Ontario College Administrative Staff Association
OCASA
APACO
Association du personnel administratif des collèges de l'Ontario

To: Linda Franklin, President & CEO, Colleges Ontario
Anne Sado, Chair, Committee of Presidents
Dr. Tony Tilly, Vice-Chair, Committee of Presidents
Don Sinclair, Executive Director, College Compensation & Appointments Council

From: Chris Fliesser, President, OCASA

Date: March 31, 2010

Re: Ontario Budget: Bill 16 and "Restraint Measures"

Following the recent Ontario budget, Bill 16 (Schedule 25, Sections 6-12) outlines a freeze on "compensation structures". This has caught many of us by surprise, particularly since those who are being affected were not consulted in the months leading up to the budget announcement.

Clearly there is still confusion about exactly how this will be interpreted and implemented. Add to it the timing of transitioning into a new governance structure for colleges, and clarity is less certain.

OCASA was formed in 1995 so that administrative staff could be represented during the social contract discussions. The vast majority of administrators voted in favour of this critical formation (which was also endorsed by all stakeholders, including the college presidents).[1]

Since that time, OCASA has continued to advocate on behalf of administrative staff, on matters that go beyond compensation. We believe in consultation, information sharing, problem solving and a professional approach to addressing the issues that challenge administrators in fulfilling the college mandate. We are the very people who implement directives and strategic plans and have consistently demonstrated these values in our ACC consultations and partner communications.

Therefore, OCASA strongly recommends the following:

1. **That the newly formed College Employer Council (and by extension, the Human Resources Steering Committee) fully includes OCASA in consultation and determination in matters relating to administrative compensation guidelines during these coming days and weeks.**
2. **That OCASA be included as a full partner in discussions about items that have an impact on workplace matters for administrative staff, now and moving forward.**

College administrators are experts in creative problem solving and doing more with less, while still excelling at delivering quality college education. Following on the next page are the concerns that administrators have expressed. We look forward to working together to address these issues.

[1]Today our members include VPs, Directors, Deans/Assoc. Deans/Chairs and Managers across all areas of colleges. While we represent about 40% of administrative staff, our members join voluntarily. In many colleges we enjoy better than 50% membership, and our membership is growing.

157 Adelaide Street West, Suite 410, Toronto, Ontario M5H 4E7
Phone: 1-866-742-5429 Fax: 1-866-742-5430 Email: info@ocasa.on.ca

Bill 16 and Restraint Measures: OCASA's response

While these concerns are in direct response to the budget, we also know that administrators have been assuming greater responsibilities with fewer resources – for some time. They have been stretched, and stretched again. In some colleges, budget limitations result in inequities for administrative staff. It seems that the 1.5% structure adjustment was uniformly implemented in 2009, but not all colleges were in a financial position to offer the recommended merit increase, or movement through the range. And this isn't the first time.

We do recognize that several colleges have fully implemented the 2009 Compensation Guidelines and, for administrators at those colleges, they feel recognized and valued. OCASA applauds the strategic decision to maintain a compensation policy that fully affirms the work of its employees.

However, as college administrators remain passionate about their role in administrating college education, many are feeling disadvantaged by inequitable treatment. This budget announcement has offered only more discouragement.

The impact of freezing the compensation structure (and we understand that this needs further clarification) heightens several fundamental issues for maintaining a qualified and experienced administration:

- <u>Recruitment and retention in administrative positions</u>: With increasing retirements, succession planning becomes that much more critical to colleges' ongoing success. Marketing and actively recruiting qualified candidates into administration will be impeded by a decreasing margin between the top faculty and administration salaries, not to mention increasing workloads. Current college staff that work under a collective agreement, will be more reluctant to move into administration when they see that administrators' salaries can easily be frozen by government order, with no prior consultation.
- <u>Compression for payband 12 chairs will become critical over this 2 year period</u>: In light of the current faculty agreement, this will only serve to further narrow the margin between faculty and administration if administrators are subjected to a two year salary freeze, particularly for those who have more recently taken on this position. Again, recruitment into administration is further hampered by this reality.
- <u>Compression for paybands 5-8</u>: OCASA has established a taskforce reviewing workplace engagement for administrators in this lower payband range. Early discussions indicate that these administrators already perceive inequities and compression of salary when compared with their support staff counterparts. As workload has increased for all levels of administration, so too for this group of employees. They play a vital role in supporting college education, and they are likely the most vulnerable group of employees when considering a wage freeze.
- <u>Pensions</u>: Many administrators are at the maximum of their range as they approach retirement. Without a structure increase (economic adjustment) in their final years of college employment, their pension benefits will be adversely affected. For those still moving through the range, they might be doubly impacted.