

Bridging the gap

Ontario thinks it has come up with a better way to deal youth employment.

It created a highly skilled workforce expert panel last December to develop an integrated strategy to better link the education system at the high school, college and university levels with the future needs of the province's economy.

Sean Conway, the former education ministry, headed the panel, and is spokesperson for the report.

The panel recommends better partnerships between educators and employers to bridge the gap between the skills needed and what the workforce now offers.

It suggests all students get experiential learning, or co-op placements.

Conway says Ontario first introduced the idea of university co-op programs to the world, and it must now expand it to all levels of education, including the college and high school levels.

The business sector says it is starved for highly skilled students, and one business owner noted last week that hundreds of potential jobs go a-begging because of a serious talent gap.

This gap is what Conway hopes to close with this new government report.

The panel wants students to get better local and regional information on the labour markets. That will help students pick the co-op program that best hones their skills development, and puts them in line for future career opportunities.

Deb Matthews, Ontario Education and Skills Development Minister, called the expert panel's report an aspirational document that will build an education system reflecting the needs of Ontario employers and its students.

She wants to see 100 per cent of students graduating high school and post-secondary institutions taking part in this integrated learning opportunity.

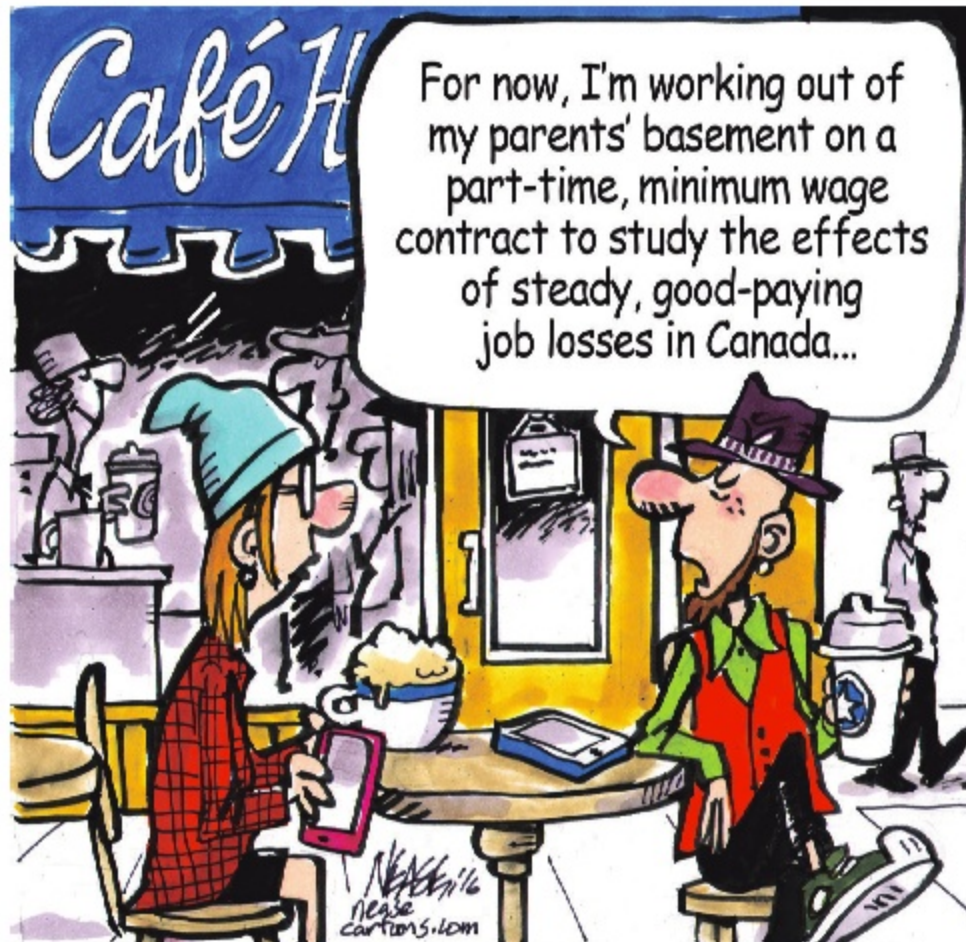
The report offers a clear plan of action, she says.

Is co-op the new way forward for Ontario's students and employers—a way to bridge the skills gap, and therefore shrink youth unemployment rates?

Let's hope this initiative doesn't suffer the same sorry fate as unpaid internships.

The Independent & Free Press

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Letters to the editor

We truly do live in a caring community

On July 19 Percy was involved in a serious motorcycle accident in the east end of town.

Our heartfelt thanks to those who stayed at the scene to help, especially Ruth, and to the paramedics, the police, the nurses, doctors and medical workers at our wonderful Georgetown Hospital and to our neighbours, family and friends.

Your support, care and concern are very much appreciated.

Percy is now recovering at home.

We are proud to live in such a caring town.

Percy, Valerie and Victoria
 Jordan,
 Halton Hills

Angels saved kitty's life

This letter is to give a huge thank you to Dr. Jasvir Salhan of Guelph Street Animal Hospital.

When I recently adopted a cat it was soon evident that he was very sick. Even though my little girl was heartbroken, we had to surrender him back to the UCHS, due to the mounting vet bills with no answers.

Thank you for trying, Dr. Aviva Rothman-Weilinga.

I just couldn't go through another expensive test knowing that there was a very real possibility of getting nowhere.

I called UCHS the next day to check on the sick kitty, and learned that he had undergone emergency surgery that night.

Two angels from UCHS volunteered their free time along with Dr. Salhan to save the cat's life. Due to this very unusual timing, I was able to re-adopt him. It has

been a bumpy road to recovery, with a few of his nine lives used up.

Dr. Salhan and his amazing staff never gave up on us.

Thank you so much for listening to my crazy ideas, for being a great coach, and for truly caring about animals.

Because of you, our little girl can grow up with her Coconut Snowball.

Suzanne Hammond,
 Halton Hills

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