



Higher Education
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Accessibility in Ontario's Postsecondary Education System: An Interprovincial Comparative Analysis (Dr. Torben Drewes, July 2008)

Accessibility in Ontario's Postsecondary Education System: An Interprovincial Comparative Analysis seeks to review the performance of Ontario's postsecondary system in terms of accessibility and participation through an analysis of various statistical measures of access by socioeconomic status. The research is based around various dimensions of accessibility, including financial barriers, capacity within the system, academic preparedness, and social circumstances that influence participation in higher education.

Data from Statistics Canada's 2002 Postsecondary Education Participation Survey (PEPS) are used. This is the most recent national data source available capable of providing sample sizes that allow for detailed analysis and comparison of accessibility at the provincial level.

The paper suggests Ontario is performing well in terms of participation in postsecondary education when compared to other provinces. Ontario also has one of the highest rates of student retention in Canada, and also provides the highest amount of both repayable (loans) and non-repayable (grants) financial assistance among provinces.

The paper also finds a strong correlation between family income and postsecondary participation, although this relationship is no more acute in Ontario than in other provinces. Dr. Drewes' work also suggests that recent Ontario high school graduates participate in postsecondary education less than their peers in other provinces. He indicates further research is required to determine the cause of this phenomenon.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Torben Drewes is Chair of the Department of Economics at Trent University, where he has served as a professor since 1980. His principal research interests are labour

economics and the economics of education, upon which he has authored and co-authored numerous reports and scholarly articles. Dr. Drewes completed his undergraduate studies at Lakehead University and holds a Ph.D. (economics) from Queen's University.