

Universities, Colleges and Trades

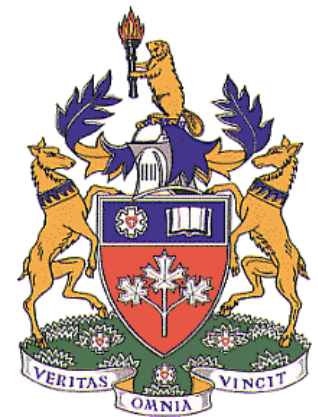
- World War II created a high demand for specialist skills, especially scientific knowledge. After the war, the Canadian government offered veterans financial help attend university, and 53 000 enrolled between 1944 and 1951.
 - Financial assistance was not offered to Black Canadians or Indigenous People who enlisted during the Second World War. Indigenous People were also not issued medals and stripped of their status for enlisting in the war effort. What does this say about Canadian society? What does the phrase “systemic racism” mean?
- By 1963, twice as many people were going to university/college as had attended in the early 1950s.

Why? ...

- Higher wages and the increasing tendency of two-income households meant that the labour of teenagers was not as highly valued as it had been earlier in the century.
- Post-war parents were less likely than pre-war parents to encourage their teenagers to quit school and get a job, to help with family expenses. In fact, many families began to think that their children should be the first people in their families to graduate high school and pursue university/college.
- A social and economic stigma became attached to not finishing high school.
- One of the most strongly held values of the post-war period was a belief that many social problems would be alleviated by more education.
- There was also a decline in un-skilled labour after the Second World War.



Toronto Metropolitan University, founded 1947



Waterloo Lutheran (renamed Wilfrid Laurier) University, founded 1959



Mohawk College, founded 1967

Increasingly, workers needed literacy and math skills just to protect their jobs, as well as the ability to continue to learn new skills as the workplace evolved. Those who wanted to become management increasingly needed a university or college degree.

- A major social change occurred when governments began to make student loans and bursaries widely available. Students who were not socially and economically privileged could now afford university/college – they were encouraged to.
- There was a post-war boom in the founding of colleges and universities. **High school increasingly is seen as existing to prepare students for entrance into university and college**, placing an emphasis on certain courses, while implying that others are less important.

The hierarchy of courses at Waterdown District High School (how are courses treated at WDHS):

Chart 1: University enrolments



*Full-time students only prior to 1961

Source: Statistics Canada, RBC Economic Research

Consequences . . .

- As more people attended universities/colleges their degrees no longer assured access to high-status jobs.
 - What is “Academic Inflation”?

“We stigmatize mistakes. And we’re now running national educational systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make — and the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities.”

- Sir Ken Robinson

Watch Sir Ken Robinson’s [“Do Schools Kill Creativity?”](#)

- A major decline in the skilled-trades developed in Canada heading into the 1990s – people lacked the training needed and a real gap in artisanal and trade skills emerged in society.
 - From the late-90s onward, the national economy began growing more rapidly, inducing an expansion of employment in construction and necessitating the creation of many new apprentice positions. The decade-long run-up in commodity prices also created new demand for apprentices, particularly in Western Canada, in trades related to construction and resource extraction.

Also . . .

- Many young people from a variety of backgrounds began to see themselves as people who could change the traditional values that they had begun to question.
- Experimentation became part of high school/university/college culture, and by extension the culture of youth. **Youth Culture emerges as a distinct thing.**