

Example of essay on ontario universities within the next 10 years will

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Face a Significant Shortage of New Professors

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Introduction

Should there be a large number of retiring faculty members, Ontario universities within the next 10 years will face a significant shortage of new professors. Moreover, if there is a need to meet the demands of a growing student population, there is also a need to open up more teaching jobs. Given such scenarios, public and private higher educational institutions in Ontario should look into previous statistics, trends and forecasts from reliable sources to prepare for this supposedly short supply of faculty members.

On the other hand, Ontario educational authorities should consider other contributory factors why should this be the case within the decade. To examine this issue more deeply, they should keep track of the employment status of university graduates, that is, whether their graduates earned post-graduate degrees in line with their specialization, employed by industries, unemployed, or underemployed. Further, university administrators should see to it that they offer courses in line with the local and international industry demands for more effective nation building.

About Ontario Universities

Ontario universities are located in the Province of Ontario, east central of Canada. Ontario has more than 20 government funded universities and more than 15 private sectarian universities. Universities at Ontario have one of the

most student populations considering that Ontario is Canada's most populous province; in addition, it is where Canada's capital and most populous cities are, Ottawa and Toronto, respectively. Ontario's oldest university is the University of Toronto, which also has the most number of enrollees in its three campuses: St. George (main campus), Scarborough, and Mississauga Campuses. These universities were either founded through a Royal Charter or the Legislative Assembly Act. To apply for admission to an Ontario public university, students go via the Ontario Universities' Application Center (OUAC) (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2013) or other government related services.

Many of Ontarian students are Canadians while others are international students. The increase in the number of student population was also attributed to the influx of immigrants. Some immigrant workers bring with them their families to be permanent residents. Hence, only if this situation continues, there is really a need for more faculty members. However, the Canadian government has placed mechanisms to prevent the oversupply of immigrants. Thus far, the data trends show that the number of enrollees per academic year fluctuate, thus, there is no assurance whether it would continue to be so within this decade.

Vis-à-vis Qualified Professorial Candidates

A number of studies points out to the large number of retiring faculty members in the province of Ontario, Canada. According to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the number of Canadians over the age of 65 years old will double within the next 10 years. Within the next 10 years, many baby boomers will retire, which include faculty members;

hence, a need to fill out positions they will leave vacant. In order to resolve this problem, higher educational institutions in Ontario have to hire 7, 000 up to 15, 000 new hires (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, 2005). Most of the potential candidates will come from the institutions themselves, who have to supplement professorial positions. Considering that entry-level instructor positions have to be filled out first, it still depends on the applicants' credentials if they match up with the faculty positions' job descriptions. In many cases, should candidates meet the minimum requirements, they could be considered for either middle- or higher-level teaching positions (e. g., associate professors, professors one, etc.).

In support to the preceding paragraph, other researchers attribute the possible shortage of new faculty members to the growing number of students' population (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013). These students are either Canadians, naturalized Canadians, children of immigrants, and/or international students. Because the influx of students is unpredictable in any year within the decade, it is highly probable that there is indeed a need for more instructors, professors, and auxiliary teaching workforce. Even with that situations, there is already a long roster for candidates from previous years who are eager and qualified to teach. Hence, even when there will be a large number of faculty who will retire anytime within the next five years, there are potentially, highly qualified applicants waiting to be hired, especially for tenured positions .

Other reports have shown that significant shortage of new professors due to retiring faculty are not conclusive. According to an interview of Meredith

Birchall-Spencer to University of Toronto Economics Professor David K. Foot, “How can you have exploding university and college enrolments and a labour market shortage? You can’t.” For the most part, even when old faculty members retire, they are still invited to work and get paid as curators, lecturers, etc. Just think that instead of giving these opportunities to younger faculty members, or hiring new ones for that matter, they are still considered as among the most experienced and knowledgeable former faculty members to take charge of the responsibilities such jobs entail. Because of these kinds of scenario, there is not much to be expected that more job creations are being made once a teaching position is left vacant. Sometimes, the vacant positions are left vacant for a few months if the demand is not that tight, such that the school year is about to end. Hence, in cases like these, other faculty members, or their trainees, serve as substitutes.

Most of the studies mentioned above point out to the inconclusivity of their evidences regarding the potential shortages in the number of new faculty because of retiring professors and growing learner population for the coming several years. Hence, more studies need to be consulted and analyzed whether they also have the same evidences. Nevertheless, it is better if we also rely on other proofs such as other data from previous years, trends, and other statistics. Should there really be an actual teaching workforce deficits in various Ontario universities, much needs to be explored, examined, and analyzed. Because of the limited scope of this essay, suffice to say that we have to look at other research findings.

Shortages of New Professors As Against Other Evidences

Based on previous data, current statistics, trends, and forecast, the possible shortage of new professors should be weighed against other evidences.

According to Thomas Watson, in 2003, there was a one-third short supply of tenure-track faculty positions because Canadian universities fail to attract candidates as they compete with the private sector industries. However, that was evident in that year alone, but from 2000-2012, the faculty to students ratio stayed at around an average of 1: 27 (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013). Hence, although previous faculty members retire, they are small in number considering that the ideal class number is not affected within the past decade or so.

In case there is an expected increase in the number of university enrollees, there are many factors why there is still fluctuation in enrolment each academic year. The number of secondary school students who graduate, for instance, may not all pursue their studies in universities and those who enter university studies will not all finish their schooling. Hence, given the fact that there is a yearly fluctuation in enrolment, it is an assurance that there is always a need for more professors in a specific academic year. Considering further that the number of those who retire does not drastically affect the need for more faculties in many Ontarian universities, there is really not a need for filling out any unfounded shortage. Nevertheless, in case there is an immediacy to hire more new professors, university administrations already have a roster of qualified candidate-faculty members from previous years. In view of the current statistics on faculty to student ratio, even when there are retiring faculty members, it is not the case that there is a shortage, but

more of a surplus (MacDonald, 2011). As shown in the subsection About Ontario Universities, from 2000-2011, there is only an average of 350 new faculty hired by Ontarian higher education institutions when there are those who earned master's and doctoral degrees that average around 850 and 118, respectively, or a total of 970. This means that should there be a need for more university faculty members, there is more than two-third the number of individuals with post-graduate qualifications. In line with this scenario, it has been forecasted that by Christensen, Horn, and Johnson (2010) in their book, *Disrupting Class* that in 2019, enrolment in online learning will surpass live instruction because of the ever-evolving modes of virtual education. With these future advances and advantages, despite wide state budget deficit and other related factors, there will not even be a decade-long instance of short supply of professors. It only means that a number of expert-professors is enough to teach hundreds of thousands of students via the internet.

Despite the ambivalence whether there is really a shortage or not of faculty members, the fact remains that there are a number of retired professors each year. But, the shortage seems to be a misunderstanding of the real situation. It was reported that there is surplus of qualified applicants than shortage of new faculty members (MacDonald, 2011). Even when there is a growing number of student population, there are also many college graduates each year wherein after several years, add up to the number of qualified but underemployed professionals.

As such, even when these fresh graduates end up having no jobs or underemployed for a year or so, they continue to professionally grow by

earning additional degrees in graduate schools. The underlying reason for their decisions is because of the tight competition in the labor market. Even though these fresh graduates either volunteer first as teachers for their first or so years after graduation, they have high intrinsic motivation to keep studying with the hope of being employed later on given their higher educational attainment and years of industry experiences.

In case there is really an unforeseen shortage in the number of new faculty members vis-à-vis retired professors plus increased student enrolment, there are many safeguards to counter any possible shortage. First, retired faculty positions are items or have regular budgetary allocation, so there is no problem for remunerating new faculty members. Second, more students mean increase in university profits. Although schools give scholarship, student assistance and other grants that come from various sources, it is an added advantage for any institutions of higher learning.

In short, it is more beneficial for any institutions of higher learning to have more students because these students may also bring with them additional profits or even more prestige when students win in international competitions. Thus, whether there is shortage or not, it is important to consider how these unforeseen events (e. g., enrolment surges) would bring positive results.

Steps to Undertake Should There be Shortages Within the Next 10 Years

Preparing for the worst possible scenario is like getting ready to have at hand the best possible solutions. Should there be shortages in hiring qualified professors, an institution's strategic goals should be reviewed in

light of up to date data. Granting without accepting that even when there is a scarce supply of qualified professors versus the demand for them, institutions should still search for ways how to attract highly credentialed and reputable professors worldwide. In terms of long term planning, institutions should keep on monitoring its graduates' employment and indicators of progress in life. Through trace studies, institutions can monitor many of its graduates who become highly successful in their chosen career or related field of endeavor. Any acknowledged contributions to society and the world of alumni is a big accomplishment for its alma mater. When institutions appreciates its graduates, it is more highly probable to get them work for them, e. g., as professors, directors, etc.

In addition to the above, even when there is large difference between supply and demand for faculty members, many institutions continue to offer continuing professional development courses. Through these courses, not to mention training, conferences, etc. as a host institution, many of alumni and other well-known figures of their craft can participate and share their expertise, values, and successes to other co-participants. In cases where some alumni are already politicians, non-profit organization leaders, and so on, institutions can even lobby or ask assistance, such that, even without any insinuation, be offered or provided with privileges for some of its growing student population. The possibilities are many to mention here, but it is incumbent upon any graduates to pay homage to their alma mater. Assuming that Ontario universities within the next 10 years, or so, will have to confront a large number of shortages in their professorial workforce because of the significant number of retiring professors and growing student

population, the time is now to act. Institutions of higher learning should not only maintain a yearly roster of potential candidates for professorial positions, but also have to perform bold steps in creating an existing pool of potentially, highly qualified instructors. Although it requires much budget to sustain a project like this one, faculty members are the lifeblood of most institutions in terms of research contributions, extension services, etc.

Hence, it is better at the onset that there be more newly hired faculty members who will not only fill out vacant faculty positions, but also serve in institutional researches, extension programs, and so on.

Having said enough, Ontario universities should create more new adjunct professorial positions whose main obligation is to produce more research outputs in line with industry needs. Higher learning institutions should serve as the nation's catalysts in bringing more changes for many communities through pioneering research findings. Through these research undertakings, more students will also be inspired to study, do research, and to ensure their own indelible marks in society. They will be trained at a much faster rate with the professor-researchers or faculty-scientists of the institutions. It is a fact that many professors have more to offer other than teaching, publishing articles, and doing extension services; but also as partners with industry specialists and consultants so that it is easier for them to relate with the widening mismatch between what industries need and what universities offer.

Concluding Remarks

No conclusive evidence exists in literature and studies that there is a pressing need for new faculty members because of a large number of retired professors and growing student population. Although there are academic years where there are more professors retiring and/or student-enrollees, there has not been a continuing trend but fluctuation (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013). This means that it is not a high indicator to hire more. Sometimes it takes a year or so before institutions hire more. This is because the ideal faculty-student ratio is from 25 to 35 students per class. Hence, if institutions maintain 35 learners per class, there is not much faculty that is needed within the next decade given the previous data in the past 10 years. It has been shown from most of the literatures mentioned above that there is not a large shortage in the faculty supply. It may be possible that the case of shortage may be specific to a few Ontario universities; hence, we cannot generalize. Even when such will be the case that most, if not all, Ontario universities will have shortages of professors in the future, with the current underemployment yet highly educationally qualified graduates, it is highly unimaginable that there will indeed be any shortages several years from now. Nonetheless, many higher educational institutions have already anticipated this problem, should it occur. That is why they continue to offer post-graduates courses. In addition, they tie up with industries and the world to spot any potential candidates for professorial positions.

Having said much for so little a space like this one, my supply-demand analysis is a valid one. Although more in-depth researches are needed to back up my analysis, much has been said so far. I have presented arguments

and counterarguments, not to mention steps and solutions to undertake, should the faculty shortage suddenly come into the scenario. Unexpected it may be, it is not logical enough to conclude at so early a stage like this that there will be a shortage within the next ten years. In case there will be a shortage, there are many experts in various fields out there in the world who await hiring.

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