



July 20, 2018

Merrilee Fullerton  
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities  
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900 Bay Street  
Toronto Ontario M7A 1L2  
Email: Merrilee.fullerton@ontario.ca

**Sent via email and post**

Re: Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Task Force

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you to express OPSEU's opposition to the Progressive Conservative government's termination of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Task Force. It's impossible to overstate the deep disappointment our union felt when we received Deputy Minister Zegarac's letter of July 13, 2018 advising that the task force was terminated on June 29, 2018.

On behalf of all OPSEU members, we urge you to do everything in your power to persuade the government to reconsider this decision.

You should be aware that the CAAT Task Force was established following extended negotiations between the Crown, the College Employer Council, and OPSEU. The parties brought their respective interests and experience to those discussions, and OPSEU ultimately agreed to withdraw certain proposals from collective bargaining in order to reach agreement on a Letter of Understanding, entitled "Ontario's Public Colleges: The Next 50 Years." The Task Force that was established through this letter brought together representation from key stakeholders, including the Government, the College Employer Council, Academic Faculty, Support Staff, students and employers. The agenda of the Task Force was innovative, forward looking, and in the interests of all Ontarians.

You should also be aware that the Letter of Understanding states that "The Ministry agrees to accept and endorse this initiative, accepting signatory status as facilitator for the Task Force..." The Ministry committed that "all recommendations of the Task Force will be considered for funding by cabinet."

The Task Force was given a mandate to develop recommendations on a number of identified issues that are significant to OPSEU, and in our view to the future of post-secondary education in Ontario. You will be familiar with the interim report that was issued on April 30, 2018. A final report and recommendations would have been issued to the Ministry in the fall of 2018.

OPSEU strongly opposes the decision to terminate the Task Force, and we will consider all legal avenues if the government persists. It's important to point out that the task force was ordered by

Arbitrator William Kaplan in his award after last year's strike, making this markedly different than some of the decisions of the previous Liberal government that have been terminated or put on hold.

By cancelling the Task Force, the Government is withdrawing from its commitments to post-secondary education, as well as the specific commitments that were given to OPSEU and the College Employer Council in the course of collective bargaining. This decision to terminate interferes with the process of collective bargaining and overturns significant outcomes that were achieved by the parties. It certainly leaves the door open to a Charter challenge pursuant to s2(d) freedom of association. In addition, the parties, government, and indeed Ontarians will lose the opportunity to hear and consider the recommendations of the Task Force.

We look forward to hearing from you once you have had the opportunity to review this information.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
OPSEU President

cc: RM Kennedy, Ontario College Faculty Division Chair  
Janice Hagan, College Support Divisional Executive Chair  
Philip Welford, Chief of Staff