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Affiliated and Federated Universities as Sources of University Differentiation

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 6 |
| Definitions and Methodology | 6 |
| Definitions..... | 6 |
| Methodology | 9 |
| Differentiation and Institutional Size in Near-universal Systems of Higher Education: Literature review | 10 |
| Ontario Government Policy: How church colleges became affiliated with secular universities | 13 |
| Affiliations: More than one model..... | 15 |
| Enrolment size | 16 |
| Geographic distance | 16 |
| Financial independence | 16 |
| Academic autonomy and integration | 16 |
| The church relationship | 17 |
| Relationship with the parent university | 18 |
| Do Affiliates Contribute to Differentiation? | 21 |
| Structural factors that contribute to differentiation | 21 |
| Evidence from the National Survey of Student Engagement | 23 |
| Some points of differentiation at each affiliated university..... | 26 |
| Discussion..... | 29 |
| Valuing the differentiated educational experiences that affiliated universities offer | 30 |
| Assessing differentiation within Ontario’s publicly supported universities | 31 |
| Conclusion..... | 34 |
| References | 35 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Affiliated and Federated Institutions Primarily Offering Secular Degree Programs..... | 8 |
| Table 2: Affiliated and Federated Institutions Primarily Offering Theological Programs..... | 9 |
| Table 3: Some Issues Addressed in Affiliation Agreements..... | 20 |
| Table 4: Student Satisfaction by Institution, 2014 (%)..... | 25 |
| Table 5: Student Engagement by Institution, 2012 (%)..... | 26 |
| Table 6: Affiliated Institutions: Some points of differentiation..... | 27 |
| Table 7: Small Campuses of Ontario Universities..... | 32 |

Executive Summary

This paper examines the role of affiliated and federated universities in Ontario's higher education system. It addresses the question: Do affiliated and federated institutions make a distinctive contribution to the differentiation of postsecondary education in Ontario?

Ontario has 16 affiliated and federated universities that historically were church-governed and that became associated with one of the publicly supported universities. Each of them offers primarily secular academic programs today. Carleton, Laurentian, Ottawa, Toronto, Waterloo and Western each have one or more federated or affiliated university.

Affiliated and federated universities have many differences from their parent universities and also from each other. These are some typical (although not universal) characteristics:

- They are primarily or solely focused on undergraduates.
- They give at least as much priority to teaching as to research.
- They focus on the liberal arts, in some cases with additional programs as well.
- They reinforce their academic mission with co-curricular activities that create a strong sense of community, including in many cases a significant residential community.
- They offer a small-campus experience, typically with small class sizes.
- They are sites for academic innovation, testing new ways of teaching and learning.
- Their academic and co-curricular activities may incorporate a commitment to social justice and community service that is inspired by their religious heritage.
- Depending on the distance to the parent university, they may offer students the best of both worlds: a small-campus experience with access to the comprehensive courses, services and facilities of the parent university.

These differences make affiliated and federated universities potentially valuable players within Ontario's higher education system.

The Ontario government's differentiation policy framework has, in its early stages, focused on each of the publicly supported universities as a whole. As the policy matures, it would be reasonable to drill down into the role played by the affiliates in offering a distinctive experience within Ontario's higher education system. As with all parts of the higher education system, it should be the responsibility of the institutions to provide evidence about the role they are actually playing and how well they are playing it.

Policymakers should also consider ways of identifying and encouraging other models of educational innovation within each of Ontario's publicly supported universities. Greater recognition of the differentiation within each university will give more insight into whether the goals of the government's differentiation policy are being achieved. Experimentation with innovative teaching and learning strategies, such as is made possible by semi-autonomous affiliates and campuses, may become an important strategy for improving the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning.

Introduction

This paper examines the role of affiliated and federated universities and university colleges in Ontario's higher education system. Do affiliated and federated institutions make a distinctive contribution to the differentiation of postsecondary education in Ontario?

The Ontario government has established a Differentiation Policy Framework for the higher education system:

The government has opted for differentiation as a primary policy driver for the system. The government's policy of differentiation sets the foundation for broader postsecondary system transformation by publicly articulating government expectations and aligning the mandates of Ontario's colleges and universities with government priorities.

Our overriding goals for a differentiated system are to build on and help focus the well-established strengths of institutions, enable them to operate together as complementary parts of a whole, and give students affordable access to the full continuum of vocational and academic educational opportunities that are required to prosper in our contemporary world. (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2013, p. 6)

Affiliated and federated institutions have been part of Ontario's university system for over a century, yet their role is not widely understood. Based on one-on-one interviews, public documents and secondary sources, I examine here the contributions these institutions make as a group, and I also describe distinctive features of each institution.

I argue that, as a group, affiliated and federated institutions make a contribution similar to that made by small liberal arts universities in the United States. They offer a form of education that, at its best, supports high levels of student engagement and learning. Policymakers should value this model of education as part of a differentiated higher education system and should encourage it through the government's accountability processes. Policymakers should also consider ways of identifying and encouraging other models of educational innovation within each of Ontario's publicly supported universities.

Definitions and Methodology

Definitions

Standard definitions with respect to affiliated and federated universities are hard to come by. Affiliates are rooted in historical circumstances that are unique to Ontario, so the higher education literature from other jurisdictions provides little guidance. I will use the following terms in this paper.

- ***Affiliated and federated universities:*** I define an affiliated or federated university as an Ontario postsecondary institution that has the legal authority to grant its own degrees, but that has put this

authority in abeyance and joined itself to a publicly supported university so that it can indirectly receive provincial operating grants. The legal name of the institution may be ‘university’ or ‘university college.’ Some of these institutions are called ‘federated’ and others ‘affiliated’: the difference relates to the original circumstances under which they joined with the publicly supported university. Whether they are affiliated or federated, the practical consequences are the same. For brevity I will use ‘affiliated university’ or ‘affiliate’ to refer to all of these institutions. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) uses the more comprehensive term “Church-related and Federated or Affiliated Institutions” (Ontario MTCU, 2009, p. 31).

- **Publicly supported university:** I define a publicly supported university as one of the 20 universities that MTCU recognizes as being eligible to receive public operating grants.
- **Parent university:** I use this term to refer to the publicly supported university with which an affiliated university is affiliated. I adopt this term reluctantly, for want of a better one. The term is not intended to connote that the affiliated university is inferior. The reality, nevertheless, is that the parent university is in a position to exert some measure of control over the affiliate, so the relationship is not one of equals. In some cases an affiliated university is actually older than its parent university.¹

My interest in this paper is affiliates whose students are primarily enrolled in secular academic programs, rather than theology programs or programs to prepare for the ministry. I therefore focus on the 16 institutions listed in Table 1. Ten of these institutions are members in their own right of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC); the non-members tend to be smaller institutions that were founded after their parent institution.

¹Western University refers to itself as the ‘constituent university,’ but this term is not widely or consistently used by other institutions. In Ireland and the Philippines, ‘constituent university’ has the opposite meaning and is used to refer to the affiliates. At the University of Toronto, the ‘constituent colleges’ are the colleges that have no religious origins and were never legally independent.

Table 1: Affiliated and Federated Institutions Primarily Offering Secular Degree Programs

| Public university | Affiliated or federated institution | Year of affiliation or federation | Religious heritage | AUCC member |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Carleton University | Dominican University College | 2012 | Catholic | X |
| Laurentian University | Huntington University | 1960 | United Church | |
| | University of Sudbury | 1960 | Catholic | X |
| | Thorneloe University | 1963 | Anglican | |
| | Hearst | 1957 (University of Sudbury) 1963 (Laurentian) | Catholic (fully secular since 1971) | |
| University of Ottawa | St. Paul University | 1965 | Catholic | X |
| University of Toronto | University of St. Michael's College | 1910 | Catholic | X |
| | University of Trinity College | 1904 | Anglican | X |
| | Victoria University | 1890 | United Church | X |
| University of Waterloo | Conrad Grebel University College | 1963 | Mennonite | |
| | Renison University College | 1960 | Anglican | |
| | St. Jerome's University | 1959 | Catholic | X |
| | St. Paul's University College | 1961 | United Church | |
| Western University | Brescia University College | 1919 | Catholic | X |
| | Huron University College | 1878 | Anglican | X |
| | King's University College | 1954 | Catholic | X |

A separate paper would be required to assess the contributions made by affiliates whose programs are primarily theological. I list them in Table 2 but do not discuss them further in this paper.

Table 2: Affiliated and Federated Institutions Primarily Offering Theological Programs

| Public university | Affiliated or federated institution | Year of affiliation or federation | Religious heritage |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Brock University | Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary | 1976 | Lutheran |
| McMaster University | McMaster Divinity College | 1957 | Baptist |
| Queen's University | Queen's Theological College (now Queen's School of Religion) | 1912 | United Church |
| University of Toronto | Emmanuel College | 1925 | United Church |
| | Knox College | 1890 | Presbyterian |
| | Regis College | 1978 | Catholic |
| | St. Augustine's Seminary | 1978 | Catholic |
| | Toronto School of Theology | 1979 | Multiple |
| | Wycliffe College | 1885 | Anglican |
| Western University | St. Peter's Seminary | 1912 | Catholic |
| Wilfrid Laurier University | Waterloo Lutheran Seminary | 1914 | Lutheran |
| University of Windsor | Assumption University | 1919 (Western) 1963 (Windsor) | Catholic |
| | Canterbury College | 1957 (Assumption) 1963 (Windsor) | Anglican |
| | Iona College | 1963 | United Church |

Note: Some theological institutions are affiliated with another affiliated institution, which in turn is affiliated with a publicly supported university.

Methodology

Twelve presidents of affiliated institutions agreed to be interviewed for this project. I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of them, lasting 30-60 minutes, using a standard questionnaire. The interviewees are listed in Appendix 2.

I supplemented these interviews with publicly available documents from institutional websites and other sources, and with the secondary literature.

Differentiation and Institutional Size in Near-universal Systems of Higher Education: Literature review

Affiliated universities as we know them in Ontario essentially do not exist in most other jurisdictions. The literature on university differentiation based on size nevertheless provides some useful context.

The growth of universities in Canada, the United States and elsewhere after the Second World War led to an extensive literature on the impersonal nature of undergraduate education at large institutions. In his Godkin Lectures at Harvard in 1963, Clark Kerr argued that the university had become a “multiversity” composed of parts that are largely severable from one another. The multiversity, he said, is “a mechanism – a series of processes producing a series of results – a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money” (Kerr, 1963, p. 20).

A consequence of multiple missions competing for faculty time, Kerr said, was that “undergraduate education in the large university is more likely to be acceptable than outstanding” (p. 65). Improving undergraduate education would require:

the solution of many sub-problems: how to give adequate recognition to the teaching skill as well as the research performance of the faculty; how to create a curriculum that serves the needs of the student as well as the research interests of the teacher; how to prepare the generalist as well as the specialist in an age of specialization looking for better generalizations; how to treat the student as a unique human being in the mass student body; how to make the university seem smaller even as it grows larger.... (p. 119)

Kerr articulated publicly concerns that were held privately by many university administrators, faculty and students. These concerns fed into two streams of research and creative experimentation. One attempted to define the optimum size of the university; the other attempted to create a small-campus experience within the large research university.

The attempt to define an optimum university size proved to be inconclusive in the short term and impractical in the long term. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1971, p. 82) found that doctoral universities should have a maximum of 23,500 students (full-time headcounts), while the California Coordinating Council for Higher Education (1966, p. 16) set the limit at 25,000-27,500. Kerr himself thought that the optimum university should have 10,000 to 15,000 FTEs (Reichard, 1971, p. 11). Above these levels, it was variously argued that departments and divisions would seek to become semi-autonomous schools, research would crowd out teaching, multiple libraries would be required, missions would proliferate, and the challenges of governance would outweigh any further advantages that might come from enhanced economies of scale. This literature has not advanced significantly, and in practice it has largely been ignored. With the near-universalization of higher education, many U.S. states have universities larger than these numbers, as do Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is much evidence that very small institutions have difficulties remaining financially viable. The number of such institutions declined sharply in both Canada and the US in the postwar period, usually through growth or merger with another institution. The U.S. National Center for Education Statistics has found that 291 not-for-profit four-year universities closed their doors between 1969 and 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Dawn Lyken-Segosebe and Justin Cole Shepherd (2013, pp. 10-11) examined the institutions closing between 2004 and 2013 and found that the largest of these institutions had just over 1,000 students. Other factors associated with closure included religious affiliation (since subsidies from religious organizations have declined), high part-time enrolments, graduate programs that do not align with undergraduate programs, small endowments and reliance on tuition discounting to attract students.

Looking specifically at liberal arts colleges – defined as four-year institutions with few or no graduate programs and awarding at least 40% of their degrees in the liberal arts and sciences – Jason Jones (2015) has found that, of the 212 liberal arts colleges in the United States in 1994, only 103 remained in 2014.

This decline is potentially troubling in the face of evidence from the United States on the distinctive benefits offered by liberal arts colleges.

- George D. Kuh has found from National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data that “students at liberal arts colleges generally are more engaged across the board in effective educational practices than their counterparts at other types of institutions.” This is true even after controlling for campus size, residential nature and admissions selectivity at liberal arts colleges. Citing the results of earlier studies, Kuh says that “liberal arts college students tend to gain more in intellectual and personal development, more frequently pursue advanced graduate study, and are more likely to vote and take part in civic matters after college” (Kuh, 2003, pp. 2, 4).
- Ernest T. Pascarella and his co-authors have found that liberal arts colleges are more likely than research universities and regional universities to engage in effective teaching and learning practices, even after adjusting for differences in incoming students (Pascarella, Cruce, Wolniak & Blaich, 2004). Student outcomes may nevertheless be mixed, since students differ in how much they choose to engage in and benefit from these practices (Pascarella, Wolniak, Seifert, Cruce & Blaich, 2005).
- Paul Umbach and George D. Kuh (2006) have found that liberal arts college students are significantly more likely than students at other types of institutions to engage in diversity-related activities and to report gains in understanding people from diverse backgrounds.

Kimball (2014) has argued that the decline in enrolments at U.S. liberal arts colleges has been matched by the rise of enrolments in honours programs and at honours colleges at large universities. Over the past four decades, he says, enrolments have shifted from the one to the other. He expresses doubt that the new programs are a satisfactory replacement for the liberal arts colleges:

A university honours program embracing the liberal arts college mission lives in an alien, even threatening environment. On the one hand, this mission does not enhance specialized research or

grant money -- the primary currencies of the research university... On the other hand, the mission is not consistent with the relativistic ideology of the multiversity... On either hand, the university's support is not intrinsic and therefore not reliable. (pp. 259-260)

Research based on NSSE has supported "human scale learning environments" while acknowledging that these can be created on campuses of any size. At both large and small campuses, "students are more likely to flourish in settings where they are known and valued as individuals contrasted with settings where they feel anonymous" (Manning & Kuh, 2005, p. 3; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2011, chapter 4).

Many public and private universities use a college system in an attempt to re-create the virtues of a small institution within a large multiversity. College systems, which date to Oxford in the thirteenth century, can be seen as an effort to address Kerr's challenge for the university to seem smaller as it grows larger. A significant literature on college systems, or "cluster colleges", developed in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the United States. Advocates of this model suggest that it has these advantages:

- The college environment is small enough to affect each student.
- Differences among colleges can provide students with a choice of educational experiences within the university.
- Colleges offer an opportunity for experimentation in educational approaches.
- Colleges benefit from economies of scale by sharing resources such as the library, information technology and central administration.
- Colleges provide a venue within which the liberal arts curriculum can be central, rather than being overshadowed by graduate and professional education. (Gaff, 1971 pp. 10-11)

An example of a highly regarded college system is the Claremont Colleges in southern California. The Claremont Colleges are unusual in that each of the seven colleges is highly autonomous: students receive their degrees from the college in which they are enrolled, and administration and admissions departments are independent. Each college has a distinctive academic mission, and two of the seven focus on graduate education. Three of the undergraduate colleges share a single science program. The seven own a consortium that provides shared services, such as a library, information technology, financial and human resources, physical plant maintenance and other services. Total enrolments are 6,500 students. *U.S. News and World Report* ranks each of the five undergraduate colleges among the top 40 liberal arts colleges in the United States.

Few college systems have attempted this degree of autonomy. A more common arrangement is for a multiversity to assign each student to a college, whose functions are to provide student support and extracurricular activities, and also residence space for students who live on campus.

The cluster college model has been difficult to maintain as jurisdictions move to near-universal higher education. Near-universality, coupled with economic changes that have reduced the number of high-quality

entry-level jobs for recent graduates, is widely thought to have increased the proportion of university students whose goals are pragmatic or vocationalist. Incentives for faculty to demonstrate that their research is valued within their discipline mean that many faculty have less time to devote to the personalized student experiences that a college system is intended to promote. A university may nominally assign each faculty member to a college, but in practice the faculty members' primary obligations are to their academic departments and to their disciplines.

These findings suggest the significant challenges that universities face in attempting to provide a personalized experience in a large-campus environment. Even at the end of his long career, Kerr (2001, p. 270) concluded that "the greatest single pathology of the research university [is] its inattention to lower-division students."

Ontario Government Policy: How church colleges became affiliated with secular universities

Ontario's affiliated universities are an artifact of government policy. Since Confederation, the Ontario government has declined to provide direct funding to any university that was governed by a religious organization. A series of compromises has allowed many pre-Confederation church-governed institutions to survive and new ones to become established.

In the mid-1800s, the only secular university in what is now Ontario was the University of Toronto. Numerous small church-governed colleges existed, whose primary areas of instruction were theology and the humanities. Prior to Confederation, many of these received small annual grants from the United Province of Canada. Section 93 of the *Constitution Act (1867)* made education the responsibility of the provincial governments. A. B. McKillop, who has written the most comprehensive history of this period, reports that "public opinion in the late 1860s did not favour state support for denominational institutions" (1994, p. 32). On this basis, the new provincial government of John Sandfield Macdonald introduced legislation in 1868 that put an end to grants to church colleges.

The new legislation caused significant financial difficulties for the church colleges. Their problems worsened as the mission of universities gradually expanded to include studies in the natural sciences: no unsubsidized college could afford more than a token presence in the sciences. A solution was found when the University of Toronto and the church-governed Victoria University negotiated a federation, the terms of which were recognized in the *University Federation Act* of 1887. In summary, the statute provided that:

- Following negotiation of an agreement with a secular university, a church college could suspend its degree-granting powers (other than in theology) and become a federating university.
- Students of the federating university would receive their degrees from the secular university (except in theology).
- The federating university would be entitled to representation on the secular university's senate.

- The provincial government would deem the students to be students of the secular university, so they could be taken into account in awarding provincial funds.²

This established a model which (with some variations in details) had a profound effect on the structure of the Ontario university system. Over time, almost all of the church colleges affiliated with a secular university, through one of these routes:

- Some of the church colleges created independent secular universities, especially for the purposes of teaching sciences, and then affiliated themselves to the secular institution. Through this or similar devices, provincial operating grants began to flow to many Ontario universities that began as church-related colleges, including:
 - Queen's in 1913
 - Western in 1915
 - McMaster in 1948
 - Essex College (an antecedent of the University of Windsor) in 1956
 - the University of Waterloo in 1959
 - Laurentian University in 1960
 - the University of Ottawa in 1965 (although its science and medicine programs were subsidized earlier through special arrangements), and
 - Wilfrid Laurier University in 1974 (Harris, 1967, p. 62; Fleming, 1971, IV, pp. 122, 133, 174, 198).
- In other cases, church colleges remained independent for an extended period of time and then negotiated an affiliation agreement with one of the secular universities.
- In a few cases, church colleges were created more or less simultaneously with the establishment of a publicly supported university in their community, with the explicit intent of becoming affiliated.³

The specifics for each affiliated institution are described in Appendix 1.

²This summary draws on McKillop (1994), pp. 32-50; Friedland (2002), pp. 99-112; and *An Act Respecting the Federation of the University of Toronto and University College with Other Universities and Colleges*, 1887, found at https://books.google.ca/books?id=RSISAQAIAAJ&pg=PA2505&lpq=PA2505&dq=degrees+%22in+abeyance%22&source=bl&ots=27ThEJaIEh&sig=83gQ9nr5h-Hlb_aHzCzUEUzkAkY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=XukBVY7ZGYOoyATE-4GQCw&ved=0CEsQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=degrees%20%22in%20abeyance%22&f=false, p. 2503

³Two interviewees for this project said that they believed that the Ontario government encouraged the local church to create their college in the late 1950s or early 1960s, as a sign of the community's broad support for the new local publicly supported university. The logic, apparently, was to avoid a situation where a public university had only one affiliate and so might seem to be dominated by a single religion. The standard histories of higher education in Ontario neither confirm nor refute this explanation.

Any of these routes made it possible for students at church colleges to be taken into account for purposes of provincial funding. The government paid the publicly supported university, which in turn passed on funds to the affiliated university in accordance with whatever agreement the two institutions made between them.

Ontario's policy of not funding church colleges did not, of course, constrain the federal government. When the federal government began providing direct operating grants to universities in the 1950s, all AUCC members were deemed eligible, including church-governed universities. In 1967, the federal government ended this funding and began transferring funds to provinces to use as they see fit (the forerunner of what is now the Canada Social Transfer).

In this same year, the Ontario government introduced the first funding formula for publicly supported universities. The formula was explicitly based on the number of students at each university, so for the first time the government needed to decide whether students at a church-related affiliate should be counted the same as other students. As a proxy for the funding that the federal government had been sending directly to church-related affiliates, the Ontario government began funding their students at 50% of Ontario's normal per-student rate.

Between 1967 and 1974, many affiliates experienced financial difficulties. Publicly supported universities were in the uncomfortable role of constraining the growth of their affiliates so that students would be encouraged to register in fully funded secular programs (McLaughlin, Stortz & Wahl, 2002, pp. 221-222). Based on requests from the affiliates and their parent universities, the provincial funding was raised in 1974 to 100% for non-theological programs, and it was raised to 100% for theological programs in 1976 (OCUA, 1992, pp. 207-208).

This policy has endured with minor changes since 1976. A publicly supported university may claim funding for the students at its church-related affiliates, provided that the students are registered at and will eventually receive a degree from the secular institution. The standards of admission, curriculum, and graduation requirements must be established and regulated by the appropriate academic bodies of the publicly supported university. New programs at the church-related institution must be approved for funding purposes by the provincial government using the same process as applies to new programs at the publicly supported institution (Ontario MTCU, 2009, section 2.2).

Affiliations: More than one model

The affiliated institutions are all based on the same government policy framework, but they differ greatly from one another. Accidents of history and geography affected each institution's initial relationship with its parent institution. Enrolment growth and program mix have been affected by changes in student demand. Relationships between affiliates and their parent universities have been re-negotiated over time, generally in a pragmatic way.

Any assessment of the role played by affiliates in Ontario's university system needs to take these differences into account. These are some of the major differences.

Enrolment size

Most of the affiliates serve between 100 and 1,500 FTE students. Three affiliates serve more than 3,000 FTE students: Victoria University and the University of St. Michael's College, both at the University of Toronto, and King's University College at Western. In other words, the largest are comparable in size to Nipissing University or OCAD University.

Geographic distance

Most of the affiliates are located on the campus of the parent institution, and their students are a short walk from other campus buildings. Others are located farther away in the same city. The greatest geographic distance is between the main campuses of Hearst and Laurentian (550 km).

Financial independence

The government's policy of not funding affiliates directly means that each affiliate and its parent have needed to negotiate a financial arrangement. A common arrangement is for the parent to flow to the affiliate the MTCU grant and tuition fees associated with the affiliates' students, minus a fee for the cost of common services (such as registration and information technology). The fee is typically expressed as a fixed percentage of the total. Another arrangement is for the affiliate to agree to teach a fixed percentage of the total teaching load of a faculty of the parent university, in return for which it is paid a percentage of the faculty's budget. Yet another arrangement is for the parent to transfer to the affiliate a block grant each year.

Affiliates have access to certain financial resources independent of those flowed through their parent universities. Affiliates may do their own fundraising and have accumulated endowments, and in a few cases they have monetized land holdings. In most cases the annual revenue from these sources is not large, but there are exceptions.

Four of the 16 affiliates studied for this paper have reported that they have no endowment; four report an endowment of between \$1 million and \$5 million; and five report an endowment between \$5 million and \$10 million. The outliers are the endowments held by the three federated universities of the University of Toronto: St. Michael's (\$67.7 million), Trinity (\$47.3 million) and Victoria (\$411.1 million) (CAUBO, 2014). Additional amounts may be held in separately incorporated foundations.

Academic autonomy and integration

Government policy requires affiliates to give up some of their academic autonomy: Programs (other than theology) must be approved by the governance process of the parent university.

Two models of academic autonomy are evident, although the differences are a matter of degree rather than kind.

- Some affiliates mount a significant number of programs in their own facilities, with their own faculty, directed largely but not exclusively at their own students. This model most plainly applies at Hearst, and to a lesser extent at Saint Paul, Dominican and the three affiliates of Western.
- Other affiliates have a more integrated model: the affiliate may offer several programs of its own, but much of its teaching involves teaching courses to students from many programs across the larger university. The affiliates of Laurentian (except Hearst), Toronto and Waterloo tend towards this model.

Geographic proximity is clearly a factor (though not the only factor) in explaining why some affiliates are highly integrated into the academic programs of the parent university and others are less so.

Under both models, the affiliate and its parent may agree that the affiliate will be the university's centre for programming in a certain area. They may also agree that the affiliate will house certain centres for research or student services.

Under both models, creating a cohesive community, including a significant community of students in residence, may be one of the affiliate's major roles. Co-curricular education is integral to this role.

Most of the affiliates employ their own faculty and have their own faculty union or association (which may work closely with the union or association representing faculty at the parent university). The University of Toronto has adopted a different model: most of the full-time faculty teaching at the affiliates are employed by the parent university.

The church relationship

While affiliates have their origins in the Ontario government's desire to separate church and state, it would be a mistake to think of affiliates in their current form as sectarian hotbeds. The relationship between the affiliates and their respective churches has changed as society as a whole has become more secular and church elites less influential.

One of the affiliates, Hearst, became fully secular in 1971: neither its statute nor its governance process make any special place for its religious heritage.⁴ The most recent affiliate, Dominican University College, welcomes students and faculty regardless of faith, but members of its founding religious order retain a significant presence in its governance and senior administration.

⁴ The primary rationale for Hearst remaining an affiliate of Laurentian rather than becoming an independent university appears to be its small size (about 100 students).

The other affiliates fall between these two poles. All honour the heritage of their church founders, but in practice the church's role and influence have been substantially reduced and are in some cases vestigial. As might be expected, there is a significant difference at many institutions between the perspectives of older alumni, donors and retired faculty and the perspectives of current students and faculty.

All of the affiliates welcome students from all backgrounds. Some interviewees said that there was little difference between students' religious beliefs and practices at the affiliate and at the parent institution. Some said that some of their students were attracted by an environment where they felt they could discuss their faith openly if they so wished. Each of Ontario's affiliated institutions is associated with a Christian denomination, but many interviewees said their students included adherents of other Christian denominations, students who were Jewish or Muslim or of other faiths, and students who have no religious belief.

Churches retain a role in governance at some affiliates. Most affiliates' founding statutes recognize their relationship to a particular denomination and give the church a formal role in the institution's governance, and so only an act of the Ontario Legislature could erase this role.⁵ Almost all interviewees said the role was in practice small and was respectful of academic freedom and the institution's need to govern its own affairs. In some cases an institution's statute gives church authorities the right to appoint certain members of the governing board, but in practice the church agrees to candidates put forward by the board and its nominating committee. The chief executive of the affiliate is normally a member of the church and in a few cases holds qualifications as a minister of the church (although at least one recent search committee was explicitly mandated to find candidates who were not from the sponsoring church denomination). Churches may provide an annual financial contribution to an affiliate, but over the years these contributions have become *de minimis*, reflecting the churches' reduced circumstances. Many affiliates have a chapel on campus with a full- or part-time chaplain; the latter may be financially supported by the church.

The affiliates do not impose religious-based behaviour codes on students. A number of them go to some lengths to promote an environment that welcomes diversity and respects students' human rights. The affiliates of publicly supported universities in Ontario are not to be confused with private religious-sponsored universities in Ontario and other provinces that require students to adhere to a behavior code that may prohibit (for example) sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage.

Relationship with the parent university

Almost all interviewees reported that they had a positive working relationship with the senior administration of the parent institution. Most of the affiliations have been in place for a half-century or more, so there has been ample time to establish relationships and address potential issues. Where there are frictions, interviewees often attributed these to newer faculty or staff who were not yet familiar with

⁵ The role has not been fully erased from the legislation governing some publicly supported universities. The *Laurentian University of Sudbury Act, 1960*, and the *University of Ottawa Act, 1965*, bar any religious test in hiring but require that their institutions be managed and controlled "in accordance with Christian principles."

established practices. Most interviewees said that they had regular interactions with the president or provost of the parent university, in some cases weekly.

Most interviewees said that it is a regular part of their job to ensure that administrators, faculty and governors at the parent university are aware of the affiliate's role and activities and why the affiliate is an asset for the parent institution. Some common challenges in relations with the parent university are unfamiliarity with why the affiliate exists, suspicion of the religious heritage, perceptions of unnecessary administrative burdens, and concern that the affiliate may be competing with the parent institution for students or resources.

Most of the affiliates account for a smaller share of the parent university's students than was once the case. This means they are less 'top of mind' at the parent institution than was the case at the time of first affiliation. Parent institutions expanded rapidly in the late 1960s, during the period when affiliates were being half-funded and so had limited resources for growth. Affiliates generally did not benefit from the major capital expansions of the late 1990s and 2000s. Affiliates cannot apply directly to MTCU for capital funding; instead, the parent university sets capital priorities for the campus as a whole and makes a request to MTCU accordingly. In the face of heavy competition from faculties of the parent university and the high cost of buildings for science, engineering and medicine, most interviewees said that they had not received capital funding from the Ontario government over the years. Some have been successful in modernizing and expanding through capital campaigns and internal resources.

The affiliation agreement is the principal tool through which the affiliate and its parent university set out mutual expectations. Affiliation agreements are reviewed every five years in some partnerships; in others the reviews are less regular. Among the explicit or implicit purposes of an affiliation agreement are to:

- discourage unproductive competition for students and resources
- discourage activities that may be seen as detracting from the reputation of the parent institution
- create clear expectations about sharing of financial resources and physical assets
- create clear expectations for students about what kind of student experience the affiliate can offer
- minimize surprises for both institutions.

Affiliation agreements can differ significantly in terms of the issues they address and how those issues are resolved. Table 3 enumerates some of the issues that may be addressed. The table is based on a review of some of the affiliation agreements currently in place.

Table 3: Some Issues Addressed in Affiliation Agreements

| Category | Sample issues |
|------------------------------|--|
| Recruitment and registration | Enrolment targets Admission standards Standards and targets for non-secondary entrants (e.g., college transfer, international) Recruitment strategies and activities Scholarships: coordination of amounts, eligibility |
| Academic | Program and teaching responsibilities Balance of flow between institutions (taught by versus taught to) Prioritization of students if a course is over-subscribed Participation in graduate programs Alignment of academic planning Approval of new programs Credit transfer agreements with other universities and colleges Library privileges Convocations |
| Information technology | IT privileges for students, faculty and staff |
| Student services | Roles and responsibilities Student eligibility to use services Student government(s) Student eligibility for inter-university sports teams |
| Financial | Sharing of revenue Sharing of expense for common services Authority to set tuition and ancillary fees |
| Administration | Sharing of administrative services Human resources policies, compensation Liability and indemnification |
| Termination | Circumstances under which the affiliation agreement can be terminated |

Source: Author's compilation

Do Affiliates Contribute to Differentiation?

I examine differences in the role of affiliated universities relative to other institutions from three perspectives:

- By looking at the structural features of affiliates that make them different from the publicly supported universities
- By analyzing data from the National Survey of Student Engagement
- By assessing the distinct programs and activities of each affiliate relative to the university sector as a whole.

Structural factors that contribute to differentiation

At their best, the affiliated universities function as liberal arts universities. Based on their resources and the opportunities and constraints presented by their affiliated relationship, many of the affiliates have adopted a mission that in other provinces and in the US is played by stand-alone institutions.

- **Primarily or solely focused on undergraduates:** Most affiliates focus on undergraduate programs and have at most a minor role in graduate education (excluding theology). Some offer no graduate programs at all; others may offer one or two graduate programs in fields of special strength. Their faculty may be recognized for purposes of graduate instruction or supervision in the programs of the parent university. This focus on undergraduates is seen as a stable state, i.e., none of the interviewees claimed that a major increase in the scope or scale of graduate education was in the offing.
- **Teaching has priority equal to or greater than research:** A majority of interviewees said that teaching was their priority, and faculty are hired based on their capacity for and interest in being great teachers. Most said that the normal teaching load at their institution was five one-semester courses per academic year (3+2), while a somewhat smaller number said it was 2+2. All of the affiliates engage in research, and of course all expect their faculty to be current in their fields. A few interviewees said that research and teaching have equal footing at their institution. Many noted that faculty involvement in service to the university was higher at their institution than at larger institutions, because a smaller number of faculty are available to serve on the committees that are common to almost all universities.
- **Focus on the liberal arts:** For financial and other reasons, the affiliates do not have significant facilities for teaching natural sciences, engineering, or other high-cost programs. Their program offerings are almost exclusively in the liberal arts, with some additions based on areas of historical strength such as social work or management studies.

- **Residential experience:** Operating the residences is a principal activity for some affiliates, and most interviewees said that building a strong residential community is one of their significant contributions. At many (not all) of the affiliates, the number of residence beds equals 25-30% of the affiliate's FTE enrolments. For affiliates that are relatively autonomous from their parent institution, the residence is a vehicle for reinforcing the academic mission with co-curricular activities that create a strong sense of community. For affiliates whose academic autonomy is limited, the residence allows them to serve a large number of students from the parent university who would not otherwise be linked to the affiliate.
- **A small-campus experience:** Almost all interviewees cited data about small class sizes as an important distinguishing characteristic of their institutions. Many also said that a small campus offers more opportunities for faculty-student interaction. Some interviewees felt that their campus offered a better experience for first-generation students, students with learning disabilities and students from other backgrounds, who might feel lost within a large-campus environment.
- **Sites for academic innovation:** Several interviewees noted that the size and autonomy of their institutions made it possible for them to test new ways of teaching and learning. Among the innovations at various affiliates are small-size interdisciplinary seminars for first-year students, courses taught in a three-week full-time blocks, mandatory international service learning in selected programs, and Canada's only all-women university.

Affiliates also offer two structural features that are not typically associated with liberal arts universities, but that derive from the affiliation relationship and the religious heritage.

- **The best of both worlds:** Several interviewees whose campuses are geographically close to the parent university's campus pointed out that their students have the best of both worlds: a small-campus experience coupled with access to the comprehensive course offerings, libraries, student services and athletics facilities of the parent institution.
- **A commitment to social justice and community service:** The distinctive curricular and co-curricular offerings of the affiliates often relate to values derived from their church heritage – to serve those in need, to promote peace and social justice, to respect the worth of each individual and to build communities. These values are of course widely held in secular society, and many publicly supported universities can point to comparable curricular and co-curricular offerings. Several interviewees nevertheless said that they felt that the heritage of their institutions gave them greater freedom to articulate these values in a scholarly context and to develop them as part of their students' education.

Support for the idea that students see liberal arts universities as distinctive can be found in Alex Usher's (2014) analysis of data from the *Globe and Mail* Canadian University Report survey. Usher found that students at liberal arts universities are more likely than other students to recognize the distinctiveness of their own institution. Students at a cluster of schools – Acadia, Mount Allison, St. Francis Xavier, Redeemer,

Trinity Western, Brescia, Huron, King's and Guelph – were likely to recognize that their institutions were relatively undergraduate rather than graduate, nurturing rather than assuming self-sufficiency, diverse rather than homogenous, global rather than local, spread rather than focused in the range of disciplines they offer, and applied rather than theoretical. Usher especially noted that students at only a handful of other Canadian universities recognized any distinctiveness in their own institution. He found that at most Canadian universities, students perceived their institution to be “just school.”

Evidence from the National Survey of Student Engagement

In recent years, five of the affiliated institutions have reported their results on the National Survey of Student Engagement separately from those of their parent institution. These results provide a limited basis for comparing student experiences using a widely recognized survey instrument.

The results on selected measures of student satisfaction and student engagement are reported in Tables 4 and 5. In each table, the NSSE average for all institutions administering the survey in Canada and the US is shown in the first row. The next 4-5 rows show the results for Ontario affiliated institutions, listed in alphabetical order. The remaining rows list results for Ontario publicly supported universities, in alphabetical order.

Based on these tables, we can make several observations about differences between the affiliated institutions and the publicly supported universities:

- The percentage of first-year students who evaluate their entire *educational experience* as ‘excellent’ is near or above the NSSE average at all of the affiliates. It is near or below the NSSE average at almost all of the publicly supported universities.
- The same is true for senior-year students. The gap between the affiliates and the publicly supported universities is somewhat more pronounced for these students.
- The percentage of senior-year students reporting that they would *definitely choose to start over again at the same institution* is above the NSSE average for the affiliated institutions and is below the NSSE average at most of the publicly supported universities.
- On *student-faculty interaction* among first-year students, the affiliated institutions score somewhat lower than the NSSE average, and the Ontario public institutions are substantially lower. Among senior-year students, the affiliated institutions are near the NSSE average and the Ontario public institutions are substantially lower.
- On the *supportive campus environment* indicator, the affiliated institutions score about the same as the NSSE average among first-year students, and most Ontario public institutions are somewhat lower. Among senior-year students, the affiliated institutions are above the NSSE average and the Ontario public institutions are somewhat lower.

The tables show little or no difference between the two types of institutions in other areas:

- The percentage of first-year students reporting that they would definitely *choose to start over again at the same institution* is near or above the NSSE average for the affiliated institutions and for most of the publicly supported universities.
- There is not much difference between the affiliated universities and the publicly supported universities in *level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning and enriching educational experiences*. On the first two of these indicators, Ontario institutions are similar to the NSSE average. On enriching education experiences, almost all Ontario institutions are lower than the NSSE average.

These data need to be interpreted with caution. The data are not strong enough to support a general claim that affiliated institutions provide a better experience for students than the publicly supported universities. Only five of the affiliates report NSSE data. Given their small enrolments, their margin of error is larger than for the publicly supported universities. None of the five affiliates reporting NSSE scores is in Toronto, where students have been found to be, on average, less easy to please (Usher & Rogers, 2011).

We should also note that all NSSE data are based on self-selected groups. If students at institution A give higher scores to institution A than students at institution B give to institution B, it does not necessarily follow that students at institution B would give high scores to institution A.

The most we might conclude from these data is that students at the five affiliates report good or very good scores on some measures of student engagement relative to the average of institutions that participate in NSSE. Their reported levels of engagement are very respectable relative to those of Ontario publicly supported universities. The experience they offer is valued by their students, in some cases highly so. The measures of engagement where the affiliates appear to have stronger scores than most publicly supported universities – student-faculty interaction and supportive campus environment – are consistent with claims that many interviewees made about the small-campus experience that they offer.

Table 4: Student Satisfaction by Institution, 2014 (%)

| | How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? | | | | If you could start over, would you attend the institution you are now attending? | | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|--|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | First year | | Senior year | | First year | | Senior year | |
| | Excellent | Good | Excellent | Good | Definitely yes | Probably yes | Definitely yes | Probably yes |
| NSSE average | 36 | 50 | 41 | 45 | 43 | 42 | 44 | 38 |
| Brescia | 36 | 51 | 49 | 39 | 46 | 42 | 54 | 36 |
| Hearst | 48 | 48 | 73 | 27 | 50 | 46 | 73 | 20 |
| Huron | 34 | 51 | 64 | 28 | 43 | 34 | 65 | 25 |
| King's | 35 | 51 | 42 | 51 | 40 | 45 | 46 | 42 |
| Saint Paul | 46 | 45 | 41 | 54 | 66 | 30 | 56 | 37 |
| Algoma | 23 | 56 | 29 | 54 | 33 | 47 | 29 | 48 |
| Brock | 28 | 54 | 31 | 53 | 41 | 45 | 38 | 44 |
| Carleton | 28 | 55 | 33 | 50 | 38 | 48 | 36 | 44 |
| Guelph | 41 | 48 | 51 | 41 | 53 | 36 | 57 | 33 |
| Lakehead | 20 | 56 | 19 | 50 | 32 | 47 | 23 | 46 |
| Laurentian | 20 | 54 | 21 | 53 | 35 | 46 | 27 | 49 |
| Laurier | 33 | 52 | 35 | 51 | 41 | 45 | 39 | 42 |
| McMaster | 37 | 45 | 38 | 48 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 41 |
| Nipissing | 38 | 52 | 38 | 48 | 51 | 40 | 39 | 42 |
| OCAD | 22 | 48 | 20 | 50 | 35 | 50 | 28 | 45 |
| Ottawa | 21 | 57 | 17 | 57 | 31 | 51 | 24 | 46 |
| Queen's | 50 | 41 | 51 | 40 | 60 | 32 | 56 | 31 |
| Ryerson | 21 | 55 | 21 | 54 | 34 | 49 | 28 | 46 |
| Toronto - all | 23 | 51 | 25 | 48 | 35 | 45 | 30 | 42 |
| Toronto St. George | 26 | 50 | 27 | 47 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Toronto Mississauga | 15 | 54 | 23 | 46 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Toronto Scarborough | 18 | 53 | 19 | 52 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Trent | 30 | 53 | 38 | 50 | 41 | 42 | 44 | 41 |
| UOIT | 24 | 55 | 24 | 50 | 36 | 46 | 26 | 41 |
| Waterloo | 35 | 49 | 30 | 49 | 43 | 45 | 34 | 44 |
| Western | 40 | 46 | 41 | 47 | 51 | 39 | 45 | 38 |
| Windsor | 18 | 55 | 17 | 55 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| York | 17 | 52 | 21 | 53 | 29 | 47 | 25 | 44 |

n.a. = not available

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2014, reported by Council of Ontario Universities and by *Maclean's*, February 23, 2015. See <http://www.cou.on.ca/statistics/cudo.aspx> and

[http://contentviewer.adobe.com/s/Maclean's%20Magazine/e5d3693b3f95480a8a76987efdc3a82d/RG_MME_20150223_REG/STUDENTS%20\(charts\).html#page_0](http://contentviewer.adobe.com/s/Maclean's%20Magazine/e5d3693b3f95480a8a76987efdc3a82d/RG_MME_20150223_REG/STUDENTS%20(charts).html#page_0)

Table 5: Student Engagement by Institution, 2012 (%)

| | Level of academic challenge | | Active and collaborative learning | | Enriching educational experience | | Student-faculty interaction | | Supportive campus environment | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| | First year | Senior year | First year | Senior year | First year | Senior year | First year | Senior year | First year | Senior year |
| NSSE average | 54.3 | 58.3 | 43.8 | 51.9 | 28.2 | 40.1 | 35.2 | 42.5 | 63.0 | 60.2 |
| Brescia | 51.2 | 56.7 | 39.1 | 54.2 | 24.0 | 37.7 | 25.9 | 40.2 | 63.3 | 65.4 |
| Hearst | 49.7 | 63.4 | 38.7 | 55.2 | 18.6 | 29.6 | 30.7 | 47.2 | 64.5 | 72.2 |
| Huron | 54.9 | 60.6 | 38.7 | 51.0 | 27.1 | 39.5 | 30.0 | 43.7 | 60.9 | 69.4 |
| King's | 51.3 | 58.6 | 36.1 | 48.3 | 24.9 | 35.1 | 26.4 | 38.7 | 60.9 | 62.8 |
| Algoma | 49.4 | 59.2 | 41.1 | 52.3 | 26.2 | 37.5 | 31.3 | 44.3 | 62.9 | 63.6 |
| Brock | 51.3 | 58.1 | 34.7 | 52.7 | 22.6 | 34.2 | 23.8 | 37.8 | 59.0 | 57.7 |
| Carleton | 51.4 | 57.2 | 35.3 | 43.8 | 25.1 | 34.7 | 22.8 | 33.1 | 59.1 | 54.6 |
| Guelph | 50.4 | 55.7 | 36.7 | 46.2 | 24.4 | 35.1 | 20.1 | 32.2 | 62.4 | 60.9 |
| Lakehead | 49.9 | 56.5 | 36.2 | 48.3 | 23.4 | 32.2 | 24.1 | 33.4 | 56.9 | 55.2 |
| Laurentian | 50.7 | 58.0 | 34.2 | 44.3 | 23.0 | 31.7 | 24.3 | 35.7 | 55.4 | 54.1 |
| Laurier | 52.3 | 56.7 | 39.0 | 47.6 | 26.0 | 34.8 | 24.7 | 33.4 | 61.1 | 57.1 |
| McMaster | 54.1 | 57.5 | 40.2 | 45.8 | 25.3 | 37.6 | 23.2 | 32.3 | 57.5 | 55.2 |
| Nipissing | 50.2 | 56.5 | 38.1 | 50.4 | 23.5 | 34.3 | 26.1 | 37.5 | 64.2 | 62.0 |
| OCAD | 51.8 | 56.5 | 42.8 | 49.5 | 21.3 | 32.0 | 25.5 | 34.7 | 51.5 | 50.2 |
| Ottawa | 51.2 | 54.7 | 32.5 | 43.4 | 23.7 | 33.0 | 20.0 | 28.9 | 54.6 | 47.5 |
| Queen's | 55.2 | 59.2 | 37.4 | 47.1 | 27.8 | 41.1 | 22.3 | 36.0 | 62.8 | 59.2 |
| Ryerson | 52.8 | 57.3 | 39.5 | 48.8 | 25.1 | 34.8 | 25.4 | 33.9 | 57.8 | 53.9 |
| Toronto | 52.5 | 56.8 | 32.5 | 39.3 | 24.4 | 34.1 | 23.0 | 32.2 | 53.9 | 47.7 |
| Trent | 53.9 | 60.9 | 37.0 | 50.1 | 25.0 | 35.9 | 27.1 | 39.0 | 63.9 | 60.1 |
| UOIT | 51.1 | 57.3 | 40.3 | 49.1 | 23.7 | 36.5 | 24.5 | 35.1 | 57.5 | 53.3 |
| Waterloo | 52.4 | 53.3 | 34.6 | 40.8 | 27.5 | 39.6 | 21.7 | 30.4 | 57.7 | 49.1 |
| Western | 51.7 | 56.2 | 34.1 | 44.7 | 26.9 | 35.8 | 23.3 | 35.3 | 60.4 | 56.6 |
| Windsor | 50.5 | 56.1 | 33.7 | 47.5 | 24.3 | 35.9 | 25.7 | 38.3 | 56.2 | 56.2 |
| York | 51.4 | 56.8 | 35.8 | 46.7 | 23.8 | 31.2 | 23.5 | 31.0 | 53.6 | 47.6 |

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2012, reported in *Maclean's*, February 7, 2013. See <http://www.macleans.ca/education/uniandcollege/how-well-do-canadian-universities-follow-best-practices/>

Some points of differentiation at each affiliated university

Each affiliate makes a distinctive contribution to the total offerings of its parent university and to the Ontario university system as a whole. These contributions may take the form of access for specific populations, academic programs and student experiences.

Table 6 compiles some points of differentiation pertaining to each of the 16 affiliates reviewed in this paper. The table is not an exhaustive list of each institution's strengths, and it is not intended to mean that an institution is the "best" or "only" institution offering a certain activity. Its purpose is to draw attention to ways in which each institution makes a contribution that differs from the norm of Ontario universities.

Table 6: Affiliated Institutions: Some Points of Differentiation

| Public university | Affiliated institution | Points of differentiation |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Carleton University | Dominican University College | A bilingual institution with a French-language heritage Specialization in philosophy and theology |
| Laurentian University | Huntington University | Lead role in offering communication studies and gerontology for Laurentian University Home of the first teaching and learning centre in Northern Ontario, the Lougheed Teaching and Learning Centre |
| | University of Sudbury | A bilingual institution with a French-language heritage Lead role in offering <i>folklore et ethnologie, études journalistiques</i> and Indigenous studies for Laurentian University |
| | Thorneloe University | Lead role in offering classical studies, theatre arts (English) and women's studies for Laurentian University |
| | Hearst | The only university in Ontario offering programs only in French Ontario's northern-most university: the only university on Highway 11 All courses are taught on a block system: Each course is full-time for three weeks |
| University of Ottawa | St. Paul University | A bilingual institution with a French-language heritage Distinctive programs in conflict studies, human relations and spirituality, public ethics, and social communications |
| University of Toronto | University of St. Michael's College | Offers a small-section interdisciplinary foundational program for first-year students St. Michael's sponsors these undergraduate programs: book & media studies; Celtic studies; Christianity & culture; concurrent education: religious education; mediaeval studies |

| Public university | Affiliated institution | Points of differentiation |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| | University of Trinity College | <p>Offers a small-section interdisciplinary foundational program for first-year students</p> <p>Trinity sponsors these undergraduate programs: immunology; international relations; ethics, society, and law</p> |
| | Victoria University | <p>Offers a small-section interdisciplinary foundational program for first-year students</p> <p>Victoria sponsors these undergraduate programs: creative expression and society; education and society; literature and critical theory; material culture; renaissance studies; science and society; semiotics and communication studies</p> |
| University of Waterloo | Conrad Grebel University College | <p>The only Mennonite private-public educational partnership of its kind in North America</p> <p>Lead role in offering peace and conflict studies BA and MA for University of Waterloo and its affiliates</p> <p>Home of the Centre for Peace Advancement</p> |
| | Renison University College | <p>Lead role in offering social work BSW and MSW for University of Waterloo and its affiliates</p> <p>Lead role in offering the Studies in Islam program for University of Waterloo and its affiliates</p> |
| | St. Jerome's University | <p>Lead role in offering the Italian Studies program and the Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies program for University of Waterloo and its affiliates</p> <p>Medieval studies program co-sponsored by St. Jerome's University and the University of Waterloo</p> <p>Service-learning initiatives that promote active social justice, including programs in Peru, Guatemala and other locations</p> |
| | St. Paul's University College | <p>Lead role with the Faculty of Environment in offering international development BA for University of Waterloo and its affiliates</p> <p>Home of Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre</p> <p>GreenHouse: a live-in social innovation centre for projects promoting environmental or social justice change</p> |

| Public university | Affiliated institution | Points of differentiation |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Western University | Brescia University College | Canada's only all-women's university Lead role in offering Food and Nutrition programs for Western University and its affiliates |
| | Huron University College | Academic focus on critical thinking and problem-solving Lead role in offering Chinese and Japanese language instruction for Western University and its affiliates |
| | King's University College | Lead role in offering social work and thanatology (grief and bereavement) programs for Western University and its affiliates Commitment to service. All students in Social Justice and Peace program engage in a service component in second year that engages them in local issues, with an optional overseas service component. |

Source: Author's compilation based on interviews and public websites and documents.

Discussion

I take it for granted that Ontarians do not want to create more religiously based affiliated universities. In a largely secular age, it seems uncomfortable that explicitly religious institutions are involved in the governance of state-supported universities. In a multicultural society, it seems uncomfortable that all of the affiliates are associated with Christian denominations. The issue of whether educational funding available to one religion should be extended to other religions was thoroughly canvassed at the K-12 level in the 2007 election campaign: Ontarians made it clear that they do not wish to move in that direction.

There are nevertheless two good reasons why those who are interested in a differentiated higher education system should take an interest in Ontario's affiliated universities:

- The affiliates exist. No one is proposing to abolish them. Policymakers need to decide whether they value the differentiated educational experiences that affiliates offer and, if so, whether any measures are needed to protect and strengthen those experiences.
- The affiliates offer a model that can be replicated in a fully secular context: the model of a semi-autonomous campus with a distinctive mission. Policymakers need to decide whether they value this model as part of a differentiated higher education system and, if so, what steps they are prepared to take to support it.

Valuing the differentiated educational experiences that affiliated universities offer

The evidence I have presented suggests that the affiliated institutions offer a differentiated experience that, at its best, models the experience of a good liberal arts university. While there are many variations among the affiliates, they focus on undergraduate teaching and scholarship in the liberal arts, they operate at a scale that encourages students and faculty to know one another, and they offer residential experiences consistent with their educational mission to a significant proportion of their students. Each of them does so in affiliation with a large multiversity, so in most cases their students have access to the programs, facilities and services of a larger institution. Their focus on undergraduate education and their affiliation with a larger institution mean that they can operate at an affordable cost.

Yet affiliates are invisible in most descriptions of Ontario's higher education system. At present the government's data collection focuses almost exclusively on each publicly funded university as a whole. Performance data are reported for each university as a whole, including graduation rates and employment rates. A few affiliates have chosen to participate separately in NSSE, but this is optional. The Strategic Mandate Agreements set expectations for each publicly funded university, but they make no reference to the affiliates or the roles they might play.⁶

These facts raise an important issue: What is the appropriate unit of analysis for a differentiation policy?

Using the university as the unit of analysis is understandable in the differentiation policy's early stages. As the policy matures, it would be reasonable for the publicly supported universities' SMAs to drill down into the role played by the affiliates in offering a distinctive experience within Ontario's higher education system. As with all parts of the higher education system, it should be the responsibility of the institutions to provide evidence about the role they are actually playing and how well they are playing it.

Recognizing and valuing affiliates' role will lead to important conversations about whether the role is sustainable over time.

- Most of the interviewees for this project expect that enrolments at their institutions will change in line with the enrolments for similar programs at other universities over the coming decade; in other words, enrolments may remain steady or decline somewhat, similar to other liberal arts programs in their region. A few interviewees have growth plans that are significant in percentage terms but may be achievable given the small number of base enrolments.
- Some interviewees expressed concern that their institution is facing some of the same pressures as the parent universities. With per-student funding increases that are lower than inflation, and with

⁶ Hearst has its own Strategic Mandate Agreement. Carleton University's SMA proposal to MTCU in 2012 included an appendix on the role of Dominican, but the final SMA signed in 2014 does not refer to Dominican.

average teaching loads falling at some institutions from their earlier levels, some affiliated institutions may be forced to grow beyond what is desirable for a small liberal arts experience.⁷

- Some interviewees also noted that, despite good will on both sides, the natural tendency of large universities to pursue their national and international ambitions may pose a risk to their small affiliates. The pressure facing universities to pursue the prestige associated with major research programs, graduate studies and professional schools has been well documented. In this context, affiliates may seem administratively inconvenient, and their small classrooms may seem an impediment to the cost efficiencies associated with large lecture halls.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess fully the outlook for the affiliated universities. If, as part of its differentiation strategy, the Ontario government recognizes and values the small-campus liberal arts education that many affiliates offer, it should be possible for the government and the parent universities to have frank discussions about how to protect this element of differentiation in the face of competing priorities.

Assessing differentiation within Ontario's publicly supported universities

The distinctive role of affiliates raises questions for Ontario's publicly supported universities as a whole. How much differentiation exists within each university? Should Ontario's differentiation policy be deepened to recognize and support desirable forms of differentiation within each university?

For example, I have argued that a differentiation policy should explicitly make room for campuses that offer the benefits of a small liberal arts experience. Comparative studies (cited above) demonstrate the benefits of the liberal arts model in promoting practices that promote student engagement and learning. Yet higher education policy in Ontario has never made a commitment to having small liberal arts universities.⁸

The affiliated universities in Ontario show how distinctive liberal arts campuses can be part of Ontario's publicly supported universities. Linking the liberal arts campus to a large parent institution creates economies of scale that can overcome some of the financial challenges of operating at small scale. Some of the elements of a successful model are:

- A distinctive campus, which may or may not be proximate to the main campus
- A distinctive vision that values undergraduate teaching and scholarship more than discovery research, graduate studies and professional programs

⁷ For an articulation of these issues from one affiliate's perspective, see King's University College (2010), pp. 28-29.

⁸ Many universities might have claimed that role at some point in their history, but there has been no government interest in maintaining the role, so almost all have grown well beyond 10,000 students and have substantial ambitions for graduate and professional studies and research. The closest examples of a liberal arts university at present are Trent (7,000 students on two campuses), Nipissing (4,000 students, including a large professional school) and Algoma (1,000).

- Faculty who are hired based on their commitment to this mission
- Faculty accountability to the campus head rather than to the department chair of the main campus
- Residences whose cocurricular activities reinforce the educational mission of the campus

This argument need not be limited to liberal arts campuses. Its application may extend to many forms of innovative teaching and learning.

Ontario has a small number of campuses that more or less fit this model, as shown in Table 7. The largest of these – the two suburban campuses of the University of Toronto – have more than doubled in size since 2000 and can scarcely be seen as small campuses. They nevertheless play distinctive roles that should be assessed separately from those of the St. George campus. The other four campuses serve a total of about 10,000 students, or about 2% of Ontario’s undergraduate population.

Table 7: Small Campuses of Ontario Universities

| University | Campus | Year opened | Enrolment (2012-13 headcount) | Points of differentiation |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| University of Guelph | University of Guelph-Humber | 2002 | 3,422 | Students receive an honours baccalaureate degree from the University of Guelph and a diploma from Humber College in four years of full-time study |
| Lakehead University | Orillia | 2006 - Downtown Campus 2010 - University Avenue Campus | 1,114 | Geographic accessibility in Orillia area, notably in arts and science, education, commerce and social work |
| University of Toronto | Scarborough | 1966 | 10,152 | Geographic accessibility for eastern GTA Designated as the University of Toronto’s U of T’s co-op campus Comprehensive range of undergraduate programs Graduate-level specialization in environmental science |
| | Mississauga | 1967 | 11,472 | Geographic accessibility for |

| University | Campus | Year opened | Enrolment (2012-13 headcount) | Points of differentiation |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | | | | western GTA Comprehensive range of undergraduate programs Graduate-level specializations Institute for Management and Innovation; Centre for South Asian Civilizations; Mississauga Academy of Medicine |
| Wilfrid Laurier University | Brantford | 1999 | 2,589 | Geographic accessibility for Brantford area, notably in arts, commerce and health studies Degree completion programs with Mohawk College Concurrent education program with Nipissing University (being wound down) |
| York University | Glendon College | 1966 | 2,221 (FTEs) | Centre of Excellence for French-language and Bilingual Education in the Central and Southwest Region The only campus in Ontario where all students study in both English and French |

Note: In addition to this list, several Ontario universities operate non-residential downtown campuses, typically in office buildings or similar structures.

Source: Trick (2012) and author's compilation. Enrolments are MTCU data.

These facts raise some significant questions for both the government and the parent institutions:

- Is the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning satisfactory at large multiversities?
- Would restructuring within the university that encourages more small-scale experiences and teaching innovation improve the quality of teaching and learning?

- Should one of the goals of Ontario's differentiation policy be to encourage such restructuring?

The first step in answering these questions is for the government's differentiation policy to drill more deeply into the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning offered by individual faculties and campuses at each university. The university as a whole is too large a unit of analysis: university-wide averages mask areas of strength and weakness.

In undertaking within-university analysis, care should be taken to gather comprehensive data. There will be an understandable tendency for each university to want to put its best foot forward by providing information on programs or colleges where the quality of teaching and learning is especially strong, but the government has a legitimate interest in the quality of undergraduate teaching in all parts of the university.

Greater recognition of the differentiation within each university will give more insight into whether the goals of the government's differentiation policy are being achieved. Experimentation with innovative teaching and learning strategies, such as is made possible by semi-autonomous affiliates and campuses, may become an important strategy for improving the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Federated and affiliated universities are artifacts of Ontario's history, yet their current role is highly relevant to the challenge of how to offer high-quality undergraduate teaching and learning in a near-universal system of higher education whose primary institutional type is the large multiversity. The affiliates carry out worthwhile missions in their own right, and they suggest how semi-autonomous faculties and campuses at publicly supported universities might play a role as innovative sites for the improvement of undergraduate education.

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