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ISSUE 2

Thank you for establishing your private account in the Members' Area of the Ontario College of Teachers' web site and for your interest in receiving breaking news and professional information from the College.

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Minister 'Studying' College Request for PLP Funding; Fees Must Rise

The Ontario College of Teachers has announced a \$35 a year increase in its annual membership fee, effective January 1, 2003.

At its September 27 meeting, the College Council approved the 2003 budget with a fee increase of \$35 in order to meet the costs of administering the Professional Learning Program (PLP) in 2003.

The College's plan to hold the fee at \$104 until 2004 was made before the introduction of the PLP in June 2001. The College has asked the government to pay the cost of administering the program, but the government has not given the College a firm answer on additional funding.

"Without the rapid expansion that was needed to implement and operate the Professional Learning Program, the College budget would show a slight surplus – despite the fact that our services to our members are growing," said Registrar Joe Atkinson. "But the size and scope of the program are such that we must have more financial resources to operate it."

The increase to \$139 was the minimum increase possible to ensure the College can continue to meet its mandated responsibilities and still be certain there will be sufficient reserves if it encounters unexpected expenses. Even with this increase, the College fee is still among the lowest of the self-regulating professional bodies in the province.

The College has implemented the legislation in a way to maximize PLP benefits to members and to maintain high quality teaching in Ontario. The PLP offers members an opportunity to have their professional learning formally recognized.

The government announced the Professional Learning Program in June 2001, informing the College at the same time that the program was to be operating by September. As a result of a business plan for the PLP submitted to the government, then Minister of Education Janet Ecker committed \$8 million to cover implementation costs. That money will be spent by the end of 2002.

Comments on the fee increase may be sent to the College at fees@oct.on.ca. For more detailed information on these and other issues, please visit the College web site at www.oct.on.ca.

Annual Fees Comparison – September 2002

Regulatory Body

Annual Fee

Law Society of Upper Canada	\$1731.26
College of Midwives	\$1535
College of Dental Surgeons	\$1310
College of Denturists	\$1007
College of Dental Technologists	\$909.50
Institute of Chartered Accountants	\$839.95
College of Physicians & Surgeons	\$820
College of Optometrists	\$802.50
College of Psychologists	\$795
College of Opticians	\$732.95
College of Chiropractors	\$650
College of Veterinarians	\$561.75
College of Respiratory Therapists	\$500
College of Audiologists	\$500
College of Pharmacists	\$478.87
College of Occupational Therapists	\$450
College of Physiotherapists	\$425
College of Massage Therapists	\$375
College of Dietitians	\$350
College of Radiation Technologists	\$267.50

College of Dental Hygienists	\$250
College of Medical Laboratory Technologists	\$214
Association of Professional Engineers	\$181.90
College of Teachers	\$139 (proposed)
College of Nurses	\$125
College of Teachers	\$104 (current)

(September 23, 2002)

College Sought Government Funding for PLP

The Ontario College of Teachers informed Minister of Education Elizabeth Witmer of the financial pressures being created by the operating costs of the government-mandated Professional Learning Program (PLP) in an effort to avoid passing the costs on to College members.

In a letter dated August 9 to the Minister, College Council Chair Larry Capstick and Registrar Joe Atkinson wrote that the organization was facing tough decisions because of the PLP and requested \$7 million to cover the program's 2003 operating costs to avoid having to pass the costs on to its members.

"Without a commitment of funding from your ministry to cover 2003 program expenditures, the College will be required to propose a significant membership fee increase," College officials wrote.

"In the absence of a fee increase or funding commitment from the ministry, the College will dissipate all of its accumulated reserves during 2003," the College officials wrote.

The August 9 letter to the Minister pointed out that she has raised expectations of changes to the PLP by inviting the Ontario Teachers' Federation and affiliates to provide advice on how the program might be revised. However, the Council must "set fees for the legislation as it currently exists."

"Our deadline for any budget adjustments is September 23. Many documents are produced in October with the next year's fee information, including registration guides, published notices to members, school boards and others. Beyond this date, we cannot change the fee."

In a response September 13, the Minister wrote that the College's request had "raised a number of issues that require careful consideration," including "impacts on the College's decision-making autonomy and management flexibility."

Given the timelines, the Minister's reply that she will study the request for operational funding has made it necessary for the College to implement a \$35 increase in the annual membership fee.

In August 2001, the College presented the Minister of Education with a business plan for the PLP outlining the \$8.2 million in one-time costs and \$10.2 million in annual operating costs at maturity. The ministry provided \$8 million for implementation in November 2001. The money will be used up by the end of 2002. Comments on the fee increase may be sent to the College at fees@oct.on.ca. For more detailed information on these and other issues, please visit the College web site at www.oct.on.ca.

College Joins Forces with Universities to Attract Technological Studies Teachers

For the past couple of years, the College has been working with the faculties of education to address the severe shortage of technological studies teachers in Ontario's secondary schools. According to College research conducted in 2000, 37 per cent of tech-qualified teachers will retire by 2005. New teachers are required – and one of the best sources may be people in other professions looking to change careers.

The latest issue of *Professionally Speaking*, for example, highlights teachers who have made the leap and whose varied backgrounds and experiences have brought an added dimension to students' learning.

To further stimulate interest in teaching careers and to aid in recruitment efforts, the College issued a news release on September 25 in conjunction with the Association of Education Registrars of Ontario Universities (AEROU) and the Ontario Council of Technological Education (OCTE). Click here to see a copy of **Shortage of Technological Teachers Reaching Critical Levels**.

This initiative is part of the College's efforts to assist AEROU and OCTE. It also extends the strong working partnership we've formed with Margaret Buchanan, the faculty of education academic counsellor at The University of Western Ontario and the subcommittee she chairs on Technological Studies on AEROU's behalf.

"What students use and learn in technology today they'll use to power Canada's workforce and economy in the future," Margaret says. "Hiring experienced trade-savvy professionals to teach our young people is a priority in education."

The subcommittee is looking squarely at the situation and searching for solutions and we're pleased to be able to help. Supporting the awareness drive is in keeping with our ongoing efforts to ensure that Ontario's school boards have qualified, certified teachers in every classroom.

Do you know someone in a technology-related profession who may be looking for a career change and the opportunity to positively influence the lives of students? Please direct them to Western or the faculties at Brock, Queen's, Ottawa, and OISE/UT for information and advice on how they can become teachers of Technological Studies.

Job opportunities abound!