution must provide a written commitment that it will not seek provincial operating or capital support.

If the institution has had legislation in place less than 10 years, then the institution would be required to seek a ministerial consent. The minister would only consider supporting amendments to legislation once the period for legislation plus consent totals 10 years.

2. I will not support *new* legislation for degree-granting authority until two 5- year consent cycles have been completed.

Under this policy, any new private bills would not receive the Minister's support for at least 10 years. Institutions wanting degree-granting authority would be required to seek a ministerial consent under the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*.

I would only support new legislation if an institution:

- has successfully passed two consent cycles (10 years), including organizational and program reviews;
- ensures new programs will undergo regular reviews, e.g., PEQAB, OCGS, COU's Undergraduate Review Program Audit Committee; and

- institutions include provisions in legislation requiring them to adhere to similar student protection measures as required of private institutions that go through the ministerial consent process;
- a private institution must provide a written commitment that it will not seek provincial operating or capital support.

These decisions have implications for the board for two reasons. First, fewer institutions will now meet the criteria for getting my support in relation to new legislation and therefore institutions that might have gone forward with legislation will now need to apply for ministerial consent. Two such institutions that have recently been informed they will not have their legislation supported are Canterbury College and Nalanda College of Buddhist Studies. Both colleges have indicated that they will likely apply for consent.

The second implication for the board is in relation to those institutions that will have amendments to their legislation supported, conditional on - among other things - a successful review by the board. Two institutions that are currently in this situation are the Institute for Christian Studies and Tyndale College and Seminary. Tyndale has recently gone through a board review, but the Institute for Christian Studies will need to submit to both a program and an organizational review to have its legislation supported. Please see attached chart for a complete requirement list of each institution.

I look forward to your continued support in ensuring the quality of degree programs in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Dianne Cunningham
Minister

Attachment