



**Challenges Facing Post Secondary Educators in Canada
Presentation by Jim Turk, Executive Director of CAUT
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The purpose of the university is the context in which we need to think of this. The University of Toronto's statement of purpose is a good frame of reference for this discussion:

The University of Toronto is dedicated to fostering an academic community in which the learning and scholarship of every member may flourish, with vigilant protection for individual human rights, and a resolute commitment to the principles of equal opportunity, equity and justice...Within the unique university context, the most crucial of all human rights are the rights of freedom of speech, academic freedom, and freedom of research. And we affirm that these rights are meaningless unless they entail the right to raise deeply disturbing questions and provocative challenges to the cherished beliefs of society at large and of the university itself...It is this human right to radical, critical teaching and research with which the University has a duty above all to be concerned; for there is no one else, no other institution and no other office, in our modern liberal democracy, which is the custodian of this most precious and vulnerable right of the liberated human spirit.¹

The distinguishing features of a University are the pursuit of knowledge, the education of Students, collegial governance, and academic freedom: all of these defining characteristics are currently under threat.

Privatization of Post-Secondary Education

Universities in most Canadian provinces have gone from 80-90% publicly funded to 45-66% publicly funded. Reduced public funding has resulted in everything being for sale within universities without consideration of the implications. Universities' integrity is also for sale as made evident in the 2010 by Jennifer Washburn, *Big Oil Goes to College*. A similar report pertaining to Canadian university collaborations will be released next month by CAUT. Many of the same problems exist in Canada; however, it can be done well. CAUT developed a set of *Guiding Principles for University Collaborations*, which should be followed when such collaboration agreements are created. We are not opposed to working with industry but it has to be done in a way that our integrity is protected.

Corporatization of Universities: Market as Model

The corporatization of university governance is evident in the corporate hierarchical model, expanding administrative structures and administrative dominance in collegial governance. Presidents at universities across Canada are increasingly calling themselves CEOs and their career paths are now more corporate than academic. This change has significant impacts on operational efficiencies and university governance.

Adopting the market as a model for measuring universities leads us toward human resources policies in which we would be hard pressed to find full time employees. Casual, part time, faculty are preferred since they provide cheap

¹ <http://www.utoronto.ca/about-uoft/mission-and-purpose.htm>

labour and flexibility. They do not have the same protections from academic freedom and have no job security: they so not need to be fired they can simply not get a contract. The rights of full time faculty will be whittled away as there is more reliance on contract faculty

In some places students are now referred to as clients or products and faculty are service deliverers. Measures of faculty success are now measured, in some universities, by the amount of revenue they bring in. Other emerging measures of success are similarly thoughtless. In accordance with Ontario's proposed [policy differentiation framework](#), Ontario is proposing measuring teaching and learning based on student satisfaction rates, number of teaching only faculty, and the number of students in Co-op programs.

Restrictions of Academic Freedom

Academic Freedom is about the rights and status of educators and the quality of education. It is a requisite for us to do our jobs properly. There are four elements to academic freedom:

- Freedom from proscribed orthodoxy when you are teaching,
- Scholarly work
- Intramural speech: the right to be critical of the university in which you work. Collegial governance is an old university notion that the academic decisions be made by the academic staff: to do this you need to have the right to comment and be critical. At Cambridge and Oxford they have groups made up of all faculty and they are the final decision making body on everything. In Canada it s was determined in the 1960's to have a Board and another body made up of faculty and administration (GFC/Senate). Senates are ineffective and, more often than not, they act as rubber stamp for the administration.
- Extramural Freedom: the freedom to exercise rights as a citizen without employer taking action against you.

Academic freedom is always under threat. AUCC revised its statement on academic freedom in 2011. As it was defined in 1911 intra and extramural academic freedom were included, but AUCC is trying to remove these now. AUCC is also trying to limit academic freedom by restricting it to apply only when faculty speak in areas related to their disciplines. Academic freedom is further restricted at the institutional level. Some universities are trying to make policies on courtesy and respectful workplaces. Some are adding policies on institutional loyalty, protection of an institution's reputation or respecting the mission of the university.

'Casualization' of academic positions is the biggest threat to academic freedom: contract faculty can be let go easily so their academic freedom is limited.

Attack on Labour rights

The only way to defend members' rights for academic freedom is to have it in the collective agreement. However, the ability to negotiate is hampered when labour rights are under attack. The proposed [bill 377](#), is going to require a level of reporting detail that will tie up representative bodies like ours. Also, there is legislation being proposed in five provinces to legislate and end to dues check off. This would obligate Associations to represent all members whether or not they pay dues.



How to Move Forward

Associations need to use collective bargaining as creatively as possible.

- Move the rights of collegial governance into the Collective Agreement
- Negotiate academic freedom
- Do educational work with members. Members may not always be on side but they need to have an understanding of the dangers post-secondary faces and what we can do about them.
- Make these changes public: if these changes happen in Alberta it will affect the quality of programming, the instructors, the degrees, and the institutions. The public needs to know that this is what we are defending.
- Build alliances with students, alumni other labour groups

It will be our action or inaction that will determine our future.