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A Look Back at the Decision on the Transfer Function at the Founding of Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology[1]

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ABSTRACT

Community college systems were established across North America from the early 1960s through the early 1970s. The new systems had two principal models: in one model, the college combined lower-division, university-level general education with technical education programs; in the other, most or all of the colleges were intended to concentrate on technical education. Ontario was the largest of the provinces and states in North America that opted for the second model. Many of the issues that planners confronted when designing these college systems have either persisted or re-emerged in recent years. This article re-examines the debate on the design of Ontario's colleges that took place when they were founded and considers its implications for the present.

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis le début des années 1960 et jusqu'au début des années 1970, lorsqu'on créait des réseaux de collèges communautaires partout en Amérique du Nord, deux modèles majeurs étaient proposés pour ces nouveaux réseaux. Dans un des modèles, le collège combinait l'enseignement général universitaire de division inférieure avec les programmes d'enseignement technique ; dans l'autre, la plupart des collèges, sinon tous, se concentraient sur l'enseignement technique. L'Ontario était la plus importante parmi les provinces et les États en Amérique du Nord qui ait opté pour le deuxième modèle. Beaucoup des défis auxquels les planificateurs ont été confrontés lorsqu'ils ont conçu le réseau des collèges sont encore présents ou sont réapparus au cours des dernières années. Cet article réexamine l'ancien débat sur la conception des collèges de l'Ontario et considère ses implications actuelles.

INTRODUCTION

When provincial systems of community colleges were being established in Canada in the 1960s, the single overriding issue in their design was whether to combine technical and general education in the same institution or to establish colleges that concentrated on technical education (Campbell, 1971). As with most American states, British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec opted for the combined model, while Ontario and a small number of states chose the technical-education model. Ontario developed the largest system of technical colleges in North America that did not have any linkage with the university sector.

The original decision about the design of Ontario's college system drew criticism from the outset, but that model remains largely intact today. Although many colleges have negotiated agreements with provincial universities that provide some university credit for courses taken in the college, these agreements constitute an uneven patchwork, and little progress has been made toward systemic change in the role of the colleges in relation to the universities (Rae, 2005). Indeed, the offering of a number of baccalaureate programs in applied fields of study by several Ontario colleges represents a "deepening" of the original technical-education model rather than a departure from it (Skolnik, 2005, 2009).

As policy-makers in Ontario try to find ways to improve opportunities for learners to attain baccalaureate degrees, they do so in the shadow of the debates that took place in the 1960s on the role of the colleges. Some of the same arguments heard today are those that were instrumental in the original decision about the design of the colleges, although often these arguments lack an appreciation of how the context of the original design decision differed from that of the present. The purpose of this article is to explain in contemporary terms what the original decision about the role of the colleges in relation to the universities meant and how that decision fit the circumstances, perceptions, and beliefs of the time. An alternative to the conventionally accepted explanation for the original design decision is offered, and the longer-term implications of that original decision are discussed briefly. The author concludes that the original decision about transfer has had adverse consequences for student mobility and personal development, social equity, and the efficiency of the post-secondary education system.

Although the original decision on the role and mission of Ontario's colleges was one of the most second-guessed in the history of Ontario higher education, relatively little has been published in the way of detailed analysis of that decision. The main discussions of the issue are found in Fleming (1971) and Dennison and Gallagher (1986), as well as in several unpublished master's and doctoral theses (Bartram, 1980; Hamblin, 1984; Murphy, 1983; Smyth, 1970; Stoll, 1993). Drawing upon those and other unpublished documents, the aim of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the original design decision, in two particular ways. First, a more-detailed examination of how the situation in the United States influenced Ontario policy-makers has been carried out. As Campbell (1971) noted, "the American experience might well be the single most influential factor accounting for the shape of this country's [Canada's] colleges" (p. 68). Although the architects of the Ontario college system claimed to be rejecting "the U.S. model," confusion has persisted regarding just what was being rejected. Second, the purported conflict between general and technical education has been delved

into more deeply than previously. In pursuing this aim, some unpublished documents that have received little attention in published sources have been drawn upon.

In short, what follows is a reflective and interpretive analysis of the founding of a college system in one province. Jones (1997) noted that "there is no such thing as a national system of higher education in Canada" (p. ix); rather, higher education is best viewed "as a collection of different provincial/territorial systems operating in parallel" (p. x). Thus, to gain an understanding of the development of, and particular issues pertaining to, colleges in Canada, it is necessary to proceed from examining case studies of individual provinces and territories to looking for commonalities, differences, and possible linkages among them. However, even though the college sectors in each province and territory have unique histories, some broad patterns can be discerned, and, as noted earlier, Ontario provides a good example of the less common of the two main models of college systems that were established in North America in the second half of the 20th century. The effort to understand why Ontario chose this particular model may, by implication, shed some light on why other jurisdictions chose the other model. Moreover, the endeavour may provide useful background for those in Ontario and other jurisdictions who are considering modifying the missions of their colleges and technical institutes.

WHAT KIND OF COLLEGE TO ESTABLISH?

By the early 1960s, there was a consensus in Ontario that the province's educational system needed to be expanded in a way that would give more young people an opportunity to have more education. The chief reason why more education was needed was, according to Fleming (1971), the growing complexity of the economy. Those who did not acquire the knowledge and skills required by new technology faced the prospect of "economic obsolescence," and the shortage of individuals with such knowledge and skills threatened to retard the economic development of the whole province (p. 491).

The best statement of the rationale for the needed expansion of Ontario's education system was provided by William Davis, the minister of Education, who referred to the "knowledge explosion" and the "technological revolution ... which has seen the disappearance of most of the unskilled, and a high proportion of the semi-skilled jobs" (Davis, 1965, p. 8–9). Although, according to Davis, these two factors alone warranted adding new types of educational opportunities to the existing system, the scale and urgency of the challenge were exacerbated by the third factor he noted in his address to the Legislature: the "population explosion." For example, the number of pupils in elementary school, which was just over a half million in 1946, had grown to 1.25 million by 1964 and was projected to reach 2 million by 1982 or 1983 (Davis, 1965, p. 10).

During the extensive deliberations that took place in the early 1960s, all conceivable ways of expanding the post-secondary system were considered: further expansion of the university system; increasing the number of institutes of technology; and introducing American-style junior colleges, either under the auspices of school boards or as independent institutions.

The number of universities in Ontario had already been increased from 5 at the beginning of World War II to 14 by 1963, and there were three arguments against simply expanding the university system to address the need for additional post-secondary education. First, there was the increasing recognition that, in addition to university graduates, Ontario industry needed workers with different skills than those produced

by a university education (Simonnet, 1963). To take just one example, industry leaders alleged that the optimum ratio of the number of engineering technicians to the number of engineers was about three to one, but in Ontario the ratio was in excess of three to one in the *opposite* direction (Skolnik, 1970; Skolnik & McMullen, 1970). The second argument against using the universities to meet the bulk of what was perceived to be a growing need for post-secondary education was rooted in the belief that many individuals did not possess the capacity for a university education and were more suited for some form of technical or applied education. When combined with the third argument – that expanding the university sector was becoming increasingly costly – the belief that a university education was suitable for only a limited portion of the population provided a powerful rationale for developing an alternative form of post-secondary education in Ontario. As Fleming (1971) noted, "it was [also] clear that the province could bankrupt itself in a vain attempt to provide the most expensive of post-secondary facilities to all comers, regardless of evidence of ability to benefit from them" (p. 492).

Even in the early 1960s, the universities were not the only post-secondary educational institutions in Ontario. In 1963, according to the Committee of Presidents of Provincially Assisted Universities of Ontario, there were seven institutes of technology with a combined enrolment of about 4,000 students, compared to an enrolment of almost 36,000 undergraduates in the universities (Committee of Presidents, 1963). Although the Legislative Assembly's Select Committee on Manpower Training had recommended that more institutes of technology be established (Simonnet, 1963) – an idea that was supported by the universities – there was reason to doubt that the institute of technology as it was then constituted was an adequate answer to the articulated need for a large number of students to have a broader alternative to the universities. The institutes of technology were limited in the range of occupations and industries for which they provided training and in the amount and types of general and adult education they offered.

Another widely discussed option for expanding post-secondary education was to emulate American community colleges. In fact, the American college loomed sufficiently large in the debate for official delegations from Ontario to visit the United States to study their colleges (Jackson, 1964). Because of the amount of attention given to U.S. colleges, a few things about the situation and terminology in the United States at that time need to be clarified.

The junior college that first appeared in the United States in the early 20th century began as an institution whose function was to provide the first two years of university arts and sciences courses for students who were expected to subsequently transfer to a university to complete a bachelor's degree. After World War II, these two-year institutions increasingly took on additional functions, particularly vocational education that was intended to prepare students for entry into the workforce rather than further post-secondary education. As these institutions took on additional functions, it became more common in the United States to refer to them as community colleges rather than junior colleges.

Interposed as it was between the secondary school and the university, the junior college could be looked upon as either an upward extension of the former or a downward extension of the latter. Cohen and Brawer (1984) noted that during the 1950s and 1960s, the term "junior college" was used mainly to refer to the lower-division

branches of universities and to religious or other independent two-year colleges, while "community college" was the term for comprehensive, publicly supported institutions. Thus, in the debate about what kind of colleges to establish in Ontario, "junior college" was an inaccurate term because it excluded the vocational education programs that were becoming increasingly prominent in the American colleges (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994).

In Ontario, junior college was most often used to connote an extension of the secondary school. One suggestion that gained considerable attention was to take Ontario's existing grade 13, add a new grade 14, and place the institutions offering these two grades under the jurisdiction of school boards, possibly even annexing them to "certain high schools" (Committee of Presidents, 1963, p. 26). This particular model was attacked vigorously by the Committee of Presidents of Ontario universities on the grounds that secondary schools did not have the resources or the expertise to "direct and organize university work" (Committee of Presidents, 1963, p. 26). Of course, this was at a time when secondary schools *were* providing the first year of university studies in the form of grade 13. In fact, the principal argument of the Committee of Presidents as to why Ontario did not need the transfer function was that the "provision of general arts and science courses paralleling the first two years of university was partly taken care of ... by the fifth year in the Ontario secondary schools" (p. 26). The university presidents seemed to want it both ways. On the one hand, they claimed the schools did not have the resources and expertise to provide the first two years of university work; on the other hand, they objected to any other option because the schools were already performing the function with respect to the first year. If the universities really were counting on secondary schools to provide general arts and sciences courses that paralleled the first year of university, then it might have made sense to strengthen and extend the schools' capability by creating separate units for this activity under their jurisdiction. Once such units were created, they could have provided the second year of studies as well.

Whether it was to be related to the secondary schools or be independent of them, the junior college model was dismissed by the Committee of Presidents as an "American invention" designed to meet educational needs in the United States. However, apart from the existence of grade 13 in Ontario (which could have been seen equally as a foundation for the junior-college model), it is difficult to imagine which U.S. educational needs were not shared by Ontario. Compared to the situation in the United States and relative to the population, universities were both less available and less accessible in Ontario, a factor that, other things being equal, should have resulted in a greater need for junior colleges in Ontario than in the United States. Robert Jackson, a demographer who advised the Ontario government on the expansion of the post-secondary system and subsequently became the founding director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, reported in 1963 that even when grade 13 enrolment was added in, the university participation rate in Canada was less than half the U.S. rate; he also projected that, based on existing trends, the rate in Ontario would be no more than 60% of the U.S. rate by 1970 (Jackson, 1963). Since only about 13% of the university age group in the province were attending university at the time, it was hard to argue that keeping grade 13 as the only bridge to university was consistent with extending education to all who could benefit from it or with developing the full potential of the province's human resources.

Other reasons why the junior college function developed in the United States included lower costs, smaller classes, more supportive environments for learning, and opportunities for a second chance, and it is unclear why these rationales would not have applied equally in Ontario. Just as they did in the United States, comprehensive community colleges that offered transfer opportunities could have helped to overcome the financial, geographic, and cultural barriers that limited access to universities in Ontario (Stager, 1966). However, the Committee of Presidents (1963) asserted that the remedial function of the junior college was uniquely American and not in demand in Ontario – a statement that, given the high dropout rate in Ontario, was grossly inaccurate. Thus, it would appear that the principal educational need in the United States that was not shared in Ontario at that time was the perceived need for greater equality of opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate.

To appreciate just what Ontario university leaders were actually rejecting when they rejected "the American model," it is important to understand the scope of transfer arrangements in the United States in the 1960s. Originally, and even beyond the 1960s, transfer education in American junior and community colleges was defined as the general education component of the first two years of a baccalaureate (Townsend, 2001). Typically, transfer students completed much of their required and elective general education courses in arts and sciences in a junior or community college, which enabled them to concentrate on more specialized courses related to their major when they got to university.

As the junior colleges evolved, they began to provide vocational programs that were designed to prepare students for work in the semi-professions. Among the chief bases of distinction between a profession and a semi-profession was that the former required four or more years of post-secondary education, while the latter required two years. In that they prepared people for direct entry into the workforce rather than for further education, the occupational preparation programs were considered to be terminal, in other words, the "final training" that the student would receive (Koos, 1970, p. 19).

When Ontario university leaders, and ultimately the Ontario government in its plan for the new colleges, rejected a transfer function for the colleges, they were rejecting the idea that the colleges should provide university-level general education courses. Although the colleges were expected to provide general education courses to support their occupational programs and for their adult students, Ontario's Education minister made it clear that these were not thought of as university-level courses (Davis, 1965). Neither the university leaders nor the Ontario government was rejecting an American practice of providing transfer credit for occupational courses, however, because, by and large, university-transfer arrangements for students in community college occupational programs did not exist in the United States at the time. Hence, transfer for students in occupational programs was not on the radar screen in Ontario when the colleges were founded.

The lack of clarity about the precise nature of the transfer situation in the United States in the 1960s led to a misunderstanding about the colleges' original mandate that continues to this day. Many people with whom the author has spoken in the college system have the impression that at the time the colleges were established, transfer for students in occupational programs in the United States was common and the Ontario government explicitly rejected this idea for its colleges. In fact, a concerted push by

American community colleges to obtain transfer agreements with universities for students in occupational programs has occurred only recently. Not only did American community colleges begin this quest at about the same time as their Ontario counterparts, but colleges in both jurisdictions have encountered similar resistance from their respective public universities – although some U.S. colleges have been more successful than Ontario colleges in overcoming this resistance.

The major reason why it has been more difficult to establish transfer arrangements for occupational programs than for the arts and sciences is that the normal curriculum sequence must be reversed for the former group. The undergraduate university curriculum is based on the notion that students take more general courses in the first two years and more specialized courses in the third and fourth years. However, students who have done a two-year career program in a college have already taken many specialized courses related to their career field but will not have had much in the way of university-level general education courses. Thus, a major recent development in the United States has been to employ the "upside down degree" model (Townsend, 2004), which enables students to transfer from college career programs to a university. In fact, the proportion of students who complete two years in an applied program in a community college and then enrol in a university the next year may not be much higher in the United States or British Columbia than in Ontario (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario [Association of Colleges], 2005; Townsend, 2002). For example, in 2003, the transfer rate for graduates of two-year applied programs in Ontario colleges was estimated to be 5.6%, compared to 8.0% in British Columbia, 6.0% in Texas, and 5.0% in Washington (Association of Colleges, 2005, p. 17). In contrast, the transfer rate for students in the general education stream is much lower in Ontario than in British Columbia or the United States. Given that the proportion of students in the general education stream is much greater in British Columbia and the United States, the overall transfer rate is much greater for these jurisdictions than for Ontario.

When the colleges first started to develop transfer agreements with universities for students in career programs in the 1980s, some people within the colleges argued that the move was in conflict with the colleges' original mandate. Although support for transfer arrangements for students in career programs is now widespread in the colleges, the same argument against this kind of college transfer is often made by people in the university sector. It is important, however, to appreciate that in trying to develop transfer arrangements for students in occupational programs in the early part of the 21st century, college leaders are not attempting to reverse the decision made in 1965 about the mandate of the colleges. Rather, these leaders are dealing with a relatively recent situation that was not anticipated in 1965. To oppose the transfer of students from college career programs to universities on the grounds that the idea was considered and rejected in the original design of the college system is to demonstrate a misunderstanding of history.

THE PURPORTED CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TRANSFER FUNCTION AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The decision that the predominant emphasis in Ontario's new colleges should be occupational education did not necessarily imply that a transfer function, defined as it was in those days as university-level general education courses, should be *totally*

excluded. As suggested earlier, even if a transfer function for colleges made greater sense in the United States than in Ontario, it was impossible to make a compelling case that the idea of transfer did not apply at all in Ontario..

The founders of Ontario's new colleges did not want even a small transfer stream, because they believed there was an inevitable conflict between these two functions and thus the existence of any kind of transfer function could jeopardize the success of the vocational function. The most colourful statement of this view was made by Norman Sisco, an Ontario Department of Education official who was one of the chief architects of the CAAT (Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology) system. Fleming (1971) quotes Sisco as warning, at a national seminar on the community college in Canada, that if the colleges had a transfer function, then after about 10 years, "you will have a fourth rate liberal arts college with a few long-haired pedants strutting around with a handful of students" (p. 516). Fleming reported that Sisco was fond of repeating this prediction, which he attributed to an unnamed American educator.

There was not much evidence in 1965 to support (or contradict) the notion of a conflict between transfer and occupational education. This issue came up during the visit to California by William Davis, Ontario's minister of Education, and his advisers to study the California junior colleges; the report of that visit notes that one of the California hosts suggested to the Canadian visitors that if too much attention were paid to the transfer programs, the occupational and community service functions could suffer (Jackson, 1964). On the other hand, the visitors were surprised to learn that enrolment in university-parallel programs was less than 10% of the total enrolment in some California colleges. They were told also that since the California colleges had established their own identity and tradition, they did not wish to become four-year institutions. Thus, there is at least as much in the report to allay fear of a serious conflict between transfer and occupational education as there is to fuel it... Moreover, the visit did not dissuade the officials of the Quebec Department of Education who were on this trip with their Ontario counterparts from establishing colleges that combined university-parallel and vocational streams in the same institution (Drainville & Côté, 1969, cited in Bartram, 1980, p. 115). In fact, in 1998, a U.S. study on the compatibility of the different functions of the community college reported that the discussion of this issue was based mostly on hypothetical argument and speculation rather than evidence (Bailey & Averianova, 1998).

Evidence or not, the alleged conflict between the transfer function and a strong focus on vocational education appears to have been the crucial factor in the Ontario government's decision that transfer would not be a systemic part of the mandate of the new colleges. It did not matter that no one could predict with any certainty whether the transfer function would in fact weaken vocational education in the new colleges. The stakes were simply too high to take the chance. This had been the position of a university-sector committee headed by J. J. Deutsch, the principal of Queen's University, and it was a position with which the government agreed (Deutsch, 1962).

The government's agreement with this view is revealed in the introduction to the statement made by William Davis, the Education minister, in the Legislature, in which he noted Ontario's long-standing deficiency in "the training of technical personnel beyond the high school but short of the university level" and referred to the "importance" of the recommendations of the Select Committee on Manpower Training for the

expansion of technical education (Davis, 1965, pp. 5–6). A further circumstance that contributed to the perceived need for the new colleges to have a strong presence in technical education was the rapid expansion of technical education in the secondary schools that was occurring at the time. This expansion was the result of two factors: a reorganization of the secondary-school curriculum that increased the streaming of students into vocational programs; and the availability of funding from the federal government, under the 1960 *Technical and Vocational Training Act*, to build vocational education facilities. Between 1961 and 1967, the percentage of students enrolled in non-academic programs in Ontario secondary schools increased from 24% to 46%, and the number of students in these programs increased from 72,000 to over 232,000 (Smaller, 2000, p. 14). Expanding technical education at the post-secondary level would give graduates of the secondary schools' new vocational programs the opportunity to further their education and thereby complete the whole system of technical education in the province.

If the notion that fear of jeopardizing the development of strong technical education programs is accepted as the major factor responsible for the government's rejection of transfer in the original design of Ontario's colleges, then the conventional view of the influence of different stakeholders in that design is called into question. The conventional wisdom is that the presidents of Ontario's universities strongly opposed the new colleges having a transfer function because they didn't want the resulting competition for students or for funding, that the presidents lobbied vigorously and skillfully to defend their interests, and that, in the end, their influence carried the day.[2]

There is no dispute about the second point. As for the first and third points, Dennison and Gallagher (1986) concluded that "the need to preserve and protect the university system" underlay most of the recommendations from the Committee of Presidents on the shape of the new college system (p. 33), and they concurred with Peter Bartram's (1980) observation that, "above all, it was the presidents of Ontario's universities who seem to have most influenced the shape of the colleges" (p. 29).

Yet, there is room for debate on both points. The problem in establishing the first point is that in the public-policy arena, interest groups generally attempt to justify policies that advance their own interests with arguments as to how these policies serve the common good. Because such arguments are often plausible, if not eloquent and persuasive, it is difficult for observers to judge whether such arguments are put forward with sincerity when even those making the argument may be unaware of their true motives. In this particular case, though, it is hard to view the universities' argument that the existence of transfer programs on even a modest scale would undermine technical education as anything but self-serving. In both the 1963 and 1965 Committee of Presidents' documents, this point was presented as a self-evident truth without any supporting evidence. The committee did not attempt to explain why the existence of transfer programs in many U.S. colleges had not impeded the development of an increasingly large career-education stream in those colleges.

The remaining point to consider is how much influence the universities actually had on the final decision reached by the government. Conceivably, the universities might have influenced the decision either because of the persuasiveness of their arguments or in deference to their presumed expertise on educational matters. Patricia Stoll, in her unpublished 1993 master's thesis, challenged the conventional view of the influence of the

university presidents. She reviewed original letters and memoranda, handwritten notes, and related documents sent to and from the Minister of Education and the minister's executive assistant pertaining to the establishment of the colleges and involving, in particular, the minister's key advisers and the drafters of the legislation. Although Stoll found very few references to the universities or to the views of the presidents, she did find significant expressions of concern about the possible conflict between transfer and technical education, findings that lead to the conclusion that the government, largely on its own, had arrived at the same position that the universities had been arguing. On the other hand, it is possible that the government originally got the idea that the transfer function and technical education were fundamentally in conflict from the 1962 Deutsch Report and, over the next three years, took ownership of the idea. If so, the influence of the universities would have been exerted mainly through planting the idea of a conflict between functions, rather than lobbying against a transfer role for the colleges.

Blending Stoll's findings with the conventional view gives rise to a more-nuanced interpretation of the founding of the colleges. Both the universities and the Ontario government had reasons for opposing transfer, but their reasons were different. For the universities, it was to maintain their monopoly over degree-credit education; for the government, it was to ensure the success of its plans for the expansion of technical education and to reap the anticipated economic benefits that expanded technical education would bring to the province. In this scenario, the universities could realize their narrow institutional aims, but only because those aims happened to be consistent with the realization of the government's larger aims for the province.[3]

The colleges that were created in 1965 were enhanced and broadened versions of the existing institutes of technology. The addition of the term "applied arts" indicated a greater breadth of occupations for which training would be provided, and the word "college" suggested a greater educational focus, including general, adult, and community education, than that of the institutes of technology. The government rejected the name "community college" for the new institutions because that term connoted an institution whose mission included *both* university-level liberal arts and career education courses. Murray Ross, the president of York University, was particularly noted for his opposition to the model that was advocated by his peers. Ross felt that the word "college" was inappropriate for institutions in which the liberal arts were not taught and said it would have been more accurate to call the new institutions "technical institutes" (cited in Campbell, 1971, p. 72). Although the colleges were not formally designated as community colleges, the term "community college" has come to be used informally in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada as a generic descriptor for post-secondary institutions that do not have university status. For example, the national organization that represents the diverse array of colleges, institutes, and other non-university post-secondary institutions in Canada is called the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, even though only 5 of its 131 member-institutions actually go by that name (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2010).

Attributing such caution to the creation of post-secondary institutions with multiple missions may seem excessive. However, it is well to remember that the decision to exclude the transfer function was buttressed by another and related factor: the prevailing limited view of human potential that implied that almost all those who would attend the new colleges did not have the capacity for university study — and the few

who did could be treated by the universities as special cases, as was proposed. Thus, a major factor accounting for Ontario's approach to the transfer function compared to that taken in the United States was likely the difference in prevailing attitudes in the two jurisdictions about the value attached to creating opportunities for social mobility. In general, educators and opinion leaders in Ontario were less optimistic about human potential and more complacent about existing patterns of social stratification than their U.S. counterparts – a comparison that had changed dramatically by the 21st century.

Pains have been taken in this article to explain the choice that the founders of Ontario's colleges made regarding transfer, particularly since most of the other larger North American jurisdictions to that time had adopted the predominant model in which colleges provided both general and vocational education. Indeed, no similar attempts have been made to explain why the provinces that built transfer into their college systems from the outset, namely, British Columbia and Alberta, chose their particular designs. In the absence of such investigations, it is impossible to provide a detailed comparison of the factors that led to the choices made in Ontario and those made in British Columbia and Alberta. Still, three factors that likely contributed to the different choices made concerning the nature of their respective college systems can be identified in the relevant history of and conditions in the three provinces.

First, in both British Columbia and Alberta, there had been prior experience with junior colleges, which, though few in number, had been quite visible institutions. Victoria College, dating back to 1903, was among the earliest junior colleges in North America; it had provided the first two years of arts and sciences in affiliation, first, with McGill University, then later, with the University of British Columbia, before becoming an autonomous university in 1963 (Campbell, 1971). Mount Royal College in Calgary became a post-secondary institution in 1931 and offered courses for transfer to the University of Alberta. There were no comparable cases of junior colleges offering transfer courses for an extended duration in Ontario.

Second, at the time the development of college systems was being considered in British Columbia and Alberta, there was just one university in each province (although a second one was imminent). Thus, whatever the new colleges provided in the way of vocational education, it would have been unthinkable for them not to expand the opportunity for university-level study as well. In contrast, at the time the colleges were being planned, Ontario had 14 universities widely dispersed across the province. In terms of the transfer function, the university presidents in Ontario vehemently opposed transfer colleges, whereas in British Columbia, not only was the president of the university a strong advocate for creating colleges with a transfer function, but he also presented the provincial government with a plan for doing so (Macdonald, 1962).

Third, in both British Columbia and Alberta, local communities exerted a strong influence on the shape of the colleges, and "the public preference was for academic, university-like junior colleges, which would, in the anticipation of many, eventually become degree granting institutions in their own right" (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 22). In both provinces, local communities provided much of the initiative for establishing colleges; in fact, in British Columbia the legislated procedure for establishing a college required community initiative and support. In contrast, in Ontario, both the policy process and the procedures for the establishment of colleges were highly centralized at the provincial level (Hamblin, 1984).

The college system established in Quebec in the 1960s also provided articulation with the universities. However, because students in Quebec enrol in college after grade 11 and college attendance is mandatory for those intending to go to university, the Quebec system is quite different from the transfer models that exist elsewhere in North America. The establishment of a new college system in Quebec was introduced as part of an overhaul of the province's entire educational system and, in contrast to Ontario, one of the major goals of that educational reform was to substantially increase the university participation rate (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986; Donald, 1997). Unlike their counterparts in Ontario, those who founded the college systems in Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta were not concerned that providing university-level general education would conflict with providing technical education.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

With their exclusive concentration on occupational programs and, it could be argued, their exclusion of a university-parallel stream, Ontario colleges have created many outstanding, indeed world-renown, career education programs. On the other hand, many Alberta, B.C., and U.S. colleges have been able to not only develop outstanding career education programs but also maintain robust programs for university transfer in the arts and sciences. Based on the experience of other jurisdictions, it is quite likely that Ontario could have had both university-parallel programs in arts and sciences and vocational education programs. Moreover, the existence of both a "transfer culture" and state- or provincial-level mechanisms for fostering transfer allowed colleges in other jurisdictions to obtain more favourable credit-transfer arrangements than those in Ontario when the era of lifelong learning arrived. Clearly, educators everywhere realized the value in extending the idea of transfer to occupational programs.

The exclusion of transfer from the functions of the colleges has had significant implications for the universities. Clark Kerr, president of the University of California from 1958 to 1967, in commenting on the role of the community college, said:

> I considered the vast expansion of the community colleges to be the first line of defense for the University of California as an institution of international academic renown. Otherwise the University was going to be overwhelmed by large numbers of students with lower academic attainments or attacked as trying to hold on to a monopoly over entry into higher status. (1978, p. 267)

At the time the colleges were created, attending university in Ontario was still the preserve of a relatively small and well-off segment of the population, but that was about to change at least to some extent. When the transition toward mass higher education occurred, Ontario universities began to feel the crunch of serving large numbers of students with very mixed records of academic attainment. Pressured by large numbers of first- and second-year students, no Ontario university has reached anywhere near the concentration on graduate studies as a proportion of total enrolment that many U.S. universities have reached. Moreover, complaints from university faculty about having to deal with students with inadequate academic preparation have become widespread (Côté & Allahar, 2007).

Perhaps the most serious consequence of the original decision about transfer pertains to social equity. In the mid 1960s, this issue was not a major concern in Ontario, but it has become so over the years. Despite the enormous expansion of the university sector since the colleges were created, the lower university participation rates for low-income groups and minorities remain a pressing problem. In fact, a 2007 study of accessibility published by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation concluded that the problem of accessibility "lies not in the overall rate of participation, but in the disparities and inequities in participation among elements of the Canadian population (Jones, et al., 2008).

In 2001, children in Canadian families earning more than $100,000 a year were about two and a half times more likely to attend university as children from families with annual incomes of less than $25,000 (Berger et al., 2007). Compared to the pattern for universities, participation rates at Canada's colleges are not closely tied to family income (Drolet, 2005). College participation rates among children from families falling within the lowest income quintile have not differed significantly from those in the highest income quintile. This same pattern appears to hold true for Ontario's colleges: college applicant rates across income levels approximate closely the percentage of the total Ontario population represented by those groups. College participation rates across income categories do not vary significantly (Colleges Ontario, 2008).

For families in all income categories below $75,000, the college participation rate is significantly higher than the university participation rate, the reverse being the case for families earning more than $100,000 annually. The absence of the kind of pathways from college to university that an arts and sciences transfer stream can provide helps to maintain this disparity and limits the access of lower-income groups to the baccalaureate.

Over the years, many colleges have, in the absence of a provincial policy on the matter, established general arts and sciences programs in part to fill this historic void. However, these programs are quite small, comprising only about 2% of total college enrolment in 2006, and there is no provincial policy, framework, or mechanism to facilitate transfer for the students in the programs. Moreover, preparing students for transfer to a university is not the only (and in many cases not the major) focus of these programs; often, they provide a place for students who have not yet decided on what career program to pursue or who are not yet academically qualified for their chosen career program.

As a result of the decision to exclude transfer from the colleges' mandate, Ontario employs what looks like a relatively inefficient approach to the provision of baccalaureate-level education (Clark, Moran, Skolnik, & Trick, 2009). In jurisdictions where transfer is available, a substantial proportion of first- and second-year university-level arts and sciences courses are provided by community colleges. By contrast, almost all arts and sciences credit courses in Ontario are provided by the universities. Although the absence of a transfer function could have created a niche for universities that concentrate on undergraduate teaching, this has not been the case. In fact, all Ontario universities have embraced the research-university model, the highest-cost model for a post-secondary institution. Thus, almost all Ontario students who pursue a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science do so in the highest-cost type of post-secondary institution.

Despite the problems that have resulted from the original decision to exclude transfer from the mandate of the colleges, formally incorporating an arts and sciences transfer function into that mandate does not seem to have been given serious consid-

eration by any Ontario provincial government. Perhaps this is because developing a system-wide capacity for the first two years of university arts and sciences courses at this stage of the colleges' development seems a daunting and an expensive task. Also, it may be more difficult to graft liberal education onto a base of career education, as Ontario colleges would have to do, than to add career education to a base of liberal education, as American colleges have done, since arts and sciences courses provide more of a foundation and support for career education courses than vice versa.

If the idea of significantly expanding the scale of general arts and sciences programs in the colleges and making university transfer the major focus of those programs does become the subject of serious discussion, the discussion will take place in the shadow of the original transfer debate. One of the hangovers of that debate is the concern that expanding the scale of university-equivalent arts and sciences courses in the colleges might jeopardize the strength and viability of their career education programs. Not only, as noted earlier, is this assertion contradicted by the experience of numerous other jurisdictions, but after four decades, those career programs should be secure. Still, the influence that this concern continues to exert (perhaps uniquely) in Ontario should not be underestimated.

Finally, it is not necessary to come to a conclusion as to whether the original decision about transfer was right or wrong. The founders made what they thought was the best decision at the time, without the benefit of four decades of hindsight. It is more helpful to focus on what William Davis, the Education minister, said when he introduced the legislation: that the exclusion of a transfer function was not intended to be a once-for-all-time choice; rather, the situation was going to be monitored continuously and a modification in the design of the system made in the future should that seem warranted (Davis, 1965, p. 14). The problem is that this monitoring has failed to occur, and as more time passed, the original design became further set in stone. Perhaps now is an appropriate time to revisit this issue, especially in view of the different ideas about equity and human potential that prevail in Ontario today compared to the 1960s.

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NOTES

1. Robert Gordon, Glen Jones, and Janet Mason provided very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this manuscript, and have no responsibility for the views expressed in this article.
2. After reading a draft of this manuscript, Glen Jones suggested two other reasons, besides fear of competition for students, why the universities might have opposed transfer. They may not have wanted to spend the necessary time and effort to develop administrative arrangements for transfer, especially at a time when they faced major challenges in regard to enrolment expansion, new program development, and governance reform, and they may have been concerned about competition from the colleges for the extra faculty they would need to handle enrolment expansion.
3. A variant of this argument would give greater prominence to the leaders of Ontario industry as a stakeholder group and place the government more in the role of mediating among different stakeholder interests. In this formulation, the pressure to expand technical education, and not take a chance on transfer getting in the way, could be seen as coming from industry. If the government was getting the same advice from both industry and the universities, there would be a particularly strong case for the rejection of transfer. Moreover, to a government that drew much of its support from business, opposition to transfer from the leaders of industry would carry more weight than that from university presidents. However, as plausible as this line of thinking may seem, there is little empirical support for it, because voices from industry are conspicuously missing in the record of the debate on the shape of the new colleges.